



PARLIAMENT OF TASMANIA

LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL

REPORT OF DEBATES

Thursday 21 May 2026

REVISED EDITION

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Thursday 21 May 2026

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

RECOGNITION OF VISITORS

Mr PRESIDENT - Honourable members, before we make our way through the business of the day, I'd like you all to make welcome to the Chamber the grade 6 students from Forest Primary School. You've come a long way to see us and what we're doing here today. It's Budget Day, so we will be having our day changed around a little bit. I believe Forest Primary School is in the electorate of the member who has kindly named herself after the town, the electorate of Murchison. All members here represent different parts of the state, but you're very lucky that you come from a particularly lovely part of the island. We hope you enjoy your day in the Tasmanian parliament, and I know that all members will join me in making you most welcome.

Members - Hear, hear.

TABLED PAPER

Joint Select Committee on Energy Matters - Inquiry into Energy Prices and Related Matters in Tasmania - Interim Report (No. 17 of 2026)

[11.05 a.m.]

Ms FORREST (Murchison) - Mr President, I'm honoured to present the interim report of the Joint Select Committee on Energy Matters (No. 17 of 2026) Inquiry into Energy Prices and Related Matters in Tasmania. I move -

That the report be received and printed.

Report received and printed.

Ms FORREST - Mr President, I move -

That consideration of the report and its noting be made an Order of the Day.

Motion agreed to.

SUSPENSION OF SITTING

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

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

This is for the purpose of a ballot.

Motion agreed to.

Sitting suspended from 11.06 a.m. to 11.18 a.m.

MOTIONS

Committee Appointments

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

That Ms Glade-Wright be appointed to serve on Government Administration Committee A; the Joint Parliamentary Standing Committee on Subordinate Legislation; and the Joint Sessional Committee on Gender and Equality.

Motion agreed to.

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

That Mr Hiscutt be appointed to serve on the Joint Select Committee on Energy Matters and the Joint Parliamentary Standing Committee on Public Works.

Motion agreed to.

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

That a Message be transmitted to the House of Assembly acquainting that House of the Appointment of Honourable Members to those respective Joint Committees of both Houses of Parliament.

Motion agreed to.

HELP TO BUY (COMMONWEALTH POWERS) BILL 2026 (No. 9)

Third Reading

Bill read the third time.

BUILDING AMENDMENT BILL 2026 (No. 1)

Consideration of Bill as Amended in Committee of the Whole Council

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

That the bill, as amended in Committee, be now taken into consideration.

Motion agreed to.

Amendments read the first time.

Amendments read the second time.

Amendments agreed to.

BUILDING AMENDMENT BILL 2026 (No. 1)

Third Reading

[11.24 a.m.]

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

That the bill be read a third time.

Mr HISCUTT (Montgomery) - Mr President, just a brief comment to clarify my position through the debate. Although the original motion was one that I would have liked to see get up, I congratulate the member for Launceston for the amendment because it is still a measurable vote. I just want to put that on record.

Mr PRESIDENT - The question is that the bill be read the third time.

The Council divided -

AYES 8

Ms Armitage
Mr Duigan
Ms Forrest (Teller)
Mr Gaffney
Mr Hiscutt
Ms O'Connor
Ms Rattray
Mr Vincent

NOES 4

Ms Glade-Wright
Ms Lovell
Ms Thomas
Ms Webb (Teller)

PAIRS

Ms Palmer

Mr Edmunds

Bill read the third time.

SUSPENSION OF SITTING

[11.28 a.m.]

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

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

This is for the purpose of the continuation of a briefing.

Sitting suspended from 11.29 a.m. to 2.30 p.m.

STATEMENT BY PRESIDENT

Treasurer's Budget Speech - Procedure for Attendance

Mr PRESIDENT - Honourable members, before I call on Question Time, which will be a little shorter today, for members wishing to attend the budget speech in the other place, we assemble outside the Long Room, House of Assembly landing, at 2.55 p.m. The attendants from the House will assist us. After the Assembly resumes and the Budget is introduced, the Sergeant of Arms will allow us entrance to the Chamber and provide direction. Then we will withdraw after the speech has been delivered. For members not wishing to be seated on the Floor of the House of Assembly, the Speaker's Reserve can be used and accessed at any time. As is the usual practice, the budget paper package, which includes the speech, will be placed on your seat here in the Chamber by our attendants as soon as the Treasurer commences his speech in the Assembly Chamber.

QUESTIONS

Fuel Provisions for the Civil Construction Industry

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

The civil construction industry employs thousands of Tasmanians and is responsible for working with government to deliver important infrastructure projects across our communities. Currently, the increases in fuel prices are putting incredible financial pressure on many small to medium civil construction businesses across the state.

Will the government consider the request put forward by the civil construction industry to introduce rise and fall provisions for the fuel component in current government contracts to account for cost pressures and to ensure government projects are not delayed or put at risk?

ANSWER

Mr President, I thank the member for the question. A lot of dialogue is taking place on this at the moment, right around Australia. Some councils, because of the nature of their works, have offered small increases to some of the councils. It has been quite informative dealing

directly with quite a few of the contractors in the Civil Construction Federation (CCF) on how they have managed their fuel situation at the moment and the percentage of the fuel usage within their contracts. It is a learning curve when you strike these things, of course, which is always good to learn from.

I'm not sure exactly, on a week-to-week basis, or a decision D-Day, but it is being worked through very seriously with the CCF and others. We are discussing it with and looking at other states. We have also had quite a few small- and medium-size councils contact the department to make sure that when a decision is made at the appropriate level, it is made so that it is fair and equitable across all their contracts and understanding of present contracts. Most of the contractors, at the moment, seem comfortable with the contingency they have in their road contracts to cover immediately. But they're anxious to make sure, if it keeps escalating, or if it goes longer, that we will be in a position to be able to trickle the right policy into place that will cover that. I don't have a date for when that decision will be made, but I can assure you that there is a lot of discussion going on to understand exactly where they need to be because it's such an important part of our road and civil construction network. Thank you for the question.

Liberty Bell Bay Manganese Smelter

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

[2.34 p.m.]

This question is perhaps a little out of date now. The Liberty Bell Bay manganese smelter in George Town is in voluntary administration and there are reports that 175 jobs will be lost unless workers agree to take unpaid leave from 24 April this year. Can the government please:

- (1) detail whether the government has explored the option of providing repayable financial loans to the administrator for the purpose of securing the current workforce for the duration of future sale and wrap-up processes;
- (2) if so, provide any modelling undertaken detailing financial amounts required to maintain the workforce over specified timeframes, such as six or 12 months or some other period until either the smelter's purchase or its ultimate permanent closure;
- (3) disclose whether any negotiations occurred with either Liberty Bell Bay or its administrators, Ernst & Young, canvassing the option of repayable loans for the purpose of securing the workforce from this particular shutdown, until the administrator's determination that either a viable sale is to be finalised or the smelter is to be closed permanently;
- (4) whether the state has requested the federal government to explore provision of a repayable financial loan to the administrator, either of its own accord or in joint arrangement with the state, noting it is no longer particularly relevant but we might as well get it on the record.

ANSWER

- (1) On 23 April 2026, the Tasmanian and Australian governments jointly announced a \$3 million loan for the purpose of meeting employee wage obligations, while the administrators conduct an accelerated sales process.
- (2) The cost of meeting wages and associated statutory on-costs, including superannuation contributions and applicable payroll tax obligations, for the full Liberty Bell Bay workforce is approximately \$1.6 million per fortnight.
- (3) The Tasmanian government is working closely with the administrators Ernst & Young (EY). The \$3 million in wage support funding has been provided to Liberty Bell Bay Pty Ltd (administrators appointed, receivers and managers appointed), in the form of a loan.
- (4) The Tasmanian government has partnered with the Australian Government to provide a time-limited loan to Liberty Bell Bay on a 50:50 basis for the purpose of meeting employee wage obligations during the Ernst & Young's sales campaign.

SUSPENSION OF SITTING

Budget Speech

[2.37 p.m.]

Ms RATTRAY (McIntyre - Leader for the Government in the Legislative Council) - Thank you, Mr President. That went quickly. I move -

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

This is for the purpose of attending the House of Assembly for the Budget speech.

Motion agreed to.

Sitting suspended from 2.37 p.m. to 3.49 p.m.

TABLED PAPERS

Budget Papers 2026-27

[3.49 p.m.]

Ms RATTRAY (McIntyre - Leader for the Government in the Legislative Council) (by leave) - Mr President, I lay upon the Table of the Council budget papers for 2026-27, titled:

- Budget Overview;
- Budget Speech;

- 2026-27 Tasmanian Gender Budget Statement;
- Appropriation Bill (No. 1) 2026;
- Appropriation Bill (No. 2) 2026;
- Budget Paper No. 1 - Budget Strategy and Estimates;
- Budget Paper No. 2 - Agency Information Supporting Appropriation Bill No. 1;
- Budget Paper No. 3 - Agency Information Supporting Appropriation Bill No. 2; and
- Budget Paper No. 4 - Supplementary Budget Reports.

Papers tabled.

MOTIONS

Precedence of Government Business

[3.51 p.m.]

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

That government business have precedence on Tuesday 26 May and Tuesday 23 June 2026.

Motion agreed to.

Budget Papers 2026-27 and Appropriation Bills (No. 1 and No. 2) - Noting

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

That the Budget Papers and the Appropriation Bills (No. 1 and No. 2) 2026 be noted.

Motion agreed to.

Ms RATTRAY (McIntyre - Leader for the Government in the Legislative Council) - Mr President, in moving that, as I've just said in a conversation with honourable members before you came back into the Chamber, there's a lot of work in reading the budget papers. I trust that members have that opportunity over the next two or three days, and look forward to the contributions that will come next week when the budget papers are noted.

In light of that, I move -

That the debate stand adjourned.

Debate adjourned.

ADJOURNMENT

[3.53 p.m.]

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

That the Council at its rising adjourn until 11 a.m. Tuesday 26 May 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 3.53 p.m.