PARLIAMENT OF TASMANIA

LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL

REPORT OF DEBATES

Tuesday 14 April 2026

REVISED EDITION

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Tuesday 14 April 2026

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

RECOGNITION OF VISITORS

Mr PRESIDENT - Before proceeding with our formal business, I welcome to our Chamber today the year 11 and 12 legal studies students from Hobart College. We've just started our sitting for this week. We have a big week ahead of us, but today is private members' day, where honourable members of the Legislative Council take opportunities to bring notices to the Chamber for debate.

I'd also like to welcome back the honourable member for Windermere. It's lovely to have you back in the Chamber, and we trust that you're doing well. Welcome, and we will get on with our day's business.

Before I call on the Leader to answer questions, I welcome the second group from Hobart College legal studies, years 11 and 12. Welcome to the Legislative Council. We are going through our formal business of the day. Once that is finished, we will go on to special interest matters, then private members' business for the rest of the day.

We hope you enjoy your time in the Tasmanian parliament. I know all members will make you welcome and answer any questions you might have if you see them in the corridors later.

Members - Hear, hear.

Ms Webb- Especially if you are a local member.

Mr PRESIDENT - Oh yes, the local member. Your local member is the member for Nelson, so make yourself known to your local member. I should always mention the local member.

QUESTIONS ON NOTICE - ANSWERS

No. 22 - Future of Defence Land at Dowsing Point

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

[11.15 a.m.]

Further to the government's 3 March 2026 announcement that redevelopment of Wilkinsons Point is the key to unlocking the potential of the adjoining land at Dowsing Point, and its statement that it is calling on the Commonwealth to transition surplus defence land at Dowsing Point into productive community use, can the Tasmanian government provide further detail about its proposal to the Commonwealth and its plans for the site, including:

(1) What correspondence has the Tasmanian government had with the Commonwealth about the future of the defence land at Dowsing Point and can the Tasmanian government provide details of the correspondence?

(2) Has the Tasmanian government formally requested the purchase, transfer, lease or other acquisition of the defence land at Dowsing Point from the Commonwealth?

(3) What specific uses or development outcomes are envisaged under the government's stated plan for 'thoughtful and sustainable' development of the land?

(4) What consultation or discussions has the Tasmanian government had with the Glenorchy City Council about its plan for the land? If not, when will this consultation occur?

(5) Has the Tasmanian government consulted with existing landowners, leaseholders or businesses adjoining the site regarding its proposal. If so, which parties have been consulted, and, if not, when will this consultation occur?

(6) What community consultation does the Tasmanian government intend to undertake regarding the future of this land, and what is the expected timeframe for this consultation?

ANSWER

The Tasmanian Government's engagement on the future of Defence land at Dowsing Point is being led in close coordination with the Minister for Planning and Housing, noting that land use planning, housing supply and urban development sit primarily within that portfolio. The Minister for Business, Industry and Resources has a supporting role given the broader economic and regional development implications.

(1) The Tasmanian Government has had ongoing correspondence and engagement with the Australian Government regarding the future of Defence land at Dowsing Point over a number of years. In 2023, the Premier and various Ministers wrote to their Australian Government counterparts advocating for the land to be made available for housing supply, including possible transfer to the Tasmanian Government. This included:

(a) correspondence in January 2023 from the then Minister for Planning to the Commonwealth Treasurer seeking consideration of the transfer or partial release of land at Dowsing Point for residential development.

(b) correspondence in January 2023 from the then Minister for Planning to the then Commonwealth Minister for Housing seeking consideration of the transfer or partial release of land at Dowsing Point for residential development.

(c) correspondence in March 2023 from the Premier to the Prime Minister advocating for the site to be made available for housing supply.

(d) correspondence in March 2023 from the Premier to the then Commonwealth Minister for Housing advocating for the site to be made available for housing supply.

I think you're getting the gist of this, Mr President. I trust the honourable member is.

(e) correspondence in May 2023 and August 2023 from the Minister for Planning to the Commonwealth Minister and Assistant Minister for Defence, further advocating for the future of the site.

Responses from that time indicated that any decision on the future of the land would be pending the outcome of the Defence Estate Audit. In February 2026, following the announcement of the Commonwealth Government's response to the Defence Estate Audit, the Tasmanian Government re-engaged with the Commonwealth, including:

(a) joint correspondence in February 2026 from the Minister for Business, Industry and Resources and the Minister for Veterans' Affairs to the Deputy Prime Minister seeking further detail on the Defence Estate Audit and proposed divestment process, including opportunities for Tasmania.

(b) correspondence in February 2026 from the Premier to the Prime Minister outlining the Tasmanian Government's interest in the Derwent Barracks site in the context of potential for residential housing.

(2) The Tasmanian Government has consistently expressed its interest in the transfer or appropriate release of Defence land at Dowsing Point to support housing outcomes.

While formal mechanisms for acquisition, transfer or other arrangements are ultimately determined by the Commonwealth, the state has clearly indicated its willingness to work with the Australian Government on options to facilitate the site’s future use.

(3) The Government has identified Dowsing Point as a site with significant potential to contribute to housing supply, including social and affordable housing, consistent with the objectives of the National Housing Accord.

Preliminary work indicates the site could support a substantial number of dwellings, subject to detailed planning, servicing, infrastructure and environmental considerations. Any future development would be guided by principles of thoughtful, sustainable and well-serviced urban development.

At this stage, detailed master planning and specific development outcomes remain subject to further work and engagement with the Commonwealth, although the Tasmanian Government remains committed to ensuring use and development at Dowsing point is underpinned by best-practice planning that prioritises good outcomes for Tasmania.

(4) The Tasmanian Government recognises the importance of working closely with the Glenorchy City Council. Consultation will be undertaken as the Commonwealth's intentions for the site become clearer and more detailed planning work progresses.

(5) Given the early and exploratory stage of engagement with the Commonwealth, consultation with adjoining landowners, leaseholders and businesses has been limited to date. Targeted stakeholder engagement will occur as proposals are further developed and once there is a greater certainty regarding the site's future.

Lastly, but importantly:

(6) Community consultation will be a critical component of any future planning process for the site. The timing and scope of consultation will be informed by the progression of discussions with the Commonwealth and the development of more detailed proposals. The Government is committed to ensuring that local communities are appropriately engaged as planning work advances.

No. 24 - Incidents at Ashley Youth Detention Centre

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

[11.21 a.m.]

With regard to Ashley Youth Detention Centre, in the period between January and December 2025, can the honourable minister advise:

(1) How many reported incidents have occurred requiring internal review by the Incident Review Committee?

(2) How many instances of physical assaults on staff were reported in those incidents?

(3) How many instances of verbal abuse, including racial abuse, toward staff occurred in those reported instances?

(4) How many staff required medical treatment, physical and mental, arising from those incidents?

(5) How many staff have been stood down for alleged code of conduct breaches in that time?

(6) Of those, how many have returned to work?

(7) Since 2021, how many staff have been stood down by the Department for alleged Code of Conduct breaches?

(8) Since 2021, of those stood down, how many remain on stand down?

(9) Since 2021, of those stood down, how many have returned to work?

(10) Since 2021, how many Code of Conduct investigations have commenced, how many have been completed and how many remain outstanding?

(11) Since 2021, how many Code of Conduct breaches have been upheld?

(12) In the past year, how many staff have been recruited to youth worker roles and how many have separated in that time?

(13) How are annual separations benchmarked?

ANSWER

(1) As Minister for Children and Youth, the safety and wellbeing of everyone at the Ashley Youth Detention Centre (AYDC) is my priority.

The AYDC Incident Review Committee (IRC) reviews all recorded incidents involving or alleging the use of force, use of isolation, serious assault, or other serious matters such as fires, escapes, or harmful sexualised behaviour.

Between January and December 2025, the Incident Review Committee reviewed a total of 296 incidents.

(2) The current processes to report specific incident detail relating to physical assaults on staff and the number of incidents at AYDC reviewed by the IRC, are not directly comparable.

This is because the IRC case records are stored securely on a separate information system to the Department for Education Children and Young People's (the Department) Safety Reporting System (SRS).

Data from the SRS indicates at the AYDC site (including the AYDC School) from January to December 2025 shows there were 70 reported incidents of violence towards AYDC staff under the categories of:

- Assault with an object or weapon'
- Deliberate kicks/ punches/ bites/spitting/ pushes/grabs'; and
- 'Other'.

(3) The IRC records are securely stored on a separate system to the Department's Safety Reporting System (SRS).

Therefore, the current processes to report specific incident details relating to verbal abuse, including racial abuse towards staff and the number of incidents reviewed by the IRC, cannot be reliably provided due to the information being recorded in different systems, resulting in reporting limitations.

Data from the SRS indicates that at the AYDC site (including the AYDC School) from January to December 2025, there were:

- five reported incidents in the category of 'verbal abuse including threats to staff'; and
- four reported incidents in the category of 'threats with an object or weapon'.

(4) As Minister for Children and Youth, the safety and wellbeing of staff at AYDC is a matter I take very seriously.

Information about staff medical treatment is recorded through distinct information reporting systems, which are not directly comparable with IRC records.

Due to the system incompatibilities and associated reporting challenges, it is not possible to provide a single consolidated figure covering all incidents reviewed by the IRC where staff required physical or wellbeing-related medical treatment.

The Department's reported safety related data indicates that across 79 serious incidents recorded during January to December 2025, 47 incidents involved staff who required medical or wellbeing related support.

Of the total 47 incidents, 41 of these involved staff who required first aid treatment including:

- EpiPen or other medication;
- Hospital emergency department care;
- Medical treatment (by a medical professional such as a doctor or ambulance officer); and
- Mental health first aid; a counsellor or health and wellbeing officer assistance.

All reported staff injuries and wellbeing concerns are taken seriously. AYDC staff are supported through appropriate medical treatment, counselling, and ongoing workplace health and safety processes whether the staff member is in the workplace or temporarily away from it.

(5) For the purposes of the answer, I am using the definition of 'stood down' as a suspension with pay under Employment Direction No. 4.

If I've not interpreted your sentiment in the question, I'm very happy to address that later.

Applying this definition, I can advise that during the period January to December 2025, six AYDC employees were suspended with pay in relation to alleged code of conduct breaches.

(6) No staff stood down for an alleged Code of Conduct under Employment Direction No.4 have returned to the workplace. This has consistently been the case since 2021.

Where an AYDC staff member has been stood down for a Code of Conduct allegation, the staff member cannot return to the workplace until the formal process outcome concludes it is appropriate and safe to do so.

(7) For the purposes of the answer, I am using the definition of 'stood down' as a suspension with pay under Employment Direction No. 4.

Applying this definition, I can advise that since 2021, a total of 26 AYDC employees have been suspended with pay following the commencement of investigations relating to alleged Code of Conduct breaches.

(8) Of the 26 employees referred to in my previous answer to question 7, a total of 16 employees previously working at the AYDC currently remain suspended with pay.

(9) No staff stood down since 2021 have returned to the AYDC workplace.

Where an AYDC staff member has been stood down for a Code of Conduct allegation, the staff member cannot return to the workplace until the formal process outcome concludes it is appropriate and safe to do so.

In some instances, the staff member may be cleared of any wrongdoing but may return to a different role away from AYDC.

There are other instances where an employee may not be medically cleared to return to work as part of a claim for Workers' Compensation.

(10) Since 2021 and up to 19 March 2026, a total of 33 code of conduct investigations have commenced.

Of those investigations:

- 12 have been completed; and
- 21 remain ongoing.

(11) For the purposes of the answer, I am using the definition of 'stood down' as a suspension with pay under Employment Direction No. 4.

Since 2021 and up to 19 March 2026, there have been five matters where a breach of the Code of Conduct has been upheld.

(12) From January to December 2025, 14 staff have been recruited to Youth Worker roles at AYDC.

During the same period, nine youth workers have separated from employment with the Tasmanian State Service.

(13) The Department does not formally benchmark annual staff separations against external data or figures.

Where there is an unusually high level of separations within a particular workplace, or they have occurred over a short period of time, the Department may review the circumstances to identify any emerging trends, workforce pressures or issues requiring management attention and follow up.

TABLED PAPERS

Joint Sessional Committee Inquiry - Commission of Inquiry Recommendations - Report (Part 1)

[11.31 a.m.]
Ms WEBB (Nelson) - Mr President, I have the honour to present the Second Interim Report (Part 1) of the Joint Sessional Committee Inquiring into Matters Related to the Recommendations made in the Final Report of the Commission of Inquiry into the Tasmanian Government's Responses to Child Sexual Abuse in Institutional Settings.

Report received and printed.

Ms WEBB - Mr President, I move -

That consideration of the report and its noting be made an order of the day.

Motion agreed to.

MESSAGE FROM THE GOVERNOR

Royal Assent to Bill

[11.32 a.m.]
Mr PRESIDENT - Honourable members, I am in receipt of a message from Her Excellency the Governor advising assent to the following bill:

- Petroleum Reporting (Miscellaneous Amendments) Bill 2026 (No. 11)

Having been presented to the Governor for the Royal Assent, she has, in the name of His Majesty the King, assented to the said bill on 2 April 2026.

RECOGNITION OF VISITORS

Mr PRESIDENT - Before calling our first speaker today on our special interest matters, I welcome Craig and Alicia Carnes to the Chamber. We will find out more about them when the member for Pembroke does his contribution, but first off, we have the honourable member for Rosevears.

SPECIAL INTERST MATTERS

Country Women's Association in Tasmania - 90th Anniversary

[11.33 a.m.]
Ms PALMER - Mr President, I would like to take a moment today to recognise the very special milestone being the 90th anniversary of the Country Women's Association (CWA) in Tasmania. This important anniversary has been marked by a number of events right across Tasmania, which has included a Vice-Regal luncheon at Government House, where members gathered with the Governor, the Honourable Barbara Baker and Professor Chalmers. Then there was a civic reception hosted by the Mayor of Launceston, Matthew Garwood, which I had the pleasure of attending. I believe you were with me as you were there as well for the 90th celebration with the Country Women's Association, the member for Launceston. Then they had an anniversary luncheon to celebrate together as members.

These events, along with celebrations held by local branches, have provided such a wonderful opportunity to recognise the extraordinary contribution of the CWA and its members and to reflect on 90 years of service to our Tasmanian community. For nine decades, the CWA has been a constant and trusted presence in communities across our state. It is a non-party political, non-sectarian organisation that today operates through a statewide network of around 36 branches and more than 600 members, all contributing thousands of volunteer hours each year.

The CWA in Tasmania began in February of 1936 when Lady Clark, the wife of the then-governor of Tasmania, Sir Ernest Clark, convened a public meeting at Launceston Town Hall. From that one meeting, the organisation quickly grew, establishing 18 branches within just 18 months and creating a platform for women to come together, to have a voice and to advocate for change.

During the war years from 1939 to 1945, the association expanded to around 2500 members across 71 branches and made a significant contribution to supporting the defence forces.

The spirit of service has continued ever since. What really stands out is the work these members continue to do today. Every year, they give thousands of hours of their time to support their communities - quietly, consistently, and with genuine care. The CWA is known for getting things done. Yes, they advocate for important issues like better rural health and education, but they also roll up their sleeves and help out in a very practical way, including putting together care packs for women's shelters, running literacy programs, fundraising for the Royal Flying Doctor Service and local charities, and supporting neighbours who might be doing it tough.

Their impact is felt right across Tasmania, and when communities face challenges like bushfires or floods, CWA members are often among the first to step up, offering help, comfort and a sense of stability.

They also play an important role in fostering social connection and leadership opportunities for women of all ages, something that remains just as important today as it did 90 years ago. Even during the recent pandemic, members quickly adapted, using technology and social media to stay connected and to continue supporting their communities.

At the anniversary events, special recognition was also given to the association's life members: people who have spent years, decades, giving back to others. Their contribution truly reflects the heart of the CWA.

This milestone isn't just about looking back: it's also about looking forward. There are many women in our communities who benefit from being part of the CWA, and this is a great opportunity to highlight what the organisation does and why it still matters. For 90 years, the Country Women's Association in Tasmania has been strengthening our communities, supporting people in need and demonstrating the power of collective action.

I congratulate the current President, Adriana Taylor, and all members, past and present. I thank them for their dedication and their contribution, and here's to the next 90 years.

Ms Rattray - Through you, Mr President, Adriana Taylor came to Scottsdale a couple of weeks ago and now I'm a member of the Scottsdale branch of the CWA. Very convincing.

Men's Resources Tasmania - Men's Mental Health Week

[11.38 a.m.]

Mr GAFFNEY (Mersey) - Mr President, I rise today to again highlight a matter of vital importance to the social fabric of our state: the health and wellbeing of Tasmanian men and boys. I've said in this place on numerous occasions that recognition for the importance of the health and wellbeing of men and boys should be led by statistics. Nationally, and here in Tasmania, males account for three-quarters of all suicides. They have shorter life expectancy and higher rates of death from most non-gender-specific causes. In our justice system, a staggering 93 per cent of the prison population is male. Yet, despite these clear indicators of need, there is a significant gap in government funding and support for male-specific health initiatives.

Other such statistics betray a particularly tragic tale, and underpin why support for men and boys is such an important issue to our communities at large. The majority of youth offenders are boys. Men are more prone to recidivism and, as I've mentioned, men are more likely to be in jail. Of course, men are also the main perpetrators of domestic violence. To my mind, these statistics beget a singular rational reaction: we must be proactive in our response, not just reactive. This is the only way to constructively approach such statistics.

Just as many other social justice movements have recognised, these statistics do not show a flaw within the demographic. Rather, they show a failure in societal and structural support. Frankly, many boys do not receive access to the role models and positive outlets necessary in

modern society and, as we know, many men do not receive the support they need to reintegrate and thrive within society.

However, to address these challenges we are seeing a groundswell of community-led action. This action is proactive in supporting better societal outcomes. At the heart of this movement is Men's Resources Tasmania (MRT), a local grassroots community-based organisation working to lead and inspire work to improve health outcomes for men and boys. MRT's vision for the state is a community where everyone reaches their full potential, and they know that for many men that journey requires a new way of thinking about support and connection.

I've previously brought to your attention the Building Pathways Transition to Community Program. This innovative program provides vital support to men at their most vulnerable point: the transition from prison back into society. As this program takes shape, the call for more volunteer mentors is still out. Mentors serve as a steady, non-judgmental presence, helping participants navigate community resources and reintegrate into society as a positive member.

Beyond the justice system, we are seeing an increased demand for men's groups across the state. This is particularly visible since the recent success of the 29th annual Tasmanian Men's Gathering on Bruny Island, which demonstrated profound yearning for authentic connection among Tasmanian men. MRT is responding to this demand by supporting grassroots initiatives that meet men where they are.

One such initiative is the Community Conversation taking place on Tuesday 19 May at St Lukes in Hobart. As part of the Men Against Violence initiative, this event moves away from lectures or panels, instead offering an open, facilitated space for men and community members to explore how we can collectively create a safer, more respectful Tasmania.

Furthermore, on 10 , June MRT will host a major statewide Men's Health Forum in Hobart, bringing together frontline workers, health leaders and policymakers to build momentum and create a targeted day of action. The positive theme of 'What's Working' will create the opportunity to hear about stories of success from several programs and initiatives in Tasmania, and to help inform the broader community sector to think differently about how they engage with men and boys.

Additionally, great success is being realised through informal, community-based, 'active' connections such as 'The Man Walk', which has recently launched in Hobart, providing a simple, no-barrier way for men to walk, talk and support one another. MRT is supporting the establishment of the first Mr Perfect barbecue in Hobart, while other such events happen across the state, particularly across the north-west coast. These initiatives, alongside the tireless work of Men's Sheds and Men's Tables around Tasmania, are essential in breaking the cycle of isolation, mental ill-health and frustration that so many men face.

To support the community sector workforce, MRT is supporting the 'Reaching Men' training workshop in Hobart later this month. This project, led by the Australian Men's Health Forum, provides health and community sector workers with the specialised tools needed to strengthen their practice when engaging with men.

As the budget approaches, I strongly urge the government to consider greater support to the men's health sector, for example: an annual grant round similar to the International

Women's Day grants, aligning with Men's Health Week in June or International Men's Day in November. MRT is well placed to support such initiatives. By fostering prosocial connections and expanding the narrative of what it means to be a man in society today, we are building a safer, more cohesive and richer community for everyone.

I call on my fellow honourable members to support these initiatives, whether it be by encouraging members of your community to become a Building Pathways mentor, by attending the upcoming Men's Health Forum or encouraging other activities during Men's Health Week in June. We all have a role to play in supporting men, thereby enriching our communities, protecting others, strengthening relationships, and it will be for the betterment of all of Tasmania. Together, we can ensure that no Tasmanian man has to walk the path of life or reintegration alone.

Coeliac Disease

[11.44 a.m.]

Mr EDMUNDS (Pembroke) - Mr President, today, like you, it is my pleasure to welcome Craig and Alicia Carnes into the Chamber for this special interest matter speech about coeliac disease. I have no doubt that all of us in this Chamber are aware of coeliac disease. We likely know somebody personally who has this genetic condition, but how much do we really know about it?

In this speech I want to highlight what coeliac disease is, just how widespread it is, and how many Australians like Alicia Carnes live with coeliac disease and some of the challenges they face. Craig is quite a passionate local advocate for coeliacs and has even had an article published in *The Mercury* before, which I'd like to start with an excerpt of:

> Imagine having an auto-immune condition that is so debilitating that eating the wrong foods can make you vomit, bring on migraine headaches and cause serious stomach and liver conditions, even hospitalisation.
>
> The condition is called coeliac, and one in 70 Australians have [it].

That is a concerning thought, Mr President. Coeliac disease is a chronic inherited autoimmune disorder where the ingestion of gluten, which is found in not just wheat, but also in barley and rye, triggers an immune response which damages the small intestine through acute inflammation. This damage prevents nutrient absorption, and if untreated, can lead to further serious long-term health problems. Potential complications span autoimmune and metabolic disorders, cardiovascular issues, nutritional and skeletal conditions, gastrointestinal conditions, skin and oral health problems, neurological and reproductive system damage, and even certain cancers. These include things like osteoporosis, anaemia, coronary artery disease, heart disease, liver disease, intestinal and bowel cancers, MS, epilepsy, dementia, infertility, and increased risk of other autoimmune disorders such as type 1 diabetes or thyroid disease developing.

The only treatment is a strict and lifelong gluten-free diet, meaning those with the condition must seek out and maintain an alternative diet to what most of us consume. It's believed that one in 70 Australians has coeliac disease. That's roughly 400,000 Australians. Even on our small island, that equates to nearly 8500 Tasmanians living with this every day.

Concerningly, though, only 20 per cent of people are formally diagnosed. This means many in our community are already living with the condition unaware, potentially experiencing other serious health issues because of it. Coeliac disease can develop at any age. It is a contribution of genetic and environmental factors that allow the disease to develop. One must be born with HLA genes, making them genetically predisposed. Around half the population carry these genes but only one in 40 carriers will get coeliac disease. The trigger for those with the genetic predisposition can be an infection, psychological stress, hormonal or immune changes, or even high gluten intake. Additionally, some coeliacs will be asymptomatic.

However, symptoms are common and include abdominal pain, bloating, nausea, vomiting, diarrhoea and/or constipation, ulcers and lethargy. If one or more high-risk features are present, Coeliac Australia recommends checking for coeliac disease, which you can start by a visit to your GP.

The more common high-risk features include iron deficiency, anaemia or other nutritional deficiencies, gastrointestinal symptoms, osteoporosis, autoimmune disease, such as type 1 diabetes or autoimmune thyroid disease, weight loss, unexplained infertility or recurrent miscarriage, or a family history of coeliac disease.

So what is life with coeliac disease like? In avoiding gluten, there's a lot of reading labels. Gluten can be found in nearly anything, from the obvious items like bread, to soy sauce or even chewing gum. It can limit the ability of people with the condition to eat out, or their choices in doing so.

Common foods to avoid or swap out for gluten-free alternatives include bread, cereal, cakes, biscuits, pastries, pizza, pasta, noodles, bread-crumbed or battered food, processed or barbecued meat, sauces or dressings of any kind, some dairy products, vegemite and even beer.

I might just go off script a little bit there for when Craig first got in touch about this. I used to have a work colleague who drank a specific coeliacs beer which was called Silly Yak. That used to live in the fridge at work, and it used to survive and be left to Dan, who we worked with. But there was one person in the office who you couldn't trust around beer. It wasn't me, Mr President. It was Tony, who one time did drink Dan's coeliac beer and he wasn't very popular for it, particularly because - and we will come to this - it came with an extra price at the counter.

Ms Forrest - I hope he replaced it.

Mr EDMUNDS - I don't think he did. I think it was more his way of teaching Dan to make sure there were other beers in the fridge for Tony. But anyway, I didn't use their last names, so hopefully that doesn't get me in to too much trouble, and it was nearly 20 years ago.

That doesn't sound easy. Then, when it comes to these constantly dietary substitutions, there's obviously a cost involved, not just the extra charges for a gluten-free bun or pizza base, but every weekly shop at the supermarket. A landmark Australian-first study published by the journal *Nutrition & Dietetics* in 2016, led by Professor Kelly Lambert at the University of Wollongong, found that Australians were paying 17 per cent more overall to eat a gluten-free diet. That same research team revisited the numbers recently and found this gap is in fact growing. To provide a stark example, in 2024, the cheapest loaf of gluten-free bread was $6.25, which is nearly 2.5 times more expensive than the cheapest regular loaf at $2.70. The biggest

price differences were in muesli, flour, wraps, bread and pasta, where the gluten-free choices cost an average of 440 per cent more. Compare the Market, in 2023, found product substitutions for items containing gluten to gluten-free alternatives added 184 per cent to the cost of the product on average. It is clear there's a substantial added cost to managing your diet for coeliacs. Across different sample groups, a very small number of coeliacs have even stated they ate gluten due to the cost of the alternatives and opted to eat products that may contain traces of gluten for the same reason.

After what we've heard, I think you'd only need five minutes in the supermarket here to see why. Nevertheless, it is quite concerning. So, where to from here? Some countries like New Zealand and the UK have started national subsidised medical food programs in response to these challenges and Professor Kelly Lambert of the University of Wollongong is an advocate for the same here. With our federal government making great strides in health and recently acknowledging 'the increasing costs of food in Australia and the challenges in accessing gluten-free foods', perhaps there are changes on the horizon?

Clearly more research is needed into coeliac disease, and it's evident we have a lot more to learn about the environmental factors involved and the triggers that facilitate the development of coeliac disease, as well as the junctions with other associated health conditions.

It is also quite concerning that, essentially, the only current treatment is maintenance of the disease by dietary control, which doesn't heal any intestinal damage it may have already caused; rather, it only prevents further damage. Diagnostics have come a long way, too. Right now, the only way to diagnose the disease is for the sufferer to consume a gluten diet and wait for symptoms to appear, then critique and formally diagnose. In some severe cases this is considered too dangerous to endure, leaving some patients informally diagnosed. With most coeliacs undiagnosed, it's likely these challenges will continue to grow.

That's why it's great to see advocacy from people like Craig and Alicia Carne in my electorate. I can certainly say I've learnt more about coeliac disease in the preparation for this speech today, and I hope all of those with us in the Chamber today can say the same. Maybe some are even inspired to grassroots activism, too. I hope we see improvements for the many people living with coeliac disease soon. I know there are many in our communities who would be happy to see it.

Dr Brian Herman

[11.53 a.m.]

Ms ARMITAGE (Launceston) - Mr President, today I speak about an amazing man, Dr Brian Herman, an interventional cardiologist who has spent the last 23 years at the Launceston General Hospital, pioneering treatments that have saved countless lives. Recently, Brian launched his book, *Becoming That Guy*, which chronicles not only his time at the Launceston General Hospital, but also his journey from the Bronx in New York to an island on the other side of the world.

In a recent *Examiner* article profiling the book, Brian recalls a defining moment early in his career as an intern in the United States. He describes watching a resident rush into a room, use a defibrillator and save a patient's life. Brian said in that moment, he thought, 'How did he know what to do?' and decided that he wanted to become that guy.

Brian describes his arrival in Tasmania as more accidental than deliberate. He arrived knowing no-one, but was shown generosity and kindness by both staff and patients. After several months, he says he woke up from a very dark place and saw into a future to establish a cardiology program that would persist beyond time. In his book, Brian reflects on his early working life as a janitor, a dishwasher, office worker and labourer, and contrasts this with his career in interventional cardiology, highlighting that no two days are ever the same. Each patient and each case is different.

Through treating people, he's learned not just about medicine but about life, from beekeeping and potato farming to plumbing, electricity and glider planes.

Brian came to Tasmania during a difficult period in his life. After an emotional conversation, along with the blessings of his two university-aged sons, he elected to move to this island and to reshape the Launceston General Hospital to better serve its patients while reshaping himself. This began with providing a much-needed clinical service and expanding his role as a teacher. As he writes, 'once the clinical program was up and running, the next step entailed developing a training program to touch the future. Of note, the LGH is the only regional hospital in Australia with a fully accredited three-year training program in cardiology.

While full of success and innovation, Brian's career has not been without serious challenges. Stories are told of life-altering complications that quickly turn routine procedures into battles for survival. Every imaginable complication can occur when operating on a patient's beating heart while they are awake. Yes, the patient is awake while instruments are inside the heart, manipulating small devices millimetres in size and even smaller.

The successes far outnumber the complications, but it's the complications that have stayed with him: from infections to loss of vision, paraplegia, loss of limb, stroke and, yes, death on the table, anything and everything can happen. It's these very stories of what he refers to as failures that have driven him to become better than when he began. He often states that there are easier ways to make a living.

He also speaks powerfully about the emotional weight borne by medical professionals. He writes, 'One of the peculiar and uncomfortable parts of this job is that even when terrible outcomes are occurring, you continue on.' He reflects on the stark divide between his professional and personal selves, and on the coping mechanisms that help clinicians survive this burden, including, at times, dark humour.

Becoming That Guy is a compelling and reflective memoir of a life devoted to medicine, learning and service. It's intertwined with insights into the human heart and the advances of modern cardiology. I've no doubt that many Tasmanians owe their lives to Dr Brian Herman. This book was dedicated to his sons. How fortunate we are that in 2003, Dr Brian Herman boarded a plane for a 36-hour flight to a place he couldn't even find on a map, Tasmania.

Dr Herman couldn't be with us this morning as he's working, no doubt doing what he's been doing during his 40-year career: repairing failing hearts through the tiniest of incisions, saving lives.

Members - Hear, hear.

Creative Paper Tasmania

[11.58 a.m.]

Ms FORREST (Murchison) - Mr President, do you remember doing papier-mâché for art in primary school? I'm sure many of us can - the old newspapers, the Clag, the messy and sticky hands you got. Well, today I'm pleased to speak about a most remarkable small business on Tasmania's north-west coast, now based in Wynyard, and one of the most remarkable stories of resilience, reinvention and community spirit I've encountered in my time representing the Murchison electorate. It's far more than papier-mâché.

The business is Creative Paper Tasmania. Now a tourism and arts destination, it did not begin that way. It began in the mid-1990s as a response to hardship. Unemployment across Australia was running at around 11 per cent and youth unemployment on the north-west coast was reaching approximately 14 per cent. A federal government program called New Work Opportunities, supported by the Australian Youth Foundation, gave long-term unemployed people something genuinely valuable: a skill, a workplace and a pathway forward.

APPM, the old paper mill, provided access to a disused building on their east mill site on Old Surrey Road in Burnie, where around 50 people undertook work placements, learning the centuries-old art of handmade papermaking alongside practical workplace skills, first aid, basic computing and the essential ability to work alongside other people. Many went on to find employment elsewhere better equipped than when they arrived.

One of those participants was a young Darren Simpson, who joined the program in 1996. After eight months he moved on to casual work at the Port of Burnie, but papermaking wasn't actually done with him. About 18 months later he returned, this time on a piecework basis, earning 45 cents per A3 sheet supplying the Body Shop with gift voucher paper.

Working independently had its constraints. Once your drying space was full, you stopped producing. He and colleague Janelle decided to combine their drying areas and split the income equally. Without quite intending to, they had invented a production line. Management took notice, productivity increased and they moved to hourly rates.

Then visitors started coming in. When customers arrived to collect their paper, they were shown around the mill and people were captivated. There is something about watching a sheet of paper being made by hand from raw fibre that stops you in your tracks. That curiosity became the seed of a new direction.

In 2000, grant funding supported the transition to a tourism-focused business with a retail space, gallery and guided tours. Sustainability and collaboration have always been central. Sustainability is what Creative Paper does.

For more than 20 years they have worked with Vincent Industries, whose cotton end-of-use towels from hotels and other accommodation, and denim offcuts, form the foundation of many of the handmade papers - recycling textile waste into something beautiful and functional.

More recently, they've entered into a partnership with the Huon Pine Shop in Strahan and produced a unique Huon pine paper from shavings and sawdust that would otherwise go to waste. This is an exclusive product to both businesses.

In 2003 Burnie City Council purchased Creative Paper Mill for $1 and rebranded it Creative Paper Tasmania. By 2007, the council had secured a $3.8 million grant to develop a waterfront cultural hub at the former Burnie High School site. However, just five weeks before the move, the site was destroyed by arson.

Council rebuilt and the Makers Workshop opened in October 2009 at the cost of $5.5 million. This was a vibrant hub for local makers and cruise ship visitors alike. This arrangement continued until 2021 when COVID-19 led Burnie City Council to close its Community Economic Development Department, which included Creative Paper Tasmania.

Rebuilding the business was not without a challenge after an initial partnership Darren undertook didn't go to plan. He took full ownership of the business in 2024 and sent out to re-establish Creative Tasmania Paper independently. Later that year, he relocated the business to Wynyard on the Bass Highway and in January 2025, officially opened to the public.

Today, Creative Paper continues to honour its roots while embracing a new chapter. Visitors can once again experience hands-on papermaking tours, explore the retail space and enjoy the largest collection of paper sculptures created by Pam Thorne and Ruth Rees. Creative Paper also proudly showcases local artwork and giftware, supporting our creative community.

For Darren, this has been far more than a career. It's been a lifelong journey and one he's proud to continue sharing with every visitor who walks through the doors, as members who join me on next year's electorate tour will discover.

Right now, our community papier-mâché wombat is taking shape on the premises, built sheet by sheet by tour visitors. In just three weeks, 100 people have already contributed. When it's finished, it will stand out the front as a welcome to all who pass and hopefully call in to do a tour.

From an employment program in a time of high unemployment rates in a disused factory to a thriving tourism experience, Creative Paper Tasmania has always been about people learning, creating and connecting. I'm proud of Creative Paper Tasmania and the extraordinary Darren Simpson for his passion and commitment to our local community, sustainability and supporting other local business.

MOTION

Ombudsman Tasmania Annual Report 2024-25 - Noting

[12.05 p.m.]
Ms WEBB (Nelson) - Mr President, I move -

That -

(1) That the Legislative Council notes the Ombudsman Tasmania Annual Report 2024-25, particularly statements made regarding;

(a) Previous recommendations made by the Ombudsman that the Tasmanian National Preventative Mechanism (NPM) be

established as a specialised institution separate from the Ombudsman, and that the person appointed as Tasmanian NPM concurrently serve as Custodial Inspector, which is also to be separated from the Ombudsman, have not been acted upon;

(b) The need for the proposed new joint Tasmanian NPM-Custodial Inspector entity to come under the administrative umbrella of a department other than the Department of Justice, given that so many of the facilities which are inspected are also under Justice's purview.

(2) That the Legislative Council further notes that:

(a) *The OPCAT Implementation Act 2021*, which was passed by the Tasmanian Parliament and received Royal Assent on 29 November 2021, establishes an NPM for Tasmania as a new, permanent monitoring body to undertake regular, unannounced inspections of places of detention in order to strengthen protections against torture and ill treatment;

(b) On 1 December 2023, the Tasmanian NPM released its first implementation project report *Preventing torture and ill-treatment in Tasmania*, which includes the results of extensive community and expert consultation to establish the Tasmanian NPM, with a focus on custody, detention, and secure mental health settings;

(c) On 26 November 2024, the Tasmanian NPM released its second, supplementary implementation project report focusing on the Tasmanian NPM's mandate in community based aged residential care and disability support services.

(d) The combined Tasmanian NPM 2023 and 2024 Implementation Reports provide 12 overarching recommendations to successfully establish an independent and accountable office that is most suitable for Tasmania and best placed to prevent torture and ill-treatment, designed to complement and work with existing oversight bodies, engage actively with civil society, and ensure appropriate Parliamentary scrutiny of its activities;

(e) On the 19 November 2024 the Legislative Council passed a motion which called for the 12 implementation recommendations to be accepted in full.

(3) That the Legislative Council also notes the following statement by the outgoing Ombudsman Mr Richard Connock in the 2024-25 Annual Report:

'*Unfortunately, the report, and the 2024 Supplementary Implementation Report, have not been formally responded to though both have been tabled in parliament. In addition, whilst government provided generous funding for the implementation phase of the NPM, it has not provided sufficient ongoing funding for the NPM to perform its functions. This is disappointing, and means that Tasmania will not meet its international obligations.*'

(4) And that the Legislative Council calls on the Tasmanian government to:

(a) Provide a formal response in the Parliament to both the *Preventing torture and ill-treatment in Tasmania 2023 Report* and the 2024 Supplementary implementation report;

(b) Commit to the full funding and implementation of all 12 overarching TNPM recommendations and provide an implementation timetable; and

(c) Report back to the Legislative Council prior the delivery of the 2026-27 State Budget.

I rise to speak to motion no.6, standing in my name regarding the Ombudsman Tasmania annual report 2024-25, specifically the statements made in that report pertaining to the capacity of the Tasmanian National Preventive Mechanism to fulfil its statutory obligations.

Although the Ombudsman's annual report canvasses a range of important and noteworthy matters, it is specifically its reference to the TNPM which is the focus of this motion. At the outset, I wish to emphasise that members will hear multiple mentions of recommendations not being implemented, and the lack of resourcing being provided to this particular statutory entity. However, this is not more of the same, when it comes to the unfortunate litany we hear so often of similar complaints. I recognise there are many independent reports commissioned by government which are either partially or completely ignored, and never implemented. We know there are a range of important statutory entities and other organisations that are currently under-resourced under this government.

However, there's a significant point here which I ask members to keep in mind during this debate: that it is rare that those other instances of inaction, and underfunding, result in Tasmania being non-compliant with a binding international treaty. That is the case with the concerns raised regarding the government's treatment of the Tasmanian National Preventive Mechanism, as I will detail during my contribution today.

In order to address the points raised by this motion, we need to return to the beginning, we need to briefly revisit the debate surrounding the OPCAT Implementation Bill 2021.

For members who were not in this Chamber at that time, it may be useful to be familiar with the background to provide context for our current debate. As summarised by clause (2)(a) of the motion before us, the *OPCAT Implementation Act 2021* established an NPM for Tasmania as a new permanent monitoring body to undertake regular, unannounced inspections

of places of detention or where people are deprived of their liberty, in order to strengthen protections against torture and ill-treatment.

We need to take a step even further back than that. The term OPCAT is an acronym for the Optional Protocol to the Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment, more frequently and easily referred to as OPCAT. The prohibition against torture and other cruel, inhuman or degrading ill-treatment is a longstanding obligation under international law. Further, this prohibition exists as one of the few recognised non-derogable obligations, which means it is an absolute obligation applicable to all states in all circumstances, to all people. Responding to atrocities undertaken before and during World War II, core legal instruments such as the 1948 United Nations (UN) Universal Declaration on Human Rights and the Geneva Conventions of 1949 embedded this absolute prohibition against torture and ill-treatment.

The following decades saw ongoing calls internationally for national states to do more to address ongoing use of torture by non-compliant states, and to develop agreed compliance and accountability mechanisms. Eventually, that effort resulted in the binding 1984 UN Convention Against Torture (UNCAT).

Australia became a signatory to UNCAT in 1985 and subsequently ratified the convention in 1989. It's pertinent to this debate to note that UNCAT established a UN monitoring body, the Committee Against Torture, whose role is to periodically review each signatory state's compliance with the convention.

However, the work on developing rigorous compliance models did not stop there. Work subsequently began on a supplementary optional protocol to the UNCAT to provide for deliberate and equally accountable preventive monitoring to complement the UNCAT's periodic reporting. Which brings us to OPCAT.

This optional protocol established a subcommittee of the UN Committee against Torture. The OPCAT Subcommittee on the Prevention of Torture has the specific brief of regularly visiting state parties to examine their places of detention, while also requiring each state party to establish national bodies to undertake its own regular preventive visits to all places of detention. That domestic entity is the National Preventive Mechanism.

The UN General Assembly adopted OPCAT on 18 December 2002. It came into force on 22 June 2006. On 17 December 2017, the Australian Government ratified OPCAT. By doing so, the Commonwealth committed the entire nation to fulfilling the protocol's specific obligations. The deadline for implementation was January 2022.

Reflecting the nature of our national federation, and as pointed out by the government's second reading speech when this Chamber debated the OPCAT Implementation Bill in 2021, it's the responsibility of all state and territory governments to ensure our OPCAT obligations are fulfilled, not just the Commonwealth. To its credit, Tasmania was the first state to progress the creation of our national preventive mechanism, the Tasmanian National Preventive Mechanism (TNPM), when developing and debating the establishment legislation in 2021; but unfortunately, that momentum, credible at the beginning, has not been maintained since.

Before I leave this broad overview of the historic steps which have resulted in the *OPCAT Implementation Act* on Tasmania's statute books, I ask members to keep in the forefront of their

mind during this debate that specific, two-pronged approach of OPCAT that I've just summarised: the first being the International Subcommittee on the Prevention of Torture with the mandate to periodically visit all state signatories and inspect detention facilities and practices; the second being the requirement for domestic independent bodies to also be established to undertake preventive inspections of the signatory state's detention facilities and practices. They are not either/or obligations; by ratifying OPCAT, the Australian Government is obligated to ensure all states and territories facilitate the first and then deliver on the second of those requirements.

That summary provides the context behind why Tasmania has its *OPCAT Implementation Act 2021*. Although Australia is the actual signatory to the convention and the protocol, due to jurisdictional complexities arising from our federation, where states, territories and the Commonwealth have different areas of responsibility and control over facilities where people are deprived of their liberty, all those different jurisdictions need to establish a mechanism by which to comply with OPCAT.

Hence, nationally, the Australian NPM comprises a network of NPMs set up by each state and territory government and also the Commonwealth government. This structural detail is also a salient point within the context of this debate. The Commonwealth Ombudsman, who has the responsibility of coordinating the Australian NPM framework, and select activities undertaken by that framework, is responsible for preparing an annual report for the federal government and also the international Subcommittee on Prevention of Torture (SPT).

As part of the national NPM network, inevitably Tasmania is going to feature in such national reports, which then go to the international body. It's worth noting that during the public consultation on the 2021 bill and the subsequent parliamentary debate, a number of civil society representatives and MPs, both in this Chamber and in the other place, emphasised the importance of proper resourcing of the new Tasmanian National Preventive Mechanism being established.

There were numerous warnings at the time regarding the need for both an appropriate model for the TNPM as well as adequate resourcing. Stakeholders rightly highlighted the fact that the Tasmanian Ombudsman already had multiple weighty hats that it wore, and pointed to the option of a different location and model for the TNPM; but no matter whether a single person or multi-statutory officers assumed the statutory responsibilities of the TMPM, the crucial consideration was the need for adequate resourcing to be provided to ensure those obligations could be fulfilled fully and effectively.

As the honourable member for Mersey stated during that debate on 11 November 2021 in this place, and I hope the member doesn't mind me quoting from his contribution:

> However, changes such as these cannot occur without significant resourcing. The administration of the bill will require adequate support to ensure financial and operational autonomy. Legislation such as this always poses the risk it will not receive enough funding to perform its most crucial operations, particularly in an area as complex as this. I wish to stress that it is our responsibility to ensure this legislation is not relegated to the background.

I agreed with the member for Mersey at the time and I agree with him still now. Other stakeholders, including the Tasmania Law Reform Institute, TasCOSS and the Tasmanian Institute of Law Enforcement Studies, also reiterated the need for adequate resourcing.

I do wish to pay credit where credit is due: following the act's commencement, the government did provide funding of $425,000 for the Tasmanian NPM Implementation Project, a sound and sensible move. It's worth noting that following the commencement of the act, the Tasmanian Ombudsman was appointed as the TNPM by the Governor, while the implementation project undertook the research and analysis to confirm a viable and fit-for-purpose model.

Noting the range of concerns raised regarding the NPM model best suited to Tasmania, the project started from ground zero, without a predetermined model in mind. The project was tasked with consulting and researching to identify the most suitable option and making recommendations accordingly in relation to governance, strategy and ongoing operational budget.

The 12-month project commenced in September 2022, and for those who may wish to know more about that process, I direct you to the 2023 implementation report of the TNPM released in December of that year. I was going to point to it here, it's somewhere - but perhaps it's a prop, so maybe I won't. It was released in December 2023, and it details the extensive engagement processes undertaken with experts, stakeholders and public consultation. It's my understanding that both this NPM establishment project and its report were a national first, one which saw Tasmania lead the way for human rights protection in this area. The 2023 implementation report presented eight key recommendations, which I will discuss in more detail later. However, I will highlight the following statement contained in the report's foreword provided by former ombudsman Mr Richard Connock, and I quote from that foreword:

> A key outcome of this project is that the Tasmanian NPM must stand on its own, led by a person that does not concurrently serve as Ombudsman. Vital to the success of the Tasmanian NPM will be ensuring that it is appropriately funded so that it can establish a multidisciplinary office that operates independently to establish trust.

The TNPM implementation project identified that the most suitable model for Tasmania, which is also best suited for the state to comply with our OPCAT obligations, is a specialised, distinct and standalone institution and one that requires separation from the role of the Tasmanian Ombudsman. However, the report also details the need and opportunity to embed a multidisciplinary approach to ensure it can draw on the expertise of both the Custodial Inspector and the Commissioner for Children and Young People via a joint-office governance model that leverages the TNPM's authority to delegate its functions while maintaining the necessary autonomy and independence - so far so good.

Then, in 2024, the TNPM released its supplementary report to the government. This supplementary report provided the final component of the project and presented a deep dive into the implementation of the NPM in relation to health and social care settings and an update on the implementation of the Tasmanian National Preventive Mechanism. A detailed and proposed operational budget for the financial years of 2025-26 through to 2028-29 was also provided.

The report also presented additional recommendations to the original eight delivered by the 2023 report, bringing the total to 12: a very thorough body of work, reflective of the commitment by those involved in the project to Tasmania complying with its OPCAT obligations, but from there it goes downhill somewhat. From here on, we start to see the Ombudsman, wearing the TNPM hat, report the lack of formal response from the government to the earlier report and its recommendations. For example, and I quote on page 16 of the supplementary report released in November 2024:

> I note that on 5 June 2024 I received correspondence from the Attorney-General, the Hon Guy Barnett MP, acknowledging my 2023 report. However, as of 30 June 2024, I have not received a response to its recommendations, nor have I been provided with the resources needed to fulfil my functions.

That statement is deeply alarming. Here we have an independent statutory officer, required under the act to report back on any progress or response to recommendations made, formally advising that Tasmania is risking being noncompliant with our international human rights obligations due to the government failing to respond to recommendations detailing adequate resources required.

It's a fair assumption to make that a responsive and responsible government would have acted in a timely manner to resolve the serious matters raised in formal statutory advice in the form of this report; but no, instead we see outgoing ombudsman Richard Connock reiterate his warning in the opening statement of the *Ombudsman Tasmania Annual Report 2024-25*, as detailed in clause (3) of the motion that we're debating today, which I will quote now for the benefit of *Hansard*:

> Unfortunately, the report, and the 2024 Supplementary Implementation Report, have not been formally responded to though both have been tabled in parliament. In addition, whilst government provided generous funding for the implementation phase of the NPM, it has not provided sufficient ongoing funding for the NPM to perform its functions. This is disappointing, and means that Tasmania will not meet its international obligations.

The incoming Ombudsman, Dr Grant Davies, who was also appointed as the TNPM, reiterates later in the annual report:

> It is one of OPCAT's strict requirements that NPMs must be operationally and financially independent.

This Annual Report 2024-25 was tabled in this Chamber on 11 November 2025 - 12 months after the supplementary TNPM implementation report, which warned of exactly the same serious ramifications should the TNPM not be adequately resourced. These serious ramifications include being noncompliant on an international convention, contrary to the Commonwealth ratification.

Further, this also means the state is not compliant with its own *OPCAT Implementation Act* if the TNPM is unable unable to fulfil its statutory functions and obligations, which is unconscionable and shameful.

What is even more alarming, though, is that this 2024-25 annual report was tabled by the ombudsman exactly a year following the affirmative vote passed in this Chamber on 19 November 2024 for the government to implement all 12 recommendations from the two TNPM implementation reports.

Ombudsman Dr Davies also specifically states on page 17 of the annual report and I quote:

> I am encouraged by the Legislative Council of the Tasmanian Parliament passing a motion on 19 November 2024 which called for the implementation recommendations to be accepted in full. It is essential that the implementation recommendations are considered and a response is provided, notably because they intersect with parallel reforms underway to establish a new Commission for Children and Young People.

We are all aware the state's independent statutory officers do not lightly or frivolously cite the votes of parliament in their formal reports. I'm not going to try to speculate or infer motivation on behalf of those independent statutory officers. However, it is a very purposeful and pointed reminder to the government that it has left undone crucially important work.

That failure by the government has very real ramifications for the TNPM being more than just yet another hat worn by the Ombudsman, for our compliance with OPCAT conventions and, crucially, for the human rights of the hundreds of Tasmanians who have been detained by the state and deprived of their liberty.

The Ombudsman Tasmania is merely doing its job as an independent statutory entity of reporting to the parliament without fear or favour that crucial recommendations it has been specifically tasked to go away and develop to ensure compliance with the OPCAT act have been ignored for years, and that a parliamentary vote calling for their implementation has also been ignored. What more does it take to break this inertia, we should well ask ourselves.

Clause (2)(e) of the motion before us states this Chamber previously passed a related motion on this matter, which I've just been mentioning. It's worth pointing out, particularly for members who have joined this Chamber since the November 2024 vote, what the government actually said during that debate and, while I will restrain myself from reflecting on the nature of that contribution, I will summarise the pertinent facts of that contribution by government. At the time, the government stated that it did not support the 2024 motion because it was continuing 'to work with the TMPM to ensure we are fulfilling our requirements under OPCAT'.

However, the government did not detail exactly how those OPCAT requirements were being met, particularly given its refusal to engage on the 12 specific recommendations from the two TNPM implementation reports. The government's response also verballed the former ombudsman Richard Connock, by quoting his acknowledgement in the 2023 TNPM report that the funding he requested for the 2022-23 and 23-24 budgets reflected his requests at the time and that the Attorney-General, the Honourable Guy Barnett, as responsible minister, had responded directly to Mr Connock acknowledging the report and requests for funding.

Yet the government deliberately failed to add that former ombudsman Mr Connock had also said in the 2024 TNPM report, which is also the subject of that Chamber debate, and I quote:

> I note that on 5 June 2024 I received correspondence from the Attorney-General, the Hon Guy Barnett MP, acknowledging my 2023 report. However, as of 30 June 2024, I have not received a response to its recommendations, nor have I been provided with the resources needed to fulfil my functions.

The government knew when it came to this place and it deliberately left out any reference to that pertinent formal statement. The government's 2024 response on this significant matter was nothing but a shameful and very telling smoke and mirrors response at the time. Smoke and mirrors to its core - reflecting a government squirming out of being held to a specific account regarding the implementation of specific recommendations and the adoption of a detailed budget proposal across four financial years.

In 2024, the government also tried to take credit for and infer that in fact it was addressing in some vague manner those of the 12 recommendations which relate to the interaction between the TNPM and the Commissioner for Children and Young People, including co-location, in light of both implementation of the commission of inquiry recommendations which relate to OPCAT and the youth justice inspections and related matters.

However, as we know, a year after that debate, the Ombudsman's annual report last November again formally drew to the parliament's attention there remained outstanding work to be done due to the government's failure to address the TMPM recommendations, which were becoming increasingly urgent due to their intersection with the parallel reforms underway to establish a new children and young people's commissioner.

That is an example of being called out in this annual report for failures. However, one of the more shocking aspects of the government's statement during this Chamber's 2024 debate was the following, and I quote:

> While I acknowledge the member's ongoing interest in this topic, this is not the appropriate forum to discuss the implementation report of the Tasmanian National Preventive Mechanism. Given the report and the recommendations relate to the detention of persons it is important that it is carefully considered by government in consultation with progress and learnings in other jurisdictions.

Let's just absorb that for a moment: apparently parliament is not an appropriate forum in which to discuss the formal public reports issued by an independent statutory entity which has a specific mandate to independently review and report on the state's treatment of fellow Tasmanians deprived of their liberty, and which we had passed legislation to establish in order to fulfil that oversight function.

Yet, apparently, according to the government, this Chamber is not an appropriate forum to then discuss whether the government, which represents the state, is responding adequately to that statutory entity's recommendations. I mean, come on, what an embarrassing try-on from

the government. We'd better not have similar embarrassing try-ons in the government's response today.

I said at the time and am raising again here now, to put the government formally on notice, do not go down that path. Do not trot out any similar line about this not being the role of this Chamber to discuss these matters and hold the government to account for them. As I've already stated, the Ombudsman has formally raised specific concerns regarding the languishing and ignored TNPM funding requests and implementation recommendations in its statutory required annual report tabled in this place.

Therefore, this parliament, this Chamber, has an unequivocal right and responsibility to examine the content of such annual reports, whether the government likes it or not. Hopefully, that puts to bed any future nonsense and we can expect the government today to address the substance of this motion instead of trotting out similar trite lines.

It's sad and disturbing that I have to take such pre-emptive steps to say this in my contribution, but, unfortunately, the government has form on trying to shut down parliamentary scrutiny of the TNPM and the implementation of our OPCAT act. Members may recall that during the debate on the OPCAT Implementation Bill in 2021, we attempted to amend that bill to require the TNPM to report annually back to parliament, just as other statutory officers do.

The Attorney-General at the time refused to accept that amendment, arguing it would interfere with the TNPM's independence, which in turn risked non-compliance with our international obligations under OPCAT. The nerve, the utter nerve. What a load of crock, quite frankly. So we're all very clear here, I will reiterate what the Ombudsman's annual report of 2024-25 states on page 16:

> It is one of OPCAT's strict requirements that NPMs must be operationally and financially independent.

Apparently, on the one hand, the government asserts that should the TNPM report to parliament, and the parliament dares to discuss matters relating to the TNPM, we risk contravening and becoming noncompliant with our international OPCAT obligations. On the other hand, by continuing to starve the TNPM of the identified resources required for it to operate autonomously and independently, as strictly required by OPCAT, the state, the government is ensuring we are, in fact, in breach of our international OPCAT obligations. Gobsmacking hypocrisy from this government on this matter. In fact, it's gaslighting this Chamber and the parliament to make the sorts of assertions that they've made here in the past, so I warn the government, do not try that on again here today. Instead, it's incumbent on the government that they focus on the urgent need for the state to ensure we are fully compliant with our OPCAT obligations.

This brings us to the crux of the matter. As I alluded to at the outset, this is more than just another example of the government failing to implement, or deliberately turning a blind eye to, formal recommendations made by independent entities. We are all aware that it can be a frustrating aspect of our Westminster-style democracy that the government of the day can generally do as it likes with advice received. However, these TNPM recommendations are not run-of-the-mill advice received regarding potential policy options. These recommendations were specifically designed to ensure the state implements the TNPM mechanisms as provided for under the *OPCAT Implementation Act 2021*, the framework designed to ensure Tasmania

and, therefore, also Australia, is complying fully and consistently with our international obligations under OPCAT.

The government invested $425,000 into the TNPM implementation project in order to receive these recommendations, to now simply ignore them and, by ignoring them, risking very real noncompliance with a human rights international treaty. There are serious and equally real ramifications of this inaction and noncompliance.

I briefly outlined earlier the relationship of the state NPMs with the Commonwealth NPM and the fact that the Tasmanian NPM reports to the federal ombudsman in its capacity as the Australian NPM coordinator, and I wish now to briefly raise the TNPM's 2025 annual report to the Australian NPM. The formal report from the Tasmanian NPM to the Australian NPM states:

> This was a year of mixed fortunes for the office. The year began and ended with notable milestones, but overall progress to operationalise was slowed by resourcing and planning delays.

It goes on to summarise the sequence of the two NPM implementation reports of 2023 and 2024 and specifically mentions that although Mr Connock had engaged with the Attorney-General and the Justice department at the completion of the implementation project in 2023, and I quote, 'Within the reporting period, the Government did not provide a formal response to the recommendations.' And further:

> With respect to non-custodial settings, because of resource constraints the NPM office was unable [to] commence examinations on its own initiative. This is principally because over the reporting period only one staff member, Mr Huber, was able to be employed and at least two staff are required for an examination to occur.

Let's just consider that statement for a minute. Section 3 of the *OPCAT Implementation Act 2021* defines two specific purposes of the act, the first being:

> (a) a national preventive mechanism to be appointed and maintained to fulfil the mandate set out in Part IV of the Optional Protocol.

I will not take up the Chamber's time by reading out OPCAT Part IV; however, I'll draw attention to article 19, which stipulates NPMs are to be provided at a minimum the power:

> (a) To regularly examine the treatment of persons deprived of their liberty in places of detention as defined in article 4, with a view to strengthening, if necessary, their protection against torture and other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment.

Yet, here we see the TNPM having to report to its federal equivalent representing the Commonwealth, which is the state signatory to OPCAT, that it has been effectively denied the capacity to fulfil this specific stipulated requirement under the convention due to inadequate resourcing.

The fact that other TNPM activities have been able to occur, as reported both in the annual report to the parliament and the Australian NPM, appears largely to be down to funding received from the Association for the Prevention of Torture, (APT), an international entity based in Geneva dedicated to assisting local, regional, and international delivery of OPCAT. However, it's clearly urgent that the Tasmanian government must address the long-term financial independence of the TNPM as a matter of urgency.

Article 18, subsection 3 of OPCAT states:

> 3. The States Parties undertake to make available the necessary resources for the functioning of the national preventive mechanisms.

I acknowledge that as the national state entity which ratified the convention, there is a role for the Australian Government to formally assist in resourcing all state and territory NPMs required to ensure compliance with OPCAT. That, however, does not let the Tasmanian government off the hook from its share of the ongoing resourcing commitment. Since 2021, Tasmania has had to negotiate a sufficient and workable arrangement with the Commonwealth, and I note that it was a Liberal federal government at the time we established the TNPM.

The fact of the matter is, it is arguable we are currently noncompliant with OPCAT due to the failure to noncomply with the specific article, the convention, including this particular article 18. I find that utterly disgraceful and shameful. The government was warned in 2021, as we passed that bill through this place, that an empty-shell entity would not cut it when it comes to fulfilling our obligations. The government cannot be surprised to now find we are risking being in breach of OPCAT, if we're not already. We do not need to hear more excuses from the government, we need to hear a detailed plan. I cannot stress enough that this is not just about delivering on words on a page, whether in an act or a ratified international treaty. This has a real impact on the lives of many of our fellow Tasmanians who have been deprived of their liberty.

Noting that there are some shared responsibilities with the Office of the Custodial Inspector, the Commissioner for Children and Young People and also now the Disability Commissioner - hence the TNPM's co-location and delegation recommendations - the areas identified as falling within the TNPM's jurisdiction include: adult custodial centres, youth detention facilities, police and court custody facilities, mental health settings, and hospitals and community-based health and social care services, including disability support, aged residential care, education settings and out-of-home care facilities.

OPCAT requires visits to these types of facilities to be regular and, in practice, the expectation is the NPM visits comprise a mix of drop-in visits, thematic visits, in-depth inspections and follow-up assessments. These required regular visits are to give oversight of the treatment of Tasmanians deprived of their liberty in any of these places of detention and to strengthen, if necessary, protections against torture and other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment.

The TNPM implementation plan has identified there are actually over 200 facilities it is responsible for visiting and reviewing the treatment of people held therein in a manner that deprives them of their liberty and freedom of movement that we all take for granted. For example, I point members to the 2024 TNPM implementation report, which details 69 aged residential care and 369 disability support settings in the state where deprivation of liberty is

likely occurring and which, therefore, fall within the TNPM's jurisdiction. At the time of that report, 47.3 per cent of these facilities were in the north and north-west region of the state and the remaining 52.7 per cent in the south. Further, the south had 32 aged-care institutions and 199 disability service organisations. The north and north-west had 37 aged-care facilities and 170 disability service organisations.

These are the people whose treatment, when detained, for whatever health or other reasons, the TNPM is meant to be regularly examining to ensure their human rights, specifically their inalienable right to not be subjected to torture or other cruel and inhuman practices, are being protected. These are the people, along with other Tasmanians in the additional detention settings I mentioned, the TNPM is currently struggling to deliver on its statutory responsibilities in respect to.

Many vulnerable and often marginalised Tasmanians are potentially being put in unnecessary risk due to the resourcing restrictions inflicted upon the entity that is meant to be working on their behalf in this context - very real and serious potential consequences of the government's irresponsible disinterest and inertia.

The Tasmanian government has a track record of hollowing out and starving our statutory entities, hobbling them from being able to meet the statutory obligations. In this case, Tasmania risks being noncompliant with an international human rights treaty and that can no longer be ignored.

I now draw the attention to point (4) of the motion before us, which seeks to provide a methodology by which the government can address this deeply concerning situation and get Tasmania back on track and compliant once more with our OPCAT obligations. Clause (4)(a) before us could be addressed immediately, by the government today providing its formal response to the combined 12 recommendations made across the TNPM implementation reports of 2023 and 2024. That's pretty straightforward, one would think. A response 18 months late is better than no response at all.

Then the government must also detail how it will ensure effective implementation of those recommendations and meet the identified resourcing requirements to enable the TNPM to fulfil its mandated functions and responsibilities under the *OPCAT Implementation Act 2021*. That would address subclauses (4)(b) and (4)(c) of the motion before us.

There is no excuse for the government to claim it has insufficient time on this matter. It has had over two years since the initial TNPM 2023 report to identify how it will implement the recommendations and resource the TMPM appropriately. Similarly, this motion has been on the books since last November, so the government has now had six months to prepare accordingly to respond. So, to conclude, I wish to reiterate article 18 subclause 3 of OPCAT, which is this:

> 3. The States Parties undertake to make available the necessary resources for the functioning of the national preventive mechanisms.

But while the TNPM continues to formally point out that it does not have the necessary resources for its functioning, we are at very real risk of being noncompliant with and contravening our obligations under OPCAT. You can't get more serious than that. During my

contribution five years ago, on the second reading debate in this place on the OPCAT Implementation Bill on 11 November, I stated this:

> We have a responsibility to ensure we are implementing OPCAT not only in words, but also in spirit and intent.

Two ignored implementation reports later, it's clear the government has done little more than just legislate the necessary words. The government's original interest and momentum behind that 2021 bill appears to have spluttered, run out of steam, and ground to a juddering halt. This is a deeply alarming situation, and one which this parliament, in its crucial role of holding the executive to account, cannot allow to fester unchecked.

The Rockliff government's apathy towards the two detailed and comprehensive TNPM implementation reports, 2023 and 2024, and its inertia when it comes to respecting affirmative votes of this Chamber, speaks volumes. This apathy and inertia discredits Tasmania on both the national and international stage. It signals fundamental disrespect towards the parliament, and a shocking disregard for the human rights and welfare of our fellow Tasmanians who have been deprived by the state of their liberty for whatever reason.

Ironically, it is this very disregard for the risk of human rights abuses when the state deprives of liberty which OPCAT is intended to challenge. The protracted failure by this government to formally respond to the TNPM implementation report's recommendations or fund the TNPM to ensure it can fulfil its statutory obligations risks Tasmania being noncompliant with the international protocol.

I hope this motion now sees the application of Newton's first law: that is, the breaking of inertia. Consistent with Newton's law, it is this parliament's role to apply the necessary external force, to start movement or change direction in order to overcome an object's resistance, which, to be very clear, in this case is the government changing its state of motion. The initial movements required are those detailed in clause (4) of this motion. As previously stated, there is no good excuse for the government to fail to deliver on (4)(a) in its contribution to this debate today. I hope we do receive that formal and overdue response to the 2023 and 2024 TMPM implementation reports.

Further, any meaningful formal response to those two reports would have to address the implementation of recommendations, as detailed in (4)(b) of our motion. A respectful government response which is comprehensive, detailed, inclusive of a required implementation plan and funding commitments, could also see (4)(c) of this motion addressed here today.

To reiterate: this parliament has a responsibility to ensure the next annual report of the Tasmanian NPM that it submits to the Commonwealth Ombudsman and the Australian NPM Coordinator does not have to report once again that its activities were limited due to resourcing and planning delays. It is untenable and shameful for this state and this government to place a statutory entity in that position. It is unacceptable for Tasmania to continue risking being noncompliant with our international human rights obligations under OPCAT.

On that note, I urge members to support this motion.

[12.45 p.m.]

Ms THOMAS (Elwick) - Thank you, Mr President. I rise to support this motion and to reinforce the importance of what is, at its core, a matter of accountability, independence and meeting our obligations as a parliament. The Ombudsman's annual report makes it clear that key recommendations regarding the establishment of the Tasmanian National Preventive Mechanism have not been acted upon. That should concern all of us.

The purpose of the NPM, as established under the *OPCAT Implementation Act*, is to provide independent, regular and unannounced oversight of places of detention, not as a formality, but as a safeguard against the most serious risks of harm, including torture and ill-treatment. These are not abstract concepts: they go to the heart of how we treat people in our care and custody. Tasmania did not stumble into this, as the member for Nelson has clearly outlined. We chose to be part of OPCAT. We chose to sign up to these obligations, and with that choice comes a clear responsibility. We do not get to pick and choose which parts we implement. If we sign it, we must honour it fully and properly.

The Ombudsman, supported by extensive consultation and detailed implementation work, has outlined a clear pathway forward, including the need for a genuinely independent structure separated from existing oversight roles, and not housed within a department responsible for the very facilities being inspected. That principle of independence is critical. Oversight must be, and must be seen to be, independent. Anything less risks undermining public confidence and the effectiveness of the framework itself.

Equally concerning is the statement that despite initial implementation funding, ongoing funding is insufficient for the NPM to perform its functions. As the Ombudsman has made clear, this places Tasmania at risk of failing to meet its international obligations. This is not a situation that should be allowed to drift. The reports have been completed, the recommendations have been made and they have been tabled in this parliament. What is missing is a formal response, a commitment to implementation and a clear timetable for delivery. Transparency builds trust, and in this case it is essential.

This motion asks for the basics: a response, proper resourcing and a plan. That is not a high bar. It is the bare minimum. If we're serious about accountability, if we are serious about human rights, and if we are serious about the commitments we have made, then this government must act and respond.

I commend the motion to the Council.

[12.48 p.m.]

Ms O'CONNOR (Hobart) - Mr President, I rise to make a brief contribution in support of this motion and to thank the honourable member for Nelson for bringing it forward, and for her relentless advocacy for the human rights of the Tasmanian people. It's now coming up to five years since the *OPCAT Implementation Act* was passed by this parliament. In passing that act, what this parliament said was that it expected the National Preventive Mechanism that was established under that act to be able to fulfil its statutory functions. I believe that parliament would have expected the government of the day, given that this statutory office had been established by the parliament, to properly fund that office.

I believe that the parliament at the time, coming up on five years ago, would have expected the government of the day to listen to the Ombudsman when he's calling for such

improvements as removing the National Preventive Mechanism from under the Department of Justice. It's not even improving the functionality of that office; it's enabling the NPM to fulfil its statutory obligations and to ensure that we are upholding our responsibilities under international human rights law.

Here we are, almost five years later: all the recommendations that have been put forward in the Ombudsman's report seem to have been ignored. The National Preventive Mechanism is still underfunded to the extent that it cannot properly undertake its work to examine the circumstances of people who are in detention or who've had their liberty deprived for a period of time. It leads us to the logical conclusion that this is wilful, and it goes to an issue with this government in the way that it deals with, particularly, its integrity bodies. We have an Integrity Commission which is the lowest-funded in the country; an Ombudsman who wears so many hats it's hard to understand how he can function; the NPM; all these entities which are critical to who we are as a people and how we look after our own people. They have all been neglected by this government, and it would appear to be wilful because if you want to reassure the world, the nation, the people of Tasmania, that you are upholding the rights of people who've had their liberty taken away from them, then you have to do a lot more than passing an act. There has to be a sustained commitment to that role and what we've had ever since that act passed, unarguably, is ignoring the need to ensure the NPM can undertake their statutory functions. In order for them to do that, they need to be properly funded and unshackled from the current structure.

I sense the honourable member for Nelson's intense frustration that here we are again, and here the honourable member is again raising these matters that seem to persistently fall on deaf ears, and let's be clear, the *OPCAT Implementation Act* was passed by parliament two state elections ago. So that's two large barrels of pork ago and we have had tens of millions of dollars being cast out into the community in a non-transparent, non-merits-based process through those state election campaigns, while our vital statutory bodies are underfunded.

Therefore, because of the way the NPM has been treated, we can have no certainty at all that Tasmania is meeting its obligations under international human rights law. That's the take-home from this; and in many ways we simply don't know, because the NPM hasn't been able to investigate or inspect so many facilities and how people are being treated in those places that are subject to the NPM's jurisdiction. Council should support this motion. Council should express its complete displeasure at the way recommendations put forward by the Ombudsman have been ignored, where cries for funding help continue to be ignored. The Council should support this motion and make the government step up and properly fund the NPM so we can make sure that the rights of Tasmanians who are in detention or in other places where they have their liberty deprived are in fact being protected, because right now we can't be sure.

[12.53 p.m.]

Ms RATTRAY (McIntyre - Leader for the Government in the Legislative Council) - Mr President, the government acknowledges the honourable member for Nelson's advocacy, certainly in this area, and for bringing forward this motion. It has noted the 12 recommendations made in the Tasmanian NPM's implementation reports, including recommendations to restructure some Tasmanian oversight bodies.

The NPM implementation reports are produced under the leadership of the previous Tasmanian ombudsman, Mr Richard Connock, and as leader for government business in the Legislative Council, I would like to take this opportunity to thank Mr Connock for his

significant service and meaningful contribution to Tasmania. The government would also like to acknowledge Dr Grant Davies, who has been appointed as Tasmania's Ombudsman, and that he also holds the statutory positions of, relevantly, Custodial Inspector and Tasmanian National Preventive Mechanism. Relevant to the implementation report's recommendations is the establishment of the new Commissioner for Children and Young People. As members will recall, the enabling legislation passed this place last year and the act received Royal Assent on 23 December 2025.

The recruitment process to appoint a commissioner under the new act has commenced, and it's anticipated that the NPM and Custodial Inspector will work closely with the new commissioner, including providing feedback to government on the views of the new statutory officeholders on the best path to support the NPM, and the role of the new commission as the NPM in relation to children and youth. These discussions will inform the government's response to the report, including any recommendations that the NPM updates in consideration of the views of the new commissioner.

In response to the call for the government to commit to the full funding and implementation of the 12 overarching TNPM recommendations and provide an implementation timetable, the 2025-26 state Budget provided the NPM with $250,000, and $250,000 in the forward Estimates for 2026-27. The budget papers stated:

> Additional funding is provided for the Tasmanian National Preventative Mechanism Office to improve custodial oversight and monitoring of non-custodial settings and give effect to recommendations 12.38 and 12.39 of the *Commission of Inquiry into the Tasmanian Government’s Responses to Child Sexual Abuse in Institutional Settings*, and recommendations 8.2, 11.11, and 11.16 of the *Royal Commission into Violence, Abuse, Neglect and Exploitation of People with Disability*.

I'm advised that the NPM is now supported by four staff and has entered memoranda of understanding with the current Interim Commissioner for Children and Young People and Disability Commissioner to support its plan of work and inspections. The government is engaging with the Ombudsman on these matters.

The recommendations in this report contain significant financial implications and all budget requests are considered in the usual manner. Again, the government notes the 12 recommendations made in the Tasmanian NPM implementation reports, including recommendations to restructure some of Tasmania's oversight bodies.

The message from the previous speakers is loud and clear, and I don't have a formal response to that, but I certainly will commit to raising these clear messages back to the government.

[12.58 p.m.]
Ms WEBB (Nelson) - Thank you, Mr President. It can be a short one. I very much appreciate the contributions from the member for Elwick and member for Hobart and the support of the motion: very clear statements of support there and I thank you for them.

The government, of course, has come with nothing. They're not able to say why they haven't provided a formal response. They haven't been able to tell us exactly when they will

provide a formal response; a fig leaf of an excuse relating to the establishment of the new Commissioner for Children and Young People office is just that, it's a figment of their imagination that that's a reason not to provide a formal response.

They could and should have done it well before now, and they should be committing to full funding and implementing all 12 overarching recommendations. If this motion was to pass this place today, I do expect that they will adhere to the reporting back to the Legislative Council prior to the delivery of the 2026-27 state budget on progress of those two things: formal response and full funding of the recommendations. On that, I commend the motion to the House and hope that it will be supported.

Motion agreed to.

Sitting suspended from 1.00 p.m. to 2.30 p.m.

QUESTIONS

Homes Tasmania - Maintenance

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

According to the annual report, Homes Tasmania budgeted just over $34 million for maintenance. However, we've heard concerning reports that Homes Tasmania has stopped undertaking maintenance for tenants because they've already reached their budget allocation.

Can you confirm whether maintenance work has been paused because there's no money left or for any other reason, and if so, how many homes and tenants are affected?

ANSWER

Mr President, I will seek some information on that.

I thank the member for the question. I'm not aware of information around that, so I'd like to take that on notice, please, so that I can answer that accurately for you and find out for myself. Thank you.

King Island - Hydro Building

Ms FORREST question to MINISTER for ENERGY and RENEWABLES, Mr DUIGAN

[2.32 p.m.]
With regard to the currently vacant Hydro building on King Island, can you provide an update on the status and intended use of the building?

Is the minister aware of any discussions between Hydro Tasmania and the local council regarding the building's potential transfer and what may be made available for community use, including groups such as Landcare or the State Emergency Service, and can you advise whether any decisions have been made regarding its future allocation?

ANSWER

I thank the member for the question. In 2024 we made an election commitment to 'work with Hydro Tasmania to provide Council with the unused Hydro building in Currie, now surplus to needs, that will enable Council to refurbish and repurpose the building'. Since then, we have engaged with both King Island Council and Hydro Tasmania on this commitment.

In March 2026, relatively recently, the King Island Council wrote to us, confirming that, following internal assessment, they do not have any current need for the building and would instead support the building being divested in a way that supports local business and community.

We are currently working with Hydro Tasmania on the future use of this building, noting that the original intent of the election commitment was to support the economic growth of King Island.

I'm advised Hydro Tasmania has taken King Island Council representatives through the property at least three times since March 2025, and the council has been provided with building drawings and land information, as requested.

Hydro Tasmania has not had any further contact with King Island Council since May 2025.

Hydro Tasmania have advised they have previously had discussions with Parks and Wildlife Service, State Emergency Service and King Island Dairy on the future use of the building. However, at that time, the election commitment to the King Island Council was still being progressed, with the promise to the council taking precedence.

Hydro Tasmania have advised they have not had any discussions with Landcare regarding the future use of the building.

Now that the council has confirmed that it has no need for the building, we are currently working with Hydro Tasmania on the future use of this building. No decisions have been made, as yet, to the specifics of what that allocation is.

Canada Versus USA Ice Hockey Classic

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

[2.35 p.m.]
On 1 April 2026, the government announced a Canada versus USA Ice Hockey Classic event will be held at MyState Bank Arena in July. My questions are as follows:

(1) What is the total financial contribution being provided by the Tasmanian government to support this event, including any direct funding, in-kind support or underwriting arrangements?

(2) From which budget program or funding sources is this contribution being drawn?

(3) What assessment has been undertaken to determine the expected economic return or benefit to Tasmania from this investment?

ANSWER

The Tasmanian government will provide a total financial contribution of $100,000 to support the event in July 2026.

Events Tasmania will fund the contribution through Output Group 5.4 - Events.

Events Tasmania assess the proposal against the Major Events Partnership Program criteria, which determine the event's ability to attract people to Tasmania, move people around Tasmania, get people talking about Tasmania and deliver a high-quality and effective event.

The expected return on investment is 3.6:1, based on the $100,000 funding contribution and two matches. The organisers have since announced a third match, which will increase the expected return on investment.

Further, the community benefits of the proposal were also considered, with the proposal offering a unique live sporting experience for the Tasmanian community, providing content that would normally require travel to attend. Hosting the event also supports positioning Tasmania as a premier events and tourism destination.

The organisers will also make the ice rink available for local sporting groups and recreational skaters outside game and event hours. Ice Sports Tasmania has also been invited to participate through figure-skating performances and a junior ice hockey match, contributing to local engagement and pathways.

Tasmanian Heritage Council - Appointment of New Chair

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

[2.37 p.m.]
Further to my previous questions relating to 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) Please provide a copy of the full applicant information package?

(2) Provide a copy of the current position description for the position of the Tasmanian Heritage Council Chair?

(3) Confirm whether the minister or anyone from the minister's office actively encouraged prospective participants to apply, and if so, whom?

(4) Confirm that the referee checks requested for the four shortlisted candidates were received either verbally or in written format?

(5) Further address the unanswered aspect of my question of 6 March, to confirm or otherwise that referee feedback was specifically sought on candidates' relevant heritage skills and experience?

(6) Provide the recruitment selection criteria and position description which was in place for the previous Chair of the Tasmanian Heritage Council?

ANSWER

Mr President, I have two documents as part of the answer to this question and I seek leave to table these documents, which are the Tasmanian Heritage Council Expression of Interest Fact Sheet, and Chairperson, Tasmanian Heritage Council Information Package.

Leave granted.

Documents tabled.

(1) As I've said, the full applicant information package is provided in attachment 1, just tabled.

(2) The position description for the Tasmanian Heritage Council Chair is documented within the applicant information package.

(3) It is quite usual for recruiting a position of this nature for the link to the advertised position to be shared widely to generate maximum interest.

(4) The referee checks requested for the four shortlisted candidates were received in written format.

(5) Referee feedback was sought to gain insight into the candidate suitability for the Chair role in line with the selection criteria. This included experience in senior leadership, stakeholder management, contemporary governance, statutory decision-making and operating in sensitive environments. Referees were also asked about personal attributes including conflict resolution, strategic thinking and working collaboratively. Noting the Tasmanian Heritage Council comprises 14 other members, four of whom are specifically appointed for their relevant heritage skills and experience, this is not considered a requirement for the Chair role.

(6) Attachment 2 provides a copy of the position description and selection criteria for recruitment of the previous Chair of the Tasmanian Heritage Council.

Ms Webb - Is that in the tabled information, the second lot?

Ms RATTRAY - Yes.

Climate Action

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

[2.41 p.m.]

(1) A new state climate action plan is to be developed 'every five years', with the new plan 'to be developed by 2028'. Given the current plan was to address the years 2023-25, what will drive action in the interim years from 2026 to 2027? Given the urgency of acting to reduce carbon emissions, can the minister commit to making amendments to the current action plan before 2028?

(2) In regard to the changes in Tasmania's net emissions in the years 2017-22, can the government offer an observation as to what the changes have been, and does it recognise any pattern? What does the government expect to happen to emissions in the next five years - I might say, particularly given the results of the recent review that found that they're likely to go up from forests?

(3) In relation to the development of bioenergy production, apart from the Cement Australia project, what will be the source of biomass for current projects and others planned in the future?

(4) It is noted the government is considering a transition to zero-emission buses. Given the urgency of acting to reduce emissions, becoming less reliant on fossil fuels and the opportunities for funding from the Australian Government such as through the Driving the Nation Fund, what date can the minister commit to replacing the Metro bus fleet with electric buses, and when will funding be flowing to start this process?

ANSWER

(1) Mr President, the Tasmanian government is focused on finalising the projects from the Tasmania's Climate Change Action Plan 2023-2025, delivering on actions in the six sector-based emissions reduction and resilience plans, and the government response to the statewide climate risk assessment, which was released in 2024.

Given the range of actions being delivered under the action plan, the six sector-based plans and the government response to the statewide climate change risk assessment, the Tasmanian government is committed to developing the next climate change action plan for release by 2028, in line with the legislated five-yearly timeframe.

This timeframe is intended to enable the next action plan to take into account the findings of the risk assessment and the sector-based emissions reduction and resilience plans, consistent with the requirements under the act. It will also enable the plan to be informed by new climate change projections for Tasmania, currently under development, as well as the

2024-25 independent review of the act, which was tabled in parliament on 25 March.

Development of the next action plan will commence in 2027.

(2) In 2017, Tasmania's greenhouse gas emissions were -1.97 Mt of carbon dioxide equivalent (CO^2-e). In 2022, emissions were -4.68 Mt of CO^2-e. The decrease in Tasmania's emissions, or increase in the carbon sink, between 2017 and 2022 is due to a range of factors across various reporting sectors.

Emissions from Tasmania's energy sector reduced from 3.79 Mt CO^2-e to 3.54 Mt CO^2-e over this period, largely due to operational output of the Tamar Valley power station, while transport emissions increased by 0.07 Mt CO^2-e.

Emissions from the industrial processes and product use sector reduced from 1.72 Mt CO^2-e to 1.58 Mt CO^2-e due to improved energy efficiency and emissions intensity of production processes, while emissions from products used as substitutes for ozone-depleting substances increased by 0.03 Mt CO^2-e.

Emissions from the agriculture sector increased from 2.54 Mt CO^2-e in 2017 to 2.65 Mt CO^2-e in 2022, largely due to higher enteric methane emissions from larger livestock herd numbers.

Emissions from the land use, land use change and forestry sector decreased from -10.37 Mt CO^2-e in 2017 to 12.81 Mt CO^2-e, due to decreased rates of land clearing, together with an increase in the establishment of plantations and increased regeneration and regrowth of previously cleared land and harvested forest.

Waste emissions reduced from 0.41 Mt CO^2-e in 2017 to 0.39 Mt CO^2-e in 2022 due to reduced organic waste landfill emissions.

Each year the Australian Government publishes national emissions projections out to 2040. These projections are not currently published at a state or territory level. However, the Australian Government has indicated the size of Tasmania's carbon sink is likely to continue to increase over the next five years.

(3) The proponents of the following bioenergy projects in Tasmania have stated that sources of biomass, which in some cases are still under contractual negotiation, are:

- HIF e-Fuels - biomass residues to be sourced from sustainably certified hardwood plantations in Tasmania;
- Bell Bay Powerfuels - biomass residues to include forest floor residues and processing waste from sawmills and woodchipping plants in Tasmania. Biomass suppliers will be required to have

internationally recognised Forest Stewardship Council (FSC) certification or Programme for the Endorsement of Forest Certification (PEFC);

- Westbury Bio Hub - organic wastes to be sourced from cropping and other agricultural processing residues and council FOGO waste streams.

(4) The Tasmanian government is supporting Metro Tasmania to run the zero-emissions bus trial. The trial includes four battery electric buses (BEB) in Launceston, and three hydrogen electric buses (HEB), in Hobart. Both trials will run for a two-year period. The BEB trial will end in August 2026 and the HEB trial will end in June 2027. The bus trials will provide valuable information to inform future transition planning for the state's public transport network.

The Tasmanian government will continue to work to maximise funding opportunities available through the Australian Government to support transport initiatives. The program guidelines for the Driving the Nation Fund indicate projects related to electrification of buses are not eligible for funding.

Ashley Youth Detention Centre - Use of Force

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

[2.49 p.m.]
With respect to the use of force at Ashley Youth Detention Centre:

(1) What is the Ashley Youth Detention Centre policy on the use of force?

(2) How many allegations of use of force have occurred since 1 July 2025?

(3) How many investigations have taken place into use of force since 1 July 2025?

(4) How many substantiated instances of use of force have occurred since 1 July 2025?

(5) How many uses of force instances have been reported to the Office of the Independent Regulator since 1 July 2025?

(6) How many use of force instances have been determined to be operationally necessary since 1 July 2025, and for what reason have they been determined necessary?

ANSWER

(1) The Ashley Youth Detention Centre (AYDC) use of force policy outlines the obligations under section 132(b) of the *Youth Justice Act 1997*, which

states that physical force may only be used where it is reasonable and necessary, and only for one or more of the following purposes:

- to prevent a young person from harming themselves or others;
- ensure the safety and security of AYDC;
- place a young person in isolation;
- conduct a search; or
- prevent a young person from damaging property.

Use of force is applied only when all other reasonable and practicable options have been exhausted and the safety and security of staff and young people at AYDC are at risk.

Where use of force is applied, the policy states it must:

- be used safely in accordance with current training and practice advice;
- involve the minimum amount of force for the minimum amount of time needed to safely manage the situation; and
- ensure the young person is constantly monitored.

(2) Between 1 July 2025 and 20 March 2026, there have been 30 reports of alleged use of force application.

(3) Between 1 July 2025 and 20 March 2026, a total of 30 investigations of alleged use of force have commenced. Of these, nine relate to historical allegations and 21 relate to contemporary matters. The historical allegations do not involve young people currently at AYDC.

(4) Between 1 July 2025 and 20 March 2026, no instances of use of force have been substantiated as reportable conduct. This does not include the matters that remain under investigation.

(5) Between 1 July 2025 and 20 March 2026, the Department for Education, Children and Young People issued 43 notifications to the Office of the Independent Regulator relating to allegations of use of force in accordance with the OIR Reportable Conduct Scheme; 13 of the notifications relate to historical matters arising before 1 July 2025.

(6) Of the 30 use of force matters investigated by the department between 1 July 2025 and 20 March 2026, nine matters have been finalised. Of these nine, seven cases were assessed as operationally necessary to prevent the young person from harming themselves or others.

Road Safety - Huon Highway-Leslie Road Intersection

Ms WEBB question to MINISTER for INFRASTRUCTURE and TRANSPORT, Mr VINCENT

[2.53 p.m.]
My question relates to a local matter of interest to the community, members of my electorate, which is the safety of the Leslie Road intersection with the Huon Highway. Minister, in correspondence of February this year to the Leslie Vale Community Group and the Friends of Longley Area Group, you stated the Department of State Growth would 'soon be engaging a consultant to design an improved Huon Highway-Leslie Road intersection'.

You indicated that the project will investigate current concerns and analyse options to progress design development. My question is: in light of your dissolution of State Growth that is soon to happen, can you confirm whether the consultant has been engaged with this project and if not, the timeframe by which we should expect that to occur? Can you guarantee that the Huon Highway-Leslie Road intersection project will proceed as a priority despite the new flagged changes to the departmental structures? What's the expected timeframe for any remedial works to be undertaken?

ANSWER

Mr President, I will just seek some advice on the first part of that question. I will seek some clarification on a design consultant, but I know the design work has been happening within the department. There have been quite a few backwards and forwards about the changes. Some people wish it to be the same as the P-turns further down the road.

We're very conscious of the possible upgrade of the licence with Hazell's quarry there and the increased number of trucks that will come out and need to accelerate out of there, as well as coming back down the other side. I did initiate that we would come back and talk to the local group down there as well as the Leslie Vale woodyard there and Hazell's into the design. Because of the nature of the acceleration lane, I understand there's a little bit more design work in the spaces needed for slowdown and acceleration there as well as turning into the left.

At this point, there is no contract with the designer team, but with the new side of Building Tasmania, nothing changes. Hopefully, we'll be more efficient as we work through that over the next six months to make those things happen. That is still a priority for the whole corridor down there. Thank you.

Ms WEBB - Just to follow up, was that six-month timeframe we're expecting work to commence or to have the project underway?

Mr VINCENT - Sorry, I was referring to the time Building Tasmania comes in on 1 July. Everything still progresses as normal and we will continue after that point. We do not have a timeline of when that work will commence until the design work is done. That goes to December.

National Health Reform Agreement - GST Exemption of Top-Up

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

[2.56 p.m.]
The Premier announced a $77 million small-state top-up payment as part of the National Health Reform Agreement, but it is unclear whether this funding is exempt from the Commonwealth Grant Commission's horizontal fiscal equalisation process or whether it will be clawed back through Tasmania's GST share.

Can you please confirm whether this payment is GST-exempt? If not, can you confirm that Tasmania will end up with just a fraction of that small-state top-up payment?

ANSWER

Mr President, I have a much shorter answer to this one. The answer is: the federal Treasurer, the honourable Jim Chalmers MP, confirmed via correspondence received on 3 March 2026 that he will exempt Tasmania's small-state top-up payment from the calculation of the GST revenue sharing relativities. I'm advised that this decision will be formalised in the next terms of reference the Australian Treasurer issues to the Commonwealth Grants Commission. Good news.

Wilkinsons Point Ferry Usage

Mr EDMUNDS question to MINISTER for INFRASTRUCTURE and TRANSPORT, Mr VINCENT

[2.59 p.m.]
Minister, recent Public Accounts Committee hearings have heard the proposed ferries for the Wilkinsons Point site will only be utilised for major events and not commuter transport. Is this the case and does this align with the original request for investment in terminals by Greater Hobart councils and/or the terms of the grant funding from the federal government?

ANSWER

I will need to seek some advice on that.

There are parts of that that I will take some further advice on. But, certainly, our expectation is that the ferries would be used to maximise the full benefit. There are obviously a lot of things happening there at Dowsings Point and all around that area there that we would like to see it linked in. That may slightly change the thought pattern if we are able to obtain that land for further development but as a whole, we want the ferries to be working to the full capacity of the whole river. It's quite exciting what could happen on that site overall, so we want to maximise the use, especially from that area. It has the potential of being a greenfield site that can be designed to the best for the people in that region. I will seek some final bit of detail.

Wellbeing in Care Procedure - Care Concerns Raised

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

[2.59 p.m.]
I lodged a question with the Leader's office to ask the Minister for Children and Youth with respect to care concerns and the Wellbeing in Care Procedure in out-of-home care.

(1) How many care concerns have been raised since 1 July 2024?

(2) How many care concerns have been managed according to the Wellbeing in Care Procedure since 1 July 2024?

(3) How are care concerns categorised, and how many care concerns have been raised in each category since 1 July 2024?

(4) How many care concerns have been referred to the Office of the Independent Regulator since 1 July 2024?

(5) How many children have been removed from their primary placement as a result of a care concern since 1 July 2024?

(6) What process is followed when the CSS staff member has a conflict of interest relating to a care concern?

ANSWER

(1) I do need to preface my answer to the question from the member just with a clarification regarding terminology. A Care Concern or Concerns in Care is now referred to as Wellbeing in care, and so I will use that term in my answers.

A Wellbeing in Care concern relates to matters specific to the safety and risk to a child or young person and may include:

- serious or criminal allegations;
- a potential breach of the Child Safe Code of Conduct; and/or
- circumstances that suggest a child or young person may be at risk under section 4 of the *Children, Young Persons and Their Families Act 1997*.

Based on this definition, from the period 31 July 2024 to 20 March 2026 there has been a total of 347 initial assessments recorded as Wellbeing in Care concerns by the Department for Education, Children and Young People relating to children in care or subject to a care and protection order.

(2) The 347 initial assessments recorded as Wellbeing in Care concerns are being managed using the Wellbeing in Care Procedure.

(3) Wellbeing in Care responses are not recorded as single, distinct categories in the Child Safety Services information management system.

(4) In accordance with the *Child and Youth Safe Organisations Act 2023*, the department made 63 notifications to the Office of the Independent Regulator between 1 July 2024 and 20 March 2026 related to departmental foster carers, including kinship carers.

In addition, the department shared information in relation to 84 non-departmental carers with the Office of the Independent Regulator in accordance with section 33 of the act over the same period.

(5) All decisions to remove a child from their current care placement only occur after careful consideration, and with the child or young person's safety at the centre of decisions. As a result, such decisions are made on a case-by-case basis to ensure the child or young person's immediate safety based on their unique circumstances.

A total figure cannot be provided. While the department records placement movements, the reason for a change in placement is not recorded in a way that allows extractable reporting. A manual review of each individual child's details would be required to determine the number of placement changes due to a Wellbeing in Care concern.

(6) A Child Safety Services staff member conflict of interest issue, real or potential, is managed according to the department's conflict of interest policy, which is reflective of the Tasmanian *State Service Act 2000* and the State Service Code of Conduct.

The department's policy objective is that a conflict of interest is identified early to maintain process integrity and protect the safety and privacy of the child or young person.

In all cases, an employee must disclose, and take reasonable steps to avoid, any conflict of interest in connection with the employee's State Service employment. In all cases, staff members must disclose real or potential conflict of interest to their supervisor as soon as they become aware of the conflict.

MOTION

Proposed Macquarie Point Stadium Project Costs and Impacts

[3.04 p.m.]
Ms O'CONNOR (Hobart) - Mr President, I move -

(1) That the Legislative Council notes the correspondence from the Premier and Treasurer to the Honourable Member for Elwick, dated 4 December 2025 and tabled in the Council by the Leader for

Government Business on 4 December 2025 in relation to the Macquarie Point Stadium Project which set out a number of claims in relation to:

(a) the final project costs and cost cap, budget impact, economic and social benefits, governance, design and construction of the Macquarie Point Stadium; and

(b) a P90 assessment which the Government relies on to support a high degree of confidence in the current $1.13 billion budget estimate for the stadium;

(2) That the Legislative Council expresses its concerns:

(a) that these claims and the P90 assessment are not supported by available evidence, are incomplete or may not be technically possible;

(b) that an industry standard P90 requires a finalised scope, known quantities, identified risks and quantified contingencies; and

(c) the project conditions may not be met resulting in penalty payments and overall cost increases; and

(3) That the Legislative Council calls on the Tasmanian Government to make publicly available and lay upon the Table of the Council the document it refers to as the P90 and any materials supporting the P90 as described in the letter by 5 May 2026.

I rise to move motion 14, which goes to the heart of this Council's responsibility - the responsibility to ensure members are given accurate, complete and reliable information before we vote on a project that will shape Tasmania's finances, our planning system and our public trust for decades to come. This is not a motion for or against the stadium. It's about accountability, transparency and probity. It's a motion for transparency and the integrity of parliamentary decision-making.

Why is this motion necessary? When this Council voted on the state policies and projects order for the Macquarie Point stadium, members were asked to rely on assurances provided by the government about the project's cost, its risks and its financial credibility. One of the most significant of those assurances was contained in a letter sent by the Premier and the Treasurer to the member for Elwick on 4 December 2025. In that letter, the government stated, and I quote from it:

> The $1.13 billion estimate is a P90 figure, providing a high degree of confidence that the project will not exceed this cost.

That statement was not a passing comment, it was a central reassurance provided directly to a crossbench member whose vote was pivotal. It was presented as evidence that the project was financially sound, that risks were contained and that members could vote with confidence. The

more we have learned since that vote, the clearer it has become, certainly to the Greens, that this assurance was not supported by the facts. This should concern us all.

P90 is not a political slogan, it's a technical term used in major infrastructure projects. It means that the cost estimate has a 90 per cent probability of not being exceeded. To produce a P90, industry standards require a finalised scope, known quantities, identified and quantified risks, stable design inputs, a complete risk register and a Monte Carlo simulation to model cost probabilities. These are not optional components of a P90, they are the minimum requirements for a valid P90.

Industry practice requires that a P90 be produced from a completed scope and a documented Monte Carlo simulation. At the time the Premier's letter was written, major scope items including the roof, power upgrades, remediation, enabling works and the underground car park were unresolved or uncosted. Under recognised cost estimation standards, a P90 is only decision-quality evidence if it explicitly included and quantified those major unresolved items.

The critical question is not whether a P90 can exist in theory, but whether the government's claimed P90 for this project was produced to that standard. We say the public record contains no auditable evidence that it was. At the time that the Premier and the Treasurer wrote to the member for Elwick, the government had already acknowledged that the stadium design was not final, the scope may change, community works were still being costed, and key elements were still under development.

We now know that Cricket Tasmania and Cricket Australia were still negotiating design changes, and maybe they still are. The roof design was still under research and it probably still is. Acoustic modelling had not been completed and the question is, has it been now? A turf and grass research facility had not been costed. Has it been since?

Power upgrades were not included, but we know from the Greens' recent Right to Information that there are major TasNeworks substation works to support the stadium, which were not part of the costings presented to this Council. Transport upgrades were not included, and there's still a question mark over them. Enabling works were not included, the underground car park was not included and it seems to have fallen by the wayside since.

Under recognised industry standards, a P90, produced before these items were costed and modelled, would not meet the maturity requirements for decision quality assurance. Members were told a P90 existed and this was provided as a reassurance. But no auditable P90 deliverables were placed on the public record at that time. I'm very happy to be corrected by the government on this, if they can produce this document or if it was provided to the member for Elwick.

So, the government used both technical language and local benefit framing to reassure honourable members. The Minister for Sport explicitly invoked a P90 to reassure honourable members. His words were:

> On top of this, the government has issued a P90 estimate. For those who are unaware, a P90 estimate can be described as a statistical cost-estimation method that provides a 90 per cent confidence level in project delivery.

That technical claim was not accompanied in the public record by the underlying P90 deliverables, including percentile tables, native model, s-curve, sensitivity outputs, and the like. The Leader for the Government repeated the $1.13 billion headline and framed it as local economic benefit. Her words were:

> In terms of the cost of the stadium and reconciling that, an important thing to consider in that equation is the amount of that $1.13 billion that will be spent here in the local economy - paying tradespeople, paying concrete providers, paying the painters and the decorators and the people who will build this thing.

That $1.13 billion headline was presented as a decision quality assurance, but as I've explained, it wasn't supported in the parliamentary record by any available P90 modelling, anything that we could look at, or any kind of scope maturity statement.

So, the P90 claim appears in the Premier and Treasurer's letter to the member for Elwick and in the minister's remarks. It wasn't, however, published in budget papers, Treasury briefings, planning documents, or other public government material prior to the vote. That selective appearance, immediately before a pivotal vote, heightens the need for the Council to see the underlying evidence. The P90 claim was never repeated in the public documentation in a way that allows for independent verification. It was never defended in the parliamentary record with auditable outputs. This raises a serious question: was the P90 claim used selectively to influence a critical vote?

The government presented the stadium as an $875 million state contribution, capped and contained. Of course, that is the most recent cost estimate because, as we know, on the first day of the 2024 state election campaign, the Premier promised the people of Tasmania that the state's contribution would be $375 million and, quote, 'not one red cent more'.

The stadium was only one part of a much larger financial commitment, however, which would be footed by the state. Industry analysis shows that when we include borrowings and interest, maintenance, remediation, enabling works, power upgrades, transport upgrades, turf systems, the underground car park - if it's ever built - the high performance centre, team subsidies and stranded assets, the true exposure to the state is not $1.13 billion. It's much closer to $3.1-3.3 billion at baseline and, if you look at typical Australian cost overruns for major projects such as this, it could be heading up towards the $4-6 billion mark.

Members were not told this. The Premier's letter also stated that the high performance centre would be 'capped at $105 million'. We now know the total cost is $115 million. The cap applies only to the state's contribution. Associated community infrastructure works are not included. The development application has not been lodged. The project is two years behind schedule. Again, members were not given the full picture before that decisive vote, for the future of Tasmania on the stadium order.

This motion does not accuse, it doesn't prejudge, it simply seeks the truth. It asks the government to table, by 5 May, the following auditable deliveries in full:

- the QS P90 report and executive summaries;
- the native probabilistic model or input spreadsheet, showing the line item cost basis, probability distributions and correlations;

- the P50 and P90 percentile table with run date; simulation metadata;
- the complete risk register and risk qualification worksheets;
- scope definition;
- any peer review assurance or validation reports;
- records showing whether and when these files were provided to the Commonwealth or to the Auditor-General;
- a signed statement from the lead QS or cost consultant confirming which major work streams and financing costs such as roof remediation, power upgrades, enabling works, underground car park and the like were included in the probabilistic runs and which, if any, were treated as single-point allowances or excluded.

If any item is withheld on commercial grounds, we would ask the government to provide a written explanation and potentially offer an in camera briefing to members under confidentiality protections. If the P90 that was referenced in that decisive letter exists, the government can table it. If it does not exist, the Council deserves to know.

Members of this Council are entitled to rely on the information provided to them by government. We're entitled to assume that when the government claims a P90 exists, it exists - particularly for a project of such consequence and significant public interest. We're entitled to assume that when the government claims a cost is capped, it is capped. I've paused my natural cynicism here, of course, but it was there in writing, provided to the member for Elwick, in a letter which has now been tabled, a clear commitment to a cost cap. Wisely or not, the government made that commitment, but it is there in writing, and we seek to understand the foundation of that commitment. We're entitled to assume that when the government claims risks are contained, they are contained.

If those assurances were incomplete, inaccurate or technically impossible, then the integrity of the vote on the order is arguably in question. It is arguable some members may have voted differently had they known the true level of uncertainty around the cost of this project in its totality.

This Council has a duty to ensure that decisions of this magnitude are made on the basis of accurate, complete and reliable information. The people of Tasmania, the people we represent, also deserve transparency because, as we know, ultimately, they will pay for this stadium one way or the other, and they will pay for generations. The people of Tasmania deserve accountability and they deserve a parliament that insists on the truth.

This motion is not about stopping the stadium. The Greens' position on the stadium is well known: we remain implacably opposed to the expenditure of billions of public money on a sports venue while the budget is a complete disaster, while ambulances don't arrive on time, while our hospitals are in crisis, while our community sector is facing savage cuts. We're also determined to fulfil our responsibility to hold government to account. This is about ensuring that the parliament and the public are not asked to make billion-dollar decisions in the dark. The Premier's P90 assurance was a headline claim unsupported in the public record, other than in that letter to the member for Elwick. The Council requires the full P90 package.

We need to be able to verify the government's claims on the cost of this project. The order may have passed, but the government is a long way from actually turning the first sod on that site. There is significant uncertainty about what the ultimate costs will be, particularly when you have a look around you at the state of the world.

I do hope members recognise that this is about holding government to account. If the government is going to make a claim about cost caps and certainty around cost assurances that are made to this Council, then we should have a look at the underlying documentation around those claims.

I do commend the motion to the Council, and obviously I don't know what's going to happen with this motion, but you can be absolutely sure we won't be letting this go because this is a matter of such significant public consequence it must be pursued.

This motion has been crafted in such a way that asks the government quite nicely for this documentation. I hope it has the support of members. Whichever way you voted on the stadium, we should have a look at these documents. We should be able to understand the foundation of any claims of ultimate costs of the stadium.

I commend this motion to the Council.

[3.21 p.m.]
Ms RATTRAY (McIntyre - Leader for the Government in the Legislative Council) - Mr President, in response to this this motion, I note the government has already progressed a number of the commitments set out in the letter referenced by the member for Hobart and tabled in this place. These include:

- Administrative oversight of the *Macquarie Point Development Corporation Act 2012* has moved to the Department of Premier and Cabinet from the Department of State Growth as of 11 February 2026.
- An independent probity adviser has been appointed to ensure ethical and transparent processes associated with the approval of plans and other decisions under the State Policies and Projects Macquarie Point Precinct Order 2025.
- The Macquarie Point Development Corporation CEO and chair appeared before the Public Accounts Committee (PAC) on 4 February 2026 and provided a report on the project's progress, with hearings to continue quarterly.
- A design quality and an integrity review panel has been established in accordance with condition A9 of the order. It is chaired by the Strategic Architectural and Urban Design Adviser and complies with the appointment parameters required under condition A9.
- In line with the government's buy local policy and free trade obligations, a 30 per cent weighting is being given to economic and social benefits in procurement, applied during the expression of interest assessment and reflected in the request for tender criteria.
- The Minister for Macquarie Point Urban Renewal and Corporation CEO presented at the first Master Builders Tasmania Building and Construction

Tasmania First Taskforce meeting on 10 December 2025 and the CEO also presented at the meeting of 23 January 2026 in addition.

- On 25 February 2026, the corporation held an industry briefing day, which provided high-level indicative information on anticipated work packages, sequencing and procurement pathways to support industry awareness and planning. The presentation and video from this session are available on the corporation's website for anyone who might be interested.

In relation to the development of the P90, the minister provides information on the process of developing the estimate and the detailed plans that support it. However, it is noted that the government is currently in an active procurement process and compelling the release of the P90 assessment and supporting materials risks disclosing cost assumptions, risks allocations and contingencies integral to bidders' pricing strategies.

There are also direct commercial and financial risks to the state. Public disclosure and internal cost benchmarks and risk positions during tendering can anchor or inflate bid pricing, reduce competitive tension and ultimately increase cost. It would also undermine the integrity of the tender. A P90 is a risk-adjusted project estimate. It is based on the probabilistic cost-estimating approach consistent with state and Commonwealth guidelines and ISO 31000:2018 risk management principles.

The stadium P90 is based on a risk model that has been calculated using that probabilistic cost-estimating approach in accordance with state government, Australian Government, industry guidance documents and ISO 31000:2018 risk management principles and guidelines. It is based on the design and risks which are quantified. The P90 indicates a 90 per cent likelihood that the project delivery will not exceed the estimated amount.

The P90 for the stadium was produced by the project consultant quantity surveyor, who is an expert in construction costs. The P90 is informed by the available evidence, including the project scope, 70 per cent design development drawings, labour, material costs and risks.

The estimate was also informed by workshops to identify and review risks, and the estimated cost variability, frequency and probability of the risks were considered.

The Monte Carlo simulation process includes running thousands of iterations of simulations and is used to inform budgets for large infrastructure projects.

The project budget has also been informed by detailed cost plans, considering materials and volumes in the design. The P90 is informed by detailed design and includes both client and contract contingencies.

In relation to permit conditions, the order sets out extensive conditions, approximately 140 in total. The corporation is actively working to meet these, including delivery of the roof test rig. Documents have been submitted and engagement with regulators is ongoing to support compliance. There is extensive governance in place to monitor progress in meeting the permit conditions. This is set out in the Governance Oversight and Assurance Framework, which was tabled in December 2025. This governance includes the from the Macquarie Point Development Corporation (MPDC) Board, Macquarie Point Urban Renewal Oversight Committee, Committee of Cabinet, ministerial portfolio dedicated to Macquarie Point Urban Renewal, as well as ongoing scrutiny from the Public Accounts Committee inquiry.

I also note the total working estimate figure for the P90 is provided in response to this notice of motion, which was originally provided in response to a motion in the other place in October 2025.

There is extensive information available on the project design. The 70 per cent design development drawings approved by the Tasmanian parliament as part of the order have been made available and were used to inform the estimate.

At MPDC's industry briefing day on 25 February 2026, details on work packages and sequencing were provided. This includes volumes on the various elements of the designed materials and input. The presentation and recording of the sessions are available, again, on the corporation's website.

In summary, the government recommends that the motion be opposed as disclosure of the P90 documentation presents a sovereign risk and would undermine the current competitive procurement process.

[3.30 p.m.]
Ms WEBB (Nelson) - Mr President, I rise to speak on this motion. Surprisingly, it doesn't look like many people are going to rise to speak on it, which is quite puzzling to me. The key role we have here in this House of review is one of scrutinising the government of the day in the decisions that have been made, particularly around the spending of public money. This project, as we're all well aware, was one of fairly high sensitivity, fairly high public engagement, fairly high public contention, and I recall as the order went through this place, time after time, statements of the need to provide intensive scrutiny as the project went forward, and support for the project being contingent, in fact, on that occurring.

We have more than enough examples in recent times in this state of government projects that have gone somewhat astray, potentially through a lack of scrutiny that was effectively applied at the right times during a process. Certainly, the one that springs to mind is to do with berthing in the Devonport area for our new ferries. Somehow, because of things going astray within the government, within the relevant GBEs, but also within the appropriate scrutiny of this parliament, we landed in a position of a project really going quite pear-shaped and having consequences: financial, social and in community confidence in government.

I don't think any of us here would expect to undermine community confidence in governance, in government, in the ability of this place to do its job for scrutiny, by us shying away from an opportunity to do that effectively with the right information in front of us. It's really interesting to me to see this motion, and I thank the member for Hobart for bringing it. I believe it's quite a straightforward proposition.

When I look to it and I consider, okay, we have a piece of correspondence that was tabled in this place on 4 December by the leader for government business that makes a statement about the existence of a P90 assessment, and I believe there's an immediate question then: did it exist at that time and what was its scope? Did it meet the standard that would be expected of a P90 assessment? That's a relevant question for us in this place. When the motion here asks us to note that correspondence and the statement about the P90 in that correspondence, that's a fairly straightforward proposition for us to note.

It also asks that this Chamber expresses concerns. These are not unreasonable things to express concern about, as the member for Hobart went through in some detail, but I will just remind myself, given that industry requirements for a valid P90 - and this is across Australia and international practice - would require for that to be done to a standard that's acceptable, there to be a finalised scope for the project, a settled design, no major unresolved design decisions, no pending negotiations with key stakeholders and no uncosted functional requirements, it would require that there were known quantities, so that we must have defined structural elements, materials, engineering systems, mechanical and electrical systems, site preparation requirements, enabling works, utilities and power upgrades, and that they would all be known quantities; that there would be identified risks in a complete risk register, including design risks, construction risks, geotechnical risks, supply chain risks, labour availability risks, inflation risks, stakeholder-driven scope changes as a risk; that we would also see the P90 presenting quantified contingencies and having those taken into account: for each risk there must be quantified and assigned a probability, assigned a cost impact, and incorporated into a Monte Carlo simulation. It's been very interesting to learn a lot from this motion in engaging with the content of it and learning a bit more about what's expected for a P90. I certainly wasn't aware of it to this degree before.

It also would require there to be stable design inputs. The following things must be final: the roof design, the acoustic engineering, the pitch and turf systems, the seating bowl geometry, the structural loads, the mechanical systems, and compliance with sporting code requirements. That requires that there would be completed engineering studies for acoustic modelling, wind loading, roof engineering, utilities and power assessments.

I didn't hear the government dispute this, but I am quite prepared to be told that some of these things aren't necessary to produce a valid, to-standard P90 assessment. If that's the case, I didn't hear the government say it. I also didn't hear the government clearly say that they had a full assessment that would meet that standard at the time that letter was written, which they certainly implied in the letter. I think it's absolutely reasonable that we may have concern to express, which is a mild thing to do about these things: firstly, that the claims in the letter and the P90 assessment are not supported by available evidence, are incomplete or maybe not technically possible, given the list of things I just read out - which I can absolutely assure you, and every member here would honestly know - on 4 December last year were not things that could be claimed to be finalised and in place and known. Who knows when that letter was written, but on 4 December last year, when it was tabled, we could not meet a P90 that required all those things I just referred to. It was a mild thing to say we may express concern about that. We're also asked to express our concern that an industry-standard P90 requires finalised scope, known quantities, identified risks and quantified contingencies. Yes, it does.

If anyone wants to get up and say it doesn't, I'm interested to hear and to see the evidence of it; and concern that the project conditions may not be met, resulting in penalty payments and overall cost increases. I think that's always an overarching concern that we would have to some extent. All of those things that the motion asks us to express concern about are valid. There's nothing particularly condemnatory about them. They're more observational than anything else, to be honest. In fact, they're asking us to be honest with ourselves, with this place and with the Tasmanian community.

The motion then goes on to ask that the Legislative Council calls on the Tasmanian government to make publicly available and lay upon the Table of the Council the document it refers to as the P90, and any materials supporting the P90 as described in the letter, by 5 May

this year. I heard the honourable member for Hobart state, in her contribution on this motion that she's brought, that it would be entirely acceptable to meet this motion if the government were to say those things can't be put into the public domain in full.

I heard her say that it would be acceptable to put the bits that could be partially into the public domain, and to potentially provide to members of this place on a confidential basis a briefing or access to see the others. That's an entirely reasonable way to approach this request in the motion. The government has got up here and stated that it can't put these things in the public domain because the project is in an active procurement phase and it's a commercial risk to put things into the public domain that might be part of this material - fine. Don't put it into the public domain, then. Meet that requirement in the motion by providing access to us as the people voted into this place to provide scrutiny of government on behalf of the Tasmanian community who all stood here and promised to do that in relation to this project.

There is literally no reason whatsoever to deny the request of this place. It's a reasonable, responsible request to see this material, in confidence if necessary - absolutely zero reason to deny this Chamber the opportunity to do that. It's actually offensive to this Chamber to not do that, if this Chamber puts the request. It is, however, a matter of this Chamber putting the request.

So, I'd be surprised today, very surprised, if there isn't majority support in this Chamber to make that request because it is an entirely reasonable and responsible request. When we get further down the track with this project, should anything go astray, should things begin going in a direction that the Tasmanian public become concerned about, and they turn to this parliament and ask us, on our behalf, how did you hold the government to account on this project? How did you apply urgent scrutiny as it progressed? If they were to look to this debate today on this motion and see that this Chamber failed to support this motion, the Tasmanian people would be well within their rights to see us as derelict in our duty, in fact. We are the House of review. We are not dominated by the government of the day. We're perfectly placed to be able to do a responsible, reasonable job, scrutinising on behalf of the Tasmanian people. This motion assists us to do that. To neglect to take this opportunity presented by the motion would be just that: neglect, dereliction of duty.

Now, I'm very pleased that the government has outlined the ways in which it's undertaking other commitments made in the letter here. Great. I'm very pleased to hear those things are being put in place, or have been put in place and are continuing to play out. I'm particularly pleased that the Public Accounts Committee is doing regular oversight of this project as it goes along. Excellent. None of that absolves us here, as a Chamber and as members, from doing our job of scrutiny, too.

Now, we haven't heard from the Public Accounts Committee member about whether they've looked at this P90. I don't know, maybe they have. I also haven't had the opportunity to go and look at the records of the scrutiny that the PAC has applied to the project so far. I don't know their intention going forward. This may well be something that PAC wishes to look at in detail, but again, even if PAC were to do that or has done it, it still doesn't mean this Chamber, as a broad Chamber of members, couldn't and shouldn't do that, too.

There's literally no reason to not support this motion. In terms of it being a reasonable call for scrutiny, it's asking for responsible information about this incredibly consequential project. It is what the Tasmanian people would expect of us. The government has no basis on

which to deny us, at the very least, confidential access to this information. There's likely to be a swathe of it that could be made public as well. There's likely to be, but if there are elements that can't be, we can certainly be provided with them on a confidential basis.

I would hate to think that this Chamber would be seen today to not support this motion, when we all stood here and promised to do this very thing not a handful of months ago when the order went through this place with the support of this Chamber.

I certainly will be supporting this motion. If it needs to be given effect to slightly different wording of the motion, for example in point (3), rather than all being made public, if elements could be made public, and other elements be provided confidentially - the member for Hobart has made it very clear that that's an acceptable proposal going forward. That's what I've heard anyway. I would support that, too. I put it out right now the government is absolutely available to do that, without any commercial-in-confidence risks because we accept confidential information. The government has provided us with confidential information on other occasions to do with other projects and nobody here abused that. Nobody here leaked about that or abused it, but we were then able to better fulfil our role of scrutiny - particularly as the House of review.

The only reasons a government would refuse to provide this information is either because it didn't exist at the time that letter was written and it will be horrendously embarrassing and damning if that comes to light, or that they don't have faith and confidence in the material that's associated with it and are scared of the criticism. Quite frankly, that's not good enough. That is just not good enough. An executive government is responsible for its decisions, it's responsible for the way it undertakes its governance work around projects, and it should be scrutinised. It should have to answer questions on it. It should have to front up and provide information at least to the people who are doing the scrutiny on behalf of the Tasmanian people here in this place.

On that, I thank the member for Hobart for bringing this motion. It's great to see somebody putting the actual role of this place to work, for us to exercise on behalf of the Tasmanian people our responsibilities on this project. I certainly hope that with this place supporting this motion, we then will have the opportunity to fully do that.

[3.46 p.m.]
Mr EDMUNDS (Pembroke) - Mr President, I take note of a lot of the points made by the previous speaker, by the mover and the Leader for the Government. I don't intend to speak for very long.

I note the points made by the Leader about some of the scrutiny measures and, certainly, as a member of Public Accounts I have welcomed the ability to have people MPDC in front of that committee. It has been wholly worthwhile already, but I agree with the sentiment of the member for Nelson that perhaps the deeper work of that committee is to come as we move forward. I absolutely agree with the points about how awry the *Spirit of Tasmania* project went and I'm proud to be from the party that moved that the stadium would be referred to Public Accounts after seeing the success of that committee in, pardon the expression, trying to right the ship around the *Spirit*s proposal and the *Spirit*s scrutiny still has a long way to play out as well. The fuel situation is another matter that will have ongoing scrutiny going forward. There were some comms out of the PAC earlier this week about that.

I take a lot of the points made by the previous speakers in favour of the motion and agree with many of them. The part I cannot get past when it comes to this is the argument put by the Leader about things such as sovereign risk. It's a healthy debate to have. There's a method for members of this place and the government to come closer together on some of these issues; however, I also believe, through PAC going forward, this is potentially some stuff that we can also pursue. However, with the motion written as it is and the arguments made about sovereign risk, the active procurement process - we are in the middle of a tendering and competitive process and I do not wish to jeopardise that through the revelation of information that can harm that. I understand that has to be delicately balanced with the scrutiny piece. I'm acutely aware of that. I'm not here to run protection, but what I am here to do is respect those processes. I'm happy to take those up through PAC. I'm happy to take them up through this House as a member of the Legislative Council.

I'm not trying to shut the gate on other members doing their own scrutiny; however, I'm unconvinced by the conversation so far and I find that the sovereign risk argument has not been overcome, so I will not be supporting the motion.

[3.49 p.m.]
Ms THOMAS (Elwick) - Mr President, I rise briefly to make a contribution. I wasn't intending to speak on the motion, but I want to make a few key points. One, to start with, being that I'm pleased to have tabled my agreement with the government in relation to the agreements we reached and the safeguards we put in place in relation to my support for the stadium. I stand by that agreement I made in the interests of Tasmanians in making what was a very difficult decision at the time. I was pleased to table that agreement in the interest of transparency and accountability. I would only hope and urge any other MP, or any other party, who does a deal with the government to similarly table any such agreement on whatever issues, be it greyhounds, salmon, in the interest of transparency and accountability.

Any member, any party who does deals ought to table them in the interests of transparency.

Ms O'Connor - We didn't do any deal, just to be clear.

Mr PRESIDENT - Order.

Ms THOMAS - I also consider in this motion that questioning whether a P90 assessment estimate actually exists, we need to be a bit careful in what we're reflecting on here because it's not just necessarily reflecting on the integrity of the government or the decision-making of me as a member, but also on the integrity of the MPDC, because they repeatedly said prior to that stadium vote that they had obtained a P90 estimate. If we're questioning whether one existed, we are questioning the integrity of the MPDC and we need to be a bit careful about that.

Also, the PAC has inquired already into this matter. Just for members' interests, on 4 February 2026 in our hearing with the MPDC, Mr Winter asked the question specifically about this commitment to me, as the member for Elwick. He asked whether the government had sought advice on whether it would be able to keep the $870 million state government cap, and Ms Beach went on to say:

> We've included in the project budget escalation and contingencies. If we were at a point where we felt were unable to deliver, we would go back to the government and say we have concerns about delivering in these parameters.

It went on and Ms Beach said:

> There are two elements to the cost estimate. One is the cost plan. That's done by our quantity surveyors. They do a line-by-line review of the actual drawings and the volumes and materials of individual items. They estimate it that way. Then they add on top things like market loading, contingencies, so client construction and design contingencies. Also included are consultancy costs and our resourcing costs. It's done line by line.
>
> Then we've also done a qualitative risk assessment where we've gone through and looked at what risks could occur and what will be the cost of those. That's how we got to a P90, which is the $1.13 billion, so there's been two elements to that -

Just to make the point, the Public Accounts Committee has made some initial inquiries into the P90, with different members asking questions, and of course can continue to request that information and may very well request that information at upcoming hearings. I will take the point of other members that they are not necessarily on these other committees and won't be privy to that information if it's tabled in confidence, given the sovereign risk that tabling it and publishing it presents.

However, that's what committees are tasked to do: work on behalf of the parliament and report back to other members, to the parliament. I also find it interesting that other members weren't asking these questions prior to the vote. It certainly was about the existence of these estimates and the evidence around it, and I wonder what material difference it could possibly make now that the decision has been made.

You just have to wonder why, given the decisions made -

Ms O'Connor - Do you even understand parliament?

Mr PRESIDENT - Order. You will have a right of reply.

Ms THOMAS - The Public Accounts Committee is inquiring into this, as it is a number of significant matters of public accounts. It has a very big workload and we take that role very seriously.

I won't be supporting the motion.

[3.54 p.m.]
Ms FORREST (Murchison) - Mr President, I rise to make a brief contribution as the Chair of the Public Accounts Committee. Members would respect the fact that we can't talk about some of the deliberative processes we have within the committee, as was basically alluded to that we should and what our future program is. That is not something that we do. But it was the House of Assembly who referred the reference to the Public Accounts

Committee, as they did the debacle that is the TT-Line berth construction and delivery of the two new vessels.

As the member for Elwick said, as deputy chair of that committee, the committee has a very heavy workload. We take it very seriously. The workloads are heavy because of so many problems that the state is facing at the moment, some of it through the government's own making. That said, we take our job very seriously. We have over recent years received lots of confidential information, which we keep confidential, but we do use that information, as in all committees that receive confidential information, to inform our questions, to inform our decision-making, to inform our reports.

I hear what members have said and I absolutely agree with the members for Hobart and Nelson that it is important that members are fully informed as best we can be. That's a matter for the government as to whether they do provide a sensitive document to members.

There was a request some time ago by the member for Mersey to table their unredacted whole-of-state business case related to Project Marinus and I voted against that at the time because there was a committee looking at that. Whilst it was offered to the Public Accounts Committee, we're not looking at that. That's one of the things we're not looking at at the moment. We have 10 other things we are currently looking at. There are 10 other separate inquiries, but the Energy Matters Committee requested and received the unredacted Whole-of-State Business Case. That has helped inform us in our questions. It will help inform us in our deliberations on a report, et cetera.

I have listened to this debate. I appreciate the government's position here that there is a live, active tender process at the moment.

I am in the very privileged position to be on the Public Accounts Committee, where we do have access to information, more information than many members in this Council actually have, but we do that on behalf of the parliament. We don't do it to squirrel away and not use it to inform the parliament through our reports.

Yes, we don't report every week but we do meet more than every week, particularly at the moment, and we take that responsibility very seriously.

There is a lot of publicly available information on the Public Accounts Committee website. Our Secretary, Simon Scott, works really hard to keep that up to date. There are questions on notice, responses to questions on notice related to matters to do with this project and every other matter we're looking into.

The *Hansard* is out as soon as it can be. We know that there's a lot of demand on Hansard at the moment and some of the transcripts take a little longer to come. We fully accept that because of the workload that Hansard is experiencing, but we do publish everything we possibly can and use the information we can't because of the confidential nature of it to inform our questions, our deliberations and our reporting.

I'm not inclined to support the motion. I believe it's difficult. I believe there could be further discussion about how that could be facilitated if members really felt it was necessary for other members to see it, but I understand the need for confidentiality around that.

There's much more control in the committee setting around confidentiality and locking down documents in our systems. Providing it to members in other ways you don't have that same security. That's not a reflection on members. I'm just saying there are processes around committees.

If there was a document that a committee ever felt was important to release publicly, there is a process to do that. We haven't utilised or felt the need to utilise that process - certainly not in recent times. I can't remember doing it much in the past either, but there has been the process through negotiation with the owner of that document. If it came to a point where we thought it was critical for the parliament to be fully aware of, then it would come back to the parliament and the parliament gets to decide.

I know that's effectively what's happening here -

Ms O'Connor - Five out of six members of PAC voted for the stadium, honourable member.

Mr PRESIDENT - Order. You will have an opportunity at the end to summarise.

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

MOTION

Proposed Macquarie Point Stadium Project Costs and Impacts

Resumed from above.

Ms FORREST (Murchison) - Thank you, Mr President. I'm pretty sure I was talking about the role of the Public Accounts Committee and what it does, and I wanted to put clearly on the record how we go about our work and particularly how we deal with confidential information.

To the actual motion itself, members may remember that I didn't actually support the order, and there were a number of reasons why that was the case, mostly around the economics of it. That is a matter that deeply, deeply concerns me and will continue to concern me. That's why I take the job of the Public Accounts Committee scrutiny very seriously, as I know other members do, even those who supported it.

I know the decision has now been made, rightly or wrongly, and various commitments were made. It's up to the government now to deliver on those. That's part of the work of the Public Accounts Committee.

To go to the content of the motion directly, a lot of that motion sets out details around the commitments that were made to the member for Elwick, and that's fine; but when you get to part (3) of the motion, it says:

> That the Legislative Council calls on the Tasmanian Government to make publicly available and lay upon the Table of the Council the document it

refers to as the P90 and any materials supporting the P90 as described in the letter [to the member for Elwick] by 5 May 2026.

That's the potential risk here. The risk is that you put out into the public arena a document - assuming it's available. One assumes they've got it, otherwise how would they possibly make a commitment to the member for Elwick? To make it publicly available at such a sensitive point in the process creates a significant risk to the state and I don't think that's a reasonable thing.

As I said earlier, if there's a mechanism where it can be provided to members in confidence, that's a different question and that's a matter for the government to then consider. The way this is worded to make it publicly available, at this particular point in the process, exposes the state to far too much risk: this is the state being responsible for Macquarie Point, because we're going to give them a lot of money. That's the bit that particularly concerns me. We will continue to do our job in the Public Accounts Committee to fully understand how they're tracking, because the majority of the work around this will be done once we actually have the final design and process, so that we know what we're actually looking at. At the moment we still don't. There's a lot more water to go under the bridge, so to speak. I believe at this particular point, when we're in an active tender process, it will be inappropriate to make this sort of information publicly available.

[4.34 p.m.]
Ms O'CONNOR (Hobart) - Thank you, Mr President. I've had a few surprising days in this place, but this one might just top them all. This motion is very straightforward: it calls for transparency around the government's assurances of the total cost of building the stadium. The government has not identified the sovereign risk in making the P90 available. They simply used the words, rather than identifying what the risk is; and I ask: what is the actual risk when anyone who might be tendering for this project should at least understand that the government has put a cap on the cost of this project of $1.13 billion? So it's the government's claim, my understanding that the government's contribution was $875 million. That's right, isn't it?

Ms Thomas - Not on the cost of the total project; on its contribution to it.

Ms O'CONNOR - The government's contribution to the total project, last I heard, was $875 million.

Ms Thomas - That's right.

Mr PRESIDENT - Order.

Ms O'CONNOR - So I'm not sure what the point of that interjection was. The government has said the cost of the project, based on its alleged P90 assessment, will be $1.13 billion, so any construction company stupid enough to tender for this understands very well that there is an alleged cost cap on this project. That is not mysterious information. We've just had it confirmed by the honourable member for Murchison that there is no final design for the stadium, which of course confirms that there can be no industry-standard P90 available. It can't be done without finalised designs and that is something that the Council should take a very close interest in. This is not about questioning the work of any committee of this place.

I will note that the membership of PAC has on it five members who supported the order, who voted for the stadium. It is a six-member committee. What I am seeking to do here is to broaden understanding of the stadium's true costs to other members of Council, and that is entirely reasonable. That's our job, too. Just because we're not on the Public Accounts Committee doesn't mean we don't have a responsibility to ask these questions, and I find it quite perplexing that there would be resistance to being open with Council about the foundations for the cost assurance that was put in a letter to the member for Elwick that unarguably influenced the vote.

It is not reasonable to say, oh well, we're going to believe the government on the sovereign risk issues. I don't believe that is a reasonable statement because the government hasn't made the case for there being a sovereign risk issue. A P90 assessment simply assesses the components of a project and comes forward with a 90 per cent probability of cost. How on earth can there be a sovereign risk issue here? If you want to talk about sovereign risk, how about the sovereign risk of a project which is likely to blow out in the order of magnitude of at least three times, particularly given all those uncosted, undetailed components of the wider Macquarie Point precinct development?

Now, I want to reassure the honourable member for Elwick that if we ever did a deal with the government or made an arrangement with the government, as we did, for example in 2010, of course we'd table the details of that arrangement, as we did in 2010. We didn't make any deal with government on the policy decision to end greyhound racing, the policy decision which is the ethical response to that industry. We didn't make a deal with the government on their half-baked sop to us and the broader progressive movement on salmon farming. We just didn't. It's something that the government came up with. I just want to be very clear about that.

I've done a *Hansard* search of PAC's inquiries into the stadium so far, looking for the word 'P90'. I've only found it once and it was in that reference that was made earlier in a statement by Anne Beach. No follow-up questions about what's in the P90. Apparently limited understanding of what is required for an industry standard P90. This is a basic. The government purports to have prepared a document which, according to industry standards, it can't possibly have done. It can't have, and it seems to me that, by majority, this Council is comfortable with that. I find that confusing.

We are the House of review; a number of honourable members in this place have made vows to hold government to account on issues such as major infrastructure projects such as the proposed Macquarie Point stadium and yet here we are. We're prepared to believe the government, first of all when it says it's done a P90 that it can't possibly have done; to believe the government when they say the cost will be capped at $1.13 billion when it can't possibly be; and believe the government when they state that there's a sovereign risk issue if they provide the P90 to this place.

I have been really impressed by the Labor opposition's willingness to believe everything that comes out of the government's mouth on the stadium. Everything. No questions, no apparent willingness, either in the other place or here, to just sort of put a bit of heat on government about the expenditure of public funds on this project. Nothing. It's a rubber-stamp opposition and that does the people of Tasmania a shocking disservice. Shocking.

We had from the government, in the Leader for the Government's response, some whiffle-waffle. I mean, it's very nice that there've been administrative oversight measures put

in place and an independent probity adviser - we don't know who that person is, haven't been provided with any more information on who has been appointed. Apparently, there's a design quality and integrity review panel being appointed, too. Wow, that's amazing. Guess what? The AFL contract with the government of Tasmania makes it really clear - final design, final scope - the AFL gets a veto every single time.

Ultimately, this project - the design, the scope, the budget, - will be approved by the AFL and that is the power that this parliament gave them. It is not enough for the Leader for the Government to say, 'Of course, everything's fine because we had an industry briefing day, we had some workshops to talk to industry participants about elements of the project.' Not good enough and, in fact, who cares? It's meaningless. What has meaning is understanding the underlying basis of this government's promises, not just to people in this place, but of this government's promises to the people of Tasmania about how they would spend their money on this project. That is something on which we all here have a responsibility to hold government to account.

I will be seeking a vote on this motion because it's very important that if members are not prepared to get transparency out of government on something as fundamental as this, then their vote should be recorded.

I am quite surprised having read, and read, and reread, the letter to the honourable member for Elwick that at the time a P90 wasn't requested by the honourable member for Elwick. If we had been written to in such terms by government making an assurance about the expenditure of public funds, we would have certainly done our homework, and if there was purported to be a document that was the foundation for the government's promise, we would have a copy of that document before we went any further.

I put it to you that an industry standard P90 did not exist on 4 December last year. Given that there's no final design, no final scope, elements of the project are still not included or costed, an industry standard P90 for the project doesn't exist now. And, you know, it is a bit problematic if people are not supporting the release of information because the government tells them there's a sovereign risk issue, rather than first establishing whether there's a P90 in existence or not. And, on the evidence, there absolutely cannot be an industry standard P90 assessment of the likely costs of the Macquarie Point stadium project. In not obtaining that information, at some level we're failing in our responsibility to hold government to account. It's not like this issue in the community has just gone away because parliament, for a range of reasons, passed that order. There is very strong community concern that persists about the proposed Macquarie Point stadium, particularly in the context of the budget that's coming barrelling down the line in May.

Tasmanians know we can't afford this. We can't afford it with an estimate of $1.13 billion for that stadium, and we certainly can't afford it with the likely cost blowouts, and the certain cost blowouts. This is a matter of very significant public importance and this is bare minimum documentation that the government should provide. They made a promise to the Tasmanian people, to this place, and they made a promise to the honourable member for Elwick. I don't think that promise had any integrity to it whatsoever. I believe now, having listened to the government, that no industry standard P90 exists, and that's why they've pulled out the sovereign risk line. It's not there. It doesn't exist. It can't exist with so many elements of the project not finalised. So I think - and this is not about the Leader for the Government, because

in this instance she has read what has been given to her - this place is being misled by government on the P90.

If I am wrong, the government can offer us a confidential examination of that P90 document.

Ms Webb - There's no reason not to.

Ms O'CONNOR - No reason not to do that, and then we can establish whether it exists or not. Whether it is industry standard or not, whether it's the result of workshops and chats, or a rigorous assessment of likely costs.

Ms Webb - There's no reason not to.

Ms O'CONNOR - There isn't any reason not to and I just give this commitment here now to the government: I'm not going away on this, and so come Question Time, come every opportunity, I will ask you about that P90 document. If you're thinking straight, I say this to the government now: if you're thinking clearly and you have nothing to hide, offer us a confidential briefing and show us the P90 document which you referenced in the letter that was tabled in this place on 4 December last year.

Ms Webb - No sovereign risk in that.

Ms O'CONNOR - Certainly no sovereign risk in having a confidential briefing with honourable members to explain to us the P90, which you may be able to put before us but I doubt it, and the basis for those assurances on the cost of the stadium. I ask the government: will they provide that confidential briefing to honourable members with the P90 document for us to examine?

Ms Rattray - Mr President, I'm unable to answer that question at this point in time, but I will endeavour to provide an answer.

Ms O'CONNOR - Okay.

Ms Forrest - It's not what the motion calls for.

Ms O'CONNOR - Well, thank you. I know that's not what the motion calls for, honourable member for Murchison, but the fact is the motion is going to fail. Hopefully, the honourable Leader for the Government will be able to come back and advise Council that they will make the P90 available in a confidential briefing. All of us here have been subject to confidential briefings, have been provided with confidential documents. It's a system that, as the honourable member for Nelson explained, we respect and that works well. So I look forward to the Leader for the Government providing some information on how members who are interested in the cost basis for the stadium can examine the P90 and the underlying foundations of that cost assessment. I hope that the government will provide that. Either way, I can assure the government, as I just have, that we're not going to let this one go.

The honourable member for Elwick asked why now we're raising this issue. Well, at the time, when the order was going through, a number of members in this place will remember that I asked many questions over many hours on that order and then not long after that, this House

rose for the summer and it is over the break, of course, that there's been time to go through some of the documents. That's why it's being raised now, because it's a matter of public importance. It's about transparency and, of course, we're going to keep raising questions about the cost of this stadium because of the implications of that on the people that we represent.

That's what scrutiny and parliament is all about. You find information; it raises questions in your head, and you find ways where you can obtain that information, and that is the case here. The costs of the stadium remain an extremely salient public issue. There have to be people asking questions about the costs. Just because the order has passed doesn't mean the issue has gone away. I am concerned about transparency for thee and not for me in this place. If you're going have a commitment to transparency and accountability, it has to be consistent. Of course, I commend the motion to the House and indicate that I will be seeking a vote.

Mr PRESIDENT (Mr Farrell) - The question is that the motion be agreed to.

The Council divided -

AYES 3	**NOES 11**
Mr Gaffney (Teller)	Ms Armitage
Ms O'Connor	Mr Duigan
Ms Webb	Mr Edmunds
	Ms Forrest
	Mr Harriss
	Mr Hiscutt
	Ms Lovell
	Ms Palmer
	Ms Rattray (Teller)
	Ms Thomas
	Mr Vincent

Motion negatived.

MOTION

Joint Standing Committee on Greyhound Racing Transition Report - Greyhound Racing Legislation Amendments (Phasing Out Reform) Bill 2025 Inquiry - Consideration and Noting

[4.58 p.m.]
Ms O'CONNOR (Hobart) - Mr President, I move -

> That the Joint Standing Committee On Greyhound Racing Transition's Report on its Greyhound Racing Legislation Amendments (Phasing Out Reform) Bill 2025 Inquiry be considered and noted.

While there was some suggestion that there didn't need to be a noting debate on the inquiry report, I strongly disagreed because 148 people made submissions to our inquiry. We had industry representatives come and give evidence before the inquiry. We had animal welfare

advocates. We had the Tasmanian Racing Integrity Commissioner, the department, the minister come and appear before that inquiry.

I felt for those stakeholders it was very important that we did have the opportunity to discuss the inquiry's report. It's also important for the overwhelming majority of Tasmanians who want to see greyhound racing phased out. The reason they want to see it phased out is because of the high rates of injury and deaths of racing greyhounds, and because we've moved on as a society and we have a different perspective on how animals should be treated. I'd like to think that dogs in particular, given that they've evolved with human beings for tens of thousands of years, have a very particular and special place in the hearts of compassionate people.

I know that some members are still making up their minds on the question of the bill itself, and I respect that. This Chamber referred the bill to the joint standing committee for examination late last year, and we took the examination of the bill and the referral from the Legislative Council very seriously. There's been some commentary about the way that the call for submissions was organised, some commentary around meeting times. I can indicate to you that the Chair of the joint standing committee and a number of committee members felt it was important to get on with that inquiry before parliament's return in February.

We had been given a task to do by the Legislative Council and we took it very seriously. Because we knew it was going to be seeking submissions over the summer break, we provided seven weeks for people to give their submissions at a time when many of us have a little bit more time to spare from our busy work lives because it is summer.

I don't expect my colleagues in here to respond to this inquiry report today in its noting. I simply wanted to bring it to Council's attention in some measure of detail. I understand people are still considering their views and considering the views of their constituents, and I hope that people who genuinely haven't made up their mind on this issue are listening to the overwhelming majority of Tasmanians who are very clear with us about how they feel about this industry, or listening to the open letter that was published in yesterday's paper to independent members of this place that was signed by people like former governor Her Excellency Kate Warner and her husband, Dick Warner, former Liberal premier, Will Hodgman, former Labor premier, David Bartlett, former Labor treasurer, Michael Aird, former Australian Greens leaders Bob Brown and Christine Milne, actor Marta Dusseldorp, and businesspeople like Greg Irons and Rob Pennicott. But more than that, more than 1000 people who see these dogs for the beautiful sentient animals that they are, signed onto that open letter, begging this House to do the ethical thing by those dogs.

I know there's been some concern expressed about the committee not hearing evidence of cruelty or welfare issues, and I dispute that. First of all, the referral to us was to further examine the bill itself, and you'll note through the report in its structure that it is structured to mirror the bill and so to some extent we were confined by those terms of reference. But that didn't stop industry participants from quite rightly putting their case against the policy itself. It also didn't stop animal welfare advocates talking about some of the welfare issues that are inherent within this industry, which means that dogs suffer and die every week.

I asked many questions relating to the welfare of animals. I refer honourable members to the *Hansard* transcript of 11 February this year, when I tried to ask questions of industry representatives about how certain dogs had died or why decisions were made to euthanise dogs.

I was strongly discouraged from asking those questions at the table, but I said at the time, and I maintain it now, how do you understand the animal welfare dimensions of an industry if you're not examining individual cases of harm? You simply can't, because otherwise you're talking about animal welfare in the abstract and only based on data.

Each of these dogs had an intrinsic right to life and a good life, and as we heard from the vets this morning, to have all their needs met under the five domains of animal wellbeing - I'll get to that in a minute - but it's concern about the high deaths and injury rates in this industry, the way dogs are treated 22 hours of the day in a kennel, the dogs who turn up for rehoming, who've got rotten teeth because they've been fed bread.

These concerns are the genesis of this bill, but it really began, in many ways, many years ago with the joint standing committee that we established in 2015 and 2016, and it began before that, of course, with the *Four Corners* program making a killing, where Australians saw for the first time the really dark and desperately sad dimension of racing dogs.

It's not just the conditions that these dogs live in, it's the industry itself - the industry, the injuries and also the sort of disposability of these dogs who are regarded as assets or not, it's just the business model. In the last three weeks, since we last sat during our last sitting, Wales passed legislation to end greyhound racing, as did Scotland. Scotland didn't have any properly functional tracks, but they voted to end greyhound racing as well and the New Zealand Parliament has passed, by overwhelming majority in New Zealand, legislation to end that industry there in the middle of this year.

I'll simply just remind honourable members that when Winston Peters, the highly conservative Deputy Prime Minister of New Zealand, announced this end to greyhound racing in New Zealand, he said it is because of the unacceptably high rates of injury and death. He gave the New Zealand greyhound racing industry 1.5 years to come to terms with the reality of the government's policy change.

What the report is examining is a bill that would give the industry three-and-a-half years, an opportunity for a dignified exit, compensation, funds for rehoming, and ultimately the opportunity for a whole lot of Tasmanians to hopefully adopt a greyhound. As long as I've been in this parliament, nearly 20 years, I've been a voice for these animals, as have the Greens, always.

The profound welfare issues of this industry simply cannot be glossed over or ignored. It's the nature of greyhound racing. It's the physics of it.

You have large, fine-boned dogs racing around tracks at up to 70 kilometres an hour. There was some talk in the briefing this morning about why we don't put them on straight tracks for the starters. We don't have the money. The budget for the North West track, which was abandoned by government, which was a single-turn track last time I checked, was about $38 million. We simply don't have the money to build straight tracks here, even if the industry wanted them, and I don't think they do.

Over all that time of advocating for animals, I've seen public opinion on greyhound racing change dramatically, and I know the *Four Corners* story was a part of that, but it has changed because there's now much greater understanding of the suffering of these dogs.

A good example of opinion changing is former premier David Bartlett, who has publicly declared his deep regret in being part of a syndicate that owned a greyhound, and I remember we asked him some questions about this in parliament all those years ago; that greyhound was called Toolong Terror. He was rescued by animal champion Emma Haswell after he was discarded from the track at that time in 2010. The premier of the day said:

> While I had great fun co-owning Toolong Terror, and particularly enjoyed the social side of going to the races, the 'Li'l Ricky' syndicate has since sold the dog, and not replaced him.

I pause for a moment here to remind members what we heard from the vets this morning: that 50 per cent of the greyhounds registered to race in Tasmania, plus-or-minus 50 per cent, are owned by syndicates, so they don't actually have an owner. Of course, there are some people who are hobbyists, with a small number of dogs, a deep connection to their dogs and, in some ways, a much greater capacity to care for them, than someone like Anthony Bullock who has 90 dogs on his property, in kennels 22 hours a day.

Yesterday, in response to the open letter, the Premier joined us for a media callout on the lawns of parliament, and he talked about his deep shame about his time owning a racing greyhound, and he talked about it being a time for kindness and conscience. We've heard so many stories over the past 25 years. In 2016, after I negotiated with the then minister for Primary Industries, Jeremy Rockliff, after seeing the *Four Corners* story, the Greens successfully moved for a parliamentary inquiry into the industry. I was a member of it alongside my predecessor in this place, Mr Valentine, the honourable Leader for the Government and the honourable member for Mersey. The stories that we heard, particularly the evidence in camera, has stayed with, and motivated, me, for the last decade. If anyone wants to see my dissenting report, it is attached to that.

I know there's a belief among some members that there's no documented evidence of welfare issues in the industry, and we had the totally disingenuous claim from Mr Winter in his dissenting report that the government had presented no evidence of cruelty. Well, many welfare issues were raised during the course of the inquiry. I will say Mr Winter didn't ask any questions relating to animal welfare. It doesn't take much looking, however, if you want to understand the animal welfare foundations of the bill, which the inquiry report examines.

There was Tah Bernard, a dog that was trained and mistreated by the infamous Anthony Bullock. Tah Bernard died in 2021 at 18 months of age. He was not long out of puppyhood. He'd suffered a broken leg during a trial at the Launceston Greyhound Racing Club. At that time there wasn't a vet required at the trials, so Mr Bullock took that dog to the local vet. Mr Bullock didn't leave Tah Bernard at the vet. A number of witnesses claimed he threw this broken dog yelping into a trailer. Distressed vet clients and animal advocates raised it with the Greens, and it prompted an official Office of Racing Integrity investigation.

Then there's the story of Zipping Princess. On 10 September 2023, greyhound advocates arranged to collect a young dog being given away by syndicate owners on Gumtree. She was born in 2020 in New South Wales and passed through five trainers in four separate states, not remaining with a trainer longer than a few months. When they collected her, Zipping Princess's body condition was poor. Her coat was full of fleas and dried skin, she had a bloodied ear from scratching, she had bald patches and old scars were recorded all over her body. Her tail had been broken previously, she was lethargic and she had no appetite. She was emotionally

withdrawn and anxious. Three days after being rescued, Zipping Princess was rushed to the vet for emergency surgery. Adhesions had rapidly formed after her desexing, and they were strangling her bowel. Blood vessels were twisted and the tissue was dying. Zipping Princess never had an owner; never had someone to care for her as an individual, sentient dog. Her surgery was successful, but her body crashed, and she had to be humanely put to sleep the following morning. She was three years old - three years of neglect and disinterest, of being traded between trainers and states, and, of course, of pain and suffering.

There's the death of Raider's Guide, which led us, in part, to the bill that we'll be considering in this place tomorrow. Raider's Guide held a Tasmanian record of $664,975 in prize money from 79 starts. On 28 July last year, four-year-old Raider's Guide bumped into another greyhound on the first turn of the race at Launceston, forcing it to tumble and the race to be abandoned. According to the steward's report, Raider's Guide was taken to a veterinary clinic and a post-race examination revealed it had suffered cervical spine injuries leading to being euthanised.

On 8 January this year, Memphis Rains fractured a right hock at Elwick. The syndicate that owns her applied to have that dog transferred to Victoria on 9 January; Tasracing gave approval. The dog didn't fly until 12 January - I'd love to know whether it was given any pain relief. It saw a vet on 12 January and it was euthanised on 13 January, for an injury that our own chief vet said in answers to questions on notice to the committee was eminently treatable. It was an injury that's known as a fractured right hock. The dog equivalent of an ankle had been fractured, and you'll see in the Excel spreadsheet that I sent around to members a short time ago, hock injuries are not unusual. This dog had a fractured ankle. An application was made to send it back to Victoria, to Melbourne, and there it was euthanised for a fractured ankle.

The dog Hellyer Dougie came barrelling down the straight and fractured both its legs on the track and was euthanised on track. There are just so many stories. Members might not be comfortable with me personalising it in this way, but it is important that we understand. Each of these creatures has an intrinsic right to a good life; they are sentient, they do feel, they have a rich array of emotions.

Just yesterday the honourable member for Elwick and I went out to the Dogs' Home of Tasmania and we met Dexter, a beautiful, fine, quite small, black greyhound who has only one ear. I think the ear that is missing is the ear that had its tattoo on it. Dexter has one ear and a wound on his neck, so the tattoo is missing. The Dogs' Home of Tasmania really doesn't know very much about this dog, but boy, it was so desperate for pats when we got there.

I know everyone's very busy. It was very regrettable that the Dogs' Home of Tasmania extended this invitation to members to visit the Dogs' Home, to see how they operate and talk to them about dog welfare and greyhounds. It was only the honourable member for Elwick and I who accepted that invitation. If you have a concern about lack of information on animal welfare in this industry, it would have been a good thing to go and talk to Mark Wild at the Dogs' Home.

Ms Forrest - It's okay when you live in Hobart.

Ms O'CONNOR - What's that?

Ms Forrest - It's okay when you live in Hobart. It's a bit of a -

Ms Thomas - You don't need to explain yourself.

Ms Forrest - Yes, it's a bit of an unfortunate reflection on those of us who don't live close to these facilities. We can't drop everything and get there.

Mr PRESIDENT - Yes.

Ms O'CONNOR - Yes, I understand that. Thank you. But there are other Dogs' Home facilities that could have been visited and I know that a number of members accepted the industry's invitation to go to the dog races. Even for balance's sake I think it would have been a positive thing to do.

There is a question mark over the data and the inquiry report found that Tasracing's data is unreliable. Answers to questions on notice that were provided to us by Tasracing contained straight-up misrepresentations. For example, I asked for information about on-track deaths and injuries. At the point that I asked that question, there had been more than 30 on-track injuries that we tracked through the steward's reports. Tasracing came back with a question on notice to a parliamentary committee and said there'd been zero on-track injuries. I wrote to Mr Jenkins and said, 'Look, I think there's been a mistake, our steward's reports tracking is very clear that there's been a significantly higher number of injuries than zero', and Mr Jenkins had to correct the record; but the inquiry did make a finding that Tasracing's data is flawed.

We also had issues with the data surrounding breeding. The initial Greyhounds Australasia assessment of breeding mothers - and in fact, I accept this explanation for why the data was incorrect the first time it was presented to us and had to be corrected - initially we were told by Greyhounds Tasmania's Luke Gatehouse that there'd only been two services of dogs in January. Greyhounds Australasia, though, in its information it provided to the committee on 31 January 2026, in terms of the number of services, said that there had been one service in January, and the total number of dogs born between June 2025 and January 2026, according to Greyhound Australasia, was 60 new dogs born into exploitation and suffering.

Then we have the updated data, which showed that the total of services in the January months was four, so significantly more than the initial estimate, and that the total number of pups born from June last year to January this year was 84. As I understand it, the original data Greyhounds Australasia gave us was subject to a reporting time lag, which I accept as quite reasonable; but tomorrow in our briefing we will hear from the Racing Integrity Commissioner, and it is my understanding that there has been a spike in breeding following the announcement of the planned phase-out of greyhound racing. As the inquiry report makes clear, according to the Racing Integrity Commissioner's last audit of the industry, there are 1053 dogs registered to race in Tasmania at this day, and when that audit was undertaken, there were 22 puppies that hadn't been registered or counted. There's still a question in my mind about what happens to the puppies that come out of this industry that are born into it, and never named for racing.

Tasracing's own figures show that this year - and this is in the data that I sent around to honourable members a short time ago - 10 racing greyhounds have died. A number of them, at least Memphis Rains and Hellyer Dougie, died as a result of on-track injuries. A number of them died as a result of kennel cough, and then in recent times there's been a number of dogs who've died from gut and bowel complications; but the steward's reports show in the data that's

been compiled very, very carefully, not deviating from any of the facts, that there have been, according to the Excel spreadsheet, 58 on-track injuries since 1 January this year.

The Excel spreadsheet that I've sent honourable members has the detail of their injuries, and a number of dogs are stood down for 90 days by the stewards. Memphis Rains was stood down for 90 days, but her owners decided to have her euthanised instead. You can see there that some of these injuries are quite serious: fracture to left ulna, radius; fracture, left hind toe, so you have a broken toe. The vet, Dr Katrina Ward, explained to us this morning how that could be. Right hind central tarsal fracture; sprained wrist; right shoulder muscle tear. If members want to check this information for themselves, I encourage a visit to Tasracing's website and have a look at the steward's reports, and on any night of racing there are numerous injuries. It's undeniable, and the reason that there are is the physics of racing these dogs in the way that they're raced.

That data of 10 deaths and 58 injuries includes a month off due to kennel cough. The reality is that whatever we believe about the conditions that these dogs are kept in, are fed, socialised or walked, it is a fact that every single trial and race places them at risk of injury and, too often, death, and we heard that from the experienced vets who came to give evidence to us this morning.

We also heard from Andrea Dawkins, the head of the RSPCA, and the evidence that she gave to the committee that many of these dogs are highly traumatised when they come into the RSPCA. Many have a strong fear of men. Most have significant dental issues and when we had a look at Dexter's teeth yesterday, they are pretty bad. Dexter has a lot of rotten teeth and it will be the Dogs' Home that funds that dental work, because while industry participants are able to access a subsidy for veterinary work, the Dogs' Home of Tasmania and the RSPCA are not able to, and it will be private donations that fund Dexter's dental work and hopefully that lovely dog will have a home soon.

I have to confess I have a new man in my life: he weighs 36.3 kilograms. He is very dark. I went to the Greyhounds as Pets program, a greyhound adoption program, on my birthday, 1 April, after many years of hassling my partner, and brought home Maxi. This beautiful animal, he's so gentle. A dog of that size is intimidating. I have lived with dogs all my life. I love dogs and I understand them quite well. A dog of that size, though, is quite a frightening prospect; but this guy, all he wants is pats and love, and I can almost see on his face his disbelief at how much his fortunes have changed. He has a very good life now. He has lots of pats. He doesn't have to be in a kennel, but he's a fearful dog. He too has trauma. There's something very stoic and sad about Maxi, and there are at least 1053 of these dogs in the industry.

I did say I wasn't going to talk for too long, and I'm not, but a number of concerns in the hearings process from the industry's perspective most primarily related to the fact that the industry doesn't want to be shut down, and I get that. I do get that, but the world is moving on, and this industry is ending nearly everywhere in the world. There was some concern expressed by industry participants that there would be a welfare void once you took these dogs out of the highly regulated Tasracing process, remembering that the RSPCA has no jurisdiction over greyhounds, so they can't enter and inspect any trainer or owner's property; but as Ms Andrea Dawkins said - well, first of all I'll go to the evidence from Deidre Wilson, a deputy secretary at NRE.

She explains that the framework within this bill is to amend other pieces of legislation. So it's really important to note that we're amending the *Animal Welfare Act 1993*, as well as the *Dog Control Act 2000*. Those acts already have frameworks that deal with animal welfare, particularly the *Animal Welfare Act 1993*, so all those provisions will apply to the care and control of greyhounds. There's also currently a process in play to review the Animal Welfare (Dogs) Regulations 2016, which have specific provisions currently pertaining to greyhounds, and that process is continuing. There was an issues paper released, and then there'll be an outcome from that.

> To say that because an industry is not in play that has rules around the industry which are then removed means that there is a gap in terms of animal welfare is -

And, of course I can't help myself, Mr President, I interrupted:

> MS O'CONNOR - Untrue. They will be treated, won't they, protected in the same way as every other dog under the *Animal Welfare Act 1993*?

She said:

> ... is a misunderstanding of how the framework will work post the changes. There are more than adequate controls under the *Animal Welfare Act 1993* and under the *Dog Welfare Act 2000* to ensure that the pet greyhounds are appropriately managed and if there were incidents of mismanagement of those dogs, there is a capacity for criminal offences.

Then when asked about it and, you know, there was an emphasis on animal welfare in this report. The Chair of the committee, the member for Clark Ms Johnston, said:

> Do you see that there would be a vacuum created in terms of animal welfare for greyhounds in particular? Is that a concern that they would then be treated, as you say, like any other dog?

She said:

> Absolutely not. The reason that there are more strict regulations and rules around racing greyhounds is because it's such a high-risk activity. Of course there needs to be extra eyes on dogs in the racing industry. Apart from the millions of dollars that flow through the government coffers, through taxpayers, to the industry, those animals are in such high-risk activities that there needs to be stronger legislation.

So, it's not true to suggest there'd be any animal welfare void should greyhound racing be phased out. There'd certainly be a lot less death and injury of sentient creatures should greyhound racing be phased out.

Now, mostly in closing, I want to take members, and I hope you've had a look at this, to the committee's findings - so this is about the Racing Integrity Commissioner. The committee finds the commissioner's view that the passage of the bill is necessary to design, implement and enforce a transition plan for the phasing-out of greyhound racing in Tasmania. The

commissioner's view that if the bill does not pass and the government persists with its policy, it would leave participants, animals and the broader community exposed to unmanaged risks - remembering that it is government policy to phase out greyhound racing one way or the other.

The government's response to questions at 1 January 2026 commencement date could be amended to a date in the future or could be dealt with by regulation. The greyhound racing industry is opposed to the bill overall and has ongoing concerns about the bill, including the haste of its development, lack of consultation and commencement provisions. Animal welfare organisations are concerned that delaying the commencement of the bill will undermine their ability to deliver humane rehoming outcomes for racing dogs and potentially lead to poor animal welfare outcomes. Of course, an overriding concern here - well, it should be a concern to all of us - is that the longer there is a delay on dealing with the welfare issues of this industry, the more suffering of sentient creatures there will be.

Breeding data provided in evidence has been inconsistent and difficult to verify, and hopefully we have some clarity on that from the Racing Integrity Commissioner tomorrow. Breeding data - this is our finding - collected by Tasracing cannot be relied upon.

We further note the Commissioner for Racing has undertaken to work with Tasracing on an audit of dogs currently in the industry. That'll be another audit. The government expects to have a report and advice in relation to the new racing deed by May 2026.

There is a finding that penalties for offences under the act are not aligned with offences created under the *Animal Welfare Act 1993* and the *Dog Control Act 2000*. I note government amendments that have been circulated to deal with that concern.

Clause 4 of the bill is drafted adequately to prohibit the export of greyhounds bred in Tasmania for racing interstate or overseas.

Lure coursing involving greyhounds would be illegal under clause 4.

I do note the information that we were given in the briefing this morning by Dogs' Home Tasmania and hope that the Deputy Leader of the Government will clarify the government's response to those concerns during debate on the bill.

We found that there's no legislative welfare void for greyhounds that will be created by the passage of this bill. They'll be protected like any other dog under existing animal laws and regulations. We found that current breed-specific welfare laws and regulations for greyhounds only exist because they participate or have participated in the high-risk activity of racing.

Industry certainty is required over the legal status and potential use of genetic material and arrangements for breeding dogs during and following the industry transition. The Greyhound Racing Transition Working Group, the closure plan and regulations must address these issues.

The continued muzzling of greyhounds as domestic pets beyond 1 July 2029 cannot be justified if greyhound racing has ended.

Clarity about desexing requirements for ex-racing greyhounds and the implications for breeding for domestic purposes should be addressed in the transition plan.

The closure date of 1 July 2029 provides three years for transition, which the commissioner and rehoming organisation advises is adequate time for properly consulted transitional arrangements to be put in place for the welfare of animals and participants.

Strong powers provided in the bill in relation to compliance, inspection and audit are required to ensure the welfare of dogs during the transition period. These are of similar scope to powers that already exist under the rules of racing and animal welfare legislation.

Clause 10 of the bill, Schedule 8 inserted, item 3 could specify a non-exhaustive list of matters that must be included in the closure plan and a requirement that consultation is undertaken in its development. The closure plan can be amended to deal with issues or needs that emerged during the transition period.

The matters outlined by the Racing Integrity Commissioner for current consideration in a draft closure plan are extensive and cover the breadth of matters raised with the committee in submissions on the bill.

Parliamentary oversight of the transition will continue, including through the work of this committee. Parliamentary oversight could be enhanced by tabling the closure plan in both Houses of parliament.

Deficient data and record-keeping by Tasracing puts animal welfare and industry participant outcomes at risk during the transition period. Ongoing auditing by the Racing Integrity Commissioner is required to ensure that data is accurate for the welfare of animals and industry participants.

The transition period will require greater ongoing resources for the Office of the Racing Integrity Commissioner, to ensure statutory responsibilities are met. Current penalties relating to the unlawful destruction of greyhounds are insufficient as a deterrent. I note the government's amendments in this regard and the government's amendments in relation to tabling the draft closure plan with a non-exhaustive list of matters to be considered in that plan.

Another finding is that there is a strong case for a just and equitable compensation package for industry participants, which is work that the Racing Integrity Commissioner would undertake to understand the extent of investment and compensation requirements. As I understand it, the announcement that was made by the Premier in relation to compensation funds over the weekend was the beginning of the conversation, and that is a dollar figure that will be in the budget.

We found that greater clarity and certainty is required on the matter of compensation for industry participants through the closure plan and the operation of the working group. Tasracing is conducting a feasibility study on the impacts of the greyhound racing transition. Consideration of compensation must be included in any transition closure plan. Compensation may be required and funded at different stages of the transition.

We found that more than 1000 ex-racing greyhounds will need to be rehomed during and following the transition period. The rehoming of ex-racing greyhounds will be a substantial,

complex and costly endeavour, both during and following the transition period. Local rehoming organisations have expressed a willingness and capacity to undertake the task of rehoming ex-racing greyhounds but will require extra sustained resourcing. Currently, non-industry rehoming organisations are not funded to rehome greyhounds exiting the industry and they've relied on community funding to do this important work to date.

Our final finding is that rehoming organisations will need to be adequately funded by government to assist with the humane transition of dogs out of greyhound racing, both during the transition period and at closure, until all dogs are rehomed. Of course, our primary recommendation was that the Greyhound Racing Legislation Amendments (Phasing Out Reform) Bill 2025 be passed with amendments.

I reject criticism of the way the committee conducted itself and the work it undertook. I believe we were very respectful of everyone who presented. We gave people who had an interest in this matter extensive period of time in which to make submissions and we have put together a carefully considered report.

I'll leave honourable members with a quote, and this is from Charles Darwin:

> There is no fundamental difference between man and animals in our ability
> to feel pleasure and pain, happiness, and misery.

I focused today on the animal welfare issues inherent in dog racing for profit, for very good reason, because I have heard some conversations around the place that there's no proof of animal welfare concerns relating to this industry. I ask honourable members to ask themselves this question. The New Zealand Government made a decision to end greyhound racing because of 'the unacceptably high rates of injury and death'. The Welsh and Scottish parliaments passed legislation to end greyhound racing because of the extent of the injury and suffering of dogs. We've just had a report released by the New South Wales Parliamentary Library which shows that 10 years after New South Wales proposed the ban to be instituted by former premier Mike Baird, 10 years after that ban fell over, the outcomes for the dogs are worse, and so, I ask honourable members to look beyond the industry's claims.

We have to, as legislators, listen to more than one group and I would be very confused if it was only the voices of industry participants who were being heard here, because we have heard from our statutory officer, the Racing Integrity Commissioner, we've heard from the entity that does the rehoming and has a statutory inspectorate role, the RSPCA, about what happens to these dogs when they race and the condition that most of them are in when they come in to the RSPCA.

We have heard from vets, like we heard this morning from vets, about the physiology of these dogs which makes injury inevitable. We will hear tomorrow from the former chief vet of New South Wales, Dr Alex Brittan, who had an epiphany - he has seen what happens to these dogs. So, the question for honourable members to ask themselves is this: what makes it any sort of possibility that the dog racing industry here is significantly different from the dog racing industry in Victoria, New South Wales, Queensland, New Zealand and anywhere else in the very small handful of countries that it's still allowed?

Yes, there's been reform here in significant part because of change in community opinion and the work of the 2016 inquiry, but the deaths continue, the high injury rates continue, and

that's because of the immovable truth that these are fine-boned dogs sent barrelling in clumps around tracks at up to 70 kilometres an hour.

There's very little difference here between our industry and any other greyhound racing industry. The dogs here still spend 22 hours or more of a day in their kennel. They still come into rehoming organisations highly traumatised, with bad teeth and gut problems. The injury rates are still sky-high with plenty of evidence of animal welfare issues with this industry. All you have to do is look.

I commend the motion to note the report.

[5.45 p.m.]
Ms RATTRAY (McIntyre - Leader for the Government in the Legislative Council) - Mr President, a much shorter offering from me, but before I commence what I have, I would like to also place on the record and acknowledge and thank all those who made submissions to the inquiry and certainly to those who appeared before the committee and were part of the inquiry process.

As a member of the committee who made a dissenting statement to the report that's been noted today, I felt it was important to speak to the motion of noting the report. My dissenting statement, I believe, speaks for itself and my comments will be limited to the process the committee undertook. I'll share my experience with honourable members and any others who may be interested in the report, with the substantive debate on the bill being made an Order of the Day for tomorrow, where I expect the policy and transition arrangements included in the bill will be thoroughly debated during the second reading contributions, and the vote to proceed to the Committee stage will be carefully considered by all honourable members of this House, as they always do.

Following a lengthy period of participating in the committee inquiry processes which have included joint house committees, I will outline my views on the process undertaken during the committee inquiry relating to the referral from the Legislative Council in December 2025 of the Greyhound Racing Legislation Amendments (Phasing Out Reform) Bill 2025, and I did touch on this somewhat briefly in my dissenting statement.

To begin, in my experience, previous committees engaged with committee members to settle on meeting dates in an attempt to fit in with members' commitments, acknowledging that this is not always possible. In this instance, future meeting dates were set without full member committee consultation and when contact to the Chair was provided around unsuitable dates and prior committee commitments, and they were dedicated committee commitments, the response was as follows, in an email dated 15 December:

> Our meeting today -

This is the morning there of.

> ... is really an administrative one to get the work underway that the Legislative Council has asked us to do. It shouldn't take long. We need to meet today in order to place the advertisement in the papers on Saturday & to open for submissions in a timely manner.

> I recognise it's a busy time & we will struggle to find a time when everyone is available but I believe we have a quorum today so I suggest we go ahead with the meeting.

Then there's a request:

> ... please feel free to send any feedback on the proposed timetable through by email if you are able to.

Mr President, I did do that. I asked that the actual meeting of the actual inquiry time, for responses, for submissions to be provided until at least 6 February, given that it's a Christmas break, and I felt that that was important, not ever considering that we would be actually setting meeting dates as well for that process.

Appendix C of the inquiry report outlines from that meeting the decisions that were made during the meeting that really was an administrative one, which is what I was told. In my view, that could be argued because when you have a look at what was actually undertaken at that meeting, I'd suggest it was more than administrative. Meeting papers were delivered which included a program of dates and, again, no consultation with the full committee and prior to the closing date for submissions; dates were set with one initial hearing date split from one day to two half-days, and I immediately advised the committee that there was a conflict with 10 and 11 February, again, a committee commitment on the 10th on the west coast of Tasmania. No consultation about the reappearing witnesses to be split across the two hearings. The usual committee practice always allows for consideration of submissions and an opportunity to discuss which submissions may be provided an opportunity to appear before the committee to add to or clarify information or enhance the committee's information. This usual practice of what I considered is a well-established committee inquiry process was completely bypassed.

Appendix B on page 113 of the inquiry report lists the witnesses that the committee directly heard from, and I'd suggest where an inquiry attracts 148 submissions - which, I will add, did include a number of pro-forma submissions, certainly - and holds three public meetings and hears directly from 14 witnesses, and not 14 separate because there were groups, it must be a first for this parliament. If that's not the case, I'd be happy to be corrected.

Let me be clear: there is no criticism of the role of the secretariat support to the committee, none whatsoever. There may well have been directions to enable the committee to progress rapidly to meet an expectation of a section of the community who support the code ban and, on the other hand, address the concerns of industry participants who feel their whole life is on hold while the Legislative Council awaits the report to proceed to debating the ban on the greyhound racing bill.

The committee was established initially to inquire into the funding deed until post the 2025 House of Assembly election and the code ban announcement, and the reestablished committee focus then changed to one of considering transition arrangements, with the bill to progress the ban from July 2029, tabled and passed by the House of Assembly. From the very outset, the announcement by the government to ban greyhound racing in our state without any discussions or consultation with code stakeholders, in my view, was disappointing and disrespectful.

I strongly believed a committee inquiry process would facilitate a strong opportunity to enable a range of stakeholders to engage with the inquiry process and, in my view, the speed and urgency of the committee to report did not adequately enable that to occur and the contents of the report, again in my view, reflects this.

The current New Zealand experience may well have been a useful source of information for the committee to understand the complexities of any transition from racing to a complete ban on racing, breeding and compensation arrangements. This was never pursued by the committee. I said this was going to be a fairly short contribution; I'm already feeling my heart rate go up.

I trust that this contribution reflects a committee inquiry process from the view of a long-term member of this place, where a thorough assessment of some of the aspects of the Greyhound Racing Legislation Amendments (Phasing Out Reform) Bill were unable to be fully examined and consulted on - again, my view. This is an emotional issue with multiple layers of complexity which will further be explored through the second reading debate of the banning of greyhound racing in our state.

I note the report.

[5.54 p.m.]
Mr VINCENT (Prosser - Deputy Leader of the Government in the Legislative Council) - Thank you, Mr President. I seek leave to table a document.

Leave granted.

I lay upon the Table the government response to the Joint Standing Committee on Greyhound Racing Transition report on its Greyhound Racing Legislation Amendments (Phasing Out Reform) Bill 2025 inquiry.

I will be providing the response on this debate on behalf of the government and in doing so, urge members to support the legislation as recommended by the majority of the committee. It is important to note this inquiry and report were not examining the policy decision of the greyhound racing phase-out, but the contents of the proposed legislation to enable the transition and process to occur. My response on this debate will therefore be confined to those matters and not the broader policy debate.

The Legislative Council referred the bill to the Joint Standing Committee on Greyhound Racing Transition (the committee) in December 2025, and the committee undertook hearings with key stakeholders including industry and community representatives, the Tasmanian Racing Integrity Commissioner (the commissioner) and the government.

The committee delivered its report on the Greyhound Racing Legislation Amendments (Phasing Out Reform) Bill 2025 inquiry on 19 March 2026. I take this opportunity to thank Ms Rattray, Ms Webb and Ms O'Connor for their work as members of the committee. We respect the decision of the Legislative Council to refer the greyhound racing legislation amendments bill 2025 to the Joint Standing Committee on Greyhound Racing Transition for consideration and report.

I am advised that the committee received 146 submissions. The government acknowledges submissions both in support of the legislation and those participants who are extremely disappointed by this policy decision, but the reality is: this is the right decision for Tasmania and we thank them for taking the time to make submissions. We acknowledge and thank those, including from interstate, who provided evidence and testimony at public hearings in February and March. As we continue to deliver a measured and sensible phase-out of greyhound racing, we want to be clear on our support for the broader racing industry, its participants and our regional communities.

This week an open letter, the biggest in Tasmania's political history, was published in *The Mercury* with 1013 signatories supporting this legislation, including a former governor, two former premiers and prominent Tasmanians across the political and social spectrum. Overwhelmingly the Tasmanian community supports this decision, with 74 per cent in support, and the reality is this decision is right for Tasmania. We thank the committee for their work and note in tabling their report, a majority recommended the bill be passed in line with the broader community sentiments. The government will introduce proposed amendments which clarify and strengthen the bill's operation in response to the recommendations.

The report's recommendations have been considered and a number of amendments to the bill have been drafted in response: change the commencement of the greyhound racing breeding ban from 1 January 2026 to the actual commencement of the transition period; align the penalties for offences in the bill with penalties in the *Animal Welfare Act 1993*; remove the requirement for muzzling of non-racing greyhounds born in Tasmania after the commencement of the transition period; specify the matters which must be covered by the Greyhound Racing Closure Plan to be developed by the commissioner and approved by the minister; require the approved closure plan to be tabled in each House of parliament.

Compensation for Tasmanian greyhound industry participants will now form part of the proposed legislation. The compensation model will form part of Tasmania's independent Racing Integrity Commissioner's greyhound transition plan. The committee supported the government's and the independent commissioner's view that passage of the bill is necessary to ensure a managed, humane and enforceable transition.

Details about financial assistance will be included in the legislation, and a funding package will be included in this year's budget, supporting a careful and managed exit from greyhound racing in Tasmania. An initial appropriation has been provided in the upcoming Budget and announced to provide a level of certainty, but the government is cognisant of the fact the Joint Standing Committee on Greyhound Racing Transition has within its terms of reference the following:

(ii) Transitional arrangements for greyhound racing industry participants, including any fair and reasonable compensation requirements;

(iii) Requirements of rehoming organisations;

We will therefore, upon passage of the bill, seek input, advice and oversight from the committee and the commissioner as we progress, as to a more detailed compensation and financial assistance model: a model that is balanced, fiscally responsible, with an approach that prioritises high-dependency participants and their wellbeing, ensures strong animal welfare outcomes and supports the orderly phase-out of greyhound racing in Tasmania. This supports

recommendation 11 from the committee, and the majority of the committee recommend a just and equitable compensation package be provided for industry participants.

I note the comments from the independent Tasmanian Racing Integrity Commissioner, Mr Sean Carroll, at the Joint Standing Committee on Greyhound Racing Transition. Mr Carroll in his evidence stated it was essential the government got on with the job of progressing this legislation as soon as possible:

> It's an essential requirement of making sure we have a clear pathway and transition ... the timeframes that have been developed in that are taking into account good animal welfare, rehoming programs, and ensuring that there is a clear pathway for those participants who are going to be impacted by the transition program itself.

But the choice before parliament is not between tradition and reform; it is between managed transition and unmanaged decline.

If we do not act, pressures that are arising from overpopulation, declining compliance and diminishing public confidence will continue to escalate without a framework to manage them. The legislation provides certainty, structure and accountability. It enables the development of a transitional plan that protects animal welfare and provides clarity to the participants, and preserves dignity in the process of change.

Mr President, as you are aware, the Tasmanian Racing Integrity Commissioner is developing the phase-out plan for the greyhound racing industry, and will undertake further consultation during this preparation. This plan, which forms part of the legislation, will be subject to public inspection during the transition period and tabled in parliament. It will serve as a strategic and operational document guiding the management of the phase-out of greyhound racing.

The government notes the committee's majority view in line with the legislation. The majority of the committee recommends that the Greyhound Racing Legislation Amendments (Phasing Out Reform) Bill 2025 be agreed to with amendments.

The majority of the committee recommends the Office of the Racing Integrity Commissioner be adequately resourced during the transition period to ensure statutory responsibilities are met.

The majority of the committee recommends clause 1 and clause 2 be agreed to, with amendment to the commencement date.

The majority of the committee recommends Part 5, clauses 11 to 28 of the bill be agreed to, and the majority of the committee recommends Part 6, clause 29 of the bill be agreed to.

In concluding, I urge all members to support the majority of the committee in recommending that the Greyhound Racing Amendment (Phasing Out Reform) Bill 2025 be agreed to with amendments. Members referred the bill to this committee, and I now urge you to accept their majority position, and the position overwhelmingly of the Tasmanian community, with 74 per cent in support; the reality is this is the right decision for Tasmania. Support the passage of this bill this week.

[6.06 p.m.]

Ms WEBB (Nelson) - Mr President, I rise to speak on this motion, the noting of the report of the Joint Standing Committee on Greyhound Racing Transition on the Greyhound Racing Legislation Amendments (Phasing Out Reforms) Bill 2025 inquiry. I'm mindful this is not a debate on the bill itself, which may well come, but a noting debate on the report of the inquiry on the bill. As a member of the Joint Standing Committee on Greyhound Racing Transition, I'm able to provide comment and reflection on the report of the inquiry and may be in a position to provide some extra clarification on matters raised.

I would like to start, though, by firmly thanking all those who participated in the inquiry process, from all angles of this matter and from all views on this piece of legislation. It was particularly good to see a lot of engagement on it, and I certainly tried to endeavour to respect that engagement every step of the way and make sure that I was taking that into consideration. I'd also like to particularly thank the other committee members and the secretariat, who helped to facilitate this inquiry as we progressed with it.

At the outset, I will note, as I did in my contribution to the debate on the motion to send the bill to the committee for inquiry in this place, that the decisions and the behaviour of the government that have landed us all in this less-than-ideal situation in many ways has likely been highly damaging to many Tasmanians and many greyhounds in Tasmania. The Rockliff government has put, I believe, animal welfare and human welfare at greater risk because of the way that it has made those decisions and the way we've then progressed from this in the context of those decisions. I maintain that, given the situation the government has thrust us into, we are left having to make the best of this situation we are in, and to proceed as carefully and respectfully as possible in this situation, while balancing the full range of interests that we have to be mindful of serving here.

Without getting too distracted by a question about how the government arrived at its decision and what it did - and I know that's something that has upset people, but this report is about a bill - and so I'm going to be focusing in on that and that's what the report focused on. I do absolutely acknowledge, though, it's an incredibly uncomfortable position for many people at the moment on this issue in this state, and so many people are on tenterhooks in relation to what happens next here and the fate of this bill.

Given we started with a less-than-ideal circumstance for a decision-making process, this was never going to be a perfect process from that point, but let's be really clear here: we can't lose sight of the fact that the status quo of greyhound racing in Tasmania is not a perfect circumstance right now either. We absolutely do have animal welfare issues with dogs dying and being injured here. Every week that passes puts more animals at risk in participating in this activity on tracks in Tasmania. That's a fact, and that's not a judgement on all the people involved in this industry. It's just a fact of the activity itself. It's a highly risky activity.

I believe it's important to acknowledge, though, there's no way forward in progressing from an imperfect status quo that we're in, that would actually have everybody involved being happy and feeling that things are being done 100 per cent as they would wish. It's not how progress forward on this issue will ever happen.

To pretend, for example, that there was a way to progress phasing out of greyhound racing in Tasmania with which the participants in that activity would be happy and satisfied is illusory, absolutely illusory. No matter how this plays out, participants in the industry will take

issue with it because they don't want it to happen and that's understandable. I have a lot of empathy for that. I understand it and they don't want the outcome so they're not happy with the process, and will never be happy with the process. Those who are passionate participants in the activity - and I've met many people who are and I respect that they are - those passionate participants in this activity of greyhound racing will fight every step of the way to try to maintain it as a lawful activity. No process that we could undertake with the intent of phasing it out would be acceptable or be something that they would regard as appropriate.

Equally naturally, those who are passionate advocates for ending that high-risk activity of greyhound racing because of the animal welfare implications will fight tooth and nail to deliver that end as quickly as possible. They may well see anything that makes progress towards that end as good, regardless of whether it's good process or appropriate decision-making, because they want the activity to end, so they're focused on that. I have sympathy for that attitude, too, where they think this is the right way forward; it's the way that's protective of dogs and addresses clearly demonstrated welfare issues with this activity and they think that we need to get to that end through any means. So, I have sympathy for both sides of this equation and that it's going to be uncomfortable regardless of how any of this came about.

Given all that, I would honestly say that while we continue to find ourselves in what I think we could all agree is a less-than-ideal process, we must take a practical approach to it and do the best we can on the facts of it. That's the approach that I took as a committee member in the inquiry on the bill. I listened carefully to the arguments made in this place during the debate on the motion to send the bill to the committee for the inquiry, and I was mindful of ensuring that some of the concerns that were raised were addressed during the inquiry process. Front of mind for me was ensuring that and in that, the concerns raised that were probably most prominent that I wanted to make sure we looked at properly in the committee process were the following things: the concern about lack of consultation on the bill before it was tabled in the parliament and the importance of participants in the greyhound racing industry having an opportunity to raise issues and concerns about the bill in a structured way and to be heard in a structured way and have queries on specific matters in the bill dealt with in a structured way.

Those concerns that hadn't happened prior to the bill being tabled were something I took with me into this inquiry and were priorities for me in my approach to the inquiry. If people had taken the time or were inclined to read the *Hansard* of our hearings, they would probably see that fairly clearly demonstrated in my approach to things.

To be very clear though, it was, I think, absolutely the case that the referral of the bill to the committee for inquiry was not intended to be a full inquiry into the underlying policy question of the bill. That wasn't in the terms of reference that came to us. The motion for referral from this place to the committee was that the Greyhound Racing Legislation Amendments (Phasing Out Reform) Bill 2025 be referred to the Joint Standing Committee on Greyhound Racing Transition for consideration and report.

That's pretty clear when bills go for inquiry to a committee; there's a fairly clear process that happens where you go through the bill pretty closely, and that's the focus of the inquiry and that's the focus of the reporting of the inquiry. I do realise though and absolutely acknowledge that many people feel there should have been some form of comprehensive inquiry into greyhound racing as a precursor to the government's policy announcement to phase it out.

Ms O'Connor - We did that in 2015-16 though.

Ms WEBB - Sure, but people still felt that there hadn't been something contemporary done in that space and that would have been one potential way to arrive at a policy decision of this sort. Sometimes that's what happens. Sometimes there is a parliamentary inquiry that makes recommendations that a government of the day responds to and makes a policy decision. Sometimes that's the pathway for it. In fairness, that's not what happened this time and governments do make significant policy decisions all the time that have not been arrived at as a result of that particular parliamentary inquiry process, but through other considerations which may or may not have been something that happened as a part of a public process.

Regardless of the government's abrupt decision on the matter and any criticism we may make, and I've made them, of the circumstances of that decision, the inquiry here was not about the merits of those circumstances of decision-making, nor was it about the merits of the overarching policy. That simply was not in the scope of this inquiry, and we didn't take evidence in a broad way like that.

That doesn't mean that members here in this place aren't absolutely entitled to form their own views on the merits of the overarching policy behind this bill. That is something we do in this place every sitting day when we're considering legislation. When it comes time to vote on the bill at some point, I know that some members here may well cast their votes on the basis of their view of the underlying policy to which it gives effect, and that's entirely available to them.

I hope, though, that they do that having availed themselves of full information about that policy and don't necessarily do it in a reactionary way because of valid criticisms about the government's initial process. Just because there were criticisms of that doesn't mean that we can't now eventually arrive at proper consideration of this bill in this matter, in this place.

I'd like to make some comment on the timelines within which this inquiry occurred because it has been a matter of comment and some criticism from others. I want to be really fair in my comments on this. It is accurate to say that the inquiry on this bill occurred in a relatively short timeframe and I accept that some people may feel uncomfortable about that. Typically, inquiries on bills tend to be a quicker process than, say, a broad-ranging inquiry on a bigger policy matter.

We all know in this place that I've been a member of committees of inquiry on particular matters that have gone on for some years, big broad-ranging ones, but when it comes to an inquiry on a bill, you've got a fairly prescribed focus to go through the clauses and the arrangements of that bill. We would expect it to be somewhat quicker.

However, as I said, I understand that some people might feel uncomfortable about a tight timeframe, and I do think it's probably not ideal. I don't accept the timeframe that was undertaken for this inquiry was inappropriate or that it resulted in flawed consideration of the bill.

As a background, I think we need to remember a few key things and will point a few out here. After the government's announcement last August that greyhound racing would be brought to an end and phased out over a period of years, we did have a situation where initially participants in the industry had refused to be part of consultation processes being established by the Racing Integrity Commissioner to inform the transition process.

Again, I make no judgement on that. They were probably pretty shell-shocked by the circumstances around everything and that's understandable. It was identified though quite quickly that legislation would need to be progressed to give effect to early requirements for a process of transition, to ensure the process could be undertaken with integrity. The bill began to be developed in consultation with the Racing Integrity Commissioner and the working group that he had established.

We had a bill first tabled on 6 November, which was passed by the House of Assembly a month later. Then, on 10 December, the bill was referred by this place to the joint standing committee for the inquiry. I'm very mindful that the committee was already in place and had already been conducting hearings during November.

We had heard from the Racing Integrity Commissioner about the need for there to be some urgency about legislating certain matters very early in a transition process to ensure the welfare on two fronts. He's always been very clear in his public statements about this: the welfare of animals and the welfare of people involved in the industry, and that certain things need to be put in place urgently, at an early stage of transition, so that we can mindfully look after welfare on both those fronts as effectively as possible and with integrity and accountability.

He's been very clear in evidence he provided to the committee, both in November, before this inquiry on the bill was established, and then also during the inquiry on the bill. It's on the public record. It is very clear that in a situation of not putting legislative structure around the early stages of transition, we risk the welfare of people and animals and we risk an unregulated deteriorating situation that will be highly detrimental.

I was very cognisant of that clear advice to us from the independent Racing Integrity Commissioner which then put us to mind, well, if this has been referred to us in early December, we know we have an opportunity to do potential committee work across a period of time while we're not sitting across the summer break that we would responsibly need for moving with this work.

It was a tight timeframe to get things in place before Christmas, so we did endeavour to find a way to get at least those early stages underway, to press go with those early meetings, it's mostly about advertising a period of consultation that people can make submissions in and then planning ahead for future work. So, the inquiry was commenced and submissions opened on 20 December. It was a submission period of seven weeks, closing on 6 February.

I acknowledge that it is absolutely less than ideal to do that sort of process over the holiday period, it's less than ideal, but seven weeks is a longer than usual time period for making submissions.

The bill had been in the public domain since 6 November, so people had had that extra time to at least have an awareness of the bill.

To my mind, we did get a significant quantum of submissions made to the inquiry that covered a lot of comprehensive areas. Some of them were proforma submissions, but many of them were comprehensive sorts of submissions that raised a range of issues.

One of the priority matters that I believe prompted the sending of the bill to an inquiry with the committee was that lack of broad consultation on the bill during its development stage, including the lack of an exposure draft being put out for consultation. I believe this seven-week period for people to make submissions in essence was about trying to make sure we could fill that gap so that things that people might raise and may have raised in an exposure draft stage of legislation development could be raised during this committee of inquiry process, and it did provide an opportunity, I believe, for people to have a say and to raise issues and concerns.

We were then able to test those in hearings and then what we did also, and for members here who haven't necessarily had the chance to engage with the committee's materials that are available in terms of evidence, we have the submissions, we have the hearing transcripts, but what we also did is put a very extensive, comprehensive series of questions on notice to the government. My focus on that - because I had gone through the submissions and made very clear notes about the areas - the specific questions and areas in the bill were those the industry participants in particular had questions about or concerns about, so I wanted to make sure we had put to the government each of those questions and concerns and got a response on them. That set of questions on notice to the government and the answers they supplied back to us are a really important part of the evidence of the inquiry as well.

I believe that through each of those processes or through the combination of those processes, we covered and took evidence on the full range of areas that people had raised concerns about. That process of the inquiry - again, was it ideal? No, I can understand people making criticisms of it. They're probably pretty readily available criticisms to make, but I can genuinely say that I believe the bill, which was the focus of the inquiry, was comprehensively examined through the process. Anybody who reads this inquiry report that we're noting today, you can't read this report and say that the voice and concerns of industry participants are not reflected in this report. They are absolutely the dominant voice through this report. The overwhelming representation in these pages is from industry participants covering matters that were raised by them in the evidence they put to the committee.

While I understand criticisms of process, I think you also have to look at the product at the end of the process, and if you look at the product here, it's a comprehensive look at this bill and the fact that it has come out and to some extent functions similar to an exposure draft consultation on the bill, it has resulted in the committee making a whole series of cogent recommendations to the government about ways to make amendments to this bill that will deliver greater confidence and certainty. Primarily, that's what I characterise the thrust of the recommendations to be, and the government, to its credit, has responded to that and acknowledged and endeavoured to meet those recommendations through a series of now proposed amendments that they're going to table, or attempt to, on the bill.

The totality of that process has delivered a comprehensive and defensible examination of this bill. It's resulted in suggested adjustments to the bill, improvements to the bill, if you will. As I said, mostly I see those as being not because the bill was flawed in the first place necessarily even, but to deliver greater certainty and clarity for anybody engaging with it. That's my comment on process.

I'll move on to a couple of other matters that have come up in the inquiry. To set the tone for things, I've always been quite clear about my view on the overarching policy matter. I do think we should bring this activity of greyhound racing to an end. I do think that that's on the basis of the fact that it's an inherently and irredeemably dangerous activity to put dogs to,

primarily for the purposes of being gambled on, but the activity itself cannot be made safe, and I know that in this context, many people raise other animal welfare concerns related to the conditions in which animals are kept and housed and looked after in this industry. In some ways I find that potentially distracting because what I know about the industry and what I've learnt and had made clear to me is that it's a very varied industry. There are people participating in this industry who are lovely, heartfelt people, who love their dogs, who care for them dearly, who provide good conditions and positive conditions in which they live. Then there are people in this industry too that are treating dogs terribly and there's ample evidence on that from every jurisdiction that this activity exists. They simply are. There are people in this industry who do bad things to dogs and who treat dogs very poorly.

I would put all of that aside because - and I want to be very clear about my view - even if we could make every condition that a greyhound racing dog lived in perfect, the fact that they are put to racing on a track, to run at speed around a track, it's an inherently dangerous activity that puts them at high risk, and inevitably you will have dogs seriously injured and dying as a result of it. For me, that's the crux of the matter in terms of welfare. That's the crux of the matter.

Moving on from that, I'm going to talk about a couple of things in the report. I know the member for Hobart went through the finding of the recommendations. I will not do that in great detail. I do just want to reinforce a couple of things, largely matters raised in evidence to the committee that were concerns about the bill that I think were addressed. I'll put that on the record right now. When, for example, people raised issues about concerns that a welfare void might exist once racing was phased out and greyhounds were no longer under the current rules that exist for them in the racing situation, that was shown to be baseless because the current rules they are in are there because they are racing animals and in the racing environment and subject to the contexts that racing puts them in. Essentially, racing puts them at a high risk. The fact that people make money out of racing and might be tempted to cut corners puts them at high risk. We have to put strict rules around racing and the way dogs are treated in racing. That won't be necessary when dogs are no longer racing, so they will have the same protections as every other dog in the community once the phase-out period comes about. There won't be a welfare void there.

People had questions and some confusion about the dogs going interstate or being able to breed dogs here to send interstate or what if we had people in Tasmania who co-owned dogs interstate. If you engage with the evidence in the inquiry, you will see that those questions are answered and there is clarity there under this bill. I think, over time, people will see that there's clarity there. I know that there's quite a bit of panic about it at the moment.

One of the things we do have up our sleeve is that this is just the beginning of a lengthy transition period. It's interesting to consider New Zealand because I was just reading news reports from New Zealand about the recent vote that they had there on greyhound racing. It's funny because some of the news reports reference the fact that in New Zealand there's some consternation because they're only giving people, from the time they announced it there to the time it's going to finish, they only had 20 months for the transition. In some of these news reports, it references the fact that Tasmania's announcement gives the industry 47 months and that's a positive compared to what they're facing in New Zealand, so they've compared us favourably in terms of a timeframe for transition.

I find it interesting, too, that I hadn't properly clocked the matters relating to compensation in New Zealand. I know the dollar figures from New Zealand have been put forward as comparing unfavourably with what's been put forward so far from the government on compensation, but in fact when you actually look into it in New Zealand, they're not providing compensation at all. The dollar figures that they're talking about are what will be spent to transition.

From the news reports I was reading, there are people up in arms about the fact that the 1055 people who have jobs in that industry in that country won't be getting compensation at all from the government in New Zealand. They'll get transition assistance to transition their dogs out and to potentially transition themselves out, but they won't get compensation per se from what's been announced in New Zealand, so there's a lot of consternation there.

We have the great benefit of having a very generous period of time, if we get on with it, to undertake a transition period, and that's what came out through this inquiry into the bill, because this bill has to be the starting point for that. If this isn't the starting point, we could end up being in a situation a bit like the consternation that's being experienced in New Zealand, where people feel that things are falling apart a bit around the edges because of a shorter timeframe and because their legislation has come late in the piece in that sense.

Certainly, the Racing Integrity Commissioner has been very clear, in his evidence to the inquiry, on the importance of this legislation passing to begin an orderly process and to look after welfare. If people look to the *Hansard*, some of which is in the report, but also if you just look to the *Hansard* more broadly from the commissioner to the inquiry process, you will see he makes comments, and I'll just quote a couple of things from him. This is from our hearing on the 11 February for the inquiry and the commissioner, Mr Sean Carroll, appearing. Some of the things he said:

> From that perspective, incremental reform is no longer adequate. We cannot rely solely on voluntary compliance or internal regulation to address systemic risk. We cannot continue to expand an industry without the capacity to protect animal welfare, and we cannot ignore the widening gap between community expectations and industry practice.
>
> For these reasons, the phase-out legislation is necessary. However, legislation alone is not sufficient. A strong, detailed and enforceable transition plan is essential. The bill proposes that I'd be responsible for developing that plan consistent with my statutory mandate to uphold integrity, enforceable standards and ensure fairness.

A bit later in his evidence, he says:

> Since the announcement of the government's decision, uncertainty with the industry has intensified. In some cases, heightened emotion has contributed to conduct that has fallen outside the accepted standards and at times breached the rules of racing and the law.

A little bit further on, he says:

> From the perspective of integrity, enforceability and risk management, the conclusion is clear: the legislation is not only desirable; it's necessary.

The commissioner was clear with us in his evidence about the necessity of this legislation to get things on track for an appropriate, careful and safe transition.

One of the things that I was particularly interested in looking at was this matter of the closure plan that's in the legislation and how we could introduce into the legislation greater certainty about, and confidence in, the closure plan - more detail into the legislation, detail that, in a non-exhaustive way, outlined some expected areas to be covered in that closure plan; setting up an expectation in legislation that it would be tabled in parliament; setting up an expectation in the legislation that the closure plan would involve consultation; putting those things in there, not because they necessarily changed the process of how that closure plan might be developed, because the commissioner was very clear he was going to undertake a comprehensive and consultative process for it, but it puts it into the legislation and the government has responded with some suggested amendments to give effect to some of that inclusion of greater detail, certainty and confidence in that part of the legislation. I was pleased that there was a receptivity to do that.

We also need to understand that the closure plan may be an evolving document. There were discussions during the inquiry about whether it could be adjusted or amended or reviewed at different stages as it played out because of changing circumstances or needs arising. It was clarified that, yes, it could be and that that would be outlined in the closure plan itself - that it could be and how it would happen. The commissioner, in his evidence to us, laid out a comprehensive list of matters that were already part of the discussion about inclusion in the closure plan. That was a recommended improvement to the bill in terms of delivering that confidence and certainty, so I was pleased to see it.

There were lots of questions during the inquiry about the breeding arrangements and most of those questions are answered in the evidence, if people go to look at it. There are elements that people will object to because they don't want the outcome that this is working towards and, as I said, I understand that. So, of course, there are still going to be things that people find problematic or hiccups.

It's funny, we had some circular discussions or consideration of whether compensation should or shouldn't be in legislation. I think there absolutely should be reference to compensation in the legislation and that's one of the things I was interested to see put in as an expected aspect of a closure plan, so that the expectation is set up in the legislation and that can be pointed to confidently. But what was clear, particularly in talking to the commissioner about a plan for compensation, is that we definitely should not rush headlong into quantifying it exhaustively in legislation because the specific arrangements will need to be carefully figured out. It's a complex, varied industry. There are different tiers or levels of participants in terms of the degree to which they're financially reliant on or involved in the industry. So, compensation plans and how we work our way towards a model for that, it's definitely not a legislative matter. It should be guaranteed through legislation and referred to in legislation, in my view, but not put in in detail. That was clarified at various times in evidence given to the committee and the discussions had. I think, for anybody to demand that we should have outlined or that the bill should have some form of specific detailed outline of a compensation model, is probably a little bit reckless, actually, particularly at this stage of things. I think if we were to rush to do that now in order to legislate it in some way, we would be doing the industry

participants a serious disservice. I think it's unlikely we could design something in that way that would fit into a legislative model of things that would be sufficiently nuanced and comprehensive and mindful of circumstances in the industry.

Those were the sorts of things that I just wanted to pick out as some of the areas that are contemplated in the inquiry report. Noting that the member for Hobart has more comprehensively gone through the very full list of findings and recommendations, I do think that we are in an interesting situation here. As I said, this is a noting debate on the inquiry on the bill and the report that we've presented as a result of that inquiry.

I understand that there will continue to be potential criticisms and issues that people might have on process about this whole thing. We were sort of set on that path, in some sense, at the very outset by the way the government has gone about it. My view is we take a practical approach at ensuring our best efforts, that at each stage we undertake the job that's needed to properly consider what's before us in this place and the matters presented to us. I think that's what has been done in the committee process and report, and I do stand by that.

I know that we will have further discussion on the bill and in its detail, potentially, at a different stage here. I won't go further into that. I'm also not going to go further into discussion about the overarching policy at this stage either, having alluded to it fairly lightly in my contribution today. I note the report from the committee, and I hope that members are able to engage with it genuinely and the evidence that sits around it.

There's a lot of really important, valuable information in the evidence of the inquiry. We all know that not all evidence makes it into a report of every inquiry. You have to go through a process of narrowing it down for presentation. For those who are particularly interested in specific matters to do with the bill, there's quite a valuable trove of evidence there as part of the records of the inquiry. I definitely point people towards it. I put on the record here that I appreciate the involvement of everybody who took part in the inquiry. I've tried to make sure that I've listened carefully at every stage of the process and genuinely took on board things that were raised, and sought to ensure that we could consider and address them in some sense as part of the process.

I note the report.

[6.43 p.m.]
Ms THOMAS (Elwick) - Mr President, I rise to contribute to the motion that the Legislative Council receive and note the report of the Joint Standing Committee on Greyhound Racing Transition into the Greyhound Racing Legislation Amendments (Phasing out Reform) Bill 2025. At the outset I want to place on the record why I supported the referral of this bill to the committee in the first instance. As has been mentioned by some, and the way I phrase it is: the government's announcement to phase out the greyhound racing industry came as a shock, not only to industry participants, but to the parliament itself.

It was rushed, unexpected and, in my view, deeply disrespectful in both its process and its communication, particularly given an election had just occurred and at no point during that election did the government put this policy decision to the Tasmanian public. If anything, it suggested its policy position was the absolute opposite. Given those circumstances, I supported referral to the committee because I believed it was essential that the parliament take the time to properly interrogate the impacts of such a significant decision. The shutdown of an entire

industry, one that supports jobs, livelihoods and regional communities, demands careful, transparent and evidence-based consideration.

In fact, any prohibition decision does. Any decision of this parliament to make an activity illegal ought to be evidence-based and thoroughly scrutinised. I also want to acknowledge the people within the greyhound racing industry. Regardless of where members ultimately land on this issue, the way in which this decision has been handled by the government, marked by a lack of consultation and a clear disregard for those affected, deserves to be condemned.

This was not even mentioned in the committee's report, and I'm not sure about other members, but I found this somewhat surprising, given Tasmanians often hear from many of the committee's members about the importance of consultation and transparency, and that on any other issue, due process really matters; but apparently not on this issue.

Importantly, at the time of referral, and still today, the phase-out of greyhound racing remains a policy position of this government. It is not yet law of this state. Prohibiting greyhound racing is not law in this state, and this decision rests with the parliament. It is not a decision for the government alone. It is not a decision for the minister, and is certainly not a decision for the Racing Integrity Commissioner. The member for Hobart, for our convenience just a moment ago, sent through some of the *Hansard* of the evidence presented by the Racing Integrity Commissioner, Mr Sean Carroll, on 11 February. I just want to refer to that, because I think it's important that this point is made. In his evidence to the committee, Mr Carroll rightly said:

> I want to begin by acknowledging the human dimension of this issue. Behind every kennel, every track and every dog are people: trainers, breeders, families and volunteers, many of whom have devoted decades to this industry. For many, greyhound racing is not merely an occupation, it is deeply held identity and a community built from tradition and care for animals. It is precisely because of that reality that this issue demands clarity, honesty and leadership.
>
> The Bill before Parliament is not a judgment on individuals. It is a response to systemic pressures that have reached a point where incremental reform is no longer sufficient. It provides a lawful, structured and orderly pathway for transition, rather than leaving the industry, participants and animals exposed to unmitigated risk.

The point I made there: he says that, 'It is a response to systemic pressures that have reached a point where incremental reform is no longer sufficient.' It sounds to me like that is pushing the policy agenda of the government.

As I was stating, prohibition is a matter for this parliament to determine. It is a matter for this parliament to determine on its merits; not a decision for the government, not for the minister and not for the Racing Integrity Commissioner. Because it is a decision for this parliament to determine on its merits, this is precisely why scrutiny through a parliamentary committee process was so important.

However, having considered the committee's report, I must say I am deeply disappointed. I do not make such observations lightly, nor do I intend any personal reflection on the members

of the committee. The report states that the committee has considered the bill clause by clause; yet it goes on to assert that the inquiry was not examining the policy decision to phase out greyhound racing, it was only examining the contents of the legislation to enable the transition. This position is, in my view, entirely untenable.

The policy decision to phase out greyhound racing is not some abstract concept sitting outside of the bill; it is embedded within it. It is the very foundation of the legislation before us, because the bill does two things: first, and most significantly, it seeks to make greyhound racing and breeding illegal in Tasmania. It is on page 7 of the bill, Part 2, clause 4, section 11C inserted into the *Animal Welfare Act*, regarding greyhound racing and commercial dog racing:

(2) A person must not -

(a) conduct, organise or facilitate the conduct of a greyhound race or a commercial dog race in Tasmania; or

(b) permit the conduct of a greyhound race or a commercial dog race on premises owned or occupied by the person; or

(c) otherwise take part in, or assist with, the organisation or conduct of a greyhound race or a commercial dog race in Tasmania.

Penalty: Fine not exceeding 100 penalty units or imprisonment for a term not exceeding 6 months, or both.

It goes on with other prohibition clauses about not allowing a dog to participate in a greyhound race or a commercial dog race in Tasmania, or not keeping a dog for use in greyhound races or commercial dog races, not selling or supplying a dog to another person, offering a dog for sale or supply to another person or breed, acquiring or keeping a dog for sale or suppling to another person if the person knows or is reasonably to know that the other person intends to cause or permit the dog to participate in a greyhound race or commercial dog race.

Prohibition clauses, on page 10, Part 3, clause 7, Insert Section 18B into the *Dog Control Act*:

18B. Breeding of greyhounds

... A person must not breed a litter from a greyhound.

Penalty: Fine not exceeding 100 penalty units.

That's what it does first, and most significantly, it seeks to make greyhound racing and breeding illegal in Tasmania. Second, it establishes a framework for transitioning the industry out of existence and that is the substance of the other clauses in the bill.

It is my firm view, that you cannot meaningfully examine the second without interrogating the first.

By choosing not to fully examine the merits of the phase-out itself or make findings and recommendations on whether prohibition is justified, the committee has, in effect, pre-empted the decision of this parliament.

The committee has proceeded on the assumption that the industry will be shut down, rather than asking whether it should be, and this choice was a choice made by the committee in establishing its terms of reference.

In doing so, the committee has only done half the job we asked it to do. It has inquired into the transition, but not the justification for it. It has looked at the how but not the why and that is a fundamental failure. This House asked it to inquire into the contents of the bill. Included in the contents of the bill are prohibition clauses. It hasn't inquired into, in my view, those prohibition clauses because the central question before us is not simply how we transition an industry out of existence, it is whether we should be doing so at all.

The committee did not inquire into the problem that this legislation purports to solve. It did not test whether a full shutdown is the only option or the best option, and it did not canvas alternative approaches. And, critically, it did not present evidence to justify why prohibition, an extreme and irreversible step, is warranted. As a result, the report has not helped me decide on whether I can support Part 2, clause 4, which prohibits greyhound racing, or Part 3, clause 7, which prohibits the breeding of greyhounds for racing.

Ms O'Connor - It sounds like you have made up your mind already.

Ms THOMAS - So have you.

Ms O'Connor - You've always been straight about -

Mr PRESIDENT - Order.

Ms THOMAS - Despite my pre-stated interest in the racing industry overall, Mr President, I've been clear on that on the record. I have a minor share in thoroughbreds. Despite my pre-stated interest in the racing industry, I certainly approached this issue with an open mind, as I do all issues before us in this place, and I supported the referral to the committee seeking evidence and analysis to guide my position.

I'm now left with more questions than answers and with less confidence in the case for this legislation. The committee's report certainly has not given me more confidence in this bill, if anything, and has had the opposite effect.

Parliamentary committees play a vital role in our system of government. They are meant to provide independent, objective scrutiny. They are meant to test assumptions, weigh evidence and assist members of this House to make informed decisions. The Tasmanian community rightly expects that when a bill of this magnitude is referred to a committee, it will be examined in full, not in part. On this occasion, I strongly believe this expectation has not been met.

Two of the six members of the committee even stated that this expectation has not been met in their dissenting reports that form part of the report that we are noting today, and it's important to note that this committee's report is not unanimous. In fact, when you look at the count of the votes at the back of the report it shows there are 34 divides on the report and on

most of the divides the result was 3:2 in favour - 24 out of 34 of the divides, 3:2, hardly a convincing decision, and that is significant. It demonstrates that there were legitimate concerns raised within the committee process itself about both the scope of the inquiry and the conclusions that were being drawn, so whilst I've refer to the committee's report and its limitations, I recognise and note there are members of the committee who share some of the concerns I've outlined today.

I will, of course, note the report. I do so with significant reservations about its scope, its approach and its failure to grapple with the central issue at hand. Ultimately, the report reinforces for me that the decision on this bill, a significant prohibition decision, is a decision for this parliament. And the academic and legal consensus is clear: prohibitions are the bluntest instrument available to parliament and should only be used as a last resort. Decisions to prohibit something must be grounded in evidence, tested against proportionality and subject to proper scrutiny. Regrettably, the report does not provide this grounding, and without that rigour we risk legislating not in the public interest but in the interests of political power.

I note the report.

[6.55 p.m.]
Ms O'CONNOR (Hobart) - Mr President, I'm not sure if the honourable member for Elwick read the terms of reference of the Joint Standing Committee on Greyhound Racing Transition. Those terms of reference and the establishment of this joint standing committee was by the parliament. We didn't develop these terms of reference. The parliament passed the motion to establish the committee with these terms of reference:

> That a Joint Standing Committee on Greyhound Racing Transition be appointed with the power to send for persons and papers, with leave to sit during any adjournment of either House and with leave to adjourn from place to place to oversee the phasing out of greyhound racing in Tasmania by 30 June 2029 including matters of:
>
> (i) Protecting the welfare of greyhounds and participants in the industry during the phase out period and following its conclusion;
>
> (ii) Transitional arrangements for greyhound racing industry participants, including any fair and reasonable compensation requirements;
>
> (iii) Requirements of rehoming organisations;
>
> (iv) Legislative requirements for the transition; and
>
> (v) any other incidental matter theretoo.

The committee was given a very clear and quite a narrow set of terms for us to operate under, and that confined the scope of our inquiry in significant part, but it didn't stop any person with an interest in this matter from presenting a submission to the committee.

It certainly didn't stop industry participants from raising the broader policy question and, as the honourable member for Nelson, in her detailed and excellent contribution, outlined, this inquiry report gives the industry a very strong voice. In fact, I'll be honest with you, it slightly

worried me that we had in this report allowed for so many industry voices and there were quite few animal welfare voices.

I just remind the honourable member, this is not our terms of reference and they were not something that we cooked up.

Ms Webb - The terms of reference for this inquiry weren't our committee's terms of reference. They were, in fact, just referring the bill for consideration and report.

Ms O'CONNOR - Oh yes, thank you, honourable member for Nelson. I was talking about the foundational terms of reference obviously for the scope of work that we were given to do. I obviously have made my mind up on this issue probably the first time a dog came into our lives. I definitely made up my mind on this issue in 2015 after seeing the *Four Corners* program 'Making a Killing' and then being part of an inquiry process that heard some really confronting evidence.

I've never been anything but straight up about my position on this issue. I haven't had to cloak my arguments in other kinds of rationales. People know exactly where the Greens and I stand on this issue: we stand with the majority of Tasmanians, we stand with the former Labor premier David Bartlett, the former Liberal premier Will Hodgman, the former governor of Tasmania, Her Excellency Kate Warner. We stand with the hundreds coming up on thousands of people who in good faith are beseeching independent members of this Council to do the right and ethical thing with this legislation. The member for Nelson put it extremely well, of course: the process here stinks. It's not a great process. We have to be a bit careful in life, though, that we don't allow ourselves - for convenience, potentially, because we don't want to have to make a difficult decision - to put process over principle.

We can all acknowledge the process here is less than perfect. We can all acknowledge the participants in the greyhound racing industry - I'm particularly sympathetic to people who have a long and deep history in this industry that goes back to before it became industrialised and part of a national gambling, money-making SportsBet scene. Of course, a change in policy like this will be devastating to people who've had greyhounds as part of their lives for a very long time.

Out on the lawns yesterday when we met to do media, a young woman came past and I'm not going to name her because she could be identifiable, and she sort of seemed to loiter a little bit as if she wanted a chat and she wanted to have a look at Maxi, our new dog, our new family member. She told a story about being the daughter of a greyhound trainer and she said -

Mr Duigan - We are doing the greyhound bill tomorrow, aren't we?

Ms O'CONNOR - Well, hang on a minute. With the greatest respect, we just listened to the honourable member for Elwick go through parts of the bill. You let me tell my story and we'll see what you have to say tomorrow. I think passing on the stories of people who've been in the industry is very germane to this work.

She said 'the most beautiful dogs used to come into my home,' and she rattled off a few names and she said 'then they disappeared once I became attached to them'. She said 'I can't have a dog now because I'm frightened of becoming attached'. The dogs in her life were disposed of.

I just want to talk about the Racing Integrity Commissioner. The Racing Integrity Commissioner has done his job with absolute professionalism, and I refute and am offended for him by any suggestion he's doing anything other than the task that he's been given of overseeing the transition and of establishing a transition working group and of, under the legislation that was passed in 2024, working to uphold integrity and the welfare of animals in the greyhound racing industry.

It is untrue to say that the Racing Integrity Commissioner is pushing the policy position for the government. It is a slur and I think the member for Elwick should withdraw it. This is a statutory officer. We've entrusted him to do a job. He's doing that job and a thorough reading of his contribution on *Hansard* will show that he's doing that with independence and professionalism. He was given the job of overseeing the transition, and that is what he was and is doing.

Of course, there are a lot of industry participants, as the member for Elwick said, who were shocked by the government's announcement. I will say this just by way of comparison, the New Zealand Government - basically on one day, greyhound racing was acceptable and fine in New Zealand. The following day - no consultation, no previous inquiries - the Deputy Prime Minister, Winston Peters, said it has to end because of the high level of injuries and deaths in this industry and it cannot escape the fact of those high levels of injury and deaths. Of course, it's awful to make comparisons in some ways, but when you look at the way New Zealand has dealt with their policy decision to end greyhound racing and the way the Tasmanian government is trying to, they are chalk and cheese. The process here is much, much more respectful of industry participants, much more structured, and it provides for compensation and a dignified exit from the industry.

The last thing I want to say, it is very easy in life to get caught up on process, and, in fact, it can be very tempting to get stuck on process and see the process as the problem. The problem with that is that, in being stuck on process you can lose sight of principle. The principle here is clear. The ethical response to the exploitation of sentient animals for profit and nothing else, the ethical response to that is to do what Wales and Scotland and New Zealand, and nearly every country in the world apart from four, have done, and that is move to phase out greyhound racing. The dogs in our lives, dogs in general, deserve better.

I ask members who genuinely haven't made up their minds between now and tomorrow, gnash your teeth about the process, but in the end you have to consider the principle and as the member for Nelson said, and I'm paraphrasing here, it's important we look at this bill on its own merits. The policy questions can be debated in this place on the bill. It wasn't the joint standing committee's job to examine the policy, although of course policy questions came up persistently.

The last thing I want members to understand, is that when you consider the votes at the back, 3:2, as the honourable member for Elwick was detailing, that was on a day when Mr Vermey was unwell, another member of the committee. It is still a fact that the committee report that we're debating today has recommendations there from a majority of members, four out of six members - a member of the Liberal Party, two Independent members and myself - agreeing. It is Labor that is on the wrong side of history here. Most Labor members know it.

I do hope members will put principle over process when it comes to debate this bill tomorrow, and I hope that the evidence that's been put forward, the further evidence from the Racing Integrity Commissioner, which I sent around to people earlier, about animal welfare issues, the data from the steward's reports, will help to broaden understanding of the welfare issues that are inherent in this industry that mean dogs are suffering when they shouldn't have to, and I hope that members who genuinely haven't made up their mind overnight, will have a think about those dogs, those beautiful dogs and support the bill.

Motion agreed to.

BUILDING AMENDMENT BILL 2026 (No. 1)

First Reading

Bill received from the House of Assembly and read the first time.

[7.09 p.m.]
Ms RATTRAY (McIntyre - Leader for the Government in the Legislative Council) - Mr President, I move -

> That the second reading of the bill be made in order of the day for Tuesday next.

Motion agreed to.

EDUCATION AND CARE SERVICES NATIONAL LAW (APPLICATION) AMENDMENT BILL 2026 (No. 7)

First Reading

Bill received from the House of Assembly and read the first time.

[7.10 p.m.]
Ms RATTRAY (McIntyre - Leader for the Government in the Legislative Council) - Mr President, I move -

> That the second reading of the Bill be made in order of the day for Tuesday next.

Motion agreed to.

ADJOURNMENT

[7.11 p.m.]

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

> That at its rising the Council adjourn to 11.00 a.m. on Wednesday 15 April 2026.

Motion agreed to.

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

> That the Council do now adjourn.

The Council adjourned at 7.11 p.m.