



LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL

SESSION OF 2025 – 2026

(FIRST SESSION OF THE FIFTY-SECOND PARLIAMENT)

VOTES AND PROCEEDINGS

No. 24

WEDNESDAY, 25 MARCH 2026

1 COUNCIL MEETS.— The Council met at 11.00 o'clock a.m.

2 ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF TRADITIONAL PEOPLE.— The President said: “We meet today on Tasmanian Aboriginal land. We acknowledge and pay respect to the Tasmanian Aboriginal people and elders, past and present. We recognise them as the first inhabitants and the continuing custodians of this land.”

3 PRAYERS AND REFLECTION.— The President read Prayers.

4 PROGRESS OF TOURISM EXPRESSION OF INTEREST PROPOSALS.— Ms *Forrest* asked the Honourable the Leader of the Government —

With reference to an announcement in 2022, by the then Minister for State Development, Construction and Housing, Minister Barnett, that changes were being made to the Tourism EOI process to address concerns about land banking and to set milestones for projects to achieve key outcomes, and that this included a requirement that every six months proponents would need to provide proof they were actively progressing their EOIs, and noting the Office of the Coordinator General oversees an ‘Accepted concepts’ webpage, and that the ‘EOI statistics’ link had not been updated between May 2025 and 11 March 2026:

- (1) Why hadn’t the Office of the Coordinator General updated the EOI statistics webpage between May 2025 and 11 March 2026?
- (2) Wild Bush Luxury had an EOI proposal regarding the South Coast Track Huts Walk, but Wild Bush Luxury has been bought by Intrepid Travel.
 - (a) Has Intrepid Travel sought permission from the EOI Assessment Panel to move forward with the South Coast Track Huts Walk EOI; and
 - (b) Does this EOI needs to be reassessed?
- (3) As suggested on the 11 March website update, no progress on any of the EOI proposals have occurred in the last 12 months. What actions have been taken to ascertain that progress is being made on the following EOIs:
 - (a) RiverFly 1864: Halls Island, Lake Malbena;
 - (b) Circa Morris-Nunn, representing Hunter Developments: Recherche Bay Eco Resort;
 - (c) Tasmanian Walking Company: Walls of Jerusalem Lodge Walk;
 - (d) Tasmanian Walking Company: Overland Track Experience;
 - (e) Tasmanian Walking Company: Cradle Base Camp Experience;
 - (f) Wild Bush Luxury: South Coast Track Huts Walk;
 - (g) Wild Bush Luxury: Maria Island Experience;
 - (h) World Expeditions: Walls of Jerusalem – Wilderness Puffer Pods; and
 - (i) World Expeditions: Overland Track – Wilderness Puffer Pods?

- (4) Why hasn't the Office of the Coordinator General removed from the EOI process such proposals that have not been progressed?
- (5) What steps will be taken to ensure the public is kept informed of how EOI projects are progressing?

The Leader answered:

- (1) During the Public Accounts Committee hearing of 6 February this year it was explained that the EOI statistics had not been updated since May 2025 because the status of the proposals included in that information had not changed in that period.

This does not mean that proposals have not made progress in that period, but simply that they have not progressed from one stage to another. As identified in the EOI statistics table, the majority of remaining proposals are in the "Approvals Underway" phase. This phase can include many elements and multiple approval processes (including local government, State and Commonwealth assessments, depending on the nature of the proposal). These may occur concurrently or sequentially (again, this depends on the nature of the proposal as well as the preference of the proponent) and all require the proponent to prepare significant amounts of information. This can take a considerable amount of time, which is why proposals may remain in this stage for long periods of time.

I would note that since the PAC hearing, the EOI Statistics link has been updated to reflect the recent cessation of operations and surrender of the relevant license by RotorLift. The page now states that it was reviewed on 11 March 2026.

- (2) (a) The Office of the Coordinator General is aware of the sale of Wild Bush Luxury to Intrepid Travel, which was made public in December 2025. The OCG has continued to engage with management during the transition to the new ownership. This transition is ongoing.

On 9 February this year correspondence was received from the proponents advising the EOI panel that – while final investment approvals will appropriately sit with the new owner following completion of the transaction – it is intended that the South Coast Track Huts Walk EOI continue to be progressed.

The sale of businesses who are proponents in the EOI process is not new, and has previously occurred.

Proposals the Panel has previously recommended to proceed and which have subsequently entered the approvals phase do not need "the permission" of the EOI Panel to progress. In cases of change of ownership, the Panel may choose to seek evidence of the new owner's capacity to deliver the proposal. This is a matter for the Panel.

- (b) As noted, the business transition between previous and new owners is ongoing.

Proposals the Panel has previously recommended to proceed and which have subsequently entered the approvals phase do not need "the permission" of the EOI Panel to progress. In cases of change of ownership, the Panel may choose to seek evidence of the new owner's capacity to deliver the proposal. This is a matter for the Panel.

- (3) *RiverFly 1864: Halls Island, Lake Malbena*

On 30 October 2025, the Acting Chair of the Panel wrote to the proponent requesting clarification on the status of the business entity associated with the proposal, and the ability to deliver the proposal.

A follow up to the October request was sent on 3 February 2026.

A response was received from the proponent clarifying the status of the business entity on 5 February 2026. This was considered by the Tourism EOI Panel on 16 February 2026. A reply to the proponent including the outcomes of this consideration is currently going through the usual formal approval process prior to being sent.

Circa Morris-Nunn, representing Hunter Developments: Recherche Bay Eco Resort

On 29 October 2025, the Acting Chair of the Panel wrote to the proponent requesting evidence of substantial progress.

The Secretariat emailed the proponent on 22 December 2025, requesting a response.

A response was received on 22 December 2025 (that is, the same day) which was considered by the Tourism EOI Panel on 16 February 2026. A reply to the proponent including the outcomes of this consideration is currently going through the usual formal approval process prior to being sent.

Tasmanian Walking Company: Walls of Jerusalem Lodge Walk

In correspondence dated 13 February 2025, the proponent advised that their Pine Moor Hut – a part of their Overland Track Experience – had been lost to bushfire. A period of grace was requested in terms of providing updates on TWC projects, while interim arrangements for the operation of the TWC's Overland Track Experience were put in place.

The Panel agreed to this request for a period of 12 months, on condition that the proponent provide regular updates on progress towards rebuilding Pine Moor Hut. These updates have been provided to the EOI program's Secretariat via monthly meetings with the Parks and Wildlife Service, which is responsible for the lease and licensing requirements associated with the rebuilding of the lost hut.

In addition, on 30 October 2025, the Acting Chair of the Panel wrote to the proponent advising that the Panel had determined that changes to the proposal design that had been previously proposed by the proponent did not constitute a substantial change and that evidence of progress should be provided to the Panel ahead of its meeting in February 2026.

On 3 November 2025 the Acting Panel Chair and the program manager met with a senior representative of the proponent to discuss project progress and the impact of 2025 bushfire that resulted in the loss of one accommodation hut on the Overland Track, on the proponent's priorities.

On 19 February 2026 a meeting involving the same people took place to receive an update on progress to re-build the lost hut on the overland track, and to clarify next steps for all three of TWC's EOI proposals.

Correspondence was received from the proponent on 5 March 2026 providing an update on all three active projects (Cradle Base Camp Experience, Walls of Jerusalem Lodge Walk and the Overland Track Experience). This will be presented to the Panel at their next meeting.

Tasmanian Walking Company: Overland Track Experience and Tasmanian Walking Company: Cradle Base Camp Experience

In correspondence dated 13 February 2025, the proponent advised that their Pine Moor Hut had been lost to bushfire. A period of grace was requested in terms of providing updates on TWC projects, while interim arrangements for the operation of the TWC's Overland Track Experience were put in place.

At its meeting of 27 February 2026 the Panel agreed to this request, on condition that the proponent provide regular updates on progress towards rebuilding Pine Moor Hut. These updates were provided to the EOI program's Secretariat via the Parks and Wildlife Service, which is responsible for the lease and licensing requirements associated with the rebuilding of the lost hut.

On 3 November 2025 the Acting Panel Chair and the program manager met with a senior representative of the proponent to discuss project progress and the impact of 2025 bushfire that resulted in the loss of one accommodation hut on the Overland Track, on the proponent's priorities.

On 19 February 2026 a meeting involving the same people took place to receive an update on progress to re-build the lost hut on the overland track, and to clarify next steps for all three of TWC's EOI proposals.

Correspondence was received from the proponent on 5 March 2026 providing an update on all three active projects (Cradle Base Camp Experience, Walls of Jerusalem Lodge Walk and the Overland Track Experience). This will be presented to the Panel at their next meeting.

Wild Bush Luxury: South Coast Track Huts Walk

On 29 October 2025, the Acting Chair of the Panel wrote to the proponent advising that the Panel at its February 2025 meeting deemed the evidence of sufficient progress provided adequate to enable the project to remain in the Tourism EOI process.

In this same correspondence, a project delivery timeline was requested by 29 January 2026 in order to be considered at the 16 February 2026 Panel meeting. The Panel also requested financial modelling and the next progress update to be provided by 30 April 2026.

The proponent provided advice on 9 February 2026, including a project delivery timeline, which was considered by the Panel at its meeting of 16 February.

A reply to the proponent including the outcomes of this consideration is currently going through the usual formal approval process prior to being sent.

Wild Bush Luxury: Maria Island Experience

The Tourism EOI Panel has previously received advice from the proponent that this proposal cannot be progressed until the Maria Island National Park and Ile des Phoques Nature Reserve Management Plan – currently in draft – is finalised, as it will stipulate areas in which development may be permitted. Natural Resources and Environment Tasmania has consistently confirmed this position to the panel. The proponent will be required to provide evidence of sufficient progress of this project once the Management Plan comes into effect.

World Expeditions: Walls of Jerusalem – Wilderness Puffer Pods and World Expeditions: Overland Track – Wilderness Puffer Pods

On 29 October 2025, the Acting Chair of the Panel wrote to the proponent advising that the Panel at its February 2025 meeting deemed the evidence of sufficient progress provided adequate to enable the project to remain in the Tourism EOI process.

In this same correspondence, a project delivery timeline was requested by 29 January 2026 in order to be considered in the 16 February 2026 Panel meeting, and a progress update was also requested by 30 April 2026.

The proponent provided advice on 27 January 2026, including a project delivery timeline, which was considered by the Panel at its meeting of 16 February. A reply to the proponent including the outcomes of this consideration is currently going through the usual formal approval process prior to being sent.

- (4) The decision to withdraw a proposal from the process on the basis of lack of evidence of progress is a matter for the responsible Minister, based on recommendations received from the independent Tourism EOI panel. It is not a matter for the Office of the Coordinator General.

Decisions to retain or remove proposals from the process have been routinely made by the Minister based on the advice received from the Panel.

Since the enhancement to the EOI process in 2022, four proposals in the assessment and approvals stage have been voluntarily withdrawn by the proponents when they have been asked to provide evidence of progress.

Three have been withdrawn by the Minister due to a lack of evidence of progress being provided. It should be noted that one of the three proposals involved two sites. While one site had secured all necessary approvals and was operational, the Assessment Panel recommended the other site be withdrawn due to lack of sufficient progress. Therefore, statistics pertaining to the Tourism EOI process registered two withdrawals, not three.

- (5) As was stated at the PAC hearing, the OCG's publicly available Tourism EOI webpages are updated as soon as possible when the status of a proposal changes.

In addition, these pages are reviewed periodically — even if no changes have occurred — with review dates published to support transparency and public confidence in the information provided.

5 PAPERS.— The Clerk of the Council laid upon the Table the following Papers:—

- (1) Climate Change Office: Climate Change Activity Statement 2025.
- (2) 2024-25 Independent Review of the *Climate Change (State Action) Act 2008*. Review Report.
- (3) Queen Victoria Museum and Art Gallery: 2023-2024 Annual Report.
- (4) Queen Victoria Museum and Art Gallery: 2024-2025 Annual Report.

6 REPORT OF THE JOINT STANDING COMMITTEE ON GREYHOUND RACING TRANSITION.— Ms O'Connor presented a Report of the Joint Standing Committee on

its Greyhound Racing Transition on Greyhound Racing Legislation Amendments Phasing Out Reform) Bill 2025 Inquiry.

Ordered, That the Report be received. (Ms O'Connor)

Ordered, That the Report be printed. (Ms O'Connor)

Ordered, That consideration of the Report and its noting be made an Order of the Day. (Ms O'Connor)

7 SITTING SUSPENDED.— *Resolved*, That the Sitting of the Council be suspended until the ringing of the Division bells for the purpose of a briefing. (Ms Rattray)

The Sitting was suspended at 11.23 o'clock a.m. and resumed at 2.30 o'clock p.m.

8 QUESTION TIME.— The President called for Questions without Notice. There were nine Questions asked.

9 SITTING SUSPENDED.— *Resolved*, That the Sitting of the Council be suspended until the ringing of the Division bells for the purpose of a briefing. (Ms Rattray)

The Sitting was suspended at 2.54 o'clock p.m. and resumed at 4.30 o'clock p.m.

10 PREMIER'S ADDRESS.— The Council according to Order resumed the Debate on the Question, That the Premier's Address be noted.

The Question was again proposed, and the Council resumed the Debate.

And the Question being put,

It was resolved in the Affirmative.

11 BILL NO. 58 OF 2025.— The Order of the Day was read for the Second reading of the University of Tasmania (Protection of Land) Bill 2025.

A Motion was made (Ms Palmer), and the Question was proposed, That the Bill be now read the Second time.

A Debate arose thereupon.

Ordered, That the Debate be adjourned (Ms Palmer)

12 ADJOURNMENT.— *Resolved*, That the Council will, at its rising adjourn until 11.00 o'clock a.m. on Thursday, 25 March 2026. (Ms Rattray)

Resolved, That the Council do now adjourn. (Ms Rattray)

The Council adjourned at 6.16 o'clock p.m.

C.L. VICKERS, *Clerk of the Council.*

Briefings:

- *University of Tasmania (Protection of Land) Bill 2025*
- *Police Offences Amendment (Increased Penalties for Damage to Tasmanian War Memorials) Bill 2026*