



PARLIAMENT OF TASMANIA

LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL

REPORT OF DEBATES

Tuesday 19 May 2026

REVISED EDITION

Contents

TUESDAY 19 MAY 2026	1
TABLING OF WRITS.....	1
ELECTORAL DIVISIONS OF ROSEVEARS AND HUON	1
MEMBER SWORN.....	1
NEW MEMBER FOR HUON - MS CLARE GLADE-WRIGHT	1
STATEMENT BY PRESIDENT	1
WELCOME TO NEW AND RETURNED MEMBERS	1
RECOGNITION OF VISITORS	2
QUESTIONS ON NOTICE - ANSWERS	2
No. 28 - AFL HEAD INJURIES	2
No. 31 - VICTIMS OF CRIME.....	4
No. 32 - MACQUARIE POINT STADIUM - TRAFFIC MANAGEMENT PLANS	6
No. 33 - STATE SERVICE SES POSITIONS	7
RECOGNITION OF VISITORS	10
TABLED PAPERS	10
PUBLIC ACCOUNTS COMMITTEE NO. 18 OF 2026 - REVIEW OF THE TASMANIAN FISCAL SUSTAINABILITY REPORT 2026.....	10
JOINT SESSIONAL COMMITTEE ON RECOMMENDATIONS OF FINAL REPORT OF THE COMMISSION OF INQUIRY - SECOND INTERIM REPORT (PART TWO).....	11
SUSPENSION OF SITTING	11
MOTIONS.....	11
TASMANIAN BUDGET 2026-27 ESTIMATES COMMITTEES - ESTABLISHMENT	11
TASMANIAN BUDGET 2026-27 ESTIMATES COMMITTEES - REQUEST FOR ASSEMBLY MINISTERS TO ATTEND.....	13
RECOGNITION OF VISITORS	13
SPECIAL INTEREST MATTERS	14
RWANDAN GENOCIDE COMMEMORATION	14
TONES AND I AT ULVERSTONE AND JYRON FLANNERY	15
PALLIATIVE CARE TASMANIA	17
MCINTYRE CONSTITUENT ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS.....	19
RHYLAN WALTERS - WINNER OF SIMPSON PRIZE FOR 2026	19
WAYNE JOHNSTON - SERVICE TO LOCAL GOVERNMENT AS MEANDER VALLEY MAYOR.....	19
JANET LAMBERT - NORTHERN MIDLANDS DEPUTY MAYOR - RETIREMENT	19
MARGARET DENNIS - WINNER OF PETER PARSSEY AWARD	19
TRISTAN GOURLAY'S CIRCUMNAVIGATION OF THE GLOBE	21
WELCOME TO NEW MEMBERS.....	22
QUESTIONS.....	23
REQUEST FOR ANSWER TO QUESTION NO. 30 ON NOTICE PAPER	23
PROJECT MARINUS EXPERT ADVISORY PANEL FINDING 6.....	23
SECRETARY OF STATE GROWTH - HEAD OF AGENCY CONTRACT.....	24
DOWSING POINT - HOUSING DEVELOPMENT	25
SECRETARY OF STATE GROWTH - HEAD OF AGENCY CONTRACT.....	27
MACQUARIE POINT STADIUM - PRECINCT ELECTRICITY ARRANGEMENTS.....	27
SUPPLEMENTARY QUESTION	28
DOWSING POINT - LAND SALE - CONSULTATION.....	29

DOWSING POINT - LAND SALE - CONSULTATION	30
MACQUARIE POINT STADIUM - TASNETWORKS' COSTS	31
MACQUARIE POINT STADIUM - TASNETWORKS' COSTS	31
DOWSING POINT - HOUSING PLAN TIMELINE	32
SPECIAL INTEREST MATTERS	33
POLITICS, PROCESS AND THE PRICE OF BROKEN TRUST	33
MOTION	35
CLIMATE COUNCIL AND EMERGENCY LEADERS FOR CLIMATE ACTION REPORT: WHEN CITIES BURN	35
MOTION	48
CLIMATE COUNCIL AND EMERGENCY LEADERS FOR CLIMATE ACTION REPORT: WHEN CITIES BURN	48
MOTION	56
TASMANIAN ARTS FUNDING	56
SUSPENSION OF SITTING	89
MOTION	89
FORMAL APOLOGY - RA RODDA MUSEUM OF PATHOLOGY	89
MOTION	101
TASMANIAN BUDGET 2025-26 - ATTENDANCE OF MINISTERS IN THE COUNCIL AT HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY ESTIMATES COMMITTEES	101
MOTION	101
JOINT SESSIONAL COMMITTEE ON RECOMMENDATIONS FINAL REPORT OF THE COMMISSION OF INQUIRY - SECOND INTERIM REPORT (PART ONE) - CONSIDERATION AND NOTING	101
JUSTICE AND RELATED LEGISLATION (MISCELLANEOUS AMENDMENTS)	
BILL (NO. 2) 2025 (NO. 39)	113
FIRST READING	113
ADJOURNMENT	113
PROJECT MARINUS - COMPULSORY ACQUISITIONS	114

Tuesday 19 May 2026

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

TABLING OF WRITS

Electoral Divisions of Rosevears and Huon

The CLERK - Mr President, I lay upon the Table of the Council writs for the return of new members for the electoral divisions of Rosevears and Huon, certifying to Joanne Lesley Palmer and Clare Glade-Wright, respectively, having been chosen on the second day of May 2026 to serve in the Legislative Council.

I advise the Council that Joanne Lesley Palmer, returned upon a new writ for Rosevears, has previously made and taken the oath of allegiance, as required by law, and subscribed to the members Code of Conduct.

MEMBER SWORN

New Member for Huon - Ms Clare Glade-Wright

Mr PRESIDENT - Let the honourable member for Huon come forward and be sworn.

The CLERK - Mr President, in accordance with the Governor's proclamation and pursuant to section 30 of the *Constitution Act 1934*, I am duly authorised to administer the affirmation prescribed by the *Promissory Oaths Act 2015*.

I now ask that you make the affirmation.

Ms GLADE-WRIGHT (Huon) - I, Clare Glade-Wright, solemnly, sincerely and truly declare and affirm that I will be faithful and bear true allegiance to His Majesty the King according to law.

Member sworn.

The CLERK - I now ask that you subscribe to the members Code of Conduct.

Ms GLADE-WRIGHT - I, Clare Glade-Wright, hereby declare that I have read and do subscribe to the Code of Conduct for Members of the Parliament of Tasmania.

STATEMENT BY PRESIDENT

Welcome to New and Returned Members

[11.03 a.m.]

Mr PRESIDENT - Honourable members, before moving to formal business, I welcome to this House and the parliament the newly elected member for Huon and wish her well in her

role. I know that I speak on behalf of all members, Chamber officers and staff when I say we are ready to offer any support, advice or assistance that you may require, particularly in the early stages of your elected term; please do not hesitate to ask. You will find at times, I know, that things may seem challenging. You can be assured that you can find a satisfying and rewarding career in this place and all the members present will help you wherever you require it. I echo the statements of the people in your electorate who put you in this House to serve here in the Legislative Council and contribute to the broader Tasmanian community.

I also wish to welcome back to our Chamber the member for Rosevears and congratulate her on her re-election. Those of us who sat on the sidelines watching the campaign, which is always the best position to be in rather than being in the active part, acknowledge the result that you got. It was a true indication of how you are regarded in your electorate.

I also wish to acknowledge the service and deeply caring manner of Dean Harriss over the past four years in this place.

RECOGNITION OF VISITORS

[11.11 a.m.]

Mr PRESIDENT - I'd like to welcome to the Chamber the Department of Natural Resources and Environment Tasmania graduate cadets and trainees who are joining us today. It's been a bit of a different day for us. We don't swear in a new member every sitting, so you've come at a good time.

Also, the Hiscutt family are joining us and that's lovely to see our former leader back there.

Members - Hear, hear.

QUESTIONS ON NOTICE - ANSWERS

No. 28 - AFL Head Injuries

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

[11.12 a.m.]

- (1) Given that Tasmanian Football Club Ltd (Tasmania Devils) and its licence is owned by the AFL, with the Tasmanian Government as the key funding and development partner:
 - (a) Does the Government have, or intend to take, legal advice on its risk of exposure to action for compensation for any future claim by a Devils player;
 - (b) What assurances does the Government have that the Board of the Tasmania Devils, as a matter of sound governance, have, or intend to take, legal advice on the risk of exposure to action for compensation for any future claim by a Devils player; and

- (c) If such an action were to arise on such an uninsurable risk, what would be the consequences for a possible claimant, the Devils as a team with the AFL as its owner, and the Government as the key funding partner?
- (2) Given that Section 7 of the *Workers Rehabilitation and Compensation Act 1988* (Tas) exempts AFL players from cover, and the fact that AFL concussion rates are among the highest for any team sport anywhere in the world:
 - (a) Will the Government follow the 2023 Senate '*Concussions and repeated head trauma in contact sports*' Inquiry recommendation to encourage state and territory governments to engage with professional sporting organisations to explore how the general exclusion of professional sports people from various state and territory workers' compensation schemes could be removed; and
 - (b) If not, what confidence can an AFL player have, that signs up to play for the Devils, that there will be adequate workplace cover for a TPD arising from their workplace as a contracted employee?

ANSWER

Mr President, with your indulgence, I'd also like to congratulate and welcome the new member for Huon to this House and to the Legislative Council family and again offer my congratulations and a welcome back to the member for Rosevears, who we saw run a fantastic campaign. So, congratulations to you both.

The answer to question No. 28, asked by the honourable member for Mersey, Mr Gaffney is:

- (1) (a) The Tasmanian government expects the AFL, and indeed all sporting organisations, to work to reduce head injury and concussion risk as far as possible, and notes recent rule changes and protocols implemented by the AFL to that end. While the Tasmanian government has a key funding role in the establishment and operations of the Tasmania Football Club Ltd (Tasmania Devils), it is not involved in any decisions which impact upon a player's terms of employment or playing conditions.
- (b) The board of the Tasmania Devils is a skills-based board. It is not a matter for government to seek assurances in this regard. It is a matter for the board to consider as part of its risk management considerations.
- (c) The government is not aware of any action in relation to compensation claims by AFL players against state governments in relation to these matters.
- (2) (a) While the government appreciates the valid questions raised by the member for Mersey, it is the broadly consistent position of Australian jurisdictions that workers compensation schemes are not the appropriate mechanism for addressing these concerns for the following reasons:

- Sport inherently encourages risk-taking behaviour that is incompatible with the spirit of work health and safety legislation.
- Employer obligations under the act may be very onerous, and possibly impractical, for some sports clubs.
- Insurance premiums may be very onerous for small clubs and seen as disproportionate to the benefits provided.
- Tasmania's workers compensation scheme may lack flexibility for sportspeople wishing to choose their own treatment providers, and whose recovery aims differ from those of the act.
- Including some sportspeople but not others may give rise to inconsistencies or unintended consequences.

The exclusion of AFL sportspersons from Tasmania's workers compensation scheme is broadly consistent with arrangements in other Australian jurisdictions.

- (b) As this aspect of the question relates to employment conditions and workplace coverage for a total and permanent disability arising from employment, an AFL player would need to pursue the matter directly with their employer, the Tasmania Devils.

No. 31 - Victims of Crime

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

Through recent discussions with individuals who have lived experience as victims of crime, it has become clear there are gaps in support for those affected by a wide range of crimes.

- (1) In relation to current legislative and service frameworks that support victims of crime in Tasmania, will the government:
 - (a) support the Tasmania Law Reform Institute to undertake a full review of existing legislation and services currently available to victims of crime, given the act has not been substantively reviewed since its inception in 1976?
 - (b) support the establishment of a victims of crime support group, to be run for and by victims of crime, to provide peer support, advocacy and connection to services?
 - (c) support amendments to the *Victims of Crime Assistance Act 1976* to broaden the definition of 'offence' to include aggravated burglary as defined in section 245 of the Criminal Code?

- (2) If the government supports broadening the definition of 'offence' to include aggravated burglary, will it expedite legislative amendments to the *Victims of Crime Assistance Act 1976* to bring it into effect as soon as possible?

ANSWER

- (1) (a) The Attorney-General has written to the Tasmanian Law Reform Institute proposing draft terms of reference to the review of the *Victims of Crime Assistance Act 1976*, having regard to the age of the act and the report of the Commission of Inquiry into the Tasmanian Government's Responses to Child Sexual Abuse in Institutional Settings. The terms of reference seek that the review examine and report on:

- any potential reforms to the act and regulations that would improve the operation of the legislation and functions of the Criminal Injuries Compensation Commissioners any desirable changes to jurisdiction, powers, practices and/or procedures under the act and the department's Victim Assistance Unit that would better serve the needs of victims of crime
- any potential reforms to the act and regulations that would improve the management of applications under the act and to consider any reforms that would make the operation more trauma informed
- any other relating matters, including consideration of the needs of Tasmanians and prioritising available resources and support to victims of crime in the most effective manner in a budget-constrained environment.

The TLRI has been engaging with the Department of Justice and has produced a project plan and quote for this work. The Attorney-General has approved that this review be undertaken, following the procurement process being completed.

- (b) The establishment of such a support group requires careful consideration, taking into account governance arrangements and the available resources of the government.

There are existing victim/survivor advisory groups established, such as the Family and Sexual Violence Victim-Survivor Advisory Council and the Child Sexual Abuse Victim-Survivor Advisory Group. Both groups are administratively supported and funded by the Department of Premier and Cabinet.

In addition to the victim/survivor advisory group and advisory council administered through DPAC, there is also the Tasmanian Family and Sexual Violence Alliance which has been established as the peak body for the family and sexual violence sectors. The alliance's priorities include 'gaining deeper lived experience perspectives on service demand and innovative service approaches'.

These are meaningful and purpose-driven steps to improve access to justice for victim/survivors of family and sexual violence.

Notwithstanding this, it is accepted that current options available to victims of crime are limited to specific areas.

There is an opportunity to consider expansion of the supports to facilitate targeted engagement with, and support to, victims of crime who are not represented by the existing victim/survivor groups. The government is engaging with advocates in this space to explore how best to support victims of crime, including through a potential community-led peer support group.

- (c) The definition of 'offence' under the *Victims of Crime Assistance Act 1976* covers a wide range of offence types involving physical violence or threats of violence. This includes, but is not limited to, murder, manslaughter, assault, aggravated burglary, grievous bodily harm, wounding and assault. Aggravated burglary is compensable under the *Victims of Crime Assistance Act 1976* when it involves physical violence or threat of violence by one person against another.

Therefore, the government is not considering amendments to the *Victims of Crime Assistance Act 1976* to include aggravated burglary within the definition of 'offence' because the act already enables access to compensation for aggravated burglary provided there was physical violence or threats of violence.

- (2) As previously stated, the government is not considering amendments to the *Victims of Crime Assistance Act 1976* to include aggravated burglary within the definition of 'offence' because the act already enables access to compensation for aggravated burglary provided there was physical violence or threats of violence.

The government will look to the findings of the upcoming TLRI report in assessing opportunities to amend the *Victims of Crime Assistance Act* to holistically improve how it addresses the needs of victims of crime.

No. 32 - Macquarie Point Stadium - Traffic Management Plans

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

[11.21 a.m.]

In light of the accident on the Tasman Bridge on Wednesday 15 April 2026, when the traffic was at a standstill and cars backed up for kilometres in all directions, and with the probability of 23,000 fans converging at the Macquarie Point Stadium:

- (1) What strategies will be considered in the event of an accident occurring on a crucial transport route into Macquarie Point?

- (2) In the case of traffic accidents how will emergency services, i.e. ambulance, police, fire brigade, enter or exit the city, CBD and hospital?
- (3) Who is responsible for the management of, and the strategy for, emergency services and transport routes and access?

ANSWER

Mr President, the response covers the questions (1) to (3).

Hobart already successfully hosts multiple large events in the CBD and waterfront. These include the Sydney to Hobart Yacht Race, the Wooden Boat Festival and the Taste of Summer, which each attract around 50,000 people. The annual Christmas pageant and Anzac Day March also attract many thousands. Emergency services have extensive experience operating during these large-scale events, and stadium events will be managed in a similar way.

In preparation for major events, emergency services undertake detailed planning to ensure they can continue to deliver essential services. This planning includes the development of contingency measures to respond effectively in the event of traffic incidents or other disruptions.

Mr Gaffney - Sorry, Leader, did you say who is responsible for the management of, sorry?

Ms RATTRAY - Emergency services.

No. 33 - State Service SES Positions

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

[11.23 a.m.]

The State Service Workforce Report No. 2 of 2016 recorded 183 Senior Executive Service (SES) positions in the Tasmanian public sector. Figures provided by the Premier's office in response to a question on notice I asked on 18 March 2026 indicate that number has now increased to 266.

- (1) Can the government explain why SES positions have grown by approximately 45 per cent over the past decade, when over the same period the overall State Service workforce has grown at around half that rate?
- (2) How does the government justify this level of growth in senior executive positions?
- (3) Does the government believe it is acceptable that the total cost of SES positions for a given pay period cannot be provided because it is said to be 'complex, not held centrally and not capable of extraction'?

- (4) What steps is the government taking to ensure transparency and proper oversight of SES remuneration, particularly as agencies are restructured and responsibilities shifted?
- (5) In a recent memorandum, Head of the State Service Kathrine Morgan-Wicks referred to the State Service being 'redesigned' and 'right-sized'.
 - (i) How is that 'right size' being determined?
 - (ii) Will the redesign and right-sizing include a reduction in SES positions, in line with any broader workforce reductions?

ANSWER

The answer to question No. 33 from the member for Elwick, who is reading as I go intently is:

- (1) The Senior Executive Service represents a small portion of the Tasmanian State Service. As of 31 December 2025, SES officers comprised 0.7 per cent of Tasmanian State Service positions by headcount, and individual salaries for key management personnel are transparently reported in each agency's annual reports, which are publicly available on agency websites.

There is a table but it's only a short one so I will read it. The number of SES officers as of June 2016 and December 2025:

Head of Agency, June 2016: 15; December 2025: 18;

Prescribed Office Holder, June 2016: 3; December 2025: 4;

Senior Executive Service, June 2016: 147; December 2025: 220;

Equivalent Specialist, June 2016: 18; December 2025: 24.

The total for June 2016 is 183 and December 2025 is 266.

Across the period from June 2016 to December 2025, the number of Head of Agency, SES and equivalent specialist offices increased from 183 to 266, reflecting changes in the size, structure and complexity of the State Service over that time. This includes modest increases in Heads of Agency which are required to exist for each agency under the State Service Act 2000 (from 15 to 18), Prescribed Office Holders (from 3 to 4), Senior Executive Service officers (from 147 to 220), and Equivalent Specialist officers (from 18 to 24).

The SES remains a tightly controlled component of the state service. Agencies are required to justify any request to the Premier for creation of SES positions based on a clear framework for assessment. SES and equivalent specialist appointments are subject to prescribed recruitment processes under an employment direction where merit must be taken into account.

- (2) Growth in SES roles reflects a range of structural, policy and operational changes across agencies. Key drivers include the transfer of functions between agencies, the

creation of new senior positions to support whole-of-government priorities, and the expansion of capability in areas such as child safety, emergency management, major infrastructure delivery, and emerging industries. Additional increases have resulted from the government's response to the commission of inquiry and the need to strengthen governance, oversight and service delivery in high-risk areas. These roles are critical to leading major service systems, managing significant public resources, and delivery of government priorities.

- (3) The government does not hold a consolidated, system-wide dataset that would allow the total cost of SES positions for a single pay period to be produced accurately and reliably. This is because remuneration for senior officers is made up of multiple components that vary by agency, role, and individual circumstance, and these elements are not currently captured in a single central system.

To produce an accurate figure, each agency would be required to manually extract and calculate remuneration across a range of categories - including base salary, allowances including any amount paid to temporarily undertake a higher level office, and superannuation. These components can fluctuate from pay period to pay period, and the work required to compile and validate this information across all agencies would be substantial. At present, undertaking this exercise would divert significant resources away from core service delivery and priority workforce activities.

- (4) The government has several mechanisms in place to ensure transparency and proper oversight of SES remuneration, particularly during period of agency restructuring and changes in responsibility.

Senior Executive (SES) and Equivalent Specialist (ES) Offices are the mechanism to appoint highly experienced and qualified people to provide strategic leadership and high level skills, within and across agencies, in order to meet government's objectives and deliver services to Tasmania.

The Mercer CED job evaluation system is the prescribed tool used to assess and classify the majority of SES and ES duties, ensuring a consistent and transparent basis for determining classification of offices. Salaries reflect this classification with any variation in the standard salaries approved by me as Premier requiring a comprehensive case to the Head of the State Service justifying the salary.

SES and ES offices may only be created by the Premier and only in my consideration of a Head of Agency's request that an office is needed to perform duties of a senior executive or equivalent specialist nature in that agency.

Offices may then be abolished where the duties are no longer required, including where this relates to rightsizing the State Service to maintain or reduce agency FTE. Heads of Agencies are expected to progress requests for abolition to me as Premier in a timely manner.

In addition, offices are routinely reviewed when they become vacant to confirm ongoing need and abolished where they are no longer required.

Salary increases to the SES are not automatically applied. Any increase is considered and approved by the Premier to ensure the appropriate management and alignment with the senior leadership and accountability requirements of this cohort.

- (5) The government has committed to reducing the size and cost of Tasmanian State Service (TSS) Agencies to meet its revised fiscal strategy targets, to return employment numbers to sustainable levels, and to align size and structure of the Tasmanian public service to population levels.

Heads of Agencies are actively managing their SES and ES establishments in the context of the broader recruitment freeze on non-essential roles and need for FTE reductions. SES and ES office vacancies are assessed prior to any advertising, consistent with the approach applied to other senior roles.

As with sound organisational design principles, and aligned with the government's broader FTE reduction strategy, the number of SES and ES offices will be reviewed to ensure we continue to have fit for purpose organisational structures to support the essential service delivery requirements to the Tasmanian community.

RECOGNITION OF VISITORS

[11.31 a.m.]

Mr PRESIDENT - Before I call for tabling of papers, I welcome to the Chamber the year 9 and 10 students from Fahan School who are joining us today. We're working through our formal business and then we will go on to other business later on through the day.

TABLED PAPERS

Public Accounts Committee No. 18 of 2026 - Review of the Tasmanian Fiscal Sustainability Report 2026

[11.31 a.m.]

Ms FORREST (Murchison) - Thank you, Mr President. I have the honour to present the report of the Parliamentary Standing Committee of Public Accounts No. 18 of 2026, Review of the Tasmanian Fiscal Sustainability Report 2026.

Mr President, I move -

That the report be received and printed.

Report received and printed.

Mr President, I move -

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

Motion agreed to.

Joint Sessional Committee on Recommendations of Final Report of the Commission of Inquiry - Second Interim Report (Part Two)

Ms WEBB (Nelson) - Mr President, I have the honour to present the Second Interim Report (Part Two) 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.

Mr President, I move -

That the report be received and printed.

Report received and printed.

SUSPENSION OF SITTING

[11.33 a.m.]

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

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

This is to enable the attendance of this House to the House of Assembly for the purpose of listening to the apology for the RA Rodda Museum.

Motion agreed to.

Sitting suspended from 11.33 a.m. to 12.27 p.m.

MOTIONS

Tasmanian Budget 2026-27 Estimates Committees - Establishment

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

That the Legislative Council establish two Estimates Committees, each consisting of five members.

And that -

Ms Forrest;
Ms Glade-Wright;
Ms Lovell;
Ms O'Connor; and
Ms Thomas
be of Committee A,

and

Ms *Armitage*;
 Mr *Edmunds*;
 Mr *Gaffney*;
 Mr *Hiscutt*; and
 Ms *Webb*
 be of Committee B.

That the Estimates Committees report upon the proposed expenditures contained in the Appropriation Bills (No. 1 and No. 2) 2026 and Budget Papers by no later than Friday, 19 June 2026.

And that the Schedule emailed to Members on Monday, 18 May 2026 be adopted as the Estimates Committees timetable.

LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL – ESTIMATES COMMITTEES SCHEDULE 2026

Monday 1 June 2026			
Commencing at 9.00 am	Committee A (Chamber)	Hon Eric Abetz MP Hon Madeleine Ogilvie MP	Treasurer Minister for Macquarie Point Urban Renewal Minister for Community and Multicultural Affairs
Commencing at 9.00 am	Committee B (Committee Room No. 2)	Hon Guy Barnett MP Hon Gavin Pearce MP	Attorney-General Minister for Justice, Corrections and Rehabilitation Minister for Small Business, Trade and Consumer Affairs Minister for Primary Industries and Water Minister for Veterans' Affairs
Tuesday 2 June 2026			
Commencing at 9.00 am	Committee A (Chamber)	Hon Nick Duigan MLC Hon Madeleine Ogilvie MP	Minister for Energy and Renewables Minister for Sport Minister for Parks Minster for Arts and Heritage Minister for Innovation, Science and the Digital Economy Minister for Environment
Commencing at 9.00 am	Committee B (Committee Room No. 2)	Hon Jeremy Rockliff MP Hon Jane Howlett MP	Premier Minister for Tourism, Hospitality and Events Minister for Women and the Prevention of Family Violence Minister for Racing
Wednesday 3 June 2026			
Commencing at 9.00 am	Committee A (Chamber)	Hon Bridget Archer MP	Minister for Health, Mental Health and Wellbeing Minister for Ageing Minister for Aboriginal Affairs
Commencing at 9.00 am	Committee B (Committee Room No. 2)	Hon Felix Ellis MP	Minister for Police, Fire and Emergency Management Minister for Skills and Jobs Minister for Business, Industry and Resources

Thursday 4 June 2026			
Commencing at 9.00 am	Committee A (Chamber)	Hon Kerry Vincent MLC	Minister for Infrastructure and Transport Minister for Housing and Planning Minister for Local Government
Commencing at 9.00 am	Committee B (Committee Room No. 2)	Hon Jo Palmer MLC	Minister for Education Minister for Children and Youth Minister for Disability Services

Motion agreed to.

Tasmanian Budget 2026-27 Estimates Committees - Request for Assembly Ministers to Attend

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

That the Legislative Council having appointed two Estimates Committees reflecting the distribution of Government Ministers' portfolio responsibilities, requests that the House of Assembly give leave to all Ministers to appear before and give evidence to the relevant Council Estimates Committee in relation to the Budget Estimates and related documents.

Motion agreed to.

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

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

Motion agreed to.

RECOGNITION OF VISITORS

[12.30 p.m.]

Mr PRESIDENT - Honourable members, it is now time for our special interest matters. I make it that we have six five-minute contributions so we should be able to squeeze it in. For the first speaker, I'd like to welcome guests of the honourable member for Hobart to our Chamber today who, no doubt, will be formally introduced when the member takes the lectern and I invite her to now.

SPECIAL INTEREST MATTERS

Rwandan Genocide Commemoration

[12.31 p.m.]

Ms O'CONNOR (Hobart) - Mr President, there is a Rwandan word, *kwibuka*, that has one meaning but is layered with so many for the Tutsi people of Rwanda. *Kwibuka* means 'to remember' and in that remembering, to keep a flame alive.

In the Chamber with us today is a great Tasmanian, a survivor and advocate for truth, my friend, Faina Iligoga. Her husband, Aubert Ruzigandekwe, cannot be here today because he is at work.

Aubert and Faina's stories of terror, grief and escape to safety are harrowing and very hard to take in as reality, but the ruthless, systematic campaign of murder on a mind-numbing scale they escaped from did happen to the world's enduring shame. Every year in Hobart for more than 20 years now, Aubert, Faina and other members of Tasmania's Rwandan Tutsi community has gathered together with many of us who love and support them, to *kwibuka*, to remember the victims of one of the most bloody, brutal and senseless slaughters of the 20th century. We hear the harrowing stories of survivors; feel just briefly, but very directly their profound trauma. We hear sometimes from their children, the next generation born in trauma, but safe here in peaceful, loving Lutruwita/Tasmania. We light candles and we *kwibuka*.

What is now known as the Rwandan Genocide began on or around 7 April 1994 and ended on 15 July that same year. In just 100 days, an estimated 800,000 to 1 million people, members of the Rwandan Tutsi minority, a number of their supporters among the progressive Hutu and the Twa people were killed by rampaging machete-wielding gangs of Hutu. Whole families were wiped out by former neighbours and friends. Multiple generations; men, women, children - so many children - grandparents; innocent people whose lives were snatched away, ending all that promise and potential. All those countless hopes and dreams lost forever.

And the world just stood by. The United Nations sent peacekeepers in who had no authority and no collective will to act to save Tutsi lives. The world, indeed, as it is with the suffering of the Palestinian people in Gaza now, simply looked the other way. For humanity fails to learn its hardest, most violent lessons. So, while the world stood by, the suffering went on for 100 days. The final death toll will never be known; the emptiness left behind will never be filled, and I read now just briefly from Faina's Churchill Fellowship report:

I was born and grew up in Rwanda, a small country in East Africa. I lived through the 1994 genocide against the Tutsi in Rwanda and was lucky to survive it with my husband, my daughter who was almost nine months old, and my three young sisters.

However, 71 of my close family members and 60 of Aubert's were murdered during this genocide. I know firsthand what it is like to live through [such a] tragedy and how it shapes the rest of your life; it's an experience that no one would wish on others.

One ... way to explain the root cause of the genocide against the Tutsi of Rwanda is to trace it back to the time of colonisation. The history of Rwanda explains how Rwandans lived in harmony for centuries until colonisation took over their country. 'In 1899 Rwanda became a German colony. After the defeat of the Germans during [World War I], subsequently in 1919, Rwanda became a mandate territory of the League of Nations under the administration of Belgium'

And it devolved after that.

There are no answers and no real justice for those left behind, or for the estimated two million Tutsi Rwandan people who sought sanctuary in other countries, places like Tasmania. Like Tasmania's Rwandan Tutsi community, we are an island, of course, with its own bleak history of brutal colonisation and attempt to erase a whole people, the Palawa, from this earth. As it is with the Tutsis who escaped Rwanda, the Palawa survived and are strong in their culture and identity.

Today I'm blessed to have been invited to attend each year's *kwibuka* since I was first elected. I've watched as our Rwandan community has grown, and despite it all, grown stronger. I've watched families grow and children become young Tasmanians shining with promise.

There are five Tasmanian Tutsi families, comprised of: Aubert Ruzigandekwe and Faina Iligoga and their four children; Lambert Ndimanyi and Christine Kayitesi and their four children; Yvonne Ilibagiza and Callan Cooper and their two children; Irene Nyiransabimana and her two children; and Carine Maniragaba and Innocent Kayitare and their one child.

The second generation of the diaspora will too, of course, carry the trauma of genocide and so will their children; such is the way of trauma. It raises the question: how does a community and a people heal from such horrors? That is the question Faina was asking for her Churchill Fellowship to Rwanda, Cambodia, Belgium and France. The community's goal, driven by Faina and Aubert, is to establish a healing and documentation centre here in Nipaluna/Hobart, a place to share knowledge and stories; to preserve memories and educate a broader community; to teach lessons of acceptance, empathy, inclusion and respect; to combat racism and discrimination; to prevent genocide denial - a place to hold the truth, a place for *kwibuka*.

I highly recommend Faina's excellent Churchill Fellowship report, which I'm sure she'd be glad to provide to anyone who asked. I hope it will inspire honourable members to get behind the project. In closing, I'm sure all honourable members will join me in expressing love and enduring support for Tasmania's Tutsi Rwandan community and to thank them for all they contribute to our beautiful island state.

Members - Hear, hear.

Tones and I at Ulverstone and Jyron Flannery

[12.37 p.m.]

Mr HISCUTT (Montgomery) - Mr President, today I rise to tell a special story about Jyron Flannery, a 20-year-old man from Ulverstone who has achieved something amazing.

There's a line in the song 'Dance Monkey' by Tones and I that goes, 'I've never seen anybody do the things you do before.' For a rural town and rural people, that feeling hits close to home. We come from a place where big dreams can feel a long way from the big stages, but sometimes all it takes is for one person to say, 'move for me, move for me, move for me', and suddenly the whole community starts to shift.

Inspired by the raw honesty of Tones and I, that sense of pushing through, of turning small-town roots into something that the world can hear, this is the story of bringing that energy back home, of proving that even from a quiet coastal town, you can make something that makes people stop, listen, and maybe even dance; and dance we did, Mr President, as on 2 May Tones and I came to Ulverstone for what is believed to be one of the biggest concerts the town has ever seen. Over 7000 people are said to have attended - I did with my wife and three kids - and we had an absolute blast of a time. The whole community enjoyed the benefits that the concert brought to town.

I just want to tell a little bit about the story of the person who initiated the process and how he has followed it through to the end. Jyron Flannery has just turned 20 but is a huge Tones and I fan, following her avidly on Facebook. On 18 January, he saw something that she posted that triggered something in him. She said, and I paraphrase, I'm back in my home country, Australia, one big show, all ages, whatever place goes the hardest gets the show, and I will bring the stage if it's a small town.

Within 45 minutes, Jyron had started the Facebook page: Tones and I come to Ulverstone, Tasmania. She later went on to say that she would do a few more than one show, doing regional shows in places like Ingham, Maryborough, Longwood and Wollongong, and then, on 2 May, Ulverstone. She said she would go to the places that went the hardest; well, Jyron did exactly that. He posted and shared the page prolifically. It now has over 4000 followers. He engaged with local councillors and politicians. He engaged with the media and basically talked about it with whomever would listen.

Jyron has had his share of hardships over the years, but for a young boy from Ulverstone, this was a triumph. Jyron shared with me that one of the reasons he wanted to give back to the community was following in his father's footsteps. His father, Anthony, is a leader with the volunteer marine rescue which operates out of Ulverstone. Helping people is in the Flannery blood. Although it was never certain, there were some hints along the way. It was finally confirmed that Tones and I would come to Ulverstone when the following was posted on the Tones and I Facebook page on 15 March, 'ULVERSTONE. What you doing first week on May?'

People are coming from across the nation to this event. The local community has got involved as well, with many businesses giving tickets out in promotions or inviting the singer to come to their business to visit. Wings Wildlife Park even offered to let her pat a Tassie devil. Special thanks must be given to the local Central Coast Council, who have supported this initiative all the way through, with Mayor Cheryl Fuller and Councillor Kate Wylie leading the charge along with others. Their support has been invaluable in seeing this concert come to fruition, but none of it would have been possible if one humble young man hadn't put up his hand and said, why not? Why shouldn't our town be given this opportunity? And he gave it his all, and he succeeded. Jyron had this to say to his Facebook followers a couple of days after the concert:

Still taking it all in... what a day for Ulverstone

I just want to say a massive thank you to my friends, my family, and our wider community for the incredible support and response to the Tones and I concert. The energy, the smiles and the way everyone came together is something I'll never forget.

To the Central Coast Council, Face To Face Touring, Tones and I's management team, our amazing local businesses, and every single person working behind the scenes, thank you for helping make this event run so smoothly and turning it into something truly special.

And to everyone who jumped on board the campaign and non-stop backed it

I'm extremely proud of what we achieved together. This wasn't just a concert, it was proof that of what's possible when the community backs something and believes in it.

And trust me... this isn't the end. This is the only beginning. I've got some big ideas that I'm working on and I can't wait to hopefully bring them to life, so stay tuned.

Thank you all for sticking by me. It just shows what we can do when we come together and use the power of social media for the right reasons.

Tones and I has another lyric that goes, 'They say, "Oh my God, I see the way you shine" ', because on that night, the shine wasn't just on one artist on the stage but the whole community was shining thanks to one young man. As a community, we thank him and we are very proud of him.

Palliative Care Tasmania

[12.42 p.m.]

Mr GAFFNEY (Mersey) - Mr President, I rise today to speak about Palliative Care Tasmania (PCT), an organisation founded in 1989 as a member-based entity to grow awareness of this vital area of care. Regarded as a peak body for almost four decades, PCT has pursued a mission to educate, lead and influence policy and practice, to advocate for and support people of all ages so that they can equitably access quality palliative care across Tasmania.

PCT has a significant role in representing a diverse sector, one which embraces not only health professionals but also the carers, volunteers, families and friends who deliver compassionate care across the state. PCT responds to the increasing needs of our community where the impact of life-limiting conditions is growing year on year, and the experience of those living longer and becoming frail in stages of advanced ageing is often becoming more complex.

PCT is affiliated with Palliative Care Australia as one of the eight jurisdictional member organisations, where it contributes strongly to the national agenda for palliative care.

As part of this work, PCT and its counterparts recognised National Palliative Care Week across the country last week, adopting an important theme: 'Getting to the heart of it - big questions, real answers.' It is this theme, which speaks to a topic that is deeply human and that I draw our attention to today.

At some point in our lives, in some form or another, every one of us will face serious illness, ageing, dying, grief or loss. Yet despite the universality of this shared experience, conversations about palliative care, including the end of life, are too often avoided, misunderstood or left until a crisis occurs.

The theme of this National Palliative Care Week encourages all Australians to ask the following questions: What does quality of life mean? What matters most to me - in life and in death? How do I want to be cared for? How might I wish to die? How can we support one another with compassion through life's most vulnerable chapters, including the final pages?

Importantly, the theme focused on real answers - not overused or simplified cliches but answers grounded in honesty, dignity and care. These answers need to consider the nature of the individual and the community context in which they are held. Together we can play a role in shaping those answers.

Let's start by asking, what is palliative care? Palliative care is often misunderstood as being only about the final days of life. In reality, palliative care can commence at any time: from the moment a diagnosis is received, or as ageing brings inevitable challenges including frailty. Palliative care is not just about dying either: it's about helping people live as well as possible, for as long as possible. It's a person-centred care that supports physical comfort, emotional wellbeing, spiritual needs, and connection with family and community - with the things that matter most.

Palliative care is often provided alongside active treatment for a time. It can begin early and, importantly, it is not only about the person who is unwell but it also supports families, carers and loved ones.

In Tasmania, Palliative Care Tasmania plays a vital role in building understanding and confidence, helping those who are often at their most vulnerable to navigate their way across this complex sector. In delivering information, advocacy, education and support to Tasmanians navigating serious illness, dying, death and bereavement, PCT can connect individuals and families with services and resources that bring dignity and quality of life. PCT intentionally supports those conversations that many people find difficult to initiate, and the team promotes awareness that quality care is everyone's business, not only the responsibility of hospitals or healthcare professionals.

We know that most people wish to experience end of life at home. We know that our system of hospitals and aged care facilities simply cannot cope with an ageing population. We know that building compassionate communities across our state is more vital now than ever before.

One of the most important things we can do as a community is to normalise conversations about death and dying. When people feel able to talk openly about dying and end-of-life wishes, uncertainty and fear can be reduced. Families are better prepared, decisions become clearer, and people are more likely to receive care that reflects their values and preferences.

Compassionate communities can be created when death is discussed openly by neighbours, in workplaces and in schools. Hospitals, aged care providers, volunteers, health professionals and governments all play a role in supporting people at the end of life.

As community leaders, we have a role to play in fostering greater awareness and understanding of palliative care. By encouraging open conversations, improving access to services, supporting carers, and investing in compassionate communities, we can help ensure that Tasmanians can experience quality palliative care, including an approach toward the end of life which offers dignity, choice and support. Let's work together to create a state where everyone feels confident to talk about palliative care, including end of life. I urge all Tasmanians to ask the big questions, listen to the real answers, and help create communities where compassionate care is understood, valued and available to all.

McIntyre Constituent Acknowledgements

Rhylan Walters - Winner of Simpson Prize for 2026

Wayne Johnston - Service to Local Government as Meander Valley Mayor

Janet Lambert - Northern Midlands Deputy Mayor - Retirement

Margaret Dennis - Winner of Peter Parssey Award

[12.47 p.m.]

Ms RATTRAY (McIntyre - Leader for the Government in the Legislative Council) - Mr President, today I would like to share four acknowledgements from across the McIntyre electorate.

The first is about a young man, Rhylan Walters, who has been named the Tasmanian winner of the prestigious Simpson Prize for 2026. Rhylan entered this competition last year while in Grade 10 at the Scottsdale High School. Rhylan is currently studying at Newstead College.

The Simpson Prize is no ordinary achievement. It is a national competition that challenges students to deeply explore Australia's wartime history, examining the experiences, sacrifices and perspectives of those who served our nation. Each year, students from across the country engage in rigorous research and critical thinking, producing essays that reflect both historical understanding and personal insight.

To be selected as a state winner is a remarkable accomplishment. It represents not only academic excellence but also curiosity, empathy, and a genuine commitment to understanding the stories that have shaped our nation. Rhylan's success speaks volumes about his dedication. It shows a willingness to go beyond the classroom - to question, to analyse and to connect with the past in a meaningful way. These are qualities that will serve him well, not only in his future studies but, I feel sure, in life.

As part of this achievement, Rhylan was invited to participate in the Simpson Prize Canberra Study Tour, where he recently joined fellow winners from around the country. The tour included visits to national institutions, historical sites and an official ceremony at the Australian Parliament House. Rhylan will also participate in an international study tour later in the year as part of this prize.

What truly stands out with this recognition is the strength of this young Tasmanian who is thoughtful, capable and engaged with the world around him. Rhylan's achievement is something to be incredibly proud of, to have represented his school, his community and his state with distinction. He is certainly an inspiration to his peers and a reminder of what can be achieved through hard work and passion, and haven't we heard a little bit about that as well this morning? My congratulations to Rhylan on this well-deserved honour and look forward to seeing what he will accomplish in the years ahead.

I would now like to recognise and congratulate Wayne Johnston on his service to local government as Mayor of Meander Valley Council. Most will be aware Wayne has recently announced he will be not recontesting the mayor's position at the local government elections.

Wayne's time in this role has been defined by dedication, integrity and a genuine commitment to the people of his community. Local government is not always easy. It requires patience, resilience and the ability to listen carefully to a wide range of voices. Wayne has done this with steady leadership and a clear sense of purpose.

Under Wayne's guidance, Meander Valley Council has continued to grow and thrive while maintaining the strong community spirit that makes this region so special. Wayne has been a strong advocate for residents, a thoughtful decision-maker and a leader who never lost sight of the importance of community.

On behalf of the Meander Valley community, I genuinely thank Wayne for his leadership and advocacy. As October approaches and retirement from local government commences, best wishes are extended to Wayne and his wife Lisa, and trust that retirement is filled with more golf, more travel, plenty of relaxation, an abundance of good health and ample time to enjoy their precious family. Congratulations to Wayne and thank you.

I would also like to acknowledge another recent announcement from the Deputy Mayor and Councillor Janet Lambert on her retirement after 15 years of serving the Northern Midlands Council. Throughout her years of dedicated service, Janet has demonstrated outstanding leadership, integrity and commitment to the community. Her contribution to council has been marked by thoughtful advocacy, tireless work on behalf of residents and a genuine passion for improving the lives of others.

As Deputy Mayor, Janet has provided support to both fellow councillors and council staff, helping to foster collaboration and positive outcomes across the municipality. Her professionalism, compassion and dedication have earned the respect and admiration of colleagues and community members alike.

We thank Janet for her valued contribution to local government and wish her every happiness, good health and success in retirement and future endeavours - and I think a lot more fishing.

Finally, an update on someone I have spoken about in this place back in 2024 for her outstanding community service, Margaret Dennis, affectionately known as 'Marg'. Recently, on 30 April, Melissa from my office and I attended a presentation where LAFM, together with the Australasian Institute of Emergency Services, presented Marg with the Peter Parssey Award in recognition of her outstanding volunteer service and dedication. This award reflects Margaret's longstanding commitment, generosity and tireless contribution to the Volunteer

Ambulance Officers Association of Tasmania over many, many years. Her roles have included secretary, treasurer and editor of the organisation's newsletter, *First Response*, a role she still undertakes today.

Congratulations, Marg, on this well-deserved recognition; and we thank her for her exceptional contribution and continued commitment to the community.

Tristan Gourlay's Circumnavigation of the Globe

[12.54 p.m.]

Ms ARMITAGE (Launceston) - Mr President, as Kevin Green stated in *Afloat* magazine in May 2026, 'Tasmanian sailors are known for their hardiness and none more so than the Gourlay family with both father Ken and now son Tristan completing circumnavigations.' Today, I highlight the extraordinary efforts of yachtsman Tristan Gourlay, who recently broke the Australian record for a solo, unassisted, nonstop circumnavigation of the globe.

At 1.35 p.m. on 9 November, Tristan left Hobart on board his 17-metre yacht, *Blue Moon II*, on his mission to be the fastest Australian to circumnavigate the world, carrying with him a Tasmanian flag given to him by the honourable Jo Palmer, member for Rosevears.

His course was to take on the five major capes: South Cape, New Zealand; Cape Horn, South America; then up across the equator and around St Peter and St Paul Rocks; Cape Agulhas, South Africa; Cape Leeuwin, Western Australia; and finally South East Cape, Tasmania.

The *Blue Moon II* is an Adams 16.4 yacht that Tristan and his father, Ken, purchased in 2023 with the plan to compete in the 2025 Melbourne to Osaka, a two-handed yacht race in which they came second in their division. After delivering her back from Osaka to Tasmania, Tristan started preparing her for the circumnavigation, using the expertise of local businesses and professionals, getting confident that he was ready for the trip.

Using the Iron Pot and the top of Bruny Island as his starting line, he headed east, passing under New Zealand, then the long isolated miles across the South Pacific. Tristan passed 200 nautical miles off Point Nemo during this time, which is the most isolated spot in any ocean in the world. Then he headed for Cape Horn. The day before he rounded this great milestone, Tristan had a small fire in the galley caused by degraded flexible gas hose. This was Tristan's most frightening time of the trip. Thankfully, however, he was able to put the fire out without any major damage being done. He was able to find another similar hose and jury-rig it up for the rest of the trip.

Tristan then passed east of the Falkland Islands, at which time the motor started playing up, but Tristan was able to stop it before any major damage was caused. A diaphragm in a fuel pump had leaked fuel into the engine oil, which was something that really needed a mechanic's expertise to repair. After that, Tristan's internet connections were cut due to a transformer failing, which left him without weather or social media. Thankfully, the rest of his trip up the South Atlantic went smoothly and Tristan managed to catch a few fish to supplement his food and provide him with fresh yellowfin sashimi, his favourite meal.

Soon, it was time to head south out of the tropics and into the Indian Ocean, which Tristan says always seems to have a couple of steady swells running. This made it a bit rougher and with some overcast days, Tristan started running out of power for his autopilots. This required him to hand-steer a lot of the time, which became physically draining. Stopping, however, would mean it would take longer to finish, but as Tristan passed the islands of Tristan da Cunha, he worked out that if he kept pushing he could make it in under 140 days. This required a great deal of mental and physical stamina as he steered towards Tasmania. During this time, Tristan recounts seeing amazing auroras in the night sky, as well as a meteor shower, a truly incredible experience.

Seeing Tasmania after all this time was elating. Conquering a solo navigation 22,500 nautical miles in record time was in Tristan's grasp. At 6.20 a.m. on 28 March, Tristan crossed the finish line at the Iron Pot. It was official: Tristan Gourlay had become the fastest Australian to circumnavigate the world leaving from Australia. The voyage was timed by the Tasmanian Yacht Club and his finishing time was 138 days, 16 hours and 49 minutes. I note, this is 41 days ahead of the existing record, held by none other than Tristan's own father, Ken, from 2007.

This is such an incredible achievement and an extraordinary story and Tristan has stated how proud and honoured he is to have left and returned home to Tasmania and showcase the potential of Tasmanian sailors on the world stage. I am sure I speak for the entire community when I say just how proud we are of Tristan's achievement. Our sincerest congratulations to him and his supporters on his incredible journey.

Mr PRESIDENT - I do not know where my mathematics went wrong, but I will give the member for Elwick the call for her five-minute contribution.

Ms Rattray - Two minutes maybe. You could welcome the new members.

Welcome to New Members

[12.59 p.m.]

Ms THOMAS (Elwick) - Mr President, I mentioned earlier how wonderful it is to see our new member Ms Glade-Wright representing the people of Huon in the Chamber and our returning member for Rosevears back in the Chamber. Whilst it has been a very different start to the day today, I certainly do welcome them. I also echo your comments as we opened the session today, acknowledging the contributions of the former member for Huon, Mr Dean Harriss, who certainly did serve his electorate well during his time here, and I wish him all the very best for the future.

Mr Edmunds - I think it is really good that you have gone to the effort to make those acknowledgements while on your feet.

Ms THOMAS - Thank you, member for Pembroke.

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

QUESTIONS

Request for Answer to Question No. 30 on Notice Paper

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

I have a question on the Notice Paper on 14 April 2026 that was addressed to the Minister for Energy and Renewables. I'm just wondering when he's going to answer it.

ANSWER

Mr President, let me seek some advice.

I thank the member for the question, and I'm advised it will be with you next week.

Project Marinus Expert Advisory Panel Finding 6

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

[2.32 p.m.]

With regard to the government's Marinus Project Expert Advisory Panel's finding 6 and recommendation of an immediate establishment of a senior whole-of government taskforce reporting to the Premier and the commissioning of a cumulative impact assessment to understand how concurrent energy projects will affect housing, transport, health services, skilled labour and community wellbeing:

- (1) Has the taskforce been established? If so, when was it established? Who is on the panel? What work has been done in the cumulative impact assessment? Have any reports been provided to you or to the Premier and if so, can we have a copy?
- (2) If the taskforce has not been established, why not and when will it be?

ANSWER

With regard to the government taskforce that has been established, my understanding is that the governance for Project Marinus and Marinus Link and North West Transmission Developments, the governance overarching framework has been published on, I'm going to say, the Renewables, Climate, Future Industries Tasmania (ReCFIT) website and that would point you to the answer you seek there around the taskforce.

The government understands, of course, the importance of ensuring strong oversight, cost controls and coordination of delivery of all elements. I'm very pleased recently to have had an opportunity to meet with fellow shareholder ministers from Victoria and the Commonwealth to discuss various aspects of the project. I would note that on the Tasmanian side of Bass Strait, things are progressing well with Project Marinus. We have received the Tasmanian Planning Commission's approval for the North West Transmission Developments. We also seek Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation approval and, of course, TasNetworks has recently proceeded to financial close for that part of the development.

In terms of other parts of your question, are we talking about the housing strategy?

Ms Forrest - Cumulative impact assessment.

Mr DUIGAN - I beg your pardon?

Ms Forrest - The cumulative impact assessment.

Mr DUIGAN - I might need to seek some advice on that, or can I come back to you on that one: The cumulative impact assessment?

Ms Forrest - Has it started?

Mr DUIGAN - I would need to seek some advice on that.

Ms Forrest - So who's on the panel?

Mr DUIGAN - It's published on the ReCFIT website if you'd like to have a look at that.

Secretary of State Growth - Head of Agency Contract

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

[2.35 p.m.]

I sent through this question on 23 March. I've asked the honourable Leader for the Government regarding the Premier's announcement in his state of the state address of 3 March this year of the intention to dismantle the Department of State Growth. Media reports the current Secretary may receive a payout of more than \$1 million. Can the government please detail:

- (1) Whether the current Secretary of State Growth is employed under the standard head of agency contract? Or does it contain differing arrangements and, if so, please specify.
- (2) Regarding the termination without cause provisions contained in the current Secretary of State Growth head of agency contract:
 - (a) Whether the current Secretary of State Growth will receive a one-year payout consistent with standard head of agency contracts, or will he receive the balance of the contract paid out?
 - (b) Which current head of agency contracts contain a one-year payout arrangement in the event of termination without cause?
 - (c) Which current head of agency contracts contain arrangements where the balance of the contract is paid out in the event of termination without cause?

- (d) Upon what basis and advice has the government entered into any head of agency contractual arrangements which deviate from the standard one-year payout provision in the event of termination without cause, and from whom was any advice received?

ANSWER

- (1) The Secretary of the Department of State Growth is employed under the standard head of agency instrument of appointment. The Secretary of the Department of State Growth is currently on annual leave.
- (2) As advised in question (1), the Secretary of the Department of State Growth is employed under the standard head of agency instrument of appointment. There are provisions for termination without cause in all heads of agency instruments of appointment. Schedule 5, Termination and Discipline, clause 3:

The appointment may be terminated by the officer upon the giving of four weeks, or such lesser period as the Premier may allow, notice in writing to the Premier

Also in Schedule 5, Termination and Discipline Clause, 2(b):

The Premier may terminate this appointment by the giving of notice in writing, or payment in lieu of notice, if the operational requirements of the Crown so require.

All secretaries are employed under the standard head of agency instrument with the exception of the Secretary, Department of Premier and Cabinet, and Head of the State Service. Contractual arrangements are a matter for the Premier as the employer. Head of agency remuneration and entitlements are published each financial year as part of the departmental annual report, and these are available on agency websites.

Dowsing Point - Housing Development

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

[2.38 p.m.]

I refer to the government's media announcement on Sunday where you were present in my electorate with the Premier and the Prime Minister, sharing some big news that the Premier announced on his Facebook page, where he said: 'Meet Tasmania's newest suburb: Dowsing Point.'

I'm interested to know more about this promotion as a new suburb and wondered if you, as minister for Housing, were aware that Dowsing Point is already a well-established suburb that has about 35 houses and over 80 people living in it. Were you aware that this is the case when the announcement was made that it would be Tasmania's newest suburb, and if so, what does it mean by 'newest suburb'? Has there been any consultation with the local residents at

Dowsing Point prior to the government making this announcement or the earlier announcement about its plan to develop the land at Dowsing Point?

ANSWER

Mr President, I thank the member for the question. It was a pretty exciting time on Sunday to be invited along to that. There was no tension, just all happiness, in delivering a project that has potentially 1000 new places for Dowsing Point. It is very early days in this, and certainly I'm fully aware of the 35 houses there, because I have spoken to a couple of people in there at a photo opportunity we did there probably three months ago. I'm not sure whether the Premier is aware of it, but he would be referring to the expansion of Dowsing Point, which is understandable, with potentially 1000 mixed types of accommodation going in there.

It's still very early days. There are still negotiations with the Defence department, and it was good to have the Assistant Minister for Defence there, who was quite bright and enthusiastic about it. I think there are about 20 people on the site who they would still have to work through relocating them. When you move around the whole site, it doesn't look like there's much there, but when you start to add up the number of trucks, trailers and other operational things there, obviously the Department of Defence has got some work to do. To rehabilitate the site is one thing, but to clear the site is another thing and that's all part of what the Defence department will be doing if all this comes to fruition.

It's very exciting to be at this point of having the announcement and discussing the potential, and when you stand up there and see the potential for Hobart and Glenorchy when you're only, I think, 7.5 kilometres from the CBD and right next to major freight routes, transport routes, the Brooker, and so many different avenues for people to disperse from that site. It is a brilliant site to have this sort of development happen, and a very rare opportunity anywhere in Australia.

The master planning is something that will come through and be a responsibility of Building Tasmania. There's a long way to go, though, before we get to that stage, and there is evidence of similar sorts of sizes like this and bigger around Australia of developments like this, created and planned at a fantastic level with the community consultation, obviously council input to it and all levels of government, so that full understanding of access to the river, ferries, green area, how that will be utilised, how it will flow into Wilkinsons Point and being a strength for the whole Glenorchy region there, and into existing pathways and school mechanisms.

It's a large number of people, potentially, to bring into an area where there's an enormous amount of planning, when you start to think about how you increase that traffic flow, how you work those greenfield areas along with commercial areas, and how Wilkinsons Point will flow through into all the other different areas around Glenorchy and Hobart; but it was an exciting thing to be involved with, and it's very rare that you get the opportunities for so many different parts of the political spectrum to come together to make a solid announcement. I'm sure there will be a lot more communication and acknowledgement of the 35 houses around there, because they do understand their area very well, the couple of people I've spoken to there; they are very protective of their small park area straight opposite their houses as well.

Secretary of State Growth - Head of Agency Contract

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

[2.43 p.m.]

I'm following up on my previous question to the Leader for the Government, because the answers failed to actually answer the large bulk of the questions that were put. I just want to be clear that rather than the government telling me what they'd like to tell me about head of agency agreements, I'd like them to answer the questions I have about those agreements in question (2), parts (a) to (d), which is regarding the termination without cause provisions contained in the current secretary of State Growth's head of agency contract:

- (a) whether the current Secretary of State Growth will receive a one-year payout consistent with the standard head of agency contracts, or will he receive a balance of the contract paid out;
- (b) which current heads of agency contracts contain a one-year payout arrangement in the event of termination without cause;
- (c) which current head of agency contracts contain arrangements where the balance of the contract is paid out in the event of termination without cause; and
- (d) upon what basis and advice has the government entered into any head of agency contractual arrangements which deviate from the standard one-year payout provision in the event of termination without cause, and from whom was any advice received?

I don't need to be told the things you'd like to tell me about how terminations come about; I'd like my questions answered.

ANSWER

Mr President, I will certainly take on board the honourable member's suggestion. The questions weren't answered and I will have another go.

Macquarie Point Stadium - Precinct Electricity Arrangements

Ms O'CONNOR question to MINISTER for ENERGY and RENEWABLES, Mr DUIGAN

[2.44 p.m.]

Last week, in a briefing on the Macquarie Point Precinct masterplan, MPs learned that plans for the way electricity is provided to and distributed within the stadium site had changed. As we understand it, the company, Veolia, is no longer undertaking that onsite energy supply project. The need for a new, standalone substation appears to have been abandoned and internal power distribution is now under a different model than that assessed by the planning commission and approved by the parliament. This raises a question about TasNetworks'

fixed-cost estimates for power supply, headworks and other enabling infrastructure, and how they will be paid for.

Minister, can you outline what meetings you or your department have had with state-owned utilities companies, including TasNetworks, and have they been asked to refine their Macquarie Point connection cost estimates downwards, to your knowledge?

Can you also confirm the costs of connecting power to the stadium site are part of the \$1.13 billion total cost project estimate that has been provided to this Council and the people of Tasmania?

ANSWER

Mr President, conversations between the Macquarie Point Development Corporation (MPDC) and TasNetworks are continuing, as you would expect with the electricity network provider and a large-scale customer like that. TasNetworks continues to work with Macquarie Point Development Corporation on the stadium project, just as it does for all connections. As with all large load connections, there is a clear process in place to work through what is needed in terms of electricity infrastructure to support a new or upgraded development.

As you would also expect on a project of this scale, the electricity connection details have continued to evolve as the stadium design has developed. This is an operational matter for TasNetworks and MPDC, and I have every confidence that they will work through the details. TasNetworks has advised it received a connection application from MPDC on 10 April 2026.

Supplementary Question

If I might just ask a supplementary question related to the first question: minister, are you telling the Council that TasNetworks has not updated you or briefed you on the negotiations with MPDC over the energy supply to the stadium site? Are you totally in the dark about the nature of that agreement, or any agreement? Could you please answer the last part of my question, which is: can you confirm that the costs of energy supply to the site are within the \$1.13 billion cost estimate for the project, to your knowledge?

ANSWER

I am in close contact with TasNetworks on a range of matters on a very, very regular basis, and in terms of the connection of electricity to the stadium site, as I have said: TasNetworks and MPDC are continuing to work through that piece of work.

Whole-of-Government Taskforce

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

[2.49 p.m.]

I have looked at the ReCFIT website. I can find no very up-to-date information at all in relation to the whole-of-government taskforce. If you can point me to it, I would be really appreciative of that.

I repeat the question: who is on the panel, when was it established, and has there been any work done on the cumulative impact assessment? I do note there is a renewable energy coordination framework on the website that is undated, but it also names the former minister Barnett as the minister responsible. I do not think that is what we are talking about here. So the questions remain: has it been established? When was it established? Who's on the panel and has it done any work on the community impact assessment?

ANSWER

Mr President, I take the member's comment around finding it difficult to find it on the ReCFIT site. It is there under the Project Marinus page, but it's easier to find on Marinus's website. It is on the ReCFIT website: recfit.tas.gov.au/what_is_recfit/major_investment_projects/project_marinus. That's a little bit oblique. I believe on Project Marinus's own website it's more fully formed and available. If you go down a little further in the page, you'll find the Project Marinus governance paragraph of that website, which then points you to the Project Marinus governance framework. To the specifics of who is on it, I would be happy to take that on notice and provide you with the information you seek.

Ms Forrest - Tomorrow?

Dowsing Point - Land Sale - Consultation

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

[2.51 p.m.]

The federal government has indicated it's planning to sell the land at Dowsing Point despite previously assuring the RSL community, the veteran community, the defence community here in Tasmania that there would be a two-year consultation process before making that decision.

Given the announcement that was made on Sunday, together with yourself, what is your understanding of the cost of the sale of that land? Is it the government's intention to purchase that land, and what's your understanding of the cost to Tasmanian taxpayers to purchase that land? Has the state government had any consultation with the veteran community, the defence community, RSL Tasmania, who say that they have been blindsided on this announcement and that the veteran community deserves clarity on whether meaningful consultation is still intended on the future of the Derwent Barracks?

ANSWER

Mr President, I'll seek some advice on part of that. Thank you. I wanted to clarify there that I had the thoughts right.

It is a matter for the federal Department of Defence to do exactly what they wish to do in communication or anything like that. Questions about price and contracts were asked of both the Premier and the Prime Minister. There is nothing to indicate there's been any discussion at this stage. It is still very much in the realms of Defence to work through the project, the rehousing, the removal of the building and then the rehabilitation of the site. What was evident though, was that the announcement was about the federal Labor government and the Rockliff Liberal government having a solid agreement to work through this project in partnership, together, once those bits are done by the Defence department.

Dowsing Point - Land Sale - Consultation

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

[2.53 p.m.]

Minister, you said in your answer just now, 'if this does occur', or something along those lines. On radio with Leon Compton on Monday, I think I heard you say this is a plan to get a plan. Given the uncertainty that surrounds this and the cost and that no agreement has been made to purchase the land or to strike a deal to develop housing, do you consider it fair and reasonable to be announcing a housing plan for up to 1000 homes to be constructed together with transport links and new open space areas when there appears to be no understanding of how much it may cost, and no agreement on who's going to develop the infrastructure to make the land development ready, no consultation or Plan B for the Defence community, and very little consultation with the existing residents of that area? All of this is despite the fact that the Premier suggests that conversations with the federal government on this have been occurring for three years, yet still we have no understanding of these things. Do you think it's fair and reasonable to put that expectation to Tasmanians that this is going to be a site developed for 1000 homes when none of that due diligence has been undertaken?

ANSWER

Mr President, yes, I do. That's one of the most fantastic ideas that I've ever heard: 1000 new homes right in the centre of Hobart, and it is the federal government's prerogative on that and a fantastic effort by a Labor prime minister to come down here and join with a Liberal premier to make such a solid announcement. It was conceptual. The ideas shown there were conceptual. It started off with 500 homes; now they believe, with medium-density, which we're trying to move towards, expanding to 1000 homes or thereabouts.

It is also a big job to do all that and everything starts with an idea and, if you go back over what the Prime Minister and the Premier said, it was about conceptual ideas. I can't quote it word for word, but if you go back over it, this is a starting point to achieve something great with that site. So, I stand by it. It's a fantastic thing for Hobart. We shouldn't be questioning it; we should be getting on board with it.

Macquarie Point Stadium - TasNetworks' Costs

Ms O'CONNOR question to MINISTER for ENERGY and RENEWABLES, Mr DUIGAN

[2.56 p.m.]

Minister, you're a shareholder minister for TasNetworks. What have they advised you about what it would cost the GBE to provide power to the Macquarie Point site? Have you seen any costings? If so, have you discussed those costings with TasNetworks or, indeed, the Premier?

Since you wouldn't answer the last part of my earlier question about whether it falls within the \$1.13 billion envelope, I presume the cost of the power supply doesn't fall within the cost projection put forward by government for the stadium. Could you, then, please tell the Council what your discussion has been with TasNetworks about how much connecting that power supply to the stadium will cost?

ANSWER

Mr President, I would counsel the member for Hobart not to presume too much about who knows what -

Ms O'Connor - You don't answer questions, so -

Mr DUIGAN - That is your interpretation. As I said, TasNetworks has received the connection application from MLPL, Macquarie Point Development Corporation.

Ms O'Connor - Who's MLPL?

Mr DUIGAN - That's Marinus Link, sorry. In April, as you have outlined, it's a relatively complex piece of work and that work is ongoing.

Macquarie Point Stadium - TasNetworks' Costs

Ms O'CONNOR question to MINISTER for ENERGY and RENEWABLES, Mr DUIGAN

[2.57 p.m.]

We live in a Westminster parliament. We operate in a Westminster parliament. You're a minister who's accountable for the expenditure of public funds. You've been asked by a member of this place what your understanding is of the budget for connecting power supply to the stadium. Are you refusing to answer? If so, why?

ANSWER

Mr President, I certainly won't be answering on behalf of Macquarie Point. Mr Abetz is the minister responsible there. TasNetworks has received a connection application relatively recently and it is my understanding that there is a lot of work to understand the full scope for that connection and application.

Dowsing Point - Housing Plan Timeline

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

[2.58 p.m.]

Minister, no-one, including myself, denies that there is a need for more housing. My concerns are about broken promises by this government and creating the expectation within my local community that an area will be developed. We've had promises for development of Wilkinsons Point for eight years now, talk of re-announcements of deals after deals, re-announcement after re-announcement, after deals and no action, no deal finalised. My concern is that this is going to happen again with this proposal.

How can Tasmanians be assured that that's not the case? How can the government properly commit that it will not break another promise here and that this will actually happen? How can Tasmanians have trust and faith in that, minister, when time after time this government breaks these promises and doesn't follow through on these plans? When would you expect a shovel to be turned in your plan for a plan? What date do you suggest housing will be delivered on this, if you're so sure of it?

ANSWER

Mr President, I thank the member for the follow-up question. It is, as I've said, conceptual between the federal government and the state government at this point. There is still an enormous amount of work to be done on the things that I've mentioned before about the relocation, the removal of the buildings, the rehabilitation of the site, and then a master plan which all the community would be involved with. It'll certainly come under Building Tasmania, and the Premier said that in his announcement, so we still have a lot of steps to go through.

There are no promises being made here other than the conceptual idea that this is what we would like to see both, jointly as the federal and state government, to move through this development. We certainly can't give any promises on when we turn a sod or anything like that because the Defence department has still got a lot of work to do on their side and that includes communication.

As this develops, if I'm still the minister for all those things, I'm happy to keep this House up to date as it progresses, as I certainly will be. It was good to have the mayor of Glenorchy there, so the council is across this. I've had conversations yesterday with the CEO or general manager, I'm not sure what he's referred to out there at Glenorchy, sorry, about as they work through it, that there is a lot of information still to come from the Department of Defence back to the Premier's office, and from the Prime Minister himself. The beauty of this is you very rarely see a project where a Labor prime minister and a Liberal premier stand united on a site with a vision for a project, and that's what it is at the moment, a vision. We are all believing and hoping that this can come to fruition for the benefit of southern Tasmania and Tasmania.

Ms Thomas - Thank you for your honesty.

SPECIAL INTEREST MATTERS

Resumed from above (page 22).

Politics, Process and the Price of Broken Trust

[3.01 p.m.]

Ms THOMAS (Elwick) - Mr President, I rise to speak today about politics, process and the price of broken trust. I rise to express concern about the human cost of governments not sticking to their word, and about the impact of this on our communities. There's a number of recent examples I could use: TasInsure, salmon farming, greyhound racing, federal tax changes, but I will refer primarily to greyhound racing in this contribution.

This is an example that clearly extends beyond a policy debate; it is a moral failure, and it's one that this government should be deeply ashamed of. Before the 2025 state election, the government gave clear assurances to participants in the greyhound racing industry that it would support them. The Premier wrote them a letter promising this. People made life decisions based on that commitment. Families invested, people borrowed money, they expanded facilities and committed to an industry they were told had a future under the Rockliff-Liberal government. They probably decided to vote Liberal because they trusted the government's word. Then, just two weeks after the election, the same government announced it would shut the industry down from 2029. No warning, no respect for the people whose lives would be turned upside down, just betrayal. This government took their vote and spat on it.

People talk about integrity. Well, where was the Premier's integrity during all this? Where's the integrity in writing to people promising you will do something and then doing the total opposite? If that wasn't bad enough, what followed has been even worse. The rushed attempt to force the bill through the parliament because it was so urgent that the Legislative Council was urged not to refer it to a committee. The confusion, the uncertainty, the bill being abruptly pulled from the Legislative Council without notice or explanation, following the committee reporting and debate commencing, then weeks of silence. Now, the extraordinary position from this government that the industry will not be funded from 2029, whether this parliament passes the legislation or not. That is not consultation, it is not leadership and that is not respect for this parliament.

Let me be clear, this is not an argument against animal welfare. Animal welfare matters. Genuine animal welfare concerns associated with any industry or activity must be addressed properly, transparently and with evidence.

Ms O'Connor - That's the effect of it.

Mr PRESIDENT - Order.

Ms THOMAS - But this wasn't and isn't truly about that. It's not about animal welfare; it's about political games and power plays. If the government believed change was needed, it had an obligation to handle that transition honestly, fairly and responsibly for the welfare of the dogs and for the wellbeing of the people whose lives are built around them. Instead, what we have seen is political convenience, broken promises and uncertainty that has caused irreparable harm.

The government keeps telling us it is committed to supporting participants through the transition, but what about now? What support is being provided right now, while people are living through months of uncertainty, anxiety and fear? What support exists for the families who invested everything based on the government's commitment, only to have that promise ripped away two weeks later? Support cannot simply mean a promise of something later. Support means showing up and listening. Support means fronting up to the track and looking people in the eye. Support means certainty. Support means not dragging people through months of political games and emotional exhaustion. Greyhound racing participants are not being supported by this government one bit. They have been abandoned - not a minister nor the Premier inside at the racetrack for months.

What makes this so deeply disturbing is that for many of these people, greyhound racing is not simply a job. It is their family. It's their purpose, their connection, their community. Their mental health is being severely damaged now. Not in 2029, now.

I thank industry participants who have courageously shared their stories about how the actions of this government are impacting on them. One woman wrote:

Our family recently invested our entire life savings, our future, our home and our children into greyhound racing. What should have been an exciting and hopeful new chapter for our family has instead become emotionally exhausting.

She said the uncertainty had created constant anxiety, burnout, sadness, emotional exhaustion, loss of hope and a feeling that no matter how hard we work, our future is never secure.

Another participant said: 'My days are filled with thoughts of not wanting to be in this world.' Another said: 'There's not a day that goes by that I don't think about our predicament. I am drained mentally completely.' Another said: 'We have been made to feel worthless,' and another said 'every media headline, every sitting day, has contributed to an environment of chronic uncertainty and cumulative psychological harm'.

These are not political statements. These are cries for help. This is what prolonged uncertainty does. This is what happens when governments play politics with people's lives. People can hold different views on greyhound racing. Reasonable people can agree to disagree, but no decent person should accept treating people like this. No decent government should make commitments before an election, reverse them immediately after, then leave families sitting in limbo while parliament becomes a political chess board. That is not principled government, it is cruel, it is cowardly and it is profoundly immoral.

Another participant expressed their dismay at watching the Premier stand there as a life member of Lifeline, speaking about mental health while presiding over a process that is causing extraordinary mental distress to hundreds of Tasmanians. This contradiction is impossible to ignore, and let me say this: if this can happen to the greyhound racing community, it can happen to anyone.

That is why this matters far beyond greyhound racing because today it is one activity, tomorrow it could be another. What message does this send to any Tasmanian considering investing in their future here? What confidence can people have when a government can make

a clear commitment before an election, reverse it immediately after, and then expect people to simply absorb the consequences? Who is next? Which industry is next? Which community is next? Whose livelihoods will become the next political bargaining chip for crossbench deals?

This damages more than one industry. It damages trust, trust in government and trust in political integrity. Trust in the stability needed for investment, business confidence and economic growth. People need to know that when government makes commitments, those commitments mean something. People need to know that parliament still matters, that it is the parliament that decides whether an activity is prohibited. They need confidence that they will not wake up two weeks after an election to find their future has been traded away behind closed doors. Every Tasmanian has the right to feel uneasy about that.

Ms WEBB - Point of order, Mr President - I am not sure which one it is - but is this a Special Interest Matters contribution?

Mr PRESIDENT - It has gone over time. We allow five minutes and the member for Elwick is not the first member today to go over five minutes, but I will ask that you do conclude your contribution.

Ms THOMAS - I will wrap up by saying you simply do not treat people this way. You don't promise security and deliver devastation. You don't ask for trust and repay it with betrayal. Tasmanians simply deserve better than this.

MOTION

Climate Council and Emergency Leaders for Climate Action Report: When Cities Burn

[3.09 p.m.]

Ms O'CONNOR (Hobart) - Mr President, I move -

That the Legislative Council:

- (1) Notes the release of the report 'When Cities Burn: could the Los Angeles fires happen here?' in January 2026 by the Climate Council and Emergency Leaders for Climate Action;
- (2) Notes the report finds that climate pollution - caused by the increased burning of coal, oil and gas - has made dangerous fire conditions more likely, including extreme dryness, heat and winds, alongside greater frequency of 'climate whiplash', the experience of a rapid switch between very wet and very dry weather;
- (3) Recognises that Australia - and Tasmania - share many of the same characteristics that led to the destructive fires that swept through Los Angeles in 2025, including long-term drying trends, episodic drought, more extreme winds, large areas of bushland adjacent to homes, steep slopes that accelerate fires and increasingly common pyroCb (fire-generated thunderstorms);

- (4) Accepts that Hobart is one of Australia's most fire-exposed capitals, hosting steep terrain, strong winds and heavy fuels, hemmed in by wet and dry forests on Kunanyi/Mount Wellington;
- (5) Notes with concern that there is a growing number of people living closer to flammable bush and grassland, with a 33 per cent increase of people living in Hobart's urban fringe danger zones over the past 2.5 decades, and 90 per cent of homes in bushfire prone areas having been constructed before modern, bushfire-resilient standards were introduced;
- (6) Calls upon the Tasmanian Government to cut climate pollution, take action now to invest in disaster preparation and community resilience, including hazard reduction, education and retrofitting existing homes to bushfire standards; and
- (7) Calls upon the Tasmanian Government to prioritise an evacuation plan for Greater Hobart, and to work with emergency services to ensure that they are properly resourced.

I bring on this motion today about the LA fires of January last year and what lessons have been learned from those devastating fires that killed more than 30 people, destroyed 16,000 or so structures, threatened Hollywood itself. I bring this motion on out of grave concern for the community that I represent, of Nipaluna/Hobart, but more broadly for communities all over this island as the planet continues to heat. At risk of being pulled up for introducing a prop, it is instructive for honourable members to understand what's happening in the Pacific Ocean right now. This is a picture of the biggest El Niño -

Mr PRESIDENT - You could table the document if you -

Ms O'CONNOR - I could table the document, but there's nothing to read on there, and for the purposes of *Hansard* - and thank you for your guidance, Mr President - I will just explain what I held up is a graphic meteorological representation of a massive blob of heat in the central and eastern Pacific, the largest El Niño at least since the late 1800s, and a portent of a very difficult year, two or five coming up.

Heating of the planet's oceans at this scale most certainly has implications for people all over the world and here in Tasmania, although we gull ourselves into thinking we're inoculated from the worst of it because of where we are on the planet. We too will be impacted, because history tells us that El Niño weather patterns increase the risk of droughts and fires in eastern Australia. Tasmania is no stranger to extreme weather events and extreme fire events; the year that I was born, 1967, is a year that is still seared into the collective memory of our community with the 1967 bushfires, but the scale and intensity of the bushfires that are coming down the line to us cannot and should not be underestimated or downplayed.

Now, I don't intend to speak for particularly long on this motion today. All honourable members here have a broad understanding and acceptance of the science of climate change and global heating; but it's very easy for human societies to not grapple with the biggest challenges, to put off dealing with the really hard things until another day. I don't believe on this island,

with that kind of warming happening in the Pacific Ocean, that we have that option. It's all about how we keep our communities safe.

The Climate Council and Emergency Leaders for Climate Action went to Los Angeles and talked to first responders, emergency services, affected communities, to understand what happened and what the response was. We also had a delegation go to LA from the Tasmania Fire Service (TFS) and the State Emergency Service (SES), who came back with a number of learnings about how we respond and how we keep people safe, and I'm very glad that they went.

The key findings of the Climate Council's emergency leaders were that the shocking 2025 wildfires that ripped through LA neighbourhoods in the middle of winter were supercharged by climate pollution, and under that finding is this statement:

Climate pollution has all but erased traditional fire seasons and turned them into an all-year-round threat. The January 2025 fires hit in the middle of winter, well outside of the traditional fire season from June to November.

...

Around the world, climate pollution is driving worsening fire conditions: 43% of the 200 most damaging fires have occurred in just the past decade.

2. Many Australian cities share dangerous characteristics that made the LA fires so destructive, and many of our worst bushfires have also exhibited unstoppable fire behaviour.

Like California, many parts of Australia have a hot and dry climate. Research shows between 2000 and 2023 the intensity and frequency of the worst fires in southern Australia and western North America rose sharply under more extreme weather conditions.

...

Fire-generated thunderstorms, or pyroconvective events, were relatively rare with 60 such events recorded in Australia in the 40 years up to 2018. During Black Summer, there were at least 45 fire-generated thunderstorms.

And that is in Victoria.

The Climate Council says:

Our analysis shows that the outskirts of Sydney, Melbourne, Canberra, Adelaide, Perth and Hobart share characteristics that made the LA fires so destructive.

3. Just like in LA, more people than ever are living in harm's way on the fast-growing urban fringes of Australian cities.

In LA, hurricane-like Santa Ana winds (up to 160 km/h) created a firestorm that fed on tinder dry brush, then houses. From 1990-2020, 45% of all new homes in California were built where suburbs meet flammable terrain.

I ask honourable members to think about this beautiful city, Nipaluna/Hobart, which Associate Professor David Bowman will tell you is a WUI: a city that has an urban-wildland interface. People live in and around the bush here in this beautiful city, and that of course brings with it enormous risk. The Climate Council report says:

Over the past 20 years, outer suburban populations have exploded in Australia, too: more than doubling in Melbourne and Perth, up 36% in Adelaide, 33% in Hobart and 24% in Sydney.

More than 6.9 million Australians now live where suburbs meet the bush -

That is, about one quarter of our entire population now live in a high-bushfire-risk zone, and that places special responsibility and imperative on governments and parliaments to make sure that our emergency services are properly funded and resourced, and that we're having conversations with our communities about how people can keep themselves, their neighbours and other vulnerable people in our community safe in the event of an extreme weather event.

4. Climate pollution is turbo-charging Australian fire conditions, and it's making fires more frequent, costly, intense - and less predictable.

Since 2020 insurance premiums have increased by 78% to 138% for homes in bushfire-prone Local Government Areas within Sydney, Melbourne and Perth.

...

From 1979 to 2019 fire seasons across Australia grew by an additional 27 days -

a whole month of extra fire season -

a 20% increase over the 40-year period.

The report also notes that:

Fire behaviour at night is becoming more extreme and robbing firefighters of a tool they have used for centuries: attacking fires and backburning during milder night conditions to bring large fires under control.

...

5. Climate-fuelled fires are increasingly exceeding the limits of modern firefighting. Investment in community preparation and urgent cuts to climate pollution are both critical to saving Australian lives and communities.

There is no way to safely or effectively fight pyroconvective events, like those experienced in Canberra 2003, Black Saturday 2009, and the Black Summer bushfires. Aircraft must be grounded, and efforts to protect properties temporarily abandoned.

Modelling shows that 3°C of global warming would result in catastrophic fire danger zones three times bigger than experienced on Black Saturday in 2009 ... with temperatures as high as 48°C in Victoria, NSW, and South Australia.

The Climate Council encourages us to do three very straightforward and necessary things to help keep our communities safe, to help ruggedise our infrastructure to protect wilderness and to protect property. Given that we are facing, according to the science, more days of more extreme fire weather and more damaging fires in that weather, we must:

- Cut climate pollution from coal, oil and gas more swiftly and deeply if we are to avoid even worse.
- Invest heavily in disaster preparation and community resilience at all levels of government so we're as prepared as possible for the worsening fire risks we already face.
- As a priority, increase emergency service and land management capacity at the urban fringe of our cities and major regional centres so growing populations are better protected for what's to come.

So, in that report there is a table about how major Australian urban fires compare to the 2025 Los Angeles fires. Unfortunately, the beautiful city which I have the honour of representing has all of the characteristics, all of them, that LA had that led to such devastating fires. We have worsening fire weather, periods of extreme dryness, the possibility of strong wind gusts and/or pyrocumulus, steep slopes that accelerate fires - hello Kunanyi, you beautiful mountain, forested as she is - and there are large tracts of bushland adjacent to homes: again, think about this great city, from Tolmans Hill, to Mount Nelson, to South Hobart, to West Hobart, to Mount Stuart and around the corner into Glenorchy, many of our communities are vulnerable. There is also a history on this island, as there was in LA, of major fires and property losses. There's a specific case study of the devastating Dolphin Sands fire within this report, there is a snapshot of risk, so you get a very graphic representation of where the risk lies, and the risk surrounds Hobart.

For many years now, in the other place and in this place, in briefings and in meetings, the Greens have been asking questions about emergency preparedness. We've zeroed in on what kind of evacuation planning is being put in place for the city of Nipaluna/Hobart. I am distressed and frustrated to tell you that the answer is always something close to crickets. There seems to be a pervasive sense of complacency here, within government, about the nature of the risk, and how imminent that risk presents itself to us. We do not see the necessary increase in capacity for the Tasmania Fire Service and the State Emergency Service. We have pathetic responses from the government and the Minister for Climate Change, who is very, very proud of the number of processes that have been put in place, reviews that are being undertaken, discussion papers that are being released.

I point members to the Tasmanian government's Climate Change State Action Plan for 2023-25, and I will have you all know it was released in 2024. A year late, the state gets a climate change state action plan, and we do have a couple of paragraphs here on adaptation and bushfire resilience in this plan. On page 24, under the action of improving bushfire preparedness, we have the Tasmania Fire Service delivering a six-week program in spring of 2023 to empower Tasmanians to improve their bushfire preparedness. The program will support Tasmanians to understand their bushfire risk, create a bushfire plan, and prepare their properties.

We also have as an action that the government will continue to deliver the statewide fuel reduction program to reduce the risk of bushfires impacting on communities. Well, tick, I think, but how scientific and strategic those fuel reduction burns remain an open question. Whether or not we're adequately tapping into Palawa knowledge about landscape management in an age of increasing fire risk is not an open question, because the answer is we're not. But it's okay, it's alright, because the government and the minister for Climate Change will continue to work with Tasmania Fire Service to mitigate the risk of ignition on the road verge and undertake vegetation management in accordance with machinery operating guidelines. For heaven's sake, that is what we've got from this government on managing bushfire risk: a six-week course from the manifestly underfunded Tasmania Fire Service to reach goodness knows how many Tasmanians or Tasmanian communities to help them be more prepared for fire danger. It's pathetic, it's grossly inadequate.

We've also got the government in here committing to work with local government on climate adaptation and yet, when the Local Government Association of Tasmania in their budget submission last year asked the government for a small sum of money to continue to fund a capacity that enabled councils to do more climate-orientated work, more adaptation work, they didn't get that money.

It's lip service and it is lip service that is negligent and reckless. Every one of us here has a vulnerable community that we are morally responsible for doing everything we can to protect, everything we can, and that means putting pressure on the government. Emissions reduction, is one thing and, of course, we need to bring down our carbon emissions.

Of course we need to protect our carbon stores, but the urgent imperative right now for this island community, for the city I represent, is disaster preparedness, a bushfire evacuation plan, engaging with people about, for example, understanding where the vulnerable people are in their street or over the hill, or thinking about your mum's old friend who has mobility challenges, thinking about people who are vulnerable and will not be able to leave their homes necessarily should a pyrocumulus come barrelling over the back of Kunanyi.

We need to find ways here to do what Tasmania does ever so well: that is community. We need to find ways to strengthen community connections. The first thing you have to do is give people the information that helps them understand the level of personal risk to them, the level of risk to their properties and even that right now is not being provided to Tasmanians, not being provided to people who live in Hobart.

I don't know how many people have heard Professor David Bowman speak about the fire risk to Hobart. It's utterly terrifying because he understands the way fire moves. He understands what's happening with the climate. He understands the way the winds work in and around Hobart, and he understands that this city is at risk and so are its people, and the lack of an

evacuation plan for the city of Hobart is something that we in this place should not tolerate, and we shouldn't tolerate it for any of the communities we represent.

I note that the member for Rumney has a very good amendment I understand she will put forward to make sure that this motion calls for more emergency and evacuation planning for the city of Nipaluna/Hobart, but also all of our rural and regional communities who right now are largely operating in the dark.

There are two things I want to briefly talk about before I sit down. One is the fact that insurance will become increasingly difficult for our constituents to obtain. There are already places in New Zealand, for example, which are close to sea level and storm surge where your home is not insurable.

For members who haven't taken the opportunity to go and talk to the RACT about fire risk in the first instance, I thoroughly recommend it. There is a deep concern within that organisation about our lack of preparedness. There is a very deep concern about the level of risk to the city of Hobart, and that was the nature of my conversations with the RACT. If your only measure is one of money, then to see this as a cost-of-living issue for our constituents is important, too, because people will not be able to afford their insurance, which leads to more risk of uninsured or inadequately or underinsured properties. It is very serious. It's not a far-off problem, particularly when we know what is happening now with that blob of extraordinary heat in the central and eastern Pacific. The RACT understands very well what the risk is.

I do want to acknowledge the very important work of organisations like the Red Cross, who went in, as members would know, after the Dunalley bushfires and worked on the ground with that deeply traumatised community who had lost so much. We had the resources of government dedicated to the Dunalley recovery and, to this day, Red Cross in Tasmania - I am sure it is happening nationally as well - still produces high-quality information about who to call in an emergency, about steps that you can take to keep yourself safe, and the need to check on your neighbours and other vulnerable people within your community. Red Cross is just one non-government organisation to work in this space. We often see them when it has all fallen apart because the Red Cross comes in and helps to pick up the pieces, as they did after Dunalley.

The Tasmanian government has a very, very poor track record on climate, the first piece of legislation that they brought into the Tasmanian parliament -

Mr Duigan - Through you, Mr President. Tasmania is Australia's only net-zero jurisdiction.

Ms O'CONNOR - I'm so glad -

Mr Duigan - One of the few in the world, if you want to talk about this.

Ms O'CONNOR - I'm so glad you said this.

Ms Forrest - Don't take the bait.

Ms O'CONNOR - I want to thank the Energy minister, who I encourage to have a look -

Mr Duigan - Such a terrible record on climate. I know.

Ms O'CONNOR - See, this is the problem with the government that allows itself to rest on laurels that were not of its construction. The reason that we are net zero -

Mr Duigan - Marinus Link, through you, Mr President, 140 million tonnes of CO₂ abated - meaningful action.

Ms O'CONNOR - The reason that Tasmania can claim to be net zero - and it is there in our greenhouse accounts for anyone to have a look at where you can see the graph trend shift very sharply in 2013 - is because of carbon that was sequestered in forests that the Tasmanian parliament, in its wisdom, approved by agreeing to the Tasmanian Forest Agreement. When you take logging out of 576,000 hectares of carbon-rich, high-conservation value forests, that will show up on your greenhouse accounts. I encourage members who believe Mr Duigan, however, to go and have a look at the other measures across stationary energy, transport, infrastructure, waste, agriculture. We have not seen emissions come down. What is happening here is that we have a government that is resting on laurels it did not create and has no policy responsibility for - in fact, they resisted it - and who are doing nothing to drive down emissions deliberately.

The minister can talk about Marinus Link but, at the moment, you know, that is over there.

Mr Duigan - Through you, Mr President, talk about our 200 per cent renewable energy target, which the Greens vote against at every opportunity.

Mr PRESIDENT - The honourable member will have an opportunity to respond.

Ms O'CONNOR - Mr President, you know I will take any interjection.

Mr PRESIDENT - Yes.

Ms O'CONNOR - You know I'll take it and that's fine, but the fact of the matter is, when the Liberals came back into office in 2014, the first piece of legislation that they introduced was to abolish the Tasmanian Climate Action Council. Mr Groom, not the minister for Climate Change, the minister for Environment at the time, that was the first piece of legislation, which tells us it was ideological because we paid the members of the Climate Action Council \$15,000 a year to provide high-quality expert scientific advice to the Tasmanian government and the Tasmanian parliament on how to reduce emissions and secure meaningful adaptation measures. That expert advice is now gone and a very clear finding of the recent review into the Tasmanian *Climate Change (State Action) Act 2008* was that that expert body needs to be reinstated. That was the feedback. It remains to be seen whether anything will be done to respond to the review of the *Climate Change (State Action) Act*. The questions that I asked of the minister for the Environment in last year's Estimates were not encouraging. I guess we'll have another plan or a review or a process, but it's just not good enough.

So, obviously, the Tasmanian government needs to do more to reduce carbon emissions. We have to be investing more in disaster preparation and community-building and community resilience. We need to have strategic, scientific hazard reduction measures in place, education at a broad community level; engagement with the people we are entrusted to represent, and retrofitting of existing homes and buildings, for example, to bushfire standards. We absolutely need meaningful disaster preparedness and evacuation planning for the cities and the towns

and the communities that we represent. It is imperative we do that. If the government won't do it, this parliament needs to drive it. That is the purpose of this motion today because, as I said at the beginning, this isn't a far-off scenario that we are facing.

My last thought is this: we have many committees in this place and they do great work, very meaningful, important work in the service of democracy and policy development. The big missing part of the picture is a joint parliamentary standing committee that helps to oversee and drive climate action. Of all the challenges that this parliament faces, of all of the difficulties that our communities will face in the future, nothing comes close to the impact of global heating on our communities. It's an ongoing conversation that I hope to have with members because I know at the moment there's a whole lot of committee work being undertaken, but there are reports being finalised and work is being wound up, and this is something - can you imagine how good it could be if you had a body of this parliament across the two Houses and it had on it a broad cross-section of people from left, right, centre and everything vertically and to the south? I absolutely believe that there are so many things that we would agree on and being able to sit together and get expertise in - scientists, emergency services personnel, affected communities, organisations that represent the elderly, for example, like the Council on the Ageing; migrant resource centres. There are English as a second language challenges for making sure there is deep knowledge in the community about risk and how to keep yourself safe. We do need a joint standing committee on a climate response. We absolutely do. It's the most important work, I think, that we will do over the next 10 years. It's a big part of the reason I decided to run for the City of Hobart. It's my love for this city and my strong sense of responsibility to its people, so I do hope members will support this motion, recognising it's an issue that affects every one of us in our communities. It's very important we work collectively to keep the people we represent safe in a time of enormous change.

I commend the motion to the House.

[3.40 p.m.]

Ms RATTRAY (McIntyre - Leader for the Government in the Legislative Council) - Mr President, the government thanks the member for Hobart for bringing this motion forward and I certainly know the member feels strongly about these issues. I believe most of us in this Chamber would agree that the questions being raised deserve a thoughtful answer. The government is not here to dismiss the report or the concerns behind it. The Climate Council's findings about fire risk, about what happened in Los Angeles and about what could happen here matter.

I expect all of us in this Chamber here today can agree that what happened in Los Angeles is an absolute tragedy and we have a responsibility to learn from that event any lessons relevant to Tasmania. While Los Angeles may be a large global megacity, there are many similarities between its fire challenges and those in Tasmania, in particular the interface between dense vegetation and urban and peri-urban areas, undulating terrain, which presents infrastructure and firefighting challenges, steep and narrow streets, and the potential for drought conditions are common features of both regions. I will touch on these common challenges further in this contribution.

The motion calls on this government to cut climate pollution, and our state was the first Australian jurisdiction to achieve net-zero emissions achieved in 2014 and has maintained it ever since - and Tasmania can be proud of its record in this area. The 2024 figures show net

emissions in minus 4.56 megatonnes of CO₂ equivalent, that is 123.5 per cent decrease from the 1990 baseline. No other state in Australia can say that.

I know some will say Tasmania's relatively small population makes that easier, but the framework that has built the *Climate Change (State Action) Act 2008*, the comprehensive Climate Change Action Plan with more than \$250 million committed across government and 98 cross government projects underway, represent genuine work and this work by the government should be recognised.

Some of those projects are tangible for ordinary Tasmanians. There is the \$4 million Low Emissions Livestock Grant Program for farmers and a \$1.8 million grant to the University of Tasmania for fine-scale climate projections, expanded EV charging infrastructure through ChargeSmart and grants to small businesses to put cargo electric bikes and electric delivery vans on our roads instead of diesel vehicles.

In November of 2024, the government released Tasmania's first statewide climate risk assessment, identifying 40 climate-related risks and opportunities. That work provides the foundation for future adaptation planning and has committed to a new action plan in 2028 as required under legislation.

This government is not standing still, and the state is doing our share of the heavy lifting to meet the global climate challenge by continuing to invest to modernise the Tasmanian economy and reduce emissions.

As many in this Chamber would be aware, one of the areas of the state that most represents fire conditions like those faced in Los Angeles would be the areas of Hobart in and around the Wellington Range. The Wellington Range, including Wellington Park and the surrounding land, is one of the most extreme bushfire risk areas in Tasmania. The communities most exposed include Fern Tree, Ridgeway, South Hobart, Mount Nelson, West Hobart, Lenah Valley, Dynnyrne, Bonnet Hill, Kingston, Glenorchy, Chigwell, Berriedale, Claremont, Montrose, Rosetta, Collinsvale and Glenlusk.

It is not an exaggeration to say that a fire in this area, if it got away, could destroy hundreds of suburban Hobart homes and cost many lives. That is not alarmism. That is what the current risk modelling is telling us. Sadly, one only has to think back to Black Tuesday in 1967, or the Dunalley fires in 2013, to understand what an out-of-control bushfire can do to Tasmanian communities. With climate change increasing the frequency and severity of bushfire events, and in some years extending the length of fire seasons, the risk level is increasing. We saw that again at Dolphin Sands in December last year, where strong winds grounded firefighting aircraft.

As I said at the outset, I want to address the comparison to Los Angeles directly. The Tasmania Fire and Emergency Service (TFES) advises that there are many similarities: the rural-urban interface, the terrain, the drying trend and the potential for wind-driven fire behaviour. In fact, such are the similarities that the TFES participated in an Australian Government-sponsored study trip to Los Angeles to learn from the 2025 Southern Californian wildfires as we heard in the member's contribution. That exchange highlighted a number of areas to focus on for the TFES to inform its work. Key learnings included: the value of advanced evacuation and fire prediction tools, post-impact tactical patrols, AI-enabled early detection using cameras and satellites, and improved approaches to managing lithium-ion

battery fires, and environmental recovery. Of particular interest was the successful use of heli-hydrants to support rapid aerial firefighting in urban areas, which is now being explored for the Hobart urban interface.

However, the exchange also highlighted a number of important differences in approach between Tasmania and LA. Tasmania's mitigation approaches, strategic frameworks and institutional arrangements for fire prevention and control differ markedly from those that assisted in LA. The Tasmania Fire Service has, over many years, adapted its strategies in response to a changing climate, and that includes strengthening community protection, improving fire prevention programs and investing in aerial firefighting capability to support rapid initial attack while there is still an opportunity to contain fires early.

In an Australian context, Hobart is among the most bushfire-exposed cities. As a consequence, the Tasmanian government has invested significantly in reducing risk at the rural-urban interface and supporting communities to do the same. For several decades there have been planning and development controls in place to manage the risk of urban expansion into bushland areas, with stronger measures introduced since 2012. The TFS provides advice on property protection and hardening for buildings that predate those controls and prioritises precinct level fuel reduction in the highest risk areas.

The fuel reduction program continues to receive significant government investment, with burning targeted specifically at reducing risk to communities. Fire management across the Wellington Range, however, remains fragmented. There are multiple land managers and multiple plans, and no unified strategy. Wellington Park is managed under the *Wellington Park Act 1993*, and the *Fire Service Act 1979* requires TFS to operate consistently with the Wellington Park Management Plan. In practical terms, if the TFS wants to undertake management work within the park that conflicts with the park's management arrangements, they cannot simply proceed. There is a gap between TFS's responsibility to protect life and property and its legal authority to act. Compounding that challenge is the fact that 68 per cent of Wellington Park cannot be treated with fuel reduction burning, while fuel corridors running from the park into suburban Hobart, across local government land, Crown land and private property remain largely unmanaged and undertreated.

Participation in the fuel reduction program is voluntary and where landowners decline, the risk remains untreated. So, what's TFS doing? Quite a lot within the constraints they face. Between 2021 and 2025, 220 hectares of fuel-reduction burning were completed inside Wellington Park. In 2026, a further 434 hectares are progressing through planning approvals for future burning.

Community protection plans are already in place for suburbs surrounding the park, and TFS is leading development of a Wellington Range Strategic Fire Management Plan, a tenure-blind plan that considers the entire landscape rather than individual land management boundaries. A draft was circulated to stakeholders in November last year and a final draft is expected later this year.

The motion also notes the 33 per cent increase in people living in Hobart's urban fringe danger zones over the past two-and-a-half decades, and that 90 per cent of homes in bushfire-prone areas predate modern construction standards. Urban growth into bushland fringe areas is to some extent inevitable. People want to live close to nature and land is available there. The real question is how we manage that growth responsibly. The government has had

planning and development controls in place for decades, with significantly stronger measures introduced since 2012, but many homes were built before these standards existed, and many sit directly alongside the Wellington Range. That is a genuine vulnerability. TFS provides advice on property hardening and protection for older homes and prioritises fuel reduction in the highest-risk precincts.

Retrofitting more broadly is complex work. It involves cost, private property considerations, insurance settings and council planning frameworks. The government is continuing to work through what is practical and will engage with councils, industry and the community on that work.

The motion also calls on the government to ensure emergency services are properly resourced, and I can assure all honourable members that the government is committed to that. The Tasmania Fire Service and State Emergency Service do extraordinary work and will continue to be supported through the budget process and the National Partnership Agreement on Natural Disaster Risk Reduction.

The financial case for investing in prevention and mitigation is also very clear. The cost of a major fire event in suburban Hobart would far exceed the investment required now to reduce that risk. That's why the work of TFES and the Parks and Wildlife Service (PWS) and Sustainable Timber Tasmania, in doing preventative burning, is so important. The government invests in and supports this work and strongly encourages private landowners to take their responsibilities for vegetation management seriously.

In particular, the work of the Red Hot Tips Program supports farmers and landowners to actively manage their bushfire risk and encourages collaborative vegetation fire management and ecological sustainability. This program is supported by the State Fire Management Council.

The Tasmanian government recognises the significant bushfire risk facing Greater Hobart, particularly across the Wellington Park and bushland-urban interface. That is why comprehensive evacuation arrangements are already in place under the Tasmanian emergency management arrangements, providing a coordinated whole-of-government framework for managing major emergencies and large-scale bushfire events.

Detailed pre-incident evacuation planning completed in January 2026 identified high-risk areas, including: Lenah Valley, Mount Stuart, Fern Tree, South Hobart, Tolmans Hill, and Mount Nelson. This planning supports targeted, risk-based preparedness activities and ensures emergency services are ready to respond when required.

Under these arrangements, the Tasmania Fire Service is responsible for evacuation decisions, while Tasmania Police coordinates the safe movement of communities during evacuation operations. Importantly, those decisions are intelligence-led and based on real-time fire behaviour, weather conditions, community vulnerability and road access rather than rigid, predetermined triggers.

Tasmania already has strong, place-based bushfire preparedness measures in place, including community bushfire protection plans, established warning systems and close coordination between Tasmania Police, TFS, SES, local government and other emergency

management partners. The government also continues to strengthen capability through regular multi-agency exercises and ongoing investment in emergency management readiness.

The Tasmania Police emergency evacuation project, completed earlier this year, has further improved statewide evacuation capability and coordination arrangements. Accordingly, the government's focus remains on continuous improvement, operational readiness and ensuring emergency services are appropriately resourced to respond effectively to major bushfire events.

In conclusion, the government has a strong climate record, having active fuel management programs, and Tasmania Fire Service is doing real work in difficult conditions. Bringing this motion forward to the parliament for consideration is exactly the kind of conversation we should be having around this important topic. I put that line in, I'm sure. The government will be supporting this motion and looks forward to continuing to work through these issues with emergency services, councils and the community in the coming months and into the future, and I look forward to the contribution from the honourable member for Rumney, who I believe has an amendment.

[3.57 p.m.]

Ms LOVELL (Rumney) - Mr President, as has been noted, I do have an amendment which has been circulated and I will speak to that in a moment, but I will just make a few comments in support of the motion itself before I move to the amendment. I want to thank the member for Hobart for bringing the motion to the Chamber, and like the Leader has said, I believe this is a really important conversation for us to be having, and this is exactly the type of thing that this Chamber and this parliament should be debating. It is a priority for Tasmanian communities.

I believe Tasmanians understand all too well the dangers of bushfires and living in bushfire-prone zones. Dating back decades, right back to 1967, and I'm sure well before that, we've had some pretty horrific examples of severe fire events over the years that have impacted on communities. People do understand all too well that many of the things that we all love about our community and our home by their nature increase the risk of those severe fire events: living adjacent to the beautiful bushland that many of us have in our communities; the terrain that we have here in Hobart; and especially the climate - all of those things are things that can contribute to the risk of bushfire. We know there is extensive evidence to show that, with climate change, the risk of those severe fire events is increasing.

I do note in particular point (5) of the motion, where the member for Hobart has talked about the increasing number of people living in urban fringe areas in the Hobart area, also in other parts of the state where people are moving out into these urban fringe areas and into areas that are more prone to bushfires. While we do have some really robust standards in place now around building standards and measures that can be put in place when constructing new homes, around bushfire safety in particular, there are a high number of homes, particularly in Hobart, that were constructed before those standards came into place and don't have that same level of protection.

It's also really important to note that this is not just about community safety, but it's also about services. They are the ones who respond to these severe fire events or any fire events. They, as people often say -

Sitting suspended from 4 p.m. until 4.30 p.m.

MOTION

Climate Council and Emergency Leaders for Climate Action Report: When Cities Burn

Resumed from above.

Ms LOVELL (Rumney) - Mr President, as I was saying, this motion and this conversation really is important, not only in relation to the safety of the community more broadly, but in relation to the safety of our emergency services personnel and first responders, who, as people often say, while the rest of us run from danger, run towards it to keep us all safe.

A flow-on effect of people gradually moving into those more bushfire-prone areas is that the risk to first responders is increased because there are more homes in more areas that might need defending and protecting from bushfires. When you add to that the increased risk from climate change and lack of preparation and lack of ensuring that we are using the opportunities we have to keep our communities as safe as we can when we can, that all compounds and that increases the risk for those first responders. It's really important to acknowledge that in this debate and acknowledge that that is a very important part of this conversation.

So, as I said, I support the motion, but I have an amendment, which I'll move. I move -

Paragraph (7), after 'Tasmanian Government to prioritise' and before ', and to work with emergency services'.

Leave out,

'an evacuation plan for Greater Hobart'

Insert instead,

'evacuation plans for Greater Hobart and other high-risk communities across Tasmania'

The purpose of that amendment - and I thank the member for Hobart for her openness for this and willingness to support the amendment - is really just to recognise that this isn't an issue that is just limited to Hobart. While it is particularly critical here in the Greater Hobart area, for reasons the member for Hobart outlined, it is an issue that impacts other parts of the state as well. The intent of my amendment is really just to broaden that out and broaden our focus to make sure that we remember that it does apply in other parts of the state as well and that there are other high-risk communities that need that preparation and attention from the government as well.

I'll end my contribution there. I support the motion, I move the amendment, and I hope that members will see fit to support the amendment.

[4.33 p.m.]

Ms RATTRAY (McIntyre - Leader for the Government in the Legislative Council) - Mr President, I'd just like to acknowledge the member for Rumney in putting that amendment to the motion and also acknowledge the member for Hobart's receptiveness. It's a very practical approach and thank you.

Amendment agreed to.

[4.34 p.m.]

Mr GAFFNEY (Mersey) - Mr President, before I start, congratulations to the members for Huon and Rosevears. I'm really pleased to see you back.

I rise to speak briefly in support of the motion and now the amended motion. I thank the member for Rumney for the extension regarding very real risk of catastrophic bushfires in Tasmania. The Climate Council and Emergency Leaders for Climate Action report, *When Cities Burn: Could the Los Angeles fires happen here?* highlights the need for adequate management of both fire risk and the climate factors in Tasmania which add to that risk.

Tasmania is vulnerable to bushfires, both in their direct impact and management, and ongoing economic impact. In terms of geography, Tasmania is predominantly rural and regional. Moreover, by way of population distribution, we are the most decentralised state in Australia. The statistics and observations made by the honourable member for Hobart are stark but realistic: we do have a fire-prone state, a fire-prone capital, and numerous buildings which were simply not designed to address the now-modern fire standard and fire management requirements. It is an incident waiting to happen.

Tasmania's unique geography poses two direct issues: one in ensuring adequate state fire management across rural communities; and one in providing adequate crisis support for all Tasmanians, no matter how regional. We need proper procedures and resources in place to support communities, not just in times of crisis.

Tasmania also has a lower risk tolerance in its economic outcomes, particularly for significant crises. We have seen this through COVID and even the more recent fuel price shocks. Our economic and demographic statistics make Tasmanians less equipped to deal with major crises. Despite this, we always seem to do quite well at a community level, but that is something that we must proactively and constantly maintain and not take for granted.

In an economic and political climate where we constantly debate the economic viability of proposals, measures to support proper fire preparedness are easy to support. Indeed, as of late we have in this place spoken much of the potential return on investment on proposals before us. In this context, money spent on effective fire preparedness is undoubtedly a positive return on investment. If we can reduce the impact of fires which are at risk of severely damaging and destroying properties, livelihoods and entire communities, it is money well spent. By investing in proper and adequate fire management for population hotspots in Tasmania, we will be mitigating the need to pay directly for rebuilds, crisis support and more indirectly in the form of market failures and inefficiencies arising from such crises. Instead of bandaging wounds, now is a chance to practically address issues before they arise, mitigate impacts and ensure we can say that we did all we could to keep Tasmanians, their jobs and their homes safe.

This is not an idle fancy. As the honourable member for Hobart made clear, major fires in urban centres are happening globally. Major fires and warming incidents are happening more frequently. This is undeniably due to climate change. Australia is already more fire-prone than most countries and the situation is only getting worse. We should know better than most that fire destroys lives and livelihoods. We also understand that the only way to manage fire risk is through proper and adequate management before the worst outcomes eventuate.

I would once again like to reaffirm the point that investment in institutional management of such grave risks to Tasmanian communities is not dollars wasted. Better preparedness, education on fire safety and retrofitting of homes is great for Tasmania in myriads of ways, several of which might not be apparent. These things allow us to better manage fires, their risk and management, but they also help our reputation, the quality of life and safety that Tasmanians feel living here. These initiatives make Tasmania a more attractive place to move to. It does not all need to be flashy stadiums and major projects; realistic and pragmatic expenditure is as much, if not more, the priority.

The state government has consistently recognised health care in its budget as a priority. Fire risk management, institutional investment and fire preparedness is similar in its case. It is a holistic issue requiring not just reactive management but preventative and initiative-taking action to ensure the best outcomes for the health and wellbeing of Tasmanians.

I would once again like to reiterate my support for the notice of motion and thank the member for Hobart. It is an important thing that Tasmania takes fire risk seriously and moves with the times in this area. The LA wildfires were a stark reminder of the brutal reality that major fires impose upon us, and Australians know this better than most. The government should be prudent in looking toward improving fire safety education, ensuring adequate resourcing, and collaborating with communities to ensure that infrastructure and residential housing is adequate to manage the ongoing risk of fire hazards. This will be money well spent and investment into fire safety results in a net benefit to both Tasmania and Tasmanians, for now and into the future.

[4.39 p.m.]

Ms FORREST (Murchison) - Mr President, I want to thank the honourable member for Hobart for bringing this on. Bushfires and fires generally are the biggest threat that Tasmania faces. I do acknowledge the member for Hobart's comments on briefings with the RACT; I had a briefing with them to understand the real challenge. So I do acknowledge that, and I'm not going to repeat a lot of the things that you've said. The contribution you made on the report itself was very valuable.

I do remember watching some of the footage of fires in other parts of the world, but the fires around California, in the winter, in an urban area, were truly frightening. The speed at which fire travels, and it creates its own energy once it gets going, and in our Australian bush the fireballs can just explode and just go everywhere, and it just runs really fast, so it is truly frightening. I have huge admiration for our firefighters, our professional firefighters as well as our volunteers, who do put themselves in harm's way. I went to an event just recently to acknowledge those who've lost their lives in the course of their duty, not just from being caught in a fire perhaps, but more from some of the presumptive cancers that those firefighters have also suffered. So, whatever we can do to reduce the risk, or the need for them to fight those massive fires - house fires are going to happen from time to time, which is really tragic, but

these are really, truly frightening experiences that don't just take one home, they take many, and it's very indiscriminate.

I do remember my husband talking to a friend about a fire on the east coast a number of years ago; it came so fast. They were given literally seconds to leave. Thankfully they took that advice because they had a beautiful home with lots of timber, new architectural design, a beautiful property. They left as the fire was closing in behind them. They went back when they could, I don't know how long afterwards, a day or two afterwards, but it looked like - not that I've seen where an atomic bomb goes off - but it was just completely decimated. Everything was grey and ash. There was a six-pack of XXXX that had survived and that was the only thing; but the worst thing for me is that sometimes people go to water to shelter. We've seen that in bushfires around the nation. His place is right on the beach and what was on the beach was dead animals as far as you could see. That fire had sucked all the oxygen out of the air and if those humans had still been there, they probably would have been dead on the beach, too.

This is the sort of thing we're talking about and why we do need to take action. I also represent a region with a lot of flammable vegetation, which I'm really pleased to have; I share a bit of it with the new member for Huon here, down in the Tasmanian Wilderness World Heritage Area, the TWWHA, and I remember a number of years ago when we had fires in there, it was a particularly dry period, and at that time I don't think we had the specialist remote area firefighters that we have now. These firefighters are winched in, dropped in, to fight fires in these really inaccessible areas. You're not going to do fuel reduction burning in the TWWHA, I'm not suggesting that, but we do need to be aware that when the climate's changing, as it is, that these fires become more of a risk and, sadly, more of a reality.

Ms O'Connor - Through you, Mr President: they do some fuel reduction burning, carefully controlled within the TWWHA, as they should.

Ms FORREST - Carefully, at low intensity, yes. However, I was talking about some more wide scale, where you see plumes of smoke upsetting the wine-growers, those ones. In many of my communities, and I'm sure it's not unique to just my electorate, but with a large rural area with lots of road networks that are narrow, that are unsealed, for many of these communities, even those that have got sealed roads, there's one way in and one way out, and if you get caught, there is no way out except to the water. I'm thinking about Sisters Beach: one road in, one road out, and bush all around in every direction. We have talked quite a bit about trying to bring another road out over toward Rocky Cape, but you're going through sensitive land there too, so it is a challenge. Fire mitigation is very important in those areas. Preventive measures, as the member for Mersey alluded to, are a bit like preventive health; you have to spend the money upfront to save money in the long run.

The other thing, I don't recall the member for Hobart mention this - she might have done, sorry - but these are the Aboriginal land management practices of the past. I remember my father talking about this because he said his recollection of the land on the farm that we have was that it had been managed by Aboriginal people for obviously centuries and centuries, thousands of years, and he noticed the change in the forest surrounding our property that reflected a lack of understanding of Aboriginal traditional land management, and they do the low-intensity burns.

They knew what they were doing. They knew how to look after the land. We've lost a lot of that and we perhaps don't respect our Aboriginal forebears who actually knew quite well the risk and the benefit of fire to them as well.

Mr President, there are many people we can learn from, but what we don't want to learn from is a lived experience of a massive fire that destroys property and people.

We can do so much more to reduce it and I do acknowledge that it's not just a Hobart problem. I'm pleased the member for Hobart recognises that. I know she's very passionate about Hobart.

Ms O'Connor - It's just this big city at risk - that's all -

Ms FORREST - It is a big problem. There are a lot of people who could potentially be trapped.

Ms O'Connor - Yes.

Ms FORREST - I don't dispute that for a minute, but there are lots of small communities that could have just-as-important Tasmanians living there so we need to be sure that we have plans for should the worst happen.

I thank the member for Hobart bringing on the motion and the contributions supportive by other members.

[4.46 p.m.]

Ms WEBB (Nelson) - Mr President, I'm very pleased to rise to support this motion and thank the member for Hobart for bringing it. I also take the opportunity - it's the first time I've spoken substantially today - and I want to congratulate the new member for Huon and welcome her to our Chamber and congratulate the member for Rosevears on her re-election and being here with us still.

I thank the member for Hobart, as I said, for bringing this important matter to our House for discussion, providing us this opportunity to contribute to a necessary debate that should be very active and very ongoing at all times in terms of climate change impact and what we need to be doing to mitigate and reduce risk. I won't be making an extensive contribution, because I do note the member for Hobart has stated the case very clearly and other members have made, I believe, very worthwhile contributions that I've appreciated listening to. However, as part of the Greater Hobart region does overlap with my electorate of Nelson, I also considered the When Cities Burn report closely. It's highly relevant.

We know that the risk of bushfires crossing over from the bush into urban areas is very real. It's not hypothetical for many Tasmanians who recall the devastation of the 1967 fires and the devastation that they left in their wake. The Tasman Peninsula still bears the scars of the 2013 inferno which impacted approximately 40,000 hectares, homes, businesses, public infrastructure, not to mention, as others have said, the catastrophic effects that it has on wildlife and native flora.

But, as this motion highlights, bushfires are no longer limited to the bush. Even if we wanted to avoid facing the warnings that have escalated across the nation over recent decades,

those warnings have been thrown into sharp relief by the January report *When Cities Burn: Could the Los Angeles fires happen here?* that was released by the Climate Council and the Emergency Leaders for Climate Action. What a worthwhile report. The report is particularly pertinent to the electorate of Nelson because, as clause (4) of the motion put before us points out, Hobart is one of the nation's most fire-exposed cities with steep terrains experiencing strong winds and heavy fuels hemmed in by wet and dry forests on Kunanyi/Mount Wellington.

Mount Nelson in fact forms part of the foothills of Kunanyi/Mount Wellington with a well-established direct peri-urban interface between scrub, bush, homes, local businesses and Hobart College also in that area. To some degree, Mount Nelson is a microcosm of the larger scale presented by the Greater Hobart area and also in the Nelson electorate, which stretches down into Longley, Leslie Vale and into the Neika areas. Also, those western and southern aspects of the Nelson electorate are prime examples of risky peri-urban areas.

It was with great recognition and no small degree of alarm that I considered the Hobart snapshot on page 34 of the *When Cities Burn* report and the identified problematic characteristic which I immediately recognised, and here were the aspects of the characteristics that were there. Firstly, descriptions of drying natural environment, reduced rainfall, warming temperature contributing to longer fire seasons, something we recognise. Secondly, the increased housing and urban sprawl, constantly pushing into flammable bush and grasslands, increasing the potential for deaths and destruction. It's too readily recognisable. Thirdly, data detailing stronger and more erratic winds, which we can also all identify in our area, and, lastly, the geographical features such as steep slopes and few roads weaving along those steep slopes are immediately recognisable particularly in some of our foothill areas of Kunanyi/Mount Wellington.

It's no surprise the report identifies this, and I quote:

Outer urban areas near Brisbane, Sydney, Melbourne, Canberra, Hobart, Adelaide and Perth feature hilly or mountainous terrain, with ridgetop residential developments surrounded by bush and grassland.

Or that the report specifically includes Hobart in a list of Australian cities which, and I quote:

could be faced with a catastrophe like that in Los Angeles as climate-fuelled extreme weather conditions continue to change and intensify.

It's quite alarming. The report identifies residential structures built within 700 metres of bushland are far more likely to be destroyed in a fire, especially when built within close proximity to each other. I live in such a residence, and I think many of us here might do so.

In this context, the government cannot ignore the implications that in fact, with our close to 33 per cent increase in population between 2001 and 2024 - I think that's a national figure - living on the city's urban fringe, expansion in that urban fringe area puts us, particularly those living in older housing stock, at risk of serious fire damage as well as fatality in the event of a bushfire.

That makes extremely pertinent the call in clause (6) of the motion before us for the government to invest in retrofitting existing homes to bushfire standards. And that's a large

task. It's a very important but very large task when you think about what proportion of our community lives in such dwellings.

The When Cities Burn report finding that Hobart shares, and I quote, 'characteristics that made the LA fires so destructive' should provide sufficient motivation for our concerted and far-reaching action and that needs to be led by government action. However, in case that's not considered sufficient cause, the motion before us calls on the government to undertake two specific sets of actions. We know climate pollution is not just an outcome of serious bushfire events but also contributes to the conditions which cause and exacerbate those catastrophic fire events. Government must prioritise as a matter of public policy imperative reforms which seriously tackle and reduce climate pollution as outlined in clause (6) of the motion. It is essential action. It is responsible action.

Clause (7) of the motion calls on the Tasmanian government to prioritise an evacuation plan, and I'm pleased to support the member for Rumney's amendment that extends that not just for Greater Hobart but for all relevant areas within the state at risk, and to work with emergency services to ensure they are properly resourced, and that's really key. My goodness, we rely so heavily on our emergency services and so much of our bushfire response is volunteer-driven in this state. People step up in those situations, but governments have to make sure they have their back and that they've resourced them properly and that they've supported them to be able to be at the ready and able to do that important work that we rely on from them.

As recent research tells us, including the When Cities Burn report, the increasing severity of catastrophic bushfire events means there's a reduction in people staying to defend their properties, who seek to leave instead. Combined with increased populations living in these areas, it means that more people attempting to leave in a hurry, and usually on a limited road network, can cause pretty intense problems. Additionally, as the When Cities Burn report states on point 5:

There is no way to safely or effectively fight pyroconvective events, like those experienced in Canberra 2003, Black Saturday 2009, and the Black Summer bushfires. Aircraft must be grounded, and efforts to protect properties temporarily abandoned.

Basically, these fires are no longer fightable. As the report continued -

Fires on this scale are considered beyond the limits of any fire service to control.

This makes a coherent evacuation plan absolutely critical, imperative. This is reiterated in a 2022 published research paper, 'Neighbourhood bushfire hazard, community risk perception and preparedness in peri-urban Hobart, Australia', which found, and I quote:

Global climate projections suggest that drier landscapes and longer fire seasons will lead to a 20-50% increase in extreme bushfire events (Bowman et al 2017). This is not a threat that state fire management authorities can handle alone.

Further, it's not enough to have a Greater Hobart evacuation plan, which looks wonderful on paper. The community needs to know about it. They need to be familiar with it and feel

confident that they can follow it in a stressful, frightening emergency situation. Being stuck in slow-moving traffic on the Southern Outlet, for example, is not where people want to find themselves when trying to evacuate. It risks preventing emergency vehicles getting to where they're needed, while also preventing people from making a smooth escape. We need reliable and timely early alert systems, clear communication channels appropriate for the community's potentially diverse needs, readily identified emergency shelter sites for people and their animals, as well as safe and clearly defined evacuation routes. Hence, Tasmania must prioritise investing in improved 'emergency service and land management capacity at the urban fringe of our cities and major regional centres so growing populations are better protected for what's to come'. That was recommended by the 'When Cities Burn' report.

This isn't a matter of if we take these actions, but instead it's a matter of when and how fast can we deliver these essential outcomes. We must heed this evidence-based research and recommendations.

I commend this motion and on behalf of all Tasmanians living in the electorate of Nelson, I will certainly be voting in support of the motion.

[4.57 p.m.]

Ms O'CONNOR (Hobart) - Mr President, this gives me great hope that, as a collective and as a Council, we can work together on this most pressing and salient of issues. I want to thank all the members who've made a contribution today and, through those contributions, are bringing your own communities, your community stories and a recognition of the risk if we're not working hard together to be prepared. The member for Nelson went through some of what we need to be prepared, including reliable and timely alerts. We're very lucky in some ways because we have that infrastructure, if you like, of ABC radio that is the best source of reliable information in times of disaster, but we also do have an alert system through the Tasmania Fire Service, and that's something on which we can build.

When the report asks could what happened in LA happen here, there's just one sentence. The chilling answer, in short, is: it's not a matter of if but when. So the work that we do on this is urgent, and I really look forward to working collectively on making sure that the government comes good on some of the commitments that it has made around adaptation and preparedness. I was very interested to know there are community protection plans for suburbs around the park because I've never seen one and I've lived in West Hobart and Mount Stuart, both high-risk suburbs, so that probably goes to some of the issues that have been raised by members about the need to engage with communities. I'm so pleased to hear there are community protection plans for suburbs around this great city.

I thank the member for Rumney for improving the motion and making it more applicable to everyone in this place. I thank all members for their contribution, and I look forward to an ongoing discussion about how we can do more work on climate action together.

Motion, as amended, agreed to.

MOTION

Tasmanian Arts Funding

[5.00 p.m.]

Ms FORREST - Mr President, it was remiss of me when I got to speak on the last motion to overlook welcoming back the member for Rosevears. Great to have you back. I know it is always a bit of a challenge when you have to wait for a result, but it is good to have you back. I look forward to continuing to work with you.

Welcome to our new member for Huon, my new seat buddy, for a little while, who knows how long this time. They get shunted along pretty quickly, but well done to you. It is a huge endorsement from your community. I look forward to working with you as well.

As with other members, I would also like to acknowledge the work of the former member for Huon, Dean Harriss and his contribution to this place. I will miss him at budget time. I will just say that because it's up to me now to find the typos again, whereas he was very good at that.

Ms Rattray - And an excellent member on Public Works.

Ms FORREST - Yes, and we'll miss him on a couple of other committees as well, I must say. I wish him all the best for whatever he chooses to do now.

Mr President, I move -

That the Legislative Council notes that:

- (1) Tasmania has the lowest per capita arts expenditure of any Australian state or territory, at \$48.93 per capita against a national average of \$78.71;
- (2) The number of arts organisations receiving annual funding from Arts Tasmania has fallen from 28 in 2021-22 to 18 in 2025-26 - a 35% reduction;
- (3) The 2025-26 Budget removed \$900,000 in funding that the Government had itself introduced in the previous year specifically to prevent sector damage, including four \$150,000 initiatives for music, theatre, regional arts, and writing, none of which were renewed;
- (4) Forward budget estimates show Arts Industry Development grants funding continuing to decline in 2026-27 and 2027-28, while the Tasmanian Symphony Orchestra, Ten Days on the Island, and Theatre Royal are funded outside the competitive grants program and receive automatic annual increases;
- (5) The arts organisations competitive grants pool has never been CPI-indexed, meaning its real value erodes each year, and had

indexation applied since 2021-22, approximately \$1.3 million additional funding would currently be available;

- (6) Defunding routinely causes permanent closure, noting the Tasmanian Theatre Company, Blue Cow Theatre, and others have closed following loss of funding, representing irreversible loss of employment, institutional knowledge, and community benefit;
- (7) The limited availability of multi-year funding arrangements has resulted in administrative inefficiency for both government and arts organisations, reduced sustainability, constrained forward planning, and persistent job insecurity for arts workers; and
- (8) While the Government has committed a maximum of \$875 million in state capital funding to a new stadium and provides substantial investment in sport programs including professional sport and other infrastructure, it has simultaneously cut arts grants funding and allowed emergency arts funding it had itself introduced to lapse - despite advancing identical arguments for both sectors in relation to health and wellbeing, community cohesion, tourism, and economic activity.

And calls on the Government to:

- (1) Restore arts grants funding to at least 2021-22 levels in real terms;
- (2) Apply annual CPI indexation to the arts organisations funding pool;
- (3) Establish adequate, stable and predictable recurrent funding for arts organisations in place of ad hoc one-off grants;
- (4) Reinstate the Tasmanian Strategic Touring Fund at \$220,000 per annum;
- (5) Commit to forward funding that responds to the Tasmanian Live Performance Exchange recommendations, including in the 2026-27 Budget;
- (6) Establish expanded multi-year funding programs for established arts organisations that have demonstrated consistent delivery, strong governance, and measurable community benefit;
- (7) Apply to arts grants funding principles that will bring the scale of arts investment into reasonable proportion with the Government's stated policy objectives for the sector.

I thank the member for Elwick for putting the motion on the Notice Paper in my name as I couldn't be here for the quorum call and I think it's really important we debate it before the budget. There are some more comments I will have to add after announcements today, but I will start where I intended to and will continue to.

Tasmania has a problem. This is not a new problem. It's not a complicated one. It is a problem of priorities and of a funding model that is structurally broken and getting worse each year. This state has the lowest per capita arts expenditure of any Australian state or territory. Not the second lowest, the lowest. At \$48.93 per capita against a national average of \$78.71 per capita, we are spending 38 per cent less per person on the arts than the rest of the country. This is not a gap that we should accept. It's a statement of what the government values and what it does not.

I want to be clear at the outset of this motion on what it's about and what it's not. It is not an argument that the arts are more important than health or housing or education. It is an argument that the arts funding model in this state is irrational, inconsistent, increasingly destructive as funding has been reduced and eroded to completely unsustainable levels, and that the government has the capacity to fix it at a relatively moderate cost, if it chooses to do so. I will come to one of those choices a little bit later.

I will start with the numbers because they tell a clear story. In 2021-22 Arts Tasmania funded organisations through its arts grant program with a pool of \$3,788,462. Of the 30 organisations funded in that year, 28 were delivering annual or multi-year programs. The other two, Express Media's *Voiceworks* magazine and Paper on Skin, received project funding rather than program funding. It is that figure for the annually and multi-year funding organisations that is the meaningful baseline.

By 2025-26, that number had fallen to 18 organisations with a pool of approximately \$3.2 million. That's a 35 per cent reduction in the number of organisations supported and a nominal reduction in the pool itself of over \$580,000, before inflation is even considered.

As I noted, Express Media's *Voiceworks* magazine and Paper on Skin received funding that was for a project, not a for a program. These kinds of projects have been supported through the organisations projects round that was created in 2023-24 and the number of projects has gone up from two in that year to eight in 2025-26. The increase in organisations funded this way, instead of through annual or multi-year funding, shows a clear pattern of destabilisation in the sector. An organisation can't deliver a project effectively unless it has core funding to support the development of the project and the writing of a grant application in the first place.

The remaining organisations were all delivering annual or multi-year programs. This makes the fall in the number of annually and multi-year funded organisations from 28 in 2021-22 down to 18 in 2025-26. In addition, of those 28, two of those funded in 2021-22, Kickstart and Big hART, have been supported through the organisations projects round in 2026, but at a level close to half of what they were supported for in the annual program in 2021-22. One organisation, Music Tasmania, did not receive funding for 2026 but did receive strategic initiatives and service organisations funding in 2024-25, which could have extended into 2026 if it was for an 18-month project.

Had that pool been indexed to CPI since 2021, as would be standard practice for any reasonably managed grants program, approximately \$1.3 million in additional funding would currently be available. Potentially this could have funded eight additional organisations, or it could have assisted the organisations that remain to better manage the rising costs of presenting and producing work, including wages and superannuation, et cetera. There has been no increase in the amount for an annual funding application an organisation can ask for, despite rising costs. So, each year the administrative costs grow as a percentage, but the funding does not. The

funding pool has never been indexed - not once. With every year that passes, its real value erodes, and organisations that were viable in the previous year find themselves on the wrong side of a funding decision, not because their work has declined in quality but because the mathematics of a static pool and rising costs have caught up with them. This is not an accident. This is a predictable consequence of a structural flaw that this government had chosen not to fix.

I want to turn to what happened in 2025-26, because the situation in 2025-26 is particularly egregious. Why? Because it involved the removal of funding that the government had itself acknowledged just 12 months earlier was necessary to prevent sector damage. In 2024-25 the government provided a \$300,000 uplift to the annual organisations funding pool, having recognised that funding levels were insufficient. It also provided for one-off initiative grants of \$150,000 each for music, theatre, regional arts and writing, after organisations in those areas missed out on competitive funding. The minister and Arts Tasmania both understood that without those initiatives, these organisations would likely close. In 2025-26 none of the funding was renewed. The uplift lapsed, the four initiatives were not continued.

The combined effect was a real loss of \$900,000 to the sector, and defunding of organisations including Big hART, Kickstart Arts, MADE, RANT Arts, Music Tasmania and the Hobart Readers and Writers Festival. I want to pause on that, because it matters. The government didn't remove this funding because they considered the sector no longer needed it. They removed it despite having established, on its own analysis, that the funding was needed, and I don't see how this can possibly be a defensible position. We here, and all Tasmanians, need to understand the real cost of this defunding. It seems there is a tendency within government to treat it as a temporary disruption when they cut funding, as though an organisation that loses funding one year can simply reapply the next and if successful, resume operations as before. I think we all know that's not how it works.

The Tasmanian Theatre Company was defunded in 2020-21: it is closed. Blue Cow Theatre was defunded in 2023-24: it is closed. Australian Plays Transform was defunded in 2022-23: this one moved interstate, taking with it an organisation that had been developed and supported by Tasmanian public investment. When an arts organisation closes, what is lost is not merely that year's program; what is lost is the audience base that was built over years; the relationships with schools, community groups and regional venues; the institutional knowledge of how to make work in this place, for this community; and the often-precarious employment of artists and art workers who may not be able to find equivalent work elsewhere in Tasmania. These are not recoverable losses. You cannot simply reinstate funding two years later and expect the organisation to reconstitute itself. The sector's capacity, once lost, is gone. This is why the motion notes that defunding represents irreversible loss of employment, institutional knowledge and community benefit, and it's not an exaggeration. It is the documented experience of this sector in Tasmania over the past five years and it's not good enough.

The problem of short-term and annual funding is not unique to the arts. We could talk about many sectors in this way, but the focus for me is on the arts, and I wish to speak specifically to the harm it creates here. Organisations like Stompin, which has been operating for 31 years, and DRILL, operating for 17 years are well-established, demonstrably effective youth dance companies that remain on annual funding cycles. Every year they spend weeks preparing competitive applications for funding they need simply to continue operating. That time is not spent making work, building audiences or leveraging their state funding to attract

investment from trust foundations or federal programs. It is spent on administrative compliance for a process that, for organisations of this track record, should be unnecessary.

The same burden falls on Arts Tasmania, which must assess and administer these applications year after year for organisations whose funding in any rational system would long since have been secured on a multi-year basis. Multi-year and four-year funding arrangements exist within the current system, but they are the exception, not the norm. The motion calls for their expansion specifically for established organisations that have demonstrated consistent delivery, strong governance and measurable community benefit. Where they've proved themselves, surely we can treat them a bit more respectfully. This is not a call for entitlement at all. It is a call for efficiency, sustainability and the basic capacity to plan ahead that we expect of many well-managed enterprises.

I also wish to speak to the structural inequity that is visible in the previous budget papers themselves. I know many of us saw this in the budget papers when we scrutinised them in November last year, because this speaks directly to the coherence, or lack thereof, of the government's approach to funding. The Tasmanian Symphony Orchestra, Ten Days on the Island and Theatre Royal are funded through administered expenses outside the competitive grants program. They receive automatic annual increases locked in across that forward Estimates; that's a good thing.

In 2025-26 Ten Days on the Island received \$1.510 million, up from \$1.480 million, and the forward Estimates showed it rising to \$1.54 million, then \$1.571 million, then \$1.602 million in subsequent years. Theatre Royal receives \$1.061 million, rising consistently to \$1.126 million by 2028-29. The Tasmanian Symphony Orchestra (TSO) receives \$2.453 million in its annual government contribution, rising to \$2.562 million, and a further \$4.5 million in one-off capital support in 2025-26. I believe this is required for the mitigation of negative impacts from the construction of the new stadium at Macquarie Point.

I'm not arguing that these organisations do not deserve support; they absolutely do and they provide a wonderful experience for those who engage with them. The work they deliver is significant and it is highly valued, not just by Tasmanians but far broader. I want members to sit with what the budget papers are actually showing us: within a single Arts portfolio we have one tier of organisations that receive automatic, recurrent funding with certainty across a four-year estimate period, and another tier of 18 organisations that compete annually for a pool that has no indexation and is declining in nominal terms. The forward Estimates showed arts industry development grants funding falling from \$9.097 million in 2026-27 to \$8.940 million in 2027-28. They will have another budget on Thursday. I will be looking there to see how it is tracking. What I'm describing here is a two-tier system without a transparent policy justification, and it's certainly not an arts policy.

Another factor that clearly shows the priorities of this government is the cuts to arts and design courses at TasTAFE. This is not a separate issue; it is part of the same story and represents the same logic taken to this conclusion.

For 2026, 12 TasTAFE courses covering design, screen and media, music, fashion, visual arts and textiles will lose their government subsidies entirely. That's a disgrace. Fees for these courses will jump from as little as \$400 to more than \$21,000: a fee increase of up to 5000 per cent. That's a big number. Concessions will be scrapped. There are 448 students enrolled in these courses. The Australian Education Union has warned that young people,

particularly those from regional and disadvantaged backgrounds, will simply not be able to afford to continue or even start these courses, so we see the death of these courses. I fear that may have actually been the intent. The Australian Education Union's TAFE Division president, Tristan Sabol, said, and I agree with him:

... this is not an either/or choice. A prosperous Tasmania needs both a strong caring and construction workforce and a thriving creative sector. Cutting off one to prop up the other is short-sighted and damaging.

But I want to address directly the justification offered by minister Ellis for these cuts. Speaking to ABC Radio, the minister said:

TasTAFE needs to focus on key vocational skills like building our homes, caring for our loved ones, feeding our families.

Of course we do. He went on to say, and I quote, this is what he said on ABC, the courses in 'apparel, fashion and textiles, screen and media, visual arts aren't necessarily delivering great student outcomes and they're not delivering great outcomes for our economy'.

Really? I have two questions for the minister: first, how did he measure that? How did he measure the economic impact of the arts, and what is he actually measuring? If the measure is immediate graduate employment in a formal, directly arts-related job 12 months after completion date, then yes, the arts, like many creative disciplines, does not create the kind of linear career pathway; nor do others.

Ms Webb - Not always.

Ms FORREST - Sometimes, but it's not automatic, but nor are many others; but the methodology, applied selectively, would defund many courses the government holds dear. Artists and creative workers piece together careers from across multiple income streams and multiple sectors. They work in education; they work in health; they work in tourism; in digital industries; in design and manufacturing. The Design Institute of Australia, the peak professional body for designers in Australia, wrote to minister Ogilvie, I think it was - anyway, they wrote to one of the ministers, either Ogilvie or Ellis, in October last year - making precisely this point.

The letter noted that the National Skills Plan itself identifies digital capability as foundational to Australia's economic future, that approximately 87 per cent of jobs now require digital skills, and that technology is moving decisively toward visual and multimodal systems. Oh, hello, that's where people learn these skills. A diploma of graphic design, the Design Institute of Australia pointed out, is fundamentally a digital technology qualification covering user interface design, web development, digital application design, interactive media and emerging technologies including AI. That it is not a peripheral creative arts course; that is workforce development for an economy increasingly built on visual digital communication.

The Design Institute of Australia also raised the impact on Waverley Mills, Australia's largest remaining woollen mill and a significant Tasmanian employer which depends on a pipeline of locally trained designers and textile specialists. Oh, so where are they going to be trained then? Maybe they will be the wealthy people who can afford to pay the extraordinary, exorbitant rates. Cut the training and you undermine the manufacturing.

The institute noted that Tasmania's technology sector is projected to triple by 2035, growing from 11,200 workers to over 32,000, and contributing more than a billion dollars to the state economy. Cutting the design education foundation degrades that growth and is, in the institute's words, 'shooting oneself in the foot'. I'm not sure what minister Ellis was measuring when he talked about economic return or economic benefit, and that's not to mention the health and wellbeing benefit. Minister Ellis also said that enrolments in these courses were quite low and that students could access them through other providers. On enrolments, yes, they are smaller than in capital cities because Tasmania represents 2.1 per cent of Australia's population: small cohorts are inherent to this state. That cannot be a test of the viability of every program, or we would strip Tasmania of educational infrastructure across the board.

On the claim that other providers offer these courses: for a student in Burnie, Devonport, Latrobe or Launceston, a course offered in Melbourne or Sydney is not an accessible alternative; and there are many from down south, I'm sure, too, who couldn't. It is, for most, no alternative at all.

To the minister's core claim that these courses are not delivering good outcomes for the economy, I would ask him to account for the fact that more than 9000 Tasmanians are directly employed in cultural and creative industries, and with many more indirectly employed through tourism, hospitality and retail; and that's not even counting those involved in the health sector and education space.

Tasmania's creative reputation, the reputation the government actively promotes as a tourism and lifestyle migration drawcard, the reputation that saw Hobart listed in the *New York Times* and Lonely Planet guides as a destination - that reputation is built on genuine creative ability. Many of the creative individuals who contribute to this story - and the government can pump up the tyres - and to the community's wellbeing and economy, started their work life in arts organisations whose funding has been systematically reduced to the point of crisis.

Genuine creative capability requires sustained investment in creative education. You cannot trade on a creative reputation while you are simultaneously defunding it at its foundations, and this brings you back to the question of measurement. The minister claims arts courses are not delivering good outcomes for the economy; as I said, how is the minister actually measuring the economic impact of the positive health and wellbeing, including mental health and wellbeing, and community wellbeing, and the inherent positive health outcomes and sense of belonging and inclusion which the arts create? It's not just those who consume the arts or engage in the arts that way; it's those who create the arts. Everyone gets a benefit. On what basis is he making the claim that it's not good for our economy?

TasTAFE cuts are a policy choice. Combined with the cuts to the competitive grants pool and lapsing of arts organisations initiatives, and the absence of indexation, they form a pattern: one of managed, incremental withdrawal from the arts, accompanied by the rhetoric that it values creativity while the budget does the opposite.

I just want to turn briefly to a comparison I raised, not to be provocative at all but because it goes directly to the question of scale, principle and priority. The government has committed a maximum of \$875 million in state capital funding to a new stadium. It provides the Active Industry Fund: \$2.5 million to nearly 40 sport and active recreation organisations. The Active Club Sports Program provides \$815,000; Her Path to Play provides \$400,000. The Tasmanian Institute of Sport talent ID program receives \$1.5 million ahead of the Brisbane Olympics.

Beyond grants, there is substantial, ongoing investment in professional sport and sports infrastructure across the state.

These are legitimate investments. Sport delivers real benefits to health, to community, to regional economies, to the Tasmanian identity, and I do not dispute that. I also know, particularly enhanced by contributions from the member for Elwick in the past, that there is disproportionate spending in sport across professional and elite sports compared to community grassroots sports and organisations.

Just listen to the language the government used to justify this, what I think is a very, well, reasonable level of sports funding. This is what they say: it's for community wellbeing; health outcomes; economic activity; tourism; a sense of belonging; regional engagement; Tasmania's identity and reputation. That is word for word the case for arts funding: the arguments are identical, the outcomes being sought are identical, not in dollar terms but in recognition of the contribution. Yet, what we see is an entirely different approach. The government will commit to a maximum of \$875 million in capital to a single stadium. It will not commit, up until today, \$1.3 million to restore the value of the arts grants pool. It will allow \$900,000 in arts funding, funding it had itself introduced specifically to prevent closures, to lapse without renewal, and it provides no indexation whatsoever to the competitive grants pool, upon which 18 organisations depend for their existence.

The contrast is not subtle. It's a statement of priorities and is a statement that demands an explanation and demands action and reprioritisation. It is an explanation that, to my knowledge, has not been provided until today.

The motion does not ask the government to choose between sport and arts; it absolutely does not do that. It asks the government to apply to arts grants funding principles that will bring the scale of arts investment to reasonable proportion with its own stated policy objectives for the sector. If the government genuinely believes the arts deliver community wellbeing, economic activity, tourism benefit and regional cohesion, as its own policy documents attest - and I personally know it to be true that they do bring those benefits - then the investment must reflect that belief. At present, until today, it didn't even come close.

I note that the Tasmanian Strategic Touring Fund, which supported Tasmania's performing arts organisations to tour their work across the state, has also lapsed. This fund addressed a genuine market failure. Federal touring funding through Playing Australia specifically excludes intrastate touring, meaning Tasmanian organisations are at a structural disadvantage compared to their interstate peers in New South Wales, Queensland, South Australia, Victoria and Western Australia, all of which have equivalent state programs. The fund delivered real returns, not just for producers but for presentation venues and audiences across the state, including in regional Tasmania. Its reinstatement of \$220,000 per annum is a modest and well-targeted investment.

We also note that the government has commissioned the Tasmanian Live Performance Exchange to develop a 10-year plan for the performing arts sector, with recommendations due to Arts Tasmania and Cabinet by June 2026. Maybe that's why we saw the announcement today. This is a welcome initiative, but a plan without committed funding risks being an exercise in managed decline.

This motion calls for the government to commit forward funding that responds to those recommendations in the 2026-27 Budget so that the plan, when it arrives, has the resources to be implemented rather than filed. We are in budget week, so, I want to be direct about what the cost of this motion asks. Restoring the arts grants pool to the 2021-22 levels in real terms, accounting for CPI since then, will require approximately \$1.3 million. This is not much more than the Premier has offered Scott Roth, coach of the JackJumpers, to be ambassador to the state, doing the job he's doing.

Reinstating the four lapsed service organisations initiatives cost \$600,000. Reinstating the annual Uplift costs \$300,000. Reinstating Strategic Touring Fund costs \$220,000. In an almost \$9 billion budget, these are not large numbers. The gap between what the arts sector needs and what it currently receives is, in budget terms, minimal. The question is not whether we can afford to fund the arts properly. The question is whether we choose to.

Before I conclude, I was alerted to those hard-working people in the creative space who have been working really desperately hard to try to see the government change its position on that. Then indeed this morning, I heard on ABC radio and in some of the local news, and I saw a Facebook post a little while ago from the Premier, that they have been successful. And when I say 'they', the creative arts sector have been working their butts off to deliver this - an announcement:

The Tasmanian Government is delivering a major boost to the state's creative economy with a \$10 million Creative Industries initiative as part of the 2026-27 Budget.

One good leak out of the Budget. Premier Jeremy Rockliff said that the investment represents a strong commitment to Tasmania's growing arts, screen and cultural sectors over the next four years and beyond. Amazing what a motion before the parliament can help to push along, isn't it? Funny, it came down the same day this motion was -

Ms O'Connor - Incredible. Pure coincidence.

Ms FORREST - Surely not. I did speak to the Premier at a meeting earlier today and he said, 'Feel free to take a bit of credit.' I don't know if he meant it or not, but, anyway, I do note further down in this commentary, in one of the media articles from Mirage News, it says:

Minister for Arts and Heritage, Madeleine Ogilvie, said investing in the State's burgeoning screen industry would be a key focus of the initiative.

Well, that's good because screen does deserve funding, but let's not put all our eggs in one basket either. I'll be interested to see, and there'll be more questions to be asked to the minister next week, or the week after actually, at Estimates, because I really want to understand what this actually says.

So, this is a very welcome announcement, but I didn't change my speech, except for the odd 'until today' in it, because I think it's really important that the concerns of the creative industries are put on the record, as they have been, that have led to this position. I want to acknowledge the hard work of all those people who put hours and hours and hours into this, rather than into producing work, creating new art and creating opportunities for people to engage in. Never underestimate the power of a motion before the parliament.

In conclusion, I am a strong supporter of the arts people. Members would know that I speak about it often in this place and provide significant personal financial support to organisations right across the state. I acknowledge also, and in terms of a disclosure of interest, I do have family members directly engaged in the arts. Members would know I have a son-in-law who's a professional opera singer. Not here in Tasmania, but they are touring to Tasmania. A little plug for him: go and see *Don Giovanni* when it's in Burnie or Hobart. He'll be in one of the lead roles in the Burnie and one of the Hobart sessions, so, do go along at the Theatre Royal. But my interest is far broader than my family's interest. I've long been involved with the arts in one way or another: at school in musicals and all sorts of stuff. We used to have a lovely time at the eisteddfods. That's why I can get up and do what I do now maybe.

The positive impacts on personal health and wellbeing, community cohesion, economic activity, tourism, inclusion and regional belonging are well documented and very real. They are not abstract contents. The arts are a fundamental contributor to Tasmania's identity, our reputation and, minister Ellis, to our economy. Tasmania's creative sector is not asking for special treatment. What it is asking for is stable, rational, predictable and adequate indexed funding that allows organisations to plan, to employ people, to make work, and to serve their communities, without spending weeks or months each year in administrative uncertainty about whether they will actually exist in 12 months. This motion is asking the government to apply to the arts the same good faith it applies to other sectors it identifies as delivering community wellbeing and economic benefit, and to bring the scale of that investment into reasonable proportion with its own stated objectives. It is asking the government to stop removing funding that it has itself identified as necessary to prevent closures and then standing by and watching those organisations close.

I represent a rural and regional electorate on our north-west coast. The arts are not peripheral to communities like mine, they are central to them. Organisations like Stompin in Launceston, RANT Arts in Devonport and in our regions, Big hART, community theatre companies right across many of our regional communities, music programs, the writers' festivals, they're not luxuries in regional communities that we can just perhaps be lucky to enjoy in the good times. They are part of the fabric of what makes a community worth living in. When those organisations close, lots is lost, and lots is lost that cannot be recovered by a future government with good intentions and a reinstated item in the budget. They're gone. You can't just stand them up again just like that.

This government has the capacity to change course, and this motion asks for that. I do acknowledge the announcement today of \$10 million, and I'll be really interested in how that is going to be applied. It's the announcement of a figure, an amount of money; I want to see how that's going to be applied. Will these longer-term funding grants be provided for? Organisations have shown that they continue to produce good work, they create economic and social wellbeing benefits and they shouldn't have to spend more of their time every year wondering whether they're going to exist next year. That is what I want to see. The minister can expect questions about this in two weeks, but I do urge the government to really focus on this for the health and wellbeing of all Tasmanians. I look forward to other members' contributions.

[5.35 p.m.]

Mr GAFFNEY (Mersey) - Mr President, I rise to fully back the motion. I thank the member for Murchison for bringing this forward. I am certain that there are a number of people

in this place who will want to speak to this. It's not going to be a 6.00 or 7.00 p.m. finish tonight. It will be quite late, I think, just putting that on the table.

There has never been a more urgent need to properly support what I believe is an essential part of being a living, breathing human being. I am also conscious, as I am sure fellow members are, of the Premier's pre-budget Facebook post put up at 9.00 p.m. last night. It spoke of backing creative Tasmanians with a \$10 million creative industries fund. Its stated aim is, and I quote, 'it will support everyone from individual artists right through to major productions.'

It is a welcome departure from the government's arts funding massacre to date and we can welcome his renewed insight. The problem comes with the perception that \$10 million will put everything right. I assume we will know more on Thursday, and it will be fascinating to learn more about the fund and how it will operate as the \$10 million will have to do a lot of heavy lifting if it is going to support everyone in the creative industries. If we were to add another zero, it might get close to making a genuine difference.

However, unlike the AFL, the creative industries cannot be choosers of the government largesse. They have to work in the real world, where funding is a privilege that can be withdrawn at a moment's notice.

I would like to expand on that argument as in a world of wants and needs, what is loosely described as the creative arts and everything that goes with it, is simply the reason we exist. In an increasingly uncertain world, the requirement to fully engage and participate in the arts has never been greater. It is an absolute need. As humans, we are not simple beings like an insect, a snake, a spider or a crocodile that rely on the instinctive aggressive reactions driven by a primitive or reptilian brain. Instead, humans are highly sophisticated animals with an expanded and highly developed brain, one which allows us to fully engage with the world around us and have the capacity to think in abstract terms and to think critically - essential skills in the modern world. Of all the large mammals, humans have the highest brain-to-body mass ratio and the densest cerebral cortex. We also have highly developed frontal and temporal lobes that allow us to create, observe and evaluate the arts. Those capabilities connect understanding and appreciation to our emotional response, to deliver a fully aesthetic experience.

What that means in practice is, unlike other mammals, we have a unique ability to engage in fully aesthetic experiences. To quote the late and great Sir Ken Robinson, who was a global authority on creativity, education and human potential:

The arts especially address the idea of aesthetic experience. An aesthetic experience is one in which your senses are operating at their peak; when you're present in the current moment; when you're resonating with the excitement of this thing that you're experiencing; when you are fully alive.

It's one in which your senses, in terms of what you are seeing and/or hearing, are operating at an almost transcendental level, with a heightened level of alertness and a direct emotional connection with what you are engaged in.

I am certain members can all recall many occasions when they have been so caught up in a moment of appreciation where our daily worries fall away with our total focus on the thing before us, be it a musical performance, reading a perfect novel or observing a beautiful painting or sculpture.

This is also true of those on the other side of the aesthetic experience - for those who may be creating the opportunity of that experience for others. I speak, of course, of the artists, be they performers, filmmakers, painters, musicians, sculptors, writers and any number of people in the creative industries.

For an audience, the opportunity to observe a performer lost in the midst of their own aesthetic experience only adds to the pleasure and enjoyment. It is a place where time is irrelevant, where the artist is lost in their interpretation of their work, and where we get to see their genius in real life and perhaps, for a moment, share a goose-pimpled, skin-prickling moment of personal connection to the artist. At its best, for both sides, it can be described as being in a state of flow - a timeless state where nothing else matters.

In order for us to enjoy these opportunities, we need access, and that is where genuine government support is critical. It is where the young talent must be nurtured and encouraged. Yes, we do have artistic prodigies in our community, but we also have capable people who can develop their abilities to match the prodigies, just like in any other profession, but only if they have tangible support and training to do so.

The political naysayers will talk of the costs and limited appeal of artistic nonsense, and that taxpayer money needs to be spent on something solid they can be photographed in front of, preferably in high-vis. They demand tangible things like roads, bridges, buildings, shopping centres and sport pitches and, dare I say, yet another stadium within which to demonstrate their athletic prowess. I would like to remind members of some of my quotes from last year's stadium debate:

Do people realise that very few Tasmanians (male or female) play in the AFL? In the last 25 years we have averaged less than four young men a year drafted to the AFL. Furthermore, young Tasmanians aspire in many things. The arts, music and creative sectors fundamentally underpin Tasmanian excellence. They are many areas we want our young people to dream big. However, if this financial white elephant gets passed, those Tasmanians will not be supported financially by this government to realise their dreams.

If we look to economic success and a proven return on investment, the stadium is an absolute dud with a return of less than 50 cents of every dollar it costs, and that was based on one of the earlier and cheaper cost estimates. If we're truly looking to the future, let's look to Ireland. After a three-year pilot, Ireland has just implemented an expanded basic income scheme for the arts that will provide a weekly taxable payment of about \$580 to 2200 participants to provide some assured stability to those in creative industries.

The pilot demonstrated an average cost-benefit ratio of €1.39 for every €1 of public money invested in the scheme. This ratio went up to €1.75 so far for 2025. With Hobart's internationally recognised connection with the arts, can we leave the AFL alone and go to town in following Ireland's lead with MONA as our champion?

To explain that further, the three-year Irish pilot project launched in 2022 is now a permanent scheme proving that direct funding to randomly selected members of the creative

community gives real returns, both in financial and cultural terms. If we were to scale the Irish initiative to Tasmania, with roughly a tenth of the population of Ireland, we would see 220 people in the creative industries generating a return of \$1.75 for every dollar of government money invested in the scheme. Not only that, they would also be working more hours in their practice and generating tangible goodwill for what are essentially small businesses. For 220 people in the creative arts, that's almost a twofold return of close to \$12 million.

What if we went further and scaled it up to more people? Or even used the Premier's new fund as the foundation of a Tasmanian version of the Irish scheme as an off-the-shelf package?

Given the current predictions on the likely stadium cost blowouts, we'll be lucky to see even a few cents in the dollar as a return on our investment from that grand experiment, one where we will be talking in terms of thousands of millions of dollars of borrowed money, so let's give the Irish basic income for the arts scheme a go. It's tried and tested and it works.

Going back to the motion and the investment it suggests, we are talking of scarcely a few million dollars scattered across the whole of Tasmania, which in sporting terms will barely pay for the sandwiches, flags and nibbles bill for the government boxes in the new stadium.

With this week's budget about to land, dare we hope that within the many thousands of millions of dollars allocated to the TT-Line, the stadium and the AFL team, we might see more than a few crumbs scattered as a lifeline to the arts? The arts to which the government has shamefully turned its back and offered only a cold shoulder in support. Whilst the Premier and I acknowledge the \$10 million creative arts fund is a good start, a constituent said to me, 'It's almost a slap in the face given what has already been cut and what is yet to come with the TasTAFE cuts.'

Speaking of shame, I speak to the government's additional shame in killing the Tasmanian Theatre Company after 53 years of successful operation. I'd like to share again a quote in an email from the Tasmanian Theatre Company and Mudlark Theatre Inc as what was our oldest professional theatre company in Tasmania. It's one I shared in my response to the Premier's state of the state address from only two months ago:

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

The net outcome is 20 permanent job losses - jobs that cannot be replaced. I must ask what it will take for the government to wake up to the seriousness of that outcome. Maybe one solution would be for those in the creative arts to start wearing hard hats and high-vis because that's what catches the government's eye and will lead it to pour millions of dollars into job preservation for a failing company that has already had millions of dollars thrown at it.

Tasmania has the potential to be the art state of Australia - if only the government gave the arts half a chance. Instead, it has ridden on the back of private investment in the arts, with the AFL now tagging along as a parasitic addition. I would go further and say David Walsh and his inspired investment in MONA and the Dark Mofo festival has saved Tasmania. He is the catalyst that revitalised Hobart as a bespoke centre of the arts. He's the reason that we now have a thriving hotel and hospitality scene in what was a fading backwater, most likely backed

only by the Port Arthur interest. His ongoing investment in expansion for MONA puts the Premier and this government to shame.

It is also probably the reason that the AFL is so insistent on having its new AFL stadium in the centre of Hobart, as it wants to elbow its way into the kudos of what MONA has created and steal some, or preferably all of it, for its own ends. Within all this is the intelligence of David Walsh and his unique business acumen that have allowed him to fully engage with his passion for creative arts, architecture and entertainment. Arts and high intelligence go hand in hand. Our brains are a muscle. It needs to be exercised just as much as our bodies, and exercising our brains through the arts expands the neural connections within our brain. It's what's known as the Flynn effect: the neuroplastic capacity of our brain to expand when challenged and one that grows all aspects of our thinking processes.

This is where the motion really shines a bright light on what is or is not being done to support the next generation, their engagement with the arts and the impact on our future. As an example, I look to a young man in my electorate who, whilst at Don College, became the junior cornet champion of Australia. He then went on to gain eight EAs and a 99.80 ATAR. He's about to graduate in medicine from the ANU with the intention of becoming a neurologist. I know that his involvement in music began as a year 3 student at Moriarty Primary School where he joined Latrobe School's cluster band and picked up a cornet for the first time. The rest is history, as he demonstrated the proven connection between instrumental music and outstanding academic achievement. Remember the Flynn effect I spoke of earlier?

He went on to become a valued member of the Latrobe Federal Band, local musical productions, and his recording of the 'Last Post and Reveille' were used by all government agencies during COVID in their special media posts for Anzac Day. That is the value of creative arts and education; it sows seeds that grow to serve our wider community's needs.

The tragedy in today's world is that instrumental music is the easiest and simplest cut that a Department for Education, Children and Young People (DECYP) principal can make in a budget reduction measure - that's if they even have an instrumental music program. No doubt we will see even more in the coming Budget. As a footnote, the Latrobe School cluster band program ended many years ago, and the current regional schools band programs in the north and north-west are under constant threat of closure.

We are perhaps already seeing the real opportunity cost in these punitive measures as DECYP chases falling attainment and attendance rates in our schools. Whilst numeracy and literacy are essential, so too are the creative arts such as writing, art, media and music.

The government has gone further in its war on the next generation of creative professionals in its decision forcing TasTAFE to find \$45 million in savings. It has apparently been directed to cut what the government sees as irrelevant courses in creative vocational skills: a looming tragedy that completely sours the honeyed words from the Premier's Creative Arts Fund announcement. What does that mean for our next generation, which might well be looking to a career in the creative arts? They will have no choice other than to head to the mainland for the opportunities and the training they need, and they will probably never return.

The young man I just spoke of was also an active participant in the local Devonport Eisteddfod, both in the music and the speech and drama classes. Local eisteddfods are a unique institution that give community members of all ages the chance to prepare a piece for

performing in a friendly competition; and yet, in the tradition of local organisations, they rely on unpaid volunteers and general sponsors whilst having to pay commercial rates for facilities they use. An example of the challenge they face is given in an email excerpt to me from the Devonport Eisteddfod:

We appreciate the personal support you provide each year to the Eisteddfod, as do other government ministers. However, organisations such as the Eisteddfod are struggling financially to continue offering opportunities to support Arts education.

Eisteddfod committees are in a similar situation to Theatre companies. Support from communities and councils is in constant flux and is not CPI indexed. The same level of financial support provides less each year. We have been fortunate to be recipients of annual grant funding from the Devonport City Council. This level of funding has not changed in the years I have been on the Eisteddfod Committee (since 2019). However, hire of venue costs have almost doubled in that time and will continue to do so.

Eisteddfods provide opportunities for all young people and adults to participate in Dance, Speech, Drama, Vocal and Musical Instrumental performances, without requiring an audition process.

The Arts are currently highly undervalued by Government, despite making a strong contribution to social cohesion, good mental health, and the development of cognitive and collaborative skills in young people who participate regularly. The lack of support for children's education in the arts is evident in the lack of a serviceable educational pathway for students in the various arts, and especially music, in the DECYP schools.

The Government's 'Ticket to Play' scheme, which provides financial assistance to children participating in sport, is not extended to students participating in equally beneficial music or drama programs such as choirs, band or theatre groups.

The last point highlights the inequality in funding opportunities between the arts and sports.

I put it to the government that it must do better. Being part of a community band, choir or theatre group requires far more commitment than just turning up in your sports kit; it requires individual practice, learning your part and music as well as your place in the performance or production. It's what gives the arts the neuroplastic effect on our learning capabilities.

I would go further and say that these aspects of the arts are the team sports for people that are not into team sports - and a team sport activity where age, gender and physical strength are irrelevant. It's where your ability, enthusiasm and team spirit are the crucial elements.

If we look to the progression of young people with an interest in the creative arts, then community theatre is a natural stepping stone into a professional career in the performance arts. The trouble comes, as the motion highlights, that there must be a professional theatre industry that can give those opportunities, both for the performers and for the Tasmanians who want to

buy a ticket to a live performance. The Theatre Council of Tasmania, as the leading state advocacy body for theatre, has its own views on the motion:

While there are many issues I could raise, I will fly the flag for Tasmania's professional theatre community, which has seen a severe contraction over the last few years. There are only two active professional companies remaining (from half a dozen or so, five years ago), and there are no substantial or ongoing programs currently in place to support Tasmanian playwrights or theatre-makers in the development of new work.

In part, this is being addressed by the consultancy currently being undertaken through the Tasmania Live Performance Exchange (who received \$150k from Arts Tas for this purpose). I would absolutely urge the state government to adopt the measures or strategies identified in the consultation report, which I think is due by the end of this year.

Beyond that, Arts Tasmania needs to recognise and support sustainable theatre and performing arts organisations consistently.

We can and we must do better. The motion plainly states that Tasmania spends \$30 less on the arts per capita than the national average. That means the arts industry in Tasmania is missing out on more than \$17 million a year. The new Creative Arts Fund is still more than \$7 million short of this basic level, and we've yet to learn if it's going to be \$10 million a year every year or a one-off announceable that must last for a decade or more.

Ms Forrest - That's why we need the budget papers.

Mr GAFFNEY - Yes. In real terms, we're talking about less than 1 per cent of the money that's likely to be spent on the stadium and everything connected with it. In the Irish government's terms, it means Tasmania is missing out on getting its money back, and more, for want of some prudent investment in the creative arts and everything connected with them.

The creative arts are the essential ties that bind us as a community. Even the Premier recognises this as he trumpeted the opportunity for Tasmanians to sing our own song in support of the Devils. No doubt he took for granted that some creative type would come up with a tune and some lyrics that would defy even the Eurovision song competition's ideas of what could be sung in good taste as an anthem.

The creative arts need more than funding. They need the overt and tangible support of the government from every department. With a Liberal government focused on business and spending money on capital works, it seems to find the creative arts to be unquantifiable, to be intangible and perhaps, worst of all, the harbour of alternative political opinions. There are elements of politics that see the creative arts to be somehow fluffy and lightweight - that's in terms of not being vast concrete edifices covered in corporate branding or in a triumphant sports team. Maybe we should even rename them as the 'Liberal Arts 2030 Strong Plan', complete with blue branding and a fertile, cultivated paddock, as that might attract the government's attention.

If we look at the hierarchy of commercial activity in Tasmania, the creative arts are far more than just a 'dessert' course in our daily lives, one that's only to be indulged in after you've

had your 'main meal' by doing something the government sees as productive, useful and responsible. The creative arts are a highly productive sector in their own right, and one that brings jobs, tourism and money into our regional communities.

The creative arts are how we change the culture, how we build better communities and how we make Tasmania a better place where the next generations want to raise their own families.

I received this contribution from the Children's Book Council of Australia:

The Tas branch of the Children's Book Council of Australia support this motion, because frankly, Tasmania's arts sector has been trying to do a full-scale production on the budget of a school sausage sizzle.

With the lowest arts funding per person in Australia, shrinking grants, and no CPI indexation, organisations are being asked to do more with less ... and then less again. Meanwhile, children's authors and illustrators keep showing up in classrooms, libraries, and community halls, doing what they do best, sparking imagination and encouraging young minds.

But let's be honest, even the most inspiring creator can't live off an oil palette or a heartfelt 'thanks very much'. Creativity is priceless, but creators still need to buy groceries, petrol and pay bills. Stable funding helps them keep writing, drawing, visiting schools, and giving Tasmanian children the joy of meeting real-life storytellers.

And this matters far beyond the bookshelf. Creativity is the launchpad for future problem-solvers. Today's child who falls in love with a story may become tomorrow's inventor, scientist, entrepreneur, or discoverer. Imagination is where cures begin, where solutions take shape, and where new ideas first stretch their legs. If we want a generation capable of tackling big challenges, we need to nurture the creative spark early and that means supporting the people who ignite it. We're not asking for a stadium, we're asking to help develop the people who will one day design it, build it, and market it. That starts with creativity, and creativity starts in childhood.

We support this motion because Tasmanian children deserve stories that reflect their world, illustrations that brighten their day, and creators who can afford to keep creating, for them, and for the future that they will one day shape.

The motion illustrates, in real terms, a basic roadmap which can guide us back to where we need to be. The creative arts are what keeps our communities alive and thriving with a real sense of purpose and identity, and they begin in our homes and schools. The government needs to go further and fully restore the creative arts programs in our schools, such as in instrumental music, the visual arts, dance and drama, for every student. If we were to allow sports and physical activities in schools to be cut, there would be outrage, and yet the deftly wielded scalpel of DECYP budget cuts can slice effortlessly into school budgets, with barely a murmur of dissent. The primary school music teacher's one day a week gets cut, the arts budget somehow disappears, and the dance and drama teacher is but a fond memory. And what of the

skills of rhetoric, debate and public speaking in our public schools, consigned to the last century, and yet these essential programs are jealously maintained and expended on by our very well funded private schools. I wonder why.

Just imagine what we could achieve as a state if all the young people from our public schools have the skills to bring on a public debate on what they expect and how to make the case for change. As we all know, a case for policy change must be put and won. The creative arts give young Tasmanians the skills to make that happen.

I fully support the member for Murchison's motion.

[5.58 p.m.]

Ms WEBB (Nelson) - Mr President, I rise to make a brief contribution to this debate because I haven't been able to give it the attention I would have liked to and that it thoroughly deserves. So, my apologies at the outset to the member for Murchison because I think this is an important motion for this Chamber to be debating. It's an important matter, and I appreciate the contribution that the members putting the motion before us made, and, my goodness, member for Mersey, what a magnificent contribution that was. I really appreciate the trouble that you've gone to, to outline here what underpins the value of the arts and creative sectors to our state, to our communities and to us, each of us, as Tasmanians. I think it's particularly apt that we see the member in this place who's probably the most sporty of all of us in terms of his achievements - and his whole family's achievements in sport, actually - coming here and talking about not to take away from what we invest and what we value about the investment in sport, but to contrast it and to say the arts and the creative industries deserve at least equivalent consideration here, and support and investment in our state.

I particularly appreciated the points made about the fact that this isn't just about how we fund art for adults and creative sectors for adults out there in the community. It starts in childhood and it's about what we do in our schools and what we don't do in our schools, what children don't have available to them when we cut funding to creative aspects of learning in schools. Not every Tasmanian child in a public school has access to music, has access to drama, has access to a full range of art subjects, and that's tragic. It's to the detriment of our state, it's to the detriment of our community. And, when I say detriment, I don't just mean, 'What a shame, we're missing out on doing some fun stuff.' It's ultimately detrimental to our social cohesion. It's detrimental to our economic outcomes. It's detrimental to our health and wellbeing outcomes in this state. It's probably one of the few things that, if we think about what we could invest in that builds our state in every way, arts and creative sectors is that area, and that investment can start from babyhood through childhood into adulthood - and needs to be maintained.

It's fascinating to explicitly comment on that nexus between creative endeavours and brain development and achievement in all ways as a human. These are all connected. Arts are not nice-to-haves; they can and should be foundational to us thriving as individuals and as a community. That's why this is an important motion in this Chamber and why I'm particularly pleased that we're debating it today and drawing it to the attention of this place and hopefully also the broader community, but most certainly, hopefully, the government. Let's be clear at the outset, too, before I get to my notes on this speech, that any announcements made today - fantastic.

It's great that a motion of this place prompts an announcement from the government. I've experienced that before myself. Was it 6 a.m. that it came out? It might have been like similar times in the past, and that's fine. If the government is responsive to motions we put for debate in this place, good on them, I welcome that. If that's how we have to make progress, so be it. It would be nice if we didn't have to fight tooth and nail for some of these things, but there you go. We can do a job here, and the government, if they're responsive to that, all well and good. However, let's be clear that what was announced today is not a panacea. It's not a fix-all, it doesn't address all the aspects that are being highlighted here today in the motion and in contributions to the motion. So, we will need to see more.

The member for Mersey highlighting the centrality of investment through our public school system in arts and creative aspects of learning and development is crucial to being supported. I'm hoping that the minister and the government are listening to that contribution from the member for Mersey and I encourage them to respond to it.

In my family we have a lot of visibility around that, given that my dad, at a certain point of his teaching career after being a principal, then went back to being a drama teacher at primary school level for numerous schools for many years. And I can tell you what, kids turn up on the day their class has drama. They do. Right there, just that very fact means that kids' learning across every subject area and globally is improved through putting drama, for an example of an art subject, into their school learning environment for the week. They turn up that day, and the arts is the way that people find their tribe.

Sometimes kids who might not be much good at sport, who might not be particularly academic, find their tribe in creative arts subjects and creative arts endeavours, and that's incredibly important because that can provide a platform from which they thrive as people and into our community. It's important.

Ms Forrest - It's a platform for the most drama queen kids out there.

Ms WEBB - Every kid needs to find their tribe, and the creative industries in the arts are a crucial one. Adults find their tribe through these things, and I'm going to speak about a couple of those things in my contribution when I get to it, which I did promise was to be short.

It's interesting, in preparing some brief notes to speak on this motion, I did come across a couple of quotes I wanted to share with the Chamber, and here are the two quotes. The first one is:

Tasmania's arts and recreation sector is a vibrant and essential part of our cultural life, adding colour, inspiration and joy to the state.

And the second one:

This is not just about entertainment. It is about improving the wellbeing of Tasmanians, by bringing enjoyment to our daily lives and helping us stay active and healthy.

Those statements were not made by artists or creative groups or those who are the traditional advocates for those areas. They are from the website of Business Tasmania - Business Tasmania, a government entity which people could be forgiven for

characterising as part of the bean-counter brigade, where profits are valued to the exclusion of all else.

Lo and behold, no. Instead we see Business Tasmania place front and centre our community's capacity to generate and celebrate joy, beauty, creativity as significant contributors, not just as nice-to-haves, but as contributors to people's health, wellbeing, sense of community and connection, and also ultimately to the economic benefit of our state. It is exactly as it should be.

Looking further on Business Tasmania's website, I noticed further details they provided and that is the value of the arts and recreation services industry in this state increased by 3.8 per cent in 2024-25 to \$442 million in gross value-added terms.

Over the past 10 years, the arts and recreation services industry has experienced a compound annual growth rate of 3 per cent. The arts and recreation services industry comprises 1.1 percent of total Tasmanian industry gross value added. This is a sector that is significant to us, but not just because of economic value.

It is clearly recognised as incredibly valuable economically but also socially, and sadly we can see it continually being devalued, or have seen that in the past, under successive governments, devalued, undermined through ongoing investment and support funding cuts in state budgets to arts grants funding and arts expenditure over the years. I know the member for Murchison has outlined this in the motion and in her contribution today.

It is all too easy. It is low-hanging fruit to cut things that seem light and fluffy in the arts sector. We saw that, as the member for Murchison spoke about it in her contribution, when we looked to see what was going to be cut from TasTAFE - the announcements that were made last year and that have come into effect this year - of course, yes, we saw creative industry subjects at TasTAFE be cut and disappear. That is an absolute tragedy - an absolute tragedy that closes doors for Tasmanians and particularly young Tasmanians, around pursuing areas of skill development, areas of job potential, areas of personal development as well.

In fact, it was during questions that I put in budget Estimates last year in our scrutiny hearings that it came to light that, in relation to those TasTAFE course cuts, neither the education minister nor the Department for Education were consulted regarding the TasTAFE subsidisation cuts to the lab tech courses or the creative industries courses. Those courses lost subsidy. They are now being scrapped entirely.

The courses in fashion design, textiles, as well as music, visual arts, graphic design, screen and media, all of those are now disappearing. It is a backward step; it is a regressive step. It must be profoundly disappointing and heart-wrenching for young Tasmanians who dearly wished to pursue studies in those areas and saw themselves with opportunities in those areas, now having a door shut in their faces.

I want to briefly mention here some local artists and art groups which contribute to Tasmania's creative reputation at the macro level, as well as immediate connection and expressiveness and wellbeing at a community and individual level. I know other members have spoken about some specific examples, too, and I appreciate and endorse those.

One that I want to particularly mention is the Hobart Repertory Theatre Society, as I am the proud patron of the Hobart Repertory Theatre Society, taking over from the former member for Hobart, Mr Rob Valentine. In July this year, the Hobart Repertory Theatre Society will celebrate its centenary. Over the last 100 years, I believe the society has made and continues to make a consistent statewide, if not national, contribution to both the arts and, specifically, the Tasmanian theatre culture.

The society provides a substantial contribution to the state's cultural and living heritage by its ownership and maintenance of an iconic Tasmanian heritage building, the Playhouse Theatre in Bathurst Street. The society and the Playhouse Theatre have provided invaluable training grounds for dozens of actors, directors and playwrights who have gone on to national and international acclaim while also at the same time being a drawcard for local, for statewide and interstate visitors alike attending the absolutely diverse range of wonderful live performances that are provided in that venue by the Hobart Repertory Society and others who utilise the venue. This is one indicator of our rich, vibrant and diverse arts culture, and it's also an example of how entwined the efforts are of many in this sector to protect and celebrate our built heritage as well as our cultural heritage. There is certainly crossover there.

I have to mention that groups like the Hobart Rep are reliant on volunteers, of course, for so much of what they do; just to mention during National Volunteer Week, here we are, the arts and culture sector is an absolutely rich sector for volunteer involvement; and while it's wonderful that volunteers underpin so much activity in this sector, we can't take that for granted. It doesn't mean we shouldn't be investing, and, in fact, as we fail to invest, we undermine volunteer participation in this sector and that's going to end up being detrimental because a lot of the benefit is from the connections and the participation that people have as volunteers.

Another local group that I'm proud to advocate for here in this contribution is for Mature Artists Dance Experience, otherwise known as MADE. It's a community dance group. MADE is made up of non-professional dancers aged over 50 years working with professional artists, and has been delighting audiences here in this state for the last 20 years; but, sadly, after not receiving continued state or federal funding, this unique and valuable dance group relies on donations and fundraising and is at risk. We know that the Commonwealth parliamentary 2021-22 inquiry into the value of the arts to society identified that Australia's artistic output gives enormous value to our society and enriches our lives, including improving social connection, physical and mental health and wellbeing. That's brought to my attention by MADE, the Mature Artists Dance Experience, because it has delivered value to and for Tasmania for more than 20 years. Previous government support has helped to sustain its contribution to the community. It's a respected not-for-profit and registered charity. It has enriched lives across Lutruwita/Tasmania, and further afield across Australia and internationally through its dance, creativity and community connections. MADE provides significant health and wellbeing benefits for older Tasmanians through weekly classes open to all mature dancers of all abilities. Dance in itself as an activity supports physical health, mental wellbeing, creativity, confidence and social connection while reducing isolation and loneliness. MADE plays an important role in challenging stereotypes about ageing through public performance, by placing mature artists at the centre of high-quality artistic work. It actively confronts ageism and sexism. It celebrates older women's visibility and shows ageing as a time of creativity, strength and possibility.

For the more than 45 per cent of Tasmanians who are aged over 50, me included, seeing high-quality performances featuring mature-age dancers is an important reflection of the creative skills, knowledge and experience that older Tasmanians contribute to our society. MADE strengthens Tasmania's cultural identity and community life. Its work connects professional artists with community participants. They create authentic Tasmanian stories through movement, and build partnerships that keep arts and wellbeing visible and accessible across the state.

Without secure funding, though, these benefits to the Tasmanian community are at risk. If MADE is to continue delivering health, wellbeing, connection and cultural value to Tasmania, ongoing government funding is essential. Securing funding for the administrative and creative functions of the organisation would ensure that MADE can continue its valuable contribution to our Tasmanian artistic landscape and, importantly, to the Tasmanian community as a whole, supporting that social connection, the physical and mental health and wellbeing of our ageing population.

MADE staged its only major performance for 2026 just this last weekend, on 15 and 16 May, to sold out-audiences. Without government funding, though, the ability to secure renowned interstate choreographer Daryl Brandwood and stage the production was only made possible through volunteer contributions, fundraising and donations. While that's a great achievement that they were able to do that, relying on volunteers and donations is not sustainable. It's not a sustainable option for the organisation going forward, and this is an organisation that is far too valuable to abandon and condemn through defunding.

There are many more worthy artistic entities and efforts that I could mention, but time constraints prevent me. To conclude, I thank the member for the motion for us to contribute to and debate today. I absolutely endorse that it is unacceptable for the government to see support for the arts plummet, and that we would have some of the lowest in the country in terms of per capita investment.

There must be a reinstatement and that investment must begin at the earliest stages in the Tasmanian community and be supported all the way through, from babyhood all the way through to those mature-age dance experience artists who are in their older ages. I'm very happy to support this motion and I hope the government has been listening carefully and appreciates that this is something that is central to the expression of our identity as a state.

[6.15 p.m.]

Mr HISCUTT (Montgomery) - Mr President, I will make a brief contribution to this motion. I'll indicate that I'm inclined to support the motion and that I and my family have a strong history of supporting the arts and the creative industries. In fact, Uncle Hugh was a life member and a longtime patron of the Burnie Arts Council, and I know Burnie has moved to the member for Murchison's electorate now; however, the will to ensure that the arts are well funded remains strong within the Hiscutt lexicon.

An increase in creative industry certainly drives innovation in our society and I concur with all the members previously who have spoken and who have said it a lot more eloquently than I could.

I just would like to confirm that I do think the numbers that I got were \$1.3 million, \$600,000, \$300,000, \$220,000 would be adequate, which comes to about \$2.42 million. I'm

just confirming that is the case. If, as I suspect, the government's contribution of \$10 million is over four years, that will mean that they actually have not achieved this.

Ms Forrest - That's what we need to see in the Budget. I've got no idea what it means. It's an announcement, there's no detail.

Mr HISCUTT - If we allow that at 3 per cent inflation, which will be generous over the coming years, it would still be \$124,000 less than what was required. We will be interested to see. Let's see where that leads to. That is all I wanted to contribute, and I look forward to the motion passing.

[6.17 p.m.]

Ms O'CONNOR (Hobart) - Mr President, I will only make a brief contribution to this excellent motion and certainly the members for Murchison, Mersey and Nelson have laid out the case for supporting this motion in very compelling terms. There were times there where I felt quite emotional thinking what's happening to the arts here in Tasmania and how it's been a gradual but deliberate erosion of supply of funds to our arts organisations.

I was very lucky to be able to send my children to Taroona High School and Hobart College. Taroona High School's music program, under the dedicated tutelage of Mr Schultz, launched generations.

Ms Webb - He's still there.

Ms O'CONNOR - I know. Unbelievable commitment to bringing the joy and the precision of music to young people and anyone who's been along to the Taroona High School awards and assemblies nights will know that that school is producing high quality, at times incredibly funky, very precise music. It's also lifting the lives of the children who take part.

My kid Jasper got an awful lot of joy out of being part of Mr Schultz's big band, and we'd leave those assemblies really uplifted by the whole experience, of course. The music program at Taroona, along with the general arts investment in students at Taroona, was really exemplary, the quality of the visual arts, also the theatre, extraordinary, and the same again at Hobart College. It shouldn't be the case that your arts and creative education on this island depends on your postcode, but it would appear that it does. We know, and it was a point that was very powerfully made by the member for Murchison, how integral, how meaningful, how enriching the arts are to rural and regional communities. They're not an optional extra; they are a part of having a good life and a connected life in a community.

The erosion of arts funding in Tasmania has been deliberate. It's been happening over the past 12 years and it's ideological. It's about a government that prioritises concrete over creativity, a government that sees the arts as a bit of a frippery or an indulgence and can't understand or fathom how integral they are to who we are as Tasmanians.

We have light here at the latitude that Tasmania is which is the same light quality as Tuscany, and that is why some of the finest young landscape painters who grew up interstate gravitated to this island in the '70s and the '80s. We have here Jock Young, Stephen Lees, the late Geoff Dyer, Barbie Kjar, we have the fantastic Michael McWilliams. We have here a quality of light and a gothic beauty about this place which has encouraged and nourished artists from all over the country and the world to come here.

We have some of the finest writers in the country, in the world, from Heather Rose to Richard Flanagan. We have the fantastic Monique Brumby, a national-standard musician and all-round fantastic human being. It is an island whose landscape and sense of community encourage rich creativity.

What we're also seeing here in recent years is a failure of successive ministers for the arts to fight for the sector's funding, ministers for the arts who, during budget deliberations around the Cabinet table, have allowed themselves to give over to - and I'm going to make a gender-based statement because, I don't care, it's true - usually the blokes around the table who would rather build a huge stadium at Macquarie Point than invest in the creativity of young people and people of all ages.

Mr Duigan - That is a load of nonsense, basically. You have no idea what the deliberations of Cabinet look like.

Ms O'CONNOR - I do have a good idea of what the deliberations of Cabinet look like. I spent four years in Cabinet, thanks very much. If you're going to interject and disagree with me, get up and make a substantive contribution. You haven't got up since Question Time, I will note.

There is clearly an ideological problem here, because you're seeing it in the erosion of arts funding, you're seeing it in a neglect that allowed Tasmania's oldest theatre company, the Tasmanian Theatre Company, to close its doors last year. You're seeing it in a decision to prioritise a stadium, knowing the impact that will have on the world's finest small orchestra, the Tasmanian Symphony Orchestra, and then chuck money at that problem to try to fix it, and I sure hope it can be fixed. I sure hope it does. The TSO for a time there became a bit of a thorn in the side of the government's plans.

Ms Forrest - It's one of the most listened-to orchestras in Australia. It is the most recorded.

Ms O'CONNOR - Yes, the quality of that sound. It is internationally recognised as one of the world's best small orchestras, so, even the big arts companies here, Tasmanian Symphony Orchestra, Ten Days on the Island and the Theatre Royal, while they are funded at a sort of subsistence level, there's no capacity for real growth there. The Theatre Royal is in a completely unsustainable position because of enormous building maintenance issues. I think it's the oldest theatre.

Ms Forrest - I think it's called a world of pain.

Ms O'CONNOR - That's right. Thank you, member for Murchison. The Theatre Royal is in a world of financial pain because there are huge building maintenance issues. There's been a partnership provided for the Hedberg next door, but that has in fact increased pressure on the Theatre Royal, and at the same time they're not being funded to look after that building.

We've got the enormously significant Salamanca Arts Centre, and that'll be 50 next year. It is iconic. It draws people here from all over the country and the world. It is, as I understand it, leased to the Salamanca Arts Centre under a lease with NRE Tas. While government has historically allocated annual funding to help the Salamanca Arts Centre with building management, meeting fire and heritage requirements and the like, that little bit of extra funding,

which I think was only about \$50,000 a year, has been snatched away and the result is a building that is degrading. We've got water flowing down street-facing downpipes and eroding sandstone; there are unsafe signs there as opposed to fences on the roof adjacent to Kelly's Steps because kids climb on it and sit on the Salamanca side roof. So, here we have one of our most significant Hobart heritage buildings, but also a place that has been the home and the font of arts on this island for decades, being abandoned by the government, who've taken away a paltry \$50,000 that was being provided to the Salamanca Arts Centre simply so they can maintain and upkeep their building and keep it safe.

We've also lost the wonderful national-class production company Wide Angle Tasmania, and, while we've got some money going towards screen and big film projects - they're big glossy ones like *Bay of Fires*, *Deadloch* and *The Survivors* - they provide a sort of a sugar hit to local production companies but all those smaller-to-medium companies are being neglected, there is no strategic funding program that enables these wonderful little creative organisations and producers to be sustained across the year.

So, it is only a brief contribution and the day is getting on. I'll just say it's a question of leadership. I had the great privilege to work in the Keating government during the time when he was developing a program called Creative Nation, because prime minister Keating understood that when you invest in the arts, you're investing in the culture and in the intellect of a nation, you're investing in its heart, you're investing in its soul. Creative Nation was a highly strategic and well-funded commitment from the Keating government to invest in the arts at all levels. Part of that would have been, I'm sure, in prime minister Keating's mind a simple economic analysis: you invest in the arts and you are investing in the growth of this country, in a really rich and meaningful, and at times intangible, way, but ever so important.

I saw a little thing on socials last night, and it was someone musing in the age of artificial intelligence about the fact that cartoon movies used to be hand-drawn. There was a little snippet there of *101 Dalmatians*, a beautifully hand-drawn cartoon movie, and it was so clear that those beautiful dogs and the loving couple were drawn by a human hand, and that's what made those drawings so precious and remarkable. What we get now, of course, is a whole lot of AI slop. You can't see the human hand in those creations - just like the AI slop that writes things for people does not stand up to the scrutiny that requires, I think, there to be a human touch, human creativity, human intellect, problem solving to those challenges.

I want to acknowledge at least one local arts organisation among the many, many here who have enriched our lives. I had a great time working for a while as the publicist to Terrapin Puppet Theatre, and I could honestly say they were some of the happiest days of my life to be working there in the Salamanca Arts Centre with this incredible little band of creators.

Most importantly, when we went out into schools and small theatres, to see how those performances that had taken months to pull together, to create the costumes and the puppets and to choreograph, those performances would lift every audience, every single one.

So, I strongly support this motion. I am pleased to hear in all likelihood it was this motion that prompted the government to suddenly wake up to the sector.

Ms Forrest - And the work of the sector.

Ms O'CONNOR - Thank you, a very good clarification. Obviously the sector has been trying to be heard by government for a very long time. They are heard in this place, and I am glad that the advocacy on the part of the creative organisations has paid off to an extent, but they are coming from a long way behind, so, there is certainly more work to do.

If government could just wake up and understand that an investment in the arts is an investment in the people of Tasmania, in our children, in our hearts, our souls and in our economy, that it is a good investment, that there is an excellent return on investment, that would be a great day for Tasmania.

[6.32 p.m.]

Ms THOMAS (Elwick) - Mr President, I rise to indicate that I will strongly support the motion brought by the member for Murchison and thank the member for Murchison for not only the work that she has put into the motion but also for her contribution to the debate this evening, which was very informative.

I also appreciate the contributions from other members, particularly the member for Mersey, who I learned a lot from as well in listening to the information that you shared. So, thank you. I really appreciate that contribution.

As the member for Murchison mentioned, I - you have heard me a number of times in this place - am a strong advocate for grassroots sport. That is not just because it is sport, but because it is grassroots. I think that gets to the heart of the reason why I am strongly supporting this motion here, because it is exactly the same sort of intent I feel that the member for Murchison has, which is to support everyday Tasmanians who benefit greatly from government investment in grassroots activities.

Whether it be arts, whether it be sport, the benefits, as the member for Murchison said, are shared across those activities, and the member for Mersey articulated that quite clearly as well. The social benefits, the mental health benefits and the physical health benefits from participating in arts are significant, and they save the government money in the long run across a number of areas. It is in some ways a preventative health investment. I think the government would probably rightly claim that it is a preventative health investment in some respects. It is an important investment that is made.

To see quite clearly here that the guts has been cut out of it gradually over years is really concerning and should give us all reason for concern. Thank goodness there are members in this place who are awake to these issues and who are alert to the concerns that are raised by these sectors, and who are willing to table them in this place for debate for us to be able to raise in this place and raise to the government to prompt action.

It is sad that we have to do that; we should not have to do that. It should be recognised that these are really important sectors and I know the member for Murchison has welcomed the announcement that the government has made a \$10 million investment into creative industries.

I am not quite as excited yet about that perhaps, because I am a bit sceptical of these announcements by the government at the moment, as you might have picked up earlier today, in my contributions. I'll wait to see the detail and I look forward to scrutinising the Budget in Estimates next week and I hope the minister is ready for the questions that we have and prepared to outline exactly what that looks like and what it means across the four years, because

\$10 million across four years means \$2.5 million a year. We know this government can find \$10 million for the private development of a private function and conference facility in Launceston quite readily for a one-off capital investment. I know that's different to ongoing operational and grants funding, I get that but, again, this comes down to government priorities. I feel like we're going to continually hear members in this place raising these sorts of issues and trying to fight for the little guy, for everyday Tasmanians, continually in this place. It's going to get tiring; I've only been here for two years and I feel like it's already a bit tiring trying to express to the government on behalf of the people of Tasmania that everyday Tasmanians and investing in the future of everyday Tasmania and the opportunities for everyday Tasmanians matters just as much, if not more, than investing in those at the top end of these sorts of activities.

I am very happy to support the motion and grateful to the member for Murchison for bringing it on and look forward to hearing more about this \$10 million.

[6.36 p.m.]

Ms RATTRAY (McIntyre - Leader for the Government in the Legislative Council) - Mr President, I've thoroughly appreciated all contributions to this motion.

Ms Forrest - Have you enjoyed the theatre of it?

Ms RATTRAY - Well, I appreciated the fact that we've had so many really thoughtful and articulate contributions, so I thank all members.

I rise to respond to the motion brought forward by the member for Murchison regarding arts funding in Tasmania and, while the importance of this discussion is acknowledged - as I expect everyone in this Chamber understands the vital role arts and culture play in our community - the government cannot agree that it is not supporting the sector.

The Premier and the Minister for Arts and Heritage announced this year's state Budget will deliver a clear, growing and sustained investment in Tasmania's creative industries with a \$10 million commitment over the forward Estimates and that funding increase year on year from \$1 million to \$4 million provides exactly that kind of certainty for the sector. I can indicate to the member and members and they can be assured that the arts uplift was in the works before this motion, but please if you want to take some credit, by all means, it certainly has been -

Ms Forrest - There was no certainty though. That's the thing they were talking about. We knew that.

Ms RATTRAY - The Minister for Arts and Heritage has worked closely with the sector and the Premier to achieve this.

This is a structured, long-term investment in our creative future. Importantly, this funding directly supports Screen Tasmania and broader arts initiatives, ensuring that Tasmanian stories, talent and cultural expression continue to reach audiences locally, nationally and internationally. And, again, this is sustained, ongoing support for a sector that is both culturally significant and economically important.

Our government is continuing to back the cornerstone organisations that underpin Tasmania's arts landscape and institutions such as the Tasmanian Symphony Orchestra, Ten Days on the Island and the Theatre Royal, continuing to ensure they can plan, they can deliver for Tasmania and they can grow. These are foundation pieces of our cultural identity, and this government is ensuring their future.

It's also important to understand that the investment in arts does not sit in isolation. Look no further than events here in Tasmania. The interconnectedness between the events sector and arts sector is the very reason government has continued its support for festivals and events, both of which bring our communities together and attract visitors to our state. This integrated approach recognises the reality that the arts, events, tourism and the visitor economy are deeply interconnected. This has been recognised as we see new alignment within internal government structures. When there is support for festivals, exhibitions, performances and creative works, there is also support for jobs, regional economies and small businesses across Tasmania.

The motion raises a number of concerns about grant programs and funding structures, and it's acknowledged that the funding model continues to evolve. I do understand the member and other members' sentiments. However, the government would like it noted that there is a difference between defunding and not being successful in a competitive grant round.

In regard to TasTAFE, and I know that was mentioned a couple of times in various contributions, the government has allocated \$300,000 to the arts portfolio for creative sector workforce development. A couple of added things that I gleaned along the way.

It's clear that our state is actively closing the gap in the per capita arts spend, and I note what was also provided in contributions. There is a claim that there has been a 40 per cent reduction in funded arts organisations. This is not entirely accurate when considered in full context. While Arts Tasmania supported 30 organisations in 2021-22, that figure included a one-off \$500,000 COVID stimulus measure that temporarily expanded the number of organisations funded. In 2025-26, 19 organisations received annual or multi-year funding, a reduction of 36.67 per cent. Notably, the level of investment has actually increased. Funding for annual and multi-year organisations has risen from \$2.87 million in 2021-22 to \$3.21 million in 2025-26, an increase of \$338,061.

This demonstrates that the government is investing more funding into the sector overall, and it's also useful to note that focusing only on annual program funding provides an incomplete picture. In 2025-26, Arts Tasmania supported 34 organisation applications across its funding programs, with total funding of \$3.9 million. This included eight organisations funded through project grants, totalling \$360,000, and seven organisations funded through youth arts programs to the value of \$332,204. Taken together, this shows more organisations are being supported in different ways, not fewer. In addition, the funding model has diversified, providing opportunities beyond a narrow pool of recurring recipients. The claimed 40 per cent reduction also doesn't consider the one-off stimulus funding in the baseline year and fails to recognise the increase in overall funding and broader support across programs.

The member has stated that the 2025-26 Budget removed \$900,000 in arts funding, and it's important in this context about the nature of that funding. The funding reference was not ongoing baseline funding, it was part of a one-off uplift of \$1.5 million in 2024-25, delivered as part of the government's election commitment to support a stronger arts sector. From that one-off package \$600,000, not the \$900,000, was allocated to a single time-limited competitive

program providing four grants of \$150,000 for music, regional arts, theatre and the delivery of the Island Readers and Writers Festival, which takes place later this month from 28 May to 1 June. As the member has encouraged us all to visit the TSO or an event coming up, the minister encourages as many members of our community as possible to participate in this event.

It's worth noting that by design, the package was temporary and targeted, created to address specific identified gaps or opportunities at that point in time. Importantly, this must be viewed alongside the government's continuing baseline investment. The Tasmanian government has provided \$1.2 million per annum in ongoing additional funding since 2021-22 to support arts organisations through Arts Tasmania programs. This demonstrates that core funding has been maintained, while one-off measures have been used strategically to respond to emerging needs. This motion also states that arts industry development grants funding is in decline; forward budget Estimates do not indicate the decline of grants funding.

The government appreciates the mention of the theatre sector as it does play an important role in our arts ecosystem; however, regarding the theatre company closures, it must emphasise that funding decisions are made based on the recommendation of expert peers through a competitive process. Support for an organisation or activity in one year does not necessarily guarantee support going forward. In Arts Tasmania's most recent funding round in 2025, \$537,498 was provided for theatre-related activities and these included \$200,000 each to ROOKE productions and Mudlark Theatre.

In addition, the government has taken decisive action to provide support and guidance to the theatre sector with a targeted one-off investment in 2024-25 that included a dedicated \$150,000 strategic grant for theatre, designed to address sector capability and development needs. That grant was awarded to the Tasmanian Live Performance Exchange, which is conducting this work, and I believe that has already been mentioned today as well. The project is now nearing completion which will result in a 10-year plan for the theatre and live performance sector. This demonstrates a commitment to ensuring the theatre sector is sustainable.

This motion also sets out a series of requests whilst not recognising the existing investment when, in reality, the ongoing baseline funding has been strengthened, including \$1.2 million per annum additional investment since 2021-22. The government is already increasing overall investment, as mentioned before, which includes a \$10 million creative industries package over the forward Estimates. Funding is being actively prioritised and allocated based on outcomes, not automatically adjusted. A rigid indexation model risks locking in historical funding patterns rather than responding to emerging opportunities and sector priorities.

The call to establish adequate, stable and predictable recurrent funding overlooks what is already in place, and many organisations already receive multi-year or annual program funding providing stability and certainty, and major institutions like the TSO, Ten Days on the Island and the Theatre Royal receive ongoing, stable funding arrangements.

With regard to the Tasmanian Strategic Touring Fund, it is noted that touring and regional access are supported through broader funding streams, including project funding, organisational funding, and events and festival investment. As the motion relates to multi-year funding programs, it is noted that multi-year funding is already a feature of the current system and considerations of expansion must be balanced with access and equity.

The bottom line is that the Tasmanian government is increasing arts investment, and what is called arts funding is not confined to a single line item; it is delivered across creative industries, events, schools, tourism and cultural infrastructure. It's considered one of the greatest achievements of our arts sector in the way it has transformed Tasmania's reputation on the national and global stage. We've heard a lot about that today, and rightly so. There was a time when Tasmania was not widely recognised for its contemporary cultural output, and today that could not be further from the truth. Tasmania is now seen as a premier arts destination, a place known for creativity, innovation and excellence. That transformation has been driven by the strength of our artists, our organisations and our cultural institutions with a strong backing from government. In particular, the TSO stands as a beacon of artistic quality, respected nationally and internationally, and providing opportunities for musicians while enriching audiences across the state. These institutions are not only places of performance and exhibition; they are places of connection, learning and inspiration.

The arts are not just about expression. They are about opportunity, they create jobs, they support small businesses, they drive tourism and they bring life to our regions. Visitors come to Tasmania for many reasons, but increasingly they come for cultural experiences, for festivals, for exhibitions, for performances, for the unique creative energy that defines this place. Importantly, this activity is not confined to one city or one region. The strength of Tasmania's arts sector lies in its breadth and reach. From the north to the south and from the east to the west, from our cities to our regions, creative activity is taking place in communities across the state. Local festivals, regional touring, community arts practice: these are all part of a vibrant ecosystem that ensures the benefit of the arts are shared widely.

Those benefits go far beyond the economic benefit. They include wellbeing, connection and community cohesion. The arts bring people together. They help us understand ourselves and each other. They give voice to diverse perspectives and experiences. They are, quite simply, essential to a healthy and vibrant society. Across disciplines, whether in visual arts, music, theatre, literature or digital media, Tasmanian artists are producing work of an exceptionally high standard. There is something distinctive about Tasmanian creativity. It is shaped by our environment, our history, our sense of place, and that distinctiveness is one of our greatest strengths. It is what draws people here. Tasmania is increasingly attracting film and television productions and is building capability in digital media and interactive storytelling.

This is opening new pathways for creatives, new careers, new opportunities, new ways of reaching audiences. It is also strengthening the broader economy as creative industries become an increasingly important part of our future growth, while at the same time nurturing the next generation of talent through education, community programs and industry pathways, ensuring that young Tasmanians have the opportunity to develop their creative skills and pursue careers in the arts. This reflects a whole-of-government approach, recognising the arts as both a cultural and economic driver.

The motion presented is selective on data and how funding should be delivered and does not reflect the full picture or, perhaps, acknowledge the significant work being done to support, strengthen and grow the arts sector in the state. The government will continue to invest in the arts in a way that delivers long-term benefits for both the sector and the Tasmanian community.

[6.54 p.m.]

Mr EDMUNDS (Pembroke) - Mr President, I will speak very briefly. I will start by acknowledging our newest member, the member for Huon, and welcome you to the Chamber, as others have, and wish you all the best over this term. Congratulations to my new neighbour, the member for Rosevears. I look forward to however long we are sitting next to each other here. I acknowledge the contribution made by the previous member for Huon, Mr Harriss, who I developed quite a fondness for over that time, as I'm sure others did.

I note the mover of the motion's remark about the theatre of the entire debate, which I think got missed - just in case *Hansard* didn't pick that one up. Chair of Committees, that's in there now.

I do acknowledge the contributions made and I won't seek to repeat them, including that of the government, perhaps apart from the TasTAFE comments, which seem to have a different author to the rest of the speech, I reckon. Members, the proof will be in the pudding on Thursday, though, as to how the rubber hits the road on those commitments.

Cuts to the arts aren't something that's come along in the last 18 months or two years. They've been embedded through more than a decade of waste. We're talking about billions of dollars in decisions and questionable priorities. I won't repeat all the points made by others to paint a full picture of the arts in Tasmania or reel off the organisations or artists. However, I will reflect on, or perhaps add to potentially, some of the comments made about our young people.

I was first elected Clarence councillor in 2018, and that's probably when I started going to assemblies of kids I didn't know. It's remarkable the students that you see who clean up with the art prize, or who are in the plays and productions, and indeed, to the member for Elwick's point, representing the school at sport. It's often those kids who are cleaning up the dux or the top academic awards when you go to Rosny College.

And it's one of the real privileges of being a public figure, I suppose, that you do get invited to these sorts of things and can actually watch the development and growth of those young people. It's not lost on me that the year 10 student you might see win the art prize at Clarence High might also win a couple of awards, or certainly be present when you're at Rosny College and I'm sure other schools.

I'd just like to reflect that. Then often, through the rest of their lives, you might see them in the alumni news or in the newspaper or on social media. As the member for Mersey painted the picture best on that front, we shouldn't lose sight of the fact that this sort of investment or indeed just having the programs is great for our young people no matter which direction, whether it's in sport or in the arts, that they should be able to reach their full potential, which I certainly support.

I support the motion.

[6.57 p.m.]

Ms FORREST (Murchison) - Mr President, I sincerely thank members for their contributions and their passion for the arts. I think anyone who really is willing to immerse themselves in a performance of any sort knows the health and wellbeing impact that has on you.

I will address a couple of things - comments from the Leader particularly. I think she may have had an older version of the motion because I referred to a 35 per cent reduction, not a 40 per cent, so, I've actually been very generous in my motion there.

I think the point that she made is a little bit overlooked here in that I was particularly focusing on acknowledging that there are three organisations that are funded outside of the competitive grants programs and do receive automatic annual increases: the Theatre Royal, the TSO and Ten Days on the Island.

But it's all the others that I'm talking about that would go from hand to mouth, year to year, not knowing. I think what I've talked about, and what many other members in this Chamber talked about, is the lived experience of our creative sector. Let's not confuse the issue here or misrepresent the purpose of this motion. I fear that might have inadvertently been done by the Leader on behalf of the government.

This is one of the things that always fascinates me - and I've worked with arts organisation, I've been on the board of an arts organisation - where you're scraping together every bit of money from every corner and down the back of every couch you can find, to try to pull enough together to put on the event, whatever it is that you're trying to do.

Yes, there are buckets of money in the festivals funding, there are buckets of money in the event space, there are buckets of money in some other little buckets over here and there, but what this motion is calling for is predictable, reliable and adequate funding to enable these other organisations, outside those three that have got the runs on the board, that have produced results year after year after year, and then find that they're back in the gun again every year. You talk about defunding being different from not being funded when you miss out on the grant round. These organisations have been going year after year and have to keep turning up; it is defunding if they lose it and you can't say we'll maybe refund them next year. That's not how it works. That's exactly what I was talking about. So, I think it's been a bit misrepresented in the intent of that, because I'm talking about the lived experience of those people who, hand to mouth, are trying to make these things stay alive.

Even for those that are funded like the Theatre Royal - which is in a world of financial pain at the minute for lots of reasons, not just the funding question - it's a much bigger picture.

The purpose of the motion is to look at longer-term funding contracts for those organisations that have been in the game for some time and are delivering the results we expect them to, and not having to spend a fair portion of their creative thinking time getting into the brain space that's not natural to a lot of them, putting in funding grant applications. You're exercising the left side of your brain, not the right, more often than not, though I'm sure the Treasurer is going to exercise a bit of creative accounting this week as well, perhaps, so, there we go.

I thank the member for Mersey, too, particularly for talking about the impact of the arts on children. My kids have always been involved in the arts, right from when they were little tackers. I was always involved in the schools. I was the wardrobe 'coordinator'. I was not going to be called the wardrobe 'mistress', because for me that wasn't a term I was comfortable with. I remember at Marist College making costume after costume after costume. I remember one young guy who is now a lawyer around town here, still involved in various parts of the art. I won't name him; I haven't got his permission to do so. I was making him a costume that had

this fake red fur on the lapel of his jacket and I said to him, 'Would you like me to make you a red fur beret?' He goes, 'Would you?' And I said, 'Yeah.' I made a red-fur, horrible-fabric beret, which he treasured, and the first time he put it on his head and looked in the mirror, the look on his face made all that effort worthwhile. Then at the end of the show, because it was made out of a scrap - that's what I made it out of, just a bit of leftover fabric - I said, 'Do you want to keep that?' He goes, 'Can I really?' I said, 'Yeah, look, it was just a scrap, take it.' He's probably still got it. Just to see the impact on that young person, and sometimes boys are a little bit less demonstrative in their appreciation in that sort of circumstance but, no, he was so taken. Then to see the impact on the kids as they put on that fancy dress.

I believe I made a dozen dresses. My mum used to come and help sew as well. These princess dresses with their full-on horrible-fabric organza skirts from Spotlight. Or it might have been Lincraft at the time. And they felt like princesses. It was just so lovely.

My kids have grown up in that. They were taken to all the school musicals. They were taken to all sorts of art exhibitions and things like that that were local. I also took them to musicals like live theatre and musicals in Melbourne to see the experience of that. I remember taking my eldest and my third child to *We Will Rock You*, one of my all-time favourite musicals. I've seen it about five times all around the world. Sitting in the theatre and, if you get in early, you get good seats right in the front - second or first row right in the middle. You get spat on and all that but it's worth it for the experience and to feel the theatre thump and vibrate through your body, to hear the music. At one stage, there was an effigy of Freddie Mercury coming out of the stage with the song 'Only the Good Die Young'. It was so powerful and just to be able to lose yourself in that. It gives people an opportunity if they're having a really bad time to go and engage in something like that and just be somewhere else, and that has a huge health and wellbeing impact.

If you haven't experienced that, I urge you to keep going to those sorts of things and really letting yourself be immersed in it because it does make a massive difference. It's a bit like the adrenaline rush I used to get when I delivered a baby. When you go to a really amazing performance like that, you get that rush.

Mr Gaffney - You would be in the theatre.

Ms FORREST - I haven't delivered any in the theatre. I've been in the operating theatre. Sometimes they pop out a bit quicker than expected when they go in for a caesarean, but there you go. But I think, as members have said, it's easy to make cuts to something like the arts because the people see it as a luxury - it's not.

I think it's important to remember about the \$10 million announcement, as the member for Elwick has rightly said, too, the devil is in the detail in that. It's \$10 million over the forward Estimates - that's not a lot of money - but I want to see what it's on top of and what it will actually apply to. If we don't see a change to the indexation of the longer-term funding contracts or agreements for some of these established organisations who have to go cap in hand, year after year, then that is what this motion is called for and I don't think that's necessarily what's being offered, but that's a matter for in two weeks' time.

I just want to finish with that we need to value the arts more and revisit our priorities at times in this space. Arts are inclusive, they're immersive, they're accessible from any age. Babies go to Music Tree and Storytime and things like that and do all those sort of things as

babies. That's art. That's creativity. Right through to some people who basically die on the stage; they're involved right up until the very end of their lives. It keeps them going, it keeps them healthy, it keeps them engaged, it promotes social cohesion and it does have measurable positive impacts on our health and wellbeing and on our economy. I think it's really important that we don't lose sight of any of that.

I do thank members for their contributions. I do note that some of the comments from the Leader I don't necessarily agree with - I think it was a little bit off the point of the motion, but that's not her fault, she's just delivering the message. I'm sure the minister will be well prepared - well, she'd better be - now we've given the opportunity to have all the answers we're seeking. I thank members for their contributions in support of the motion.

Motion agreed to.

SUSPENSION OF SITTING

[7.07 p.m.]

Ms RATTRAY (McIntyre - Leader for the Government in the Legislative Council) - Mr President, given that the Council still has a couple of motions to deal with this evening, I think it's only fair, when you think about our staff and those around, that we suspend the sitting for the purpose of a dinner break and I indicate that we will be back at 7.45 p.m.

I move -

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

Sitting suspended from 7.08 p.m. to 8.01 p.m.

MOTION

Formal Apology - RA Rodda Museum of Pathology

Ms WEBB (Nelson) - Mr President, I move motion No. 15 standing in my name, but before I do that I acknowledge the deep pain and fear that this matter has stirred within our communities across Australia, including Tasmania. I recognise that many in our community may be carrying strong feelings as a result of this tragedy and today's discussion may impact people sitting here in the House or those watching online.

I strongly encourage anyone feeling overwhelmed, anxious or isolated to reach out as support has been arranged to be on hand today. For members of the public, there's also a range of free supports available to the community including Access Mental Health, a mental health support, triage and referral phonenumber delivered by the Department of Health Tasmania. It operates 24 hours a day, seven days a week to support the Tasmanian community and make it easier to access the Tasmanian mental health system. Anyone in Tasmania can call Access Mental Health on 1800 332 388 for counselling and support over the phone. Other supports include Lifeline on 13 11 14 or Beyond Blue on 1300 224 636.

Mr President, I move -

- (1) The Legislative Council:
 - (a) notes the unacceptable and unlawful practices which occurred between 1966 and 1991 which saw 177 specimens of human remains stolen from coronial autopsies and sent to the R.A Rodda Museum of Pathology, without consent of the individuals or families involved, and in contravention of the *Coroners Act 1957*, as reported upon by Coroner Simon Cooper in the Coronial Project - Museum Cases Finding Report, 8 September 2025;
 - (b) Acknowledges the hurt and trauma endured by current family members upon the discovery their loved ones were subjected to these unacceptable and unlawful practices, and also acknowledges the additional hurt caused for many by the manner in which they discovered remains of their loved one had been taken, and in some instances, displayed, without their knowledge or consent; and
- (2) The Legislative Council notes the formal apology to those individuals and family members affected by these practices, to be delivered by the Minister for Health on Tuesday 19 May on behalf of the State.

It may be useful to briefly frame this debate in this place in some context for new members as well as for those listening. Formal apologies delivered on behalf of the government of the day are usually delivered in the parliamentary Chamber of government, the House of Assembly, or the Chamber in which the minister delivering the apology may sit. Hence, the formal apology for the historic practices at the RA Rodda Museum of Pathology was delivered today by the minister for Health in the House of Assembly.

Clause (2) of the motion before this Chamber, which we are addressing now, makes it clear this is not a formal apology being presented on behalf of the government, but instead, here we are noting or responding to that apology which was already given by the minister in the lower House earlier today. It is my understanding that this is an unusual occurrence in relation to this Chamber's involvement in previous formal state apologies, and hopefully one which will be seen to be positive and constructive.

Given the gravitas of the events central to the government's apology, and the fact the historic and ongoing hurt and trauma impacted so many people around the state, I strongly believe that all state MPs representing those affected Tasmanians should have the opportunity to also pay their respects, as it were, to those affected.

I wish to also state upfront my thanks and appreciation to the government for taking on board my request to enable the Legislative Council to formally contribute to this public apology process, and for working with me to find an appropriate mechanism by which that could happen. I know for some with whom my office has been interacting, the significance of both

Chambers taking the time today to acknowledge formally what happened to their loved ones has been noted and has been deeply welcomed.

At the outset, I wish to reassure those listening that although I may be reading a prepared speech, it is written and delivered from the heart today. There is much to cover, and I do not want to risk forgetting something that someone has specifically asked me to mention here today in my contribution. As stated, members of this place heard the minister this morning deliver the government's formal apology, which outlined some of the factual developments of this shameful and sorry saga. However, for the sake of completeness and for the sake of many people listening either here in person or online, I will also be placing on the record as complete a story as possible.

This is a disturbing story consisting of multiple chapters, and when thinking that the logical place to begin telling this story is, in fact, the beginning, I found myself asking: whose beginning? The beginning as seen by the perpetrators of these acknowledged unlawful, unacceptable acts? No. They have done enough, more than enough. Instead, I am going to start at the beginning from the perspective of those affected by these horrific, abhorrent and unlawful acts which have led us here today, some of whom were here in parliament today, some who may be watching online and some who may just not be able to face it today.

For many, this nightmare began on or shortly after 25 January 2025. On this date, a list of 126 names of people deceased, from whom the Coroners Office believed post-autopsy samples had been stolen and kept by the RA Rodda Museum without consent, was published in the three state newspapers: the *Mercury*, *The Examiner* and *The Advocate*.

The list was accompanied by a brief explanatory note calling for family members to contact the Coroners Office to assist with its inquiries. The impact of this sudden appearance of a list of names upon family members was brutal and devastating. Some discovered their deceased loved one on the list themselves; others were informed by other family members or friends; while some only found out months later. Many felt they were being forced to grieve the loss of their loved one a second time: the loss of their infant child, their brothers, sisters, parents and partners. I find it unfathomable to try to place myself in the shoes of someone suddenly discovering their loved one is on a list due to the fact that apparently some of their remains may have been stolen and kept in a pathology museum without consent.

Following that initial shock of the publication of 126 names, the following additional historic facts became more widely known: in February 2016, the coronial division was advised by the University of Tasmania's RA Rodda Museum of Pathology that the museum had identified it may hold human remains which appeared to have been sourced from coronial autopsies, but without consent of either the families or the coroner at the time; this 2016 Rodda Museum notification originally indicated there were three identified bone samples with a question mark over their provenance.

Once advised in 2016 by the RA Rodda Museum of potentially unlawful remains being kept without consent, the Coroners Office commenced identifying the extent of human remains kept without consent and identifying the people to whom they belonged. In 2018, the coroner ordered the removal from display of all identified human remains kept without consent in the RA Rodda Museum.

On 3 April 2024, the Tasmanian coronial division released a brief statement announcing that since receiving the RA Rodda Museum's advice of February 2016, the coronial division had identified human remains of 147 people which had been kept from autopsies undertaken between 1953 and 1985. The Coroners Office also advised a formal investigation had commenced into this situation.

The coroners Museum Cases (Coronial Project) report was released in September 2025, nine months following the January publication of the list of names. This report confirmed the final number of human remains, consisting of organs and tissue samples kept unlawfully without consent - to be clear, in breach of all standard health ethics - had been stolen following coronial autopsies: the number was 177, with these unlawful practices being identified as occurring between 1966 and 1991. That historical synopsis of what and when was placed on the public record most recently provides a brief summary of the events referenced in clause (1)(a) of the motion before us today.

Some may say that the facts speak for themselves; but in this instance, a neat timeline of factual events barely speaks at all. Rather, it is almost clinical, sanitised, a muted outline. Instead, these factual events should shout and scream to the rafters their horror and outrage. They should grab us and shake us by the shoulders while yelling, how dare they? That would not be a rhetorical question. How dare they is, in fact, at the heart of this timeline of events and at the heart of so many stories of those affected, which brings me to the next chapter of this story, which is reflected in clause (1)(b) of the motion currently before us.

This is not a matter that can be neatly categorised and relegated as historical. Yes, the coronial project investigation may reassure us that these unlawful practices of stealing human remains during autopsies in Tasmania ceased in 1991, but the trauma, pain and hurt is current and ongoing. That hurt does not recognise, nor is it constrained by, boundaries of time. Earlier in my contribution, I described this deplorable saga as a story containing other stories: those are the lived experiences of those family members and friends whose loved ones were subjected to these unlawful acts.

I'm privileged by some of those who have interacted with my office over the last 12 to 18 months, to provide some insight here of their lived experience and their stories. Before I do that, however, I will thank and acknowledge the staff member in my office who has been at the heart of this, interacting with many of these families over this period of time, and the exemplary work that she's done for my office and for those families across that time.

To the lived experiences: in most cases I will not be providing identifying details unless I have been provided explicit permission to do so. Instead, I wish to focus on the themes that emerged from those hours of contact and discussion over these months since 25 January 2025. Earlier in my contribution, I touched on the shock and distress expressed by many people who contacted my office in the wake of that newspaper list of names published in the classified section. This was a common theme: the unimaginable shock, sitting down to lunch and receiving a phone call from a family friend alerting them that the name of their long-deceased loved one has appeared on a public list - and such a list. The bewilderment and struggling to comprehend, 'What does this mean? Why is my parent, my sibling, my spouse, my child on this list?' For some, the revelations their loved ones' human remains may have been stolen and kept without consent during autopsies had massive cultural and religious implications. Others were immediately assailed with concern over how they would break the news to elderly parents and other family members. Repeatedly, I was told of traumatised people struggling to minimise

inflicting trauma on parents, or aunts and uncles, in their 80s and 90s, when having to take them through how and why their spouse or child is on that list.

I heard people relive their original grief of losing their 19-year-old brother, their 13-year-old brother, their infant and toddler children, their teenage sister, their parents, their partners. This grief was so fresh. One constituent who contacted my office and who has given me permission to outline her brother's situation stated this:

I'm happy to provide you the consent to describe my brother's fate as that will contrast and highlight the fact he was unable to give his consent to what was done to him.

Her 14-year-old brother was killed in a car accident in July 1976 and, for some reason, someone in a position of authority decided to remove and keep some of this young boy's remains, to steal parts of him. As if the death of their 14-year-old son and brother was not bad enough, the circumstances of his accident are tragic and painful in themselves. He was what was referred to as a Wybra Hall boy. He was exposed to and suffered the horrendous abuse experienced by too many at that facility, and he and two of his mates decided to escape. It was during their escape attempt that the fatal accident occurred. What his sisters and other family members have to live with is that they had been told, before his escape attempt, that he would be released and home by Christmas, but they were not allowed to tell him. So, for all these years, that family has been grieving over the fact their brother could still be alive if he had not been so desperate to escape the appalling institutional abuse he was enduring, and feeling responsible for the fact that he didn't know he was soon to leave that cruel institution. Now their grief is compounded by this knowledge that an additional layer of institutional callousness was inflicted upon him in death. The toll of that living nightmare, of these combined historic and recent failings inflicted upon this family is, quite frankly, unimaginable.

Another current lived experience I have permission to share is that of the sister of another young man killed in 1976. This constituent's brother was 28 years old when he was killed in a motorcycle accident. Sadly, she was five months' pregnant at the time and still grieves the fact that her brother never knew his niece. She believes she has never recovered from the shock of his sudden death. She was devastated at the time and grieves still. Despite living in Tasmania, she discovered her brother was on the published list when a cousin living in Queensland contacted her and sent her the details. When she contacted my office, she was still traumatised and bewildered that she hadn't been informed as next of kin. She desperately wished to have her brother's remains returned to her so they could be buried with him in his current resting place in Bagdad. So many failings in that heartbreaking story.

The last personal story that I'll mention for now is of another family who lost their son and brother during a sudden accident when a cave collapsed. This young man's name was not on one of the published lists of 2025, but instead his 90-year-old father, a Vietnam veteran, received a letter in the mail approximately four weeks after the newspaper publication of the list of names. This elderly father was so distressed that his daughter, who contacted my office, has shouldered the burden of trying to understand what happened and why. She also had to explain to her 90-year-old father why the coroner declined their request to reclaim the stolen parts for reburial, which was part of her brother's lung. Distressingly, she only discovered the fact this apology was occurring today via a news bulletin last week as her father was of the understanding that he'd be formally notified and invited to any apology or memorial. Sadly, there was insufficient time to arrange their attendance in the circumstances.

The other constant theme evident from those few examples of the multiple layers of hurt and broken trust experienced is the toll of the historic and the current that it's taking on people here and now. While some had other family members to assist through this reopening of long-nursed wounds which would never heal in the best of circumstances, others face this fresh trauma much on their own.

Repeatedly, another theme I heard was the overwhelming sense of isolation and hopelessness. We all know that families are complex. Some felt they needed to carry the weight of these latest revelations to protect other vulnerable members of the family, while others couldn't raise it with their family members through estrangement or other personal considerations. Quite often I heard variations of 'Thank goodness my mother or father is no longer alive to see this', then the loneliness for them in working out how to deal with the news on their own from then on.

The compounding harm of historic and current pain and hurt inflicted is the next chapter of the story. It highlights a significant point that was raised in clause (1)(b) of the motion before us in this Chamber, and that is acknowledgement of the additional hurt caused for many current family members by both the manner in which they found out about these atrocious, unlawful acts and the subsequent failings of processes experienced since then. This fresh layer of pain and frustration of recent processes and their failings has been truly awful to witness, which is why I felt any apology today must specifically acknowledge those recent failings as well as the historic unlawful, unacceptable practices, and I thank the minister for taking that request on board, as reflected in the apology given by clause (4)(b) of that formal apology delivered today in the Assembly and again highlighted in clause (1)(b) of the motion before this Chamber.

The newspaper advert of 25 January last year is a manifestation of a range of those non-trauma-informed current processes that have been so impactful. We also need to acknowledge that for many of the affected families, they didn't even see the newspaper advert of 25 January 2025. As we've already heard, some had it brought to their attention by others, while some never saw it but were informed by letters arriving out of the blue.

The themes voiced loud and clear in this context are, 'Why wasn't I contacted privately? Why am I finding out this way?' Repeatedly, we heard that family members with the same surname still live locally, yet apparently, they couldn't be found and contacted in a more trauma-informed manner than a public advertisement in the newspaper.

I won't go into too much detail regarding how badly let down so many people feel about the manner in which they discovered their loved one had body parts stolen and kept by the Rodda Museum. The coronial project's findings report presents that steps were taken to attempt to identify living next of kin, but there remain very legitimate questions from family members who can't understand why it took so long, nor why it was apparently so difficult to locate them. I've heard of multiple instances where direct family members, particularly siblings with the same surname, live in the vicinity of the address published with their loved one's name. For example, current siblings live in the same farm address listed against the deceased's name in the coronial project advert but were not contacted directly.

Other family members are still living in a Sandy Bay address listed against their loved one's name in that same advert. This was not a one-off, sadly. It was a continual theme which I had heard and therefore expected that other members here might also have heard. Rightly or wrongly, that just compounds the sense of hurt and betrayal for people, that for some reason

they and their family members were not considered worth the effort of a private, trauma-informed method of contact.

A common theme across the many stories I have heard is the gut-wrenching distress as people struggled to absorb the revelations that the funeral of their child, their brother, sister, mother, father, niece or nephew did not bury them entirely. Some, for whom it was and continues to be a significant pilgrimage to regularly visit loved ones' resting places, understandably, now feel, in the words of one family, 'cheated'. Now, the peace and solace they used to obtain from that personal, quiet pilgrimage has been permanently and profoundly wrenched from them.

Now every visit reminds them that their loved one had been denied a fundamental dignity due to these unfathomable failings of our public institutions. It reminds them of the failure of the oversight and accountability mechanisms which should have protected them from these egregious and callous actions. It reminds them that they may never receive satisfactory answers as to how and why their loved one was chosen to have their dignity violated in this appalling manner by representatives of our public institutions we should all feel secure in believing only operate with the highest standards of ethical conduct, accountability and empathy.

Again, in the context of these statements contained in both the government's apology and also in the motion before this Chamber recognising the additional layers of hurt inflicted since January 2025, we must also acknowledge how hurtful and shocking it was and continues to be for many affected families to not have these stolen remains returned to them once identified. An important factor we cannot lose sight of is that those individuals listed in that January 2025 advert died in a manner which warranted an autopsy. That is an indication those deaths were unexpected, potentially suspicious and utterly traumatic for their families.

For too many affected people who have been working for decades to rebuild their lives after the unexpected and traumatic deaths of loved ones, they have been shattered all over again. Not just by the discovery body parts were stolen, but that, despite the theft being confirmed, they were unable to reclaim those parts. Too often I heard instance after instance of people interacting with the coronial processes identifying when asked what their preferred option was regarding the eventual fate of their loved one's remains that they wished for their return, only to have that request denied.

Some members may not be aware, but most people involved in the processes last year were informed they had 10 days in which to advise their preference for what was to happen to their loved one's remains. For some, that involved deeply traumatic conversations with other family members. Some just couldn't face a decision within such an imposed deadline and now find themselves having to live with the regret that they didn't respond in that timeframe perhaps. Some did their best to do so but then discovered their stated preference was not considered practical or appropriate, for whatever reason.

Some merely wished to have the ashes returned to them should the remains be cremated but were informed that due to the small size or nature of the retained sample there wouldn't be sufficient ash to collect. Sadly, bitterly sadly, there were instances where people were unaware the timeframe had expired by which they were to advise their preferred option for their loved one's remains. I am aware of at least one instance where a request for an infant's remains to be returned was discovered too late, that the request had not been made in the expected or

appropriate format or to the right entity. This mistake was discovered too late. It is grief upon grief.

The last personal example I will raise during this debate is that of Mr John Santi. Members will be aware of his family's story as John has found the strength to speak publicly about the treatment of his brother Tony Santi. But I will point out those efforts have taken their toll. It is not easy to keep forcing yourself to not only relive the original loss but also the pain since, not just in the privacy of your own head or home but putting it out there publicly. While John is capable of telling his own story, it is worth pointing out that his story is very instructive regarding the recent communication and process difficulties and failings because, although John did succeed in having his brother's brain returned to him and his brothers, it was not an easy or smooth process.

In fact, it was incredibly hard. And it took its toll. I am sure it is still taking its toll. I cannot claim to speak for people who found themselves let down yet again by our systems and processes in such a deeply personal and egregious manner, but I can be angry for them, shocked for them and deeply upset on their behalf.

It hurt to hear. It hurt to watch. I cannot fathom how badly it must have hurt to feel.

I do not present these matters here now with the intent to shock or upset or be gratuitous in any way. I raise them here because many who cannot have asked for this perspective and lived experience to be placed on the public record as part of this parliamentary debate.

I acknowledge there are some affected people for whom grieving is a deeply personal and private process, and even some who do not want to know anything further about this matter, including today's apology. But for others, it is part of their equally personal grieving process to have it clearly acknowledged that their grief has been exacerbated not only by the historic practices recognised but also the more recent ongoing processes, which have denied the return of the stolen body parts and have denied clear answers, options and, by doing so, denied respect.

Trauma-informed and responsive guidelines make it clear that, to be meaningful, not only must formal apologies step up and take responsibility for the wrongs inflicted but they must also commit to ensuring those wrongs can never happen again. We have heard that stated clearly today.

However, for many of those affected by these wrong and unlawful acts, it is difficult to have full confidence in commitments to ensure these actions can never happen again when in their minds there are still too many unanswered questions as to how they happened in the first place.

These human remains were stolen by persons in positions of authority and responsibility acting within our state public institutions, and these practices were normalised by decades of failures of our oversight and accountability systems. As we heard in contributions made in the other place today, there is recognition that these outrages inflicted upon their loved ones were a fundamental breach of human decency - a breach of the standard health ethics which we are led to believe underpin all those decisions and actions taken by that key health fraternity.

I and others warned the government following the public release of the coroner's final findings report on 8 September last year that affected families would not accept that as an end to this matter. How could they? Why should they?

That is why I personally consider it significant that the minister's apology today did include an update detailing the outcomes of further investigatory work undertaken and that there will be referrals to the DPP. These developments will also have a human face and a potential human consequence. But seeing those current accountability processes through to their natural conclusion may provide some meaningful sense of resolution for some. For these people who have felt their loved ones, and they themselves, have been repeatedly told they and their wishes don't matter by public institutions, or those in decision-making positions, they may now feel a little more heard, a little more seen and a little more respected, even if we never receive all the answers to the questions remaining.

Before I begin to conclude, I must address the elephant in the room: as part of a meaningful, trauma-informed and responsive formal apology process, commitments to specific actions and reforms should also be delivered. In this instance, I wish to use this opportunity to place on the record my support for those calls that the government remains open to investigating the delivery of an appropriate financial redress scheme for the currently affected families. Such a commitment delivers on a trauma-informed principle of avoiding doing further harm. I believe that by forcing people who have already had so much taken from them and their loved ones, to have to argue the case for appropriate compensation does risk inflicting additional harm and grief.

We also know there is a relatively contained cohort of affected people, so an appropriate redress scheme for those impacted by the unlawful actions resulting in the stealing and keeping of human remains without consent will not necessarily involve large or unknown numbers of potential recipients. I recognise that now is not the time or the place to prosecute this particular argument, but I will reiterate that such a forward step is both consistent with the principles stated in the government's apology today and will also progress meaningful reparation for those to whom we are now apologising.

This is a serious story comprised of many individual stories, and none of which have a happy ending. However, hopefully there will be some sense of reclaiming a voice or restoring dignity, of reclaiming the consent that had been ignored by these historic, unlawful and wrong actions. This is a story that jumps across periods of time, blurring perceptions of boundaries between the past and the present, the hidden and the known, the silenced and the now heard, all linked by pain and trauma and broken trust. None of us here would argue that today's belated formal recognition will undo the trauma, hurt, anger, confusion and bewilderment. All we can hope is that today's apology provides recognition that what happened to people's loved ones was abhorrent, beneath us as a community and just plain wrong. The apology may lead to some sense of resolution, some sense of acknowledgement given and received, that it may provide people strength to move forwards and to heal. We should also be upfront and acknowledge today's apology may also provide people the strength to still explore other avenues of restitution which may be available, as they have every right to do.

To conclude, I also wish to take this opportunity to thank and acknowledge the efforts of those Tasmanians who took the courageous step of asking questions following the publication of the 126 names in the newspaper advert on 26 January 2025, by asking questions via my office, via other MPs' offices, through public authorities or in the media. To those people: you

should never have been put in that situation. These events should never have happened to your loved ones. You should never have had to pursue justice and answers, let alone have to navigate the bureaucratic and nightmarish maze when doing so. We should not have needed to find ourselves here, now, offering and noting this formal apology from the government, but here we are.

I know the apology which we are noting here will not be enough for some listening. For others, it proved too painful to even attempt to attend or listen. Here, now, I offer my personal apology and acknowledgement of your pain, grief and anger. To add to the government's apology delivered in the Assembly earlier today, I also add my commitment to working, for however long I have the honour to represent my electorate in this place, to ensure lessons are learned, reforms are implemented and this never happens again. I will work to ensure current and future state governments deliver on the commitments made in clause (5) of the government's apology motion today that said this:

... the Tasmanian Government to continue to be transparent, accountable, and ethically responsible in all matters involving the care, custody, and dignity of human remains, with robust legal, clinical and governance safeguards in place to prevent any recurrence of such practices.

I also acknowledge, for those to whom it is important, your right to continue to seek further answers, accountability and redress. I commend the motion to the House.

[8.41 p.m.]

Ms FORREST (Murchison) - Mr President, I would like to make quite a brief contribution on this motion. I want to thank minister Archer, who's in the Chamber with us tonight, for delivering a very thoughtful, intentional and sincere contribution, in my view, a very sincere apology to the people who have been deeply impacted by this tragic situation. I am deeply sorry for what some of our fellow Tasmanians have had to endure. I'm particularly sorry that their grief hasn't ended. Nothing with grief ever ends, but sometimes when you reopen a wound, such as being reopened by this, it takes far longer to heal than the initial wound itself. That's what I hear.

No-one can undo the damage, the harm and the trauma that was inflicted on these families and the travesty that occurs to their loved ones with no consent, not even any knowledge that it had gone on. The question that comes to me and has been raised with me by some people who've been exposed to this horror is: where were the ethical considerations in all of this? How could it possibly have even been okay to do this? There are no answers to that, but what is clear is that what did happen was unlawful. What did happen was wrong. What did happen should never have happened, and we need to do all that we possibly can to make sure it doesn't happen again or anything like this happens again.

I want to touch briefly on the fact, and the point that I touched on, is that sometimes when you reopen a wound, it takes even longer to heal. One of the reasons that this, I think, has been particularly bad is the manner in which the information came to light, as the member for Nelson has outlined, but also the very distressing way that some family members came to gain knowledge of this event. There are so many better ways that this could be done and I think we need to learn from this. To receive a letter in the mail with no warning at all, to have a heading at the top in bold along the lines of: this letter contains disturbing information, and then not to say to the person, who may well be on their own, may well be elderly, may well be unwell, to

ensure that they don't read any further, or that it's inside another envelope you have to open, until they have someone with them that they love and they trust and can provide support.

That's just what happened: people opened these letters and read them with no preparation, no idea what was in this letter, no idea this has happened to their loved one. It doesn't matter whether they were a brother, sister, aunt, uncle, mother, child, baby; to find a letter in your mail like that and just sit there for most of the day looking at it, wondering what it actually means, must have been truly awful. We need to be sure that if there is ever to be a notification of anything, even anywhere near this, this approach is not repeated. There weren't that many people. If they know where the person lives, because they've sent a letter to the next of kin, then surely they could have taken a different approach. That's been terribly difficult. We need to learn from that. There were wishes, and the member for Nelson touched on this, wishes that were not met by some family members who wanted certain things to occur that didn't happen, mainly through lack of communication. Unacceptable.

I not only apologise and say I'm deeply sorry for what happened in the 1960s and 1970s and 1980s when the unlawful acts were undertaken, but also in the way this has been handled with the notification. I do appreciate the effort the minister and the government have gone to, to make a very sensitive apology and to commit to further action to try to do whatever they can to assist people impacted by this. The loss of a loved one at any time is very difficult. The loss of a child is another thing altogether. To be informed that something dreadful has been done to your child, I don't know how anyone actually gets over that. Well, they don't get over it, they learn to live with it.

I think we need to be really clear that there are a lot of family members out there who are going to take quite a long time now to re-heal, to get to a point where they may have been before with a degree of closure or acceptance that a certain event happened, whether it was the death of a husband, a wife, a sister, brother, spouse, child, anyone. The period of healing that is required now is going to be at least as long and possibly longer. So, I think we, as a parliament, and certainly the government, need to be aware that the provision of ongoing support for these families is going to be much longer than some people may think.

I do hope that we can continue to make sure these people get the support they need; if they continue to seek answers, that we do everything we possibly can to provide answers, and that we do give people the time to heal and be really careful about how we continue to approach this issue because it was a horror at the beginning, and some of the ways this has been dealt with since it came to light have added to the trauma of some of these people.

I'm deeply sorry for both of those outcomes but I do acknowledge the apology that was provided. I thank the government and the minister for taking it seriously and I know that she will continue to do what she can to bring answers to those who are still seeking them, acknowledging that for some there aren't and never will be answers.

[8.49 p.m.]

Ms RATTRAY (McIntyre - Leader for the Government in the Legislative Council) - Mr President, I rise to speak in support of this motion, one that calls on us to recognise, to accept and to take responsibility for a deeply distressing chapter in our history. The government thanks the member for Nelson for bringing this motion forward and the contribution you made this evening. I also recognise the Minister for Health, Mental Health and Wellbeing for

providing the formal apology in the House of Assembly and I also acknowledge you in the Chamber this evening.

I'm pleased that members of this place were afforded the opportunity to observe the apology. This is not an easy motion to consider, nor should it be. It requires us to confront practices that fall well short of the values we uphold today. Practices that failed to respect the dignity of the deceased and the rights of their families and, in doing so, eroded the trust placed in public institutions.

As we know, between 1966 and 1991, human organs and tissue samples were removed following coronial autopsies and stolen without the knowledge or consent of families. Every person deserves to be treated with respect in life and in death. Every family deserves transparency, honesty and the opportunity to make informed decisions about their loved ones. What occurred in this period represents a profound failure to uphold those principles.

This motion rightly recognises that these practices were not isolated anomalies, but the result of systemic shortcomings, failures in law, in oversight and in ethical governance. It acknowledges that successive governments did not prevent, identify or adequately address these actions. In supporting this motion, we acknowledge that the systems entrusted to protect dignity and uphold standards did not do so and we recognise the obligation we have as a parliament to confront that failure openly and without defensiveness.

At the heart of this, we treated people both alive and who have passed with deep disrespect. Most importantly, we must pause to reflect on the human impact. Behind every specimen was a person, behind every person was a family. For many families, learning of these practices has brought profound distress. It is difficult to imagine how it must feel to learn of your loved one being treated in this way.

That harm cannot be undone, but we can acknowledge it, we can listen, and we can ensure that those affected are treated with the compassion and respect they deserve and that we don't repeat these practices. The apology is, therefore, significant. It is a formal recognition of wrongdoing, it is an expression of remorse and it is a necessary step in rebuilding trust and committing to never repeating these wrongs. The motion and the apology send a clear message that we have learned from the past, that we take these failures seriously and we are committed to ensuring they are not repeated.

To the individuals and families affected, I want to say I am so sorry. Your experiences matter, your pain is acknowledged and your voices have contributed to this moment of recognition and accountability. While nothing we can say today can fully heal the hurt that has been caused, the apology represents an important step, one grounded in respect, in truth and in a commitment to ensure that this chapter of history is neither ignored nor repeated. The motion is strongly supported. Thank you.

[8.53 p.m.]

Ms WEBB (Nelson) - Mr President, I just thank members for their contributions, the member for Murchison and the government. It'll be very much appreciated and I very much acknowledge the minister being here with us in the Chamber as well, as part of witnessing our contributions, noting the apology in the other place. I see this as a wonderful potential turning point in how things have been done.

Motion agreed to.

MOTION

Tasmanian Budget 2025-26 - Attendance of Ministers in the Council at House of Assembly Estimates Committees

[8.54 p.m.]

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

That the Honourable Member for Rosevears, as Minister for Education; Minister for Children and Youth; and Minister for Disability Services, and the Honourable Member for Windermere, as Minister for Energy and Renewables; Minister for Parks; and Minister for Sport, and the Honourable Member for Prosser, as Minister for Infrastructure and Transport; Minister for Local Government; and Minister for Housing and Planning, be given leave to appear before and give evidence to the relevant Estimates Committee of the House of Assembly in relation to the Budget Estimates and related documents.

Motion agreed to.

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

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

Motion agreed to.

MOTION

Joint Sessional Committee on Recommendations Final Report of the Commission of Inquiry - Second Interim Report (Part One) - Consideration and Noting

Ms WEBB (Nelson) - Mr President, I move -

That the Second Interim Report (Part One) 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 be considered and noted.

I rise to speak on this motion, noting the second interim report, Part 1, the report of the Joint Sessional Committee on recommendations made in the final report of the Commission of Inquiry into Child Sexual Abuse and Institutional Settings.

Before I begin the contribution, I want to mention, as we have done before in this place and as we have during proceedings of the committee, that the topic of the commission of inquiry, its findings and recommendations may be difficult for some people here today.

Members of the community may be watching online or others may engage with the *Hansard* or the video at a later date and, so, I encourage anyone who is impacted by the content matter in this contribution and in this debate to make contact with support services as required. Those would include the statewide Sexual Assault Support line, which is a 24-hour support from local specialist counsellors; and Sexual Assault Support Service or Laurel House, which can be reached on 1800 697 877 or 1800 MYSUPPORT. There is also the Lifeline 24-hour crisis support on 13 11 14; or Tasmanian Lifeline from 8.00 a.m. to 8.00 p.m. every day on 1800 984 434. There is also 13YARN, a 24-hour crisis support for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people on 139 276; or Relationships Australia from 9.00 a.m. to 5.00 p.m., Monday to Friday on 1300 364 277.

I speak to this report as the current Chair of the committee, and at the outset I would like to thank committee secretary Jenny Mannering and support Allison Scott for their hard work to assist the committee.

I would also like to thank the current members of the committee who have been involved in producing this report, including in this Chamber the member for Hobart and member for Rumney, and, from the other place, Cecily Rosol MP, Jess Greene MP and Marcus Verney MP.

We have all had something of a journey in this committee, and I would like to thank all previous members of the committee, including the member for Murchison from this place, who was the initial chair of the committee until June last year, and the member for Prosser, who was on the committee for its first few months in 2024 before he was elevated and shifted on to bigger and better things.

Previous committee members from the other place also include Rebekah Pentland MP, Ella Haddad MP, Jacquie Petrusma MP, Rebecca White MP, Miriam Beswick MP and Roger Jaensch MP. It has been quite the cast of thousands.

Given that it is probably useful to provide some background explanation to that and the journey of this committee as a backdrop to this second interim report, this joint sessional committee was formed in June 2024 with the terms of reference. I will just outline that so members here, particularly new members, understand what the intention is for the committee.

The terms of reference are to inquire into and report upon matters related to the recommendations made in the final report of the commission of inquiry, and they include the following things:

- the Tasmanian government's response and plan to implement the recommendations;
- the Tasmanian government's progress in implementing the recommendations;
- the outcomes related to the implementation of the recommendations, both partially and fully implemented;

- the monitoring of the progress reports provided to parliament as provided for by recommendation 22.1 by the independent Child Safety Reform Implementation Monitor (when appointed);
- overseeing the performance and proper execution of functions of the Commission for Children and Young People, as provided for by recommendation 18.9;
- any other relevant matters that either House may refer to the sessional committee; and
- any other matters incidental thereto.

Then further, number (2) in those terms of reference is the number of members to serve on the committee was on the part of each of the Chambers was to be four originally.

So, it was a very big job. In fact, there were 191 recommendations from the final report of the commission of inquiry, just to remind members, and many of those are very comprehensive and complex recommendations in and of themselves, with many parts.

Originally the scrutiny of those involved having to scrutinise ministers across portfolio areas that were the responsibility of five separate ministers. Now that's four separate ministers. The committee took evidence during the second half of 2024 via hearings with each of the relevant ministers at the time and in written updates from the government that focused on scrutinising the early work of implementation of the recommendations, and then the committee took further evidence from non-government stakeholders in the early part of 2025 and was also focused on submissions and hearings.

As with so many things in this place, work on preparing the report then was interrupted in June 2025 by the unexpected prorogation of parliament for the very early state election that was called, and that delayed work quite significantly for some months. That election not only delayed things, but it resulted in some significant changes to the committee's membership and a reduction of that membership from eight to six when the committee was reformed a couple of months after the election.

So, the committee on reforming in October 2025 was mindful of the delay of the work and the fact that the evidence that we had taken during 2024 was now somewhat dated and didn't represent a current picture of the progress of implementation. However, it was important to report on that evidence and, as a matter of public record, to have that reported to this place in the form of a report. Certainly, while some of the evidence was not necessarily an up-to-date reflection of where things were at, it did highlight some very important matters raised, and they are matters in many instances that would continue to be relevant, so, important to make public and report on here.

Mindful of that delay in reporting on its work, the committee considered that to expedite things, given 191 recommendations to report on, it's a very big body of work, that it would be expeditious to present this second interim report of the committee in two parts, so that we could progress one and have it tabled and then continue to progress the other, because there was such a length and such a bulk of evidence to deal with. And that's how things have worked out. We tabled the report that we're noting today in an earlier session of sitting, and then just today we've tabled Part 2 of this second interim report. So, the entirety of that body of work is now tabled in this place. It is not to be regarded as a current picture of where things are at as of

today with implementing commission of inquiry recommendations. It is a matter of historic record about the evidence we took during the timeframe laid out from June 2024 to June 2025.

To explain the two parts: Part 1, which is the one we're noting today of the second interim report includes consideration of evidence relating to recommendations from the commission of inquiry report's chapter 6, which is education; chapter 9, which is out-of-home care; chapter 12, which is youth detention. This represents approximately half of the recommendations in total from the final report of the commission of inquiry.

The Part 2 report, which we tabled earlier today, of the second interim report we completed covers the other half of the recommendations. The relevant chapters from the commission report are chapter 15, which is health; chapter 16, criminal justice responses; chapter 17, redress civil litigation and support; chapter 18, overseeing child safe organisations; chapter 19, a coordinated approach; chapter 20, State Service disciplinary processes; chapter 21, therapeutic services; and chapter 22, monitoring reforms. Just for clarity and to have on the record, that's the way we've divvied up part 1 and part 2.

Another thing to mention, one that certainly intersects with the work of this committee, is that during 2025, the Office of the Independent Implementation Monitor was established and began its work. The evidence that was taken by the committee across that June 2024 to June 2025 period became a body of material not only for the committee to report on itself, but also became available, because it was in the public domain, to the monitor to inform his work as well. It certainly was potentially quite useful, as an early part of his work needed to be the development of an evaluation framework that would underpin his work going forward as he does that job of independent monitoring of the implementation of recommendations. It's good to have had a dual purpose, in a sense, of the information and the evidence collected from the committee being able to inform that that work, too.

For those who may be seeking to stay up to date in a current sense on progress of the implementation of the commission of inquiry recommendations, I would refer people to the annual report from the Implementation Monitor, which was released in the second half of last year, in October. He will be expecting to do his next annual report, which will be based on his evaluation framework, later this year, hopefully to be released in September or October. Again, that will become the primary vehicle for assessing how implementation is going as we go forward.

The other way to stay up to date in a current sense with implementation is to look to the government's periodic progress updates, which are published online. Again, that's the government-reported progress, so that people can make their own assessments as to how well that represents the reality.

Again, I think one of the things that jumps out from the report of the committee is that, yes, on the one hand we have what the government reports to be progress against recommendations, and that's all well and good, but also when we hear from others, particularly non-government external stakeholders, there's sometimes a gap between the perception of something that has been implemented, or the extent to which it has been implemented successfully, and that which is the observation of others in the space. So, take the government progress reports as an indication, but it's not necessarily something that has been independently verified until the Implementation Monitor makes his assessment.

Having said that, what we can also observe is that since the time the committee took that evidence from June 2024 to June 2025, there will be instances in the report here, as we report on that, where people need to be aware of changes that have subsequently come to pass. I'm just going to mention a few of those now for reference, because while in the report it might be noted that something has yet to be done, because here we are, a year later, almost; then the evidence-taking period, we now have seen some more progress. Listed in the early stages of our part 1 report of the second interim report are some of the things that have occurred, and those include: the passage of various pieces of legislation; the tabling in parliament of some independent reports like the Tatarka Report and the Woolcott Review; annual reports being provided by some of the entities that have been established based on recommendations, like the Implementation Monitor, like the Office of the Independent Regulator; progress being made on certain frameworks or policies or procedures and documents and such things that relate to various recommendations; and certain outlines for the way forward on some of the recommendations. There has been progress and people can refer in the report to a list of things there. We did want to acknowledge that, knowing that people may read the report and think that we're still a way back from where we'd like to be; progress has continued to be made.

It's probably a good moment to make a broad observation, and as many would appreciate here, I'm often going to be someone who's pretty much on the front foot when it comes to scrutinising and being potentially critical of the government around progress on things; that's fine. That's part of our job in this place as non-government members and as independent members representing the community but it's also, I believe, important - and as I do so in the report and I will do so here as part of my contribution - to recognise, as a broad observation, that we are making good progress on many things connected to the recommendations from the commission of inquiry final report.

That progress is being made in many instances in very good faith, with good intent by people who are genuinely doing their best to bring things forward for the ultimate goal of not just ticking off a set of recommendations, but genuinely delivering greater safety for children in this state. I believe it's very important to recognise all that strong work that is being made even as we, at times, are noting things that perhaps could be done better, or things that aren't quite there yet, or highlighting observations or criticisms from others that may be relevant. All of those things, of course, are also well intentioned and looking towards the ultimate outcomes that we are all deeply committed to seeing, which is improved safety for children in this state and assurance that we, to the greatest extent we possibly can, don't see any institutional failures around protecting children from abuse in this state.

On both sides of that equation, there is important, significant work being done to make progress. There's diligent work being undertaken by many in the public service to deliver progress across, as I said, such a broad range of portfolio areas and therefore also departments, from the Department of Justice to the departments of Health; Education, Children and Young People; Police, Fire and Emergency Management; and Premier and Cabinet.

It's such a plethora of work across whole of government, really. It's complex work and I believe, no doubt, it's presenting many challenges in progressing some particular recommendations. While much of that work is structural and process-related, alongside that, there's the less tangible but I believe probably more significant task of cultural change that has to be delivered on. Progress on structural and process tasks can be readily, I guess, reported on and ticked off in that sense of auditing, but it's the progress on cultural change that's much more

challenging to be monitoring, to be measuring, to be demonstrating, as in progress and as in potentially arriving somewhere that's improved.

That is an area that's commented on in the committee's report in a number of instances: that while we might be able to tick off on something as having been put in place - and just as an example, there might be training now being offered to certain staff in certain areas on certain child safety matters, and that's fine, that's good; we can tick that off as technically being offered but, of course, the ultimate outcome is to be able to understand or to measure or monitor or demonstrate that that training has resulted in a culture change within that particular agency, and a change in the level of accountability and standard of behaviour amongst the staff there. That's something that readers of this report would encounter throughout, and we wait to see how we may best understand progress on culture change.

To explain to people the structure of the report if they come to read it, because it's not necessarily the way some other committee reports have been presented, certainly in my experience - and again, with 191 recommendations, some of which take a page or more to write out in the report - we felt it was important to be as clear as we could be in presenting our assessment of how things were going, with some evidence that was illustrative of matters we might raise, and also that there be something of a complete record or representation of those 191 recommendations across the two parts.

So, what we've done through the reports - in part 1, but also part 2, which was tabled today - is we have laid out each recommendation in full so any reader of this can get a full sense of what the recommendation is, not just a little overview statement or something along those lines. We have noted whether it was a phase 1, 2 or 3 recommendation at the time we took evidence on it and to explain the commission of inquiry's final report to people, particularly those who are new to this. In that, when the commissioners made their recommendations, they each allocated either a phase 1, which meant it should be completed by mid-2024, or phase 2, which at the time meant it should be completed by mid-2026, or phase 3, which meant it should be completed by 2029.

Those phases were initially allocated by the commissioners themselves when they presented their final report and the government, I think in good faith, attempted to maintain recommendations in those phases and deliver on them, implement them according to those phases. What has probably - and naturally, I think - happened is that there has needed to be some adjustment, sometimes because things have taken longer than expected and sometimes because there might have been something that needed to occur before something else could come into play. Without anything being untoward, at times things needed to be adjusted. So, if anyone was to go and look at the current update on progress, they would see that some things have shifted in their timeframes or shifted from one phase to perhaps the next. I don't criticise the fact that that has needed to occur and sensibly has needed to occur. People would though, on reading this report, see times that the committee has chosen to note where, in the committee's view, something should be happening quicker or something should be prioritised in particular and that's presenting the view of the committee in terms of those things. The government can take that view of the committee and do with it as it will, knowing that, at the end of the day, we are expecting, because the government has, certainly laudably, always stated it, a commitment to delivering on all 191 recommendations. So, that's where we're headed.

In the report, each recommendation is presented and it's specified whether, at that stage we took evidence, it was a phase 1, 2 or 3. We also note the government's reported status at

that time of taking evidence where that was available to us. Often that was an extract from the government's implementation report of August 2024, so at that early stage of taking evidence. What we do in the report then is immediately provide some statements about the committee's assessment of how things were being implemented at that stage of taking evidence for that recommendation and then after that include some extracts from evidence that illustrate that or help readers to understand the assessment statements that the committee has made in relation to what we heard in evidence.

Hopefully, as readers go through the report, they will get that sense of what we were trying to convey and that we were trying to ensure that we present something that faithfully shows what we heard in evidence and also being able to express the committee's view on what we were observing and hearing about.

Mindful of time and because of how extensive this report is, I'm not going to go through each of the recommendations in any level of granular detail or specific assessments made. Members, if they were to look at the Chair's foreword in our report, would see that there are some general observations that pick up on some common or highlighted themes coming out of the material covered in the report. I am going to mention those here just in brief, as a matter of record.

Some of those things included that, while some recommendations have been deemed completed, for example, a particular policy or procedure or training module has been developed or there has been a new position established to meet one of the recommendations. The key intent of the recommendations is behaviour and cultural change, as I mentioned before, and perhaps we have yet to have the degree to which cultural change has been or is being achieved, or whether it has been achieved and demonstrated. On that basis, the committee regularly notes that ongoing monitoring and evaluation of the implemented recommendations will be required to determine whether it has successfully delivered on that ultimate intent. That will be the ongoing body of work for the Implementation Monitor and also the committee.

Another broad comment to make is that full implementation of some recommendations will require the government to commit to increased and ongoing funding to ensure that new models of working, or new workforce requirements, some of which would include increased staffing or increased training, and appropriately funded non-government organisations are being involved in the delivery of services as intended by the commission of inquiry in their recommendations. Many of those things will require a commitment to an increase in ongoing funding and such a commitment, as we would all be well aware, is a challenging one for the government to make in the context of our budgetary situation. We are going to have that brought well and truly to the forefront of our minds when the state budget comes down later in the week. The committee is at pains to note, though, that without a commitment to appropriate funding of the implementation of those recommendations, we risk curtailing the ultimate benefits and outcomes that we want to see. That is something that has been clearly noted in many instances throughout the report.

Another broad area is that there appear to be issues with the planned sequencing of some of the recommendations. An area where that seemed particularly present was the out-of-home care related recommendations, many of which are interrelated. There are some questions around the sequencing of the implementation that we felt should be reviewed and adjusted where needed to ensure it occurs in a logical order. One of the biggest centrepieces of reform in the out-of-home care area that comes through the recommendations is the pretty much

wholesale shift of out-of-home care out of the government sector into the non-government sector. That was a phase 2 recommendation, which means it was originally intended to have been done by the middle of 2026, but other recommendations related to a workforce strategy or a strategic plan for out-of-home care were in phase 3. It seemed a bit odd to make a wholesale shift without having a workforce plan or strategy done first. So, when I talk about sequencing, that is just an example of one area where we observed there could be benefit from a different sequencing. Of course, we are noting that this is on evidence taken some time ago now, so my understanding is it is likely some of those things have been reviewed and adjusted since then.

Another broad area that is picked up on throughout the report is that workforce recruitment and development is central to the delivery and implementation of many recommendations, especially in the child safety, out-of-home care and youth detention areas. Achieving the full intended outcomes of the recommendations will rely on establishing, maintaining, training and effectively managing a skilled workforce. Given the current challenges faced by the government in each of those areas, that may be a significant barrier to successfully implementing commission recommendations, and it is an area we will have to carefully monitor, assess and report on as we go forward.

Another broad comment was that there is a notable disconnect between the government's reported progress on implementation of many recommendations and the observations made by key external non-government stakeholders in evidence that they gave to the committee. It was also clear that, for those non-government external stakeholders, consultation and engagement with local expert stakeholders has not always been undertaken in a way that they would have wished to see, or felt needed to be done, to get the most effective outcomes. So, there are clear opportunities for potential improvement in those areas having been highlighted in the evidence that we're presenting. We certainly, as a committee, appreciated the effort gone to by those non-government external stakeholders in providing us with evidence through submissions and then also in hearings. There is so much good work, goodwill and good intention from non-government stakeholders involved here toward the outcomes we want to see, and getting the best result from implementation of these recommendations from the commission.

One of the particular things that the committee wanted to note and highlight in the report is the deep concern around the delay and the apparent inertia that was experienced for periods of time on the part of the government in closing Ashley Youth Detention Centre (AYDC), and strongly urging the government to prioritise implementation of every recommendation required to expedite its closure. The committee noted a number of things on that front, which can be looked at in more detail in the report but essentially can be boiled down to the closure of AYDC as one of the most urgent and sensitive of all 191 recommendations made in the commission's report.

Indeed, it was the testimony of whistleblowers and victim/survivors of abuse at AYDC that led in significant part to the establishment of the commission of inquiry in the first place, certainly for them to make their recommendation that, as soon as possible, it should be closed down. It is a matter of concern and frustration that it remains in place, noting work being done, but it's a significant matter of concern. While the government does indicate it's progressing the closure of AYDC as soon as possible, there has been, as far as we can see, no real firm commitment to a timeline for that closure, and from the evidence we took, an unwillingness or inability to provide a definitive list of actions that need to be taken to facilitate the closure.

I must say the evidence we took in that period of time was with the minister who was previously responsible for AYDC, not the current minister responsible for AYDC; I'm just noting that here on the record today, so some of the comments on evidence taken are historical comments in that sense.

The committee noted on the evidence taken that there was a high concern around the increase in the number of children being detained at AYDC, the majority of them unsentenced, and a concern by reports of a lack of therapeutic supports available, reports about the use of force and the ongoing impacts of practices such as lockdowns and extended periods of isolation on the safety and wellbeing of children detained, and also on the safety of staff and the support required for staff. It's a matter of ongoing deep concern for many in the community that AYDC remains open, even given everything that was in the commission of inquiry evidence and in the final report, and stated so clearly in the recommendations about the need for urgent closure. I won't say more about that in the interest of time today, but it is an area that's of acute interest to me, and I know to others in this place, and one that we continue to monitor and be cognisant of in a fairly close way.

Other things that we as a committee have highlighted for prioritisation relate to progressing the recommendation to raise the age of criminal responsibility. That is fundamental. That's linked also across to what's needed to be done in order to close AYDC as soon as possible; there's a nexus between the two. We also have highlighted some concerns about the way certain funding has been allocated, in one instance via an election commitment rather than through an appropriate, department-led tender process for such a sensitive area of service delivery to an incredibly vulnerable cohort of children, again an area that I'm particularly concerned about but I'm not going to go into detail about in this place today in relation to this report. It is something that will continue to be looked at through other scrutiny mechanisms, though, and through this committee.

To wrap things up, it's also a matter of where to from here for this committee because its job changes and evolves, particularly given the establishment of the Office of the Independent Monitor. In this 2025-26 year, that independent monitor has an evaluation framework in place and will be fully undertaking his role and reporting in his annual report later in the second half of the year on the government's progress and the assessments he has made of it. In a sense, the committee, at that point, steps back slightly from the role of having to closely monitor progress on every recommendation.

What will then become the focus of scrutiny for the committee is the Implementation Monitor's report to parliament, and that will become a prompt for the committee to then scrutinise the government, the ministers and the departments responsible on matters that are highlighted or raised or drawn to our attention via the monitor's reporting processes, so a slight adjustment. In some ways that is going to be a more realistic task for the committee, because it would be well-nigh impossible through our committee system, for the committee to be providing a very contemporary, up-to-date report on progress of implementation of these recommendations in an effective, timely way.

So, looking ahead from the next part of our work, I think that process of the Implementation Monitor's assessment and reporting, and then the committee on the basis of that providing an additional layer of scrutiny of government and government ministers becomes a workable plan. Of course, we will also continue to, in a similar way, monitor the activities and reporting of some of the other entities that are being established under the

recommendations, since that would include the new Commission for Children and Young People, which will come into play in the near future, and also the Office of the Independent Regulator as it exists now as a separate entity and then, ultimately, when it becomes subsumed into the new Commission for Children and Young People as well. The committee will continue to have an oversight role in relation to those entities and will draw on the work that it does to further scrutinise the government on implementation of commission of inquiry recommendations.

With that, that has really barely scratched the surface of the bulk of material and comments and assessments in our second interim report, part 1. However, in the interests of it being a public record of the work that the committee has done, I commend it to members here. Part 2, as I said, tabled today, will also now be available in the public domain. They will become part of the parliamentary record. The committee, as with so many people working on this across government and in the non-government sector, remains fully behind the outcomes we wish to see here, which is greater safety for Tasmanian children, particularly vulnerable children who are part of our institutional settings in this state and under the responsibility of the state, and we are committed to continuing the work of scrutiny and oversight as we go forward.

I commend the reports to members and hope that we will see, as we report next time, even greater progress on many of these things.

[9.34 p.m.]

Ms LOVELL (Rumney) - Mr President, I will make a fairly brief contribution on this to concur with the member for Nelson and put a couple of my own thoughts on the record. This report and the work of the committee, and the ongoing work that is being undertaken by the government and by other bodies right around the state, is a really important piece of work for our whole state. I think we all have acknowledged a number of times how critical the commission of inquiry has been for our state, and this report I see as a reflection of that shared commitment from all of us in the parliament that has been demonstrated a number of times in the parliament, in the government, across a range of government departments, other non-government organisations, really across the whole community. It's a shared commitment to making sure that the work that we've seen through the commission of inquiry was not undertaken in vain, and that the trauma and the distress that was experienced by so many people in living through that experience of contributing to the commission of inquiry does result in lasting, meaningful, ongoing change.

As the member for Nelson said, this report and part 2, which was tabled this morning, may seem a little different to reports normally and, as the member explained, will seem a little out of date or delayed, and that is something that we as a committee have been mindful of.

This report-writing process has been a really interesting process. We've had, as the member explained, hold-ups and delays through prorogation of parliament and other matters. Add to that the huge amount of evidence that we heard, that was presented to us and that we've worked our way through, and changes in committee membership, which have left us with this report that we know is going to read a little differently than you would normally expect. But I want people to be assured that I am not saying this piece of work wasn't important, it absolutely was - the next piece of work, I feel, is almost more important because as we heard earlier, there has been a lot of progress already, largely on those more administrative matters - changes to legislation, establishing a new commission, changes to employment directions, child safe organisations, all of those sorts of things - but really, where it will make

a difference is ongoing monitoring of that progress to ensure that what we're seeing reflected in reality is that cultural change that's required.

It was a little early to be able to assess that properly because some of those changes were very new and are still underway. I feel like we're well positioned now to assess that well in our next piece of work that we will undertake, so there is a lot more work to be done, but I know that this committee is deeply committed to ensuring that our role continues to be really relevant and meaningful and that that work continues to be done. I did want to thank those who gave evidence to the report. We had some really valuable evidence from a range of stakeholders. The ministers were very happy to come and give us evidence as well, which we certainly appreciated.

As a committee, we had lengthy hearings with a number of ministers and ongoing correspondence with ministers as well, and then we heard a range of evidence and we had submissions from lots of different stakeholder groups as well and different non-government organisations who are dealing with the reality of these recommendations and how they're implemented in the real world. Essentially, they're dealing with those people who are interacting with the systems and government departments that are implementing these recommendations, so they're the ones that really understand how it's working in reality, so I want to acknowledge the huge amount of work that goes into putting together a submission and coming along to a hearing before a parliamentary committee.

I did also want to acknowledge the members of the committee. I really enjoy working on this committee. I believe the work we do and the committee itself has a - gosh, I don't quite know what the right word is - it's just a really good way of working together. It's very respectful. Everyone contributes. I believe it's largely grounded in the fact that all of us are deeply committed to this work and I feel like it's leading us to produce really good, meaningful work. I also wanted to acknowledge the support we've had from our committee secretariat, Jenny and Alli, who have been nothing short of amazing.

One of the main reasons I wanted to make a contribution is to acknowledge the work of the Chair, the member for Nelson. It's been an enormous amount of work that our Chair has put into writing both of these reports. I've seen the committee supporting her through that work in a meaningful way, but I know she has carried a lot of this herself and put in an enormous amount of work, so I wanted to acknowledge that and get that on the record.

With that, I commend the report and support the noting of the report today.

[9.40 p.m.]

Ms RATTRAY (McIntyre - Leader for the Government in the Legislative Council) - Mr President, firstly, I acknowledge the member for Nelson for bringing forward this motion and acknowledge that the member of the committee, the member for Rumney, has expressed her support for the work that you've doing in this space.

The Tasmanian government welcomes the Joint Sessional Committee's Second Interim Report (Part 1), and thanks the committee for its important work of providing scrutiny and examining the implementation of the recommendations of the commission of inquiry and related reviews. The committee's recognition of the significant work underway across government is noted.

The reform program is a joint effort across multiple agencies including the departments of Police, Fire and Emergency Management; Health; Justice; Education; Children and Young People; and Premier and Cabinet. The committee found that the government has made progress, and the committee draws particular attention to the development of strategies, policies and legislation as part of the first two phases of the reform program.

It's also acknowledged in the committee's findings that this work has not yet consistently translated into system-wide changes in practice and culture, and it's a valid reflection. I can reaffirm that the government is committed to substance and not just form. Since the commission of inquiry reported, all 191 recommendations have been accepted, with 57 already completed and progress underway across every agency. This includes major legislative reform, the establishment of independent oversight through the Implementation Monitor, and the new Commission for Children and Young People, and system-wide changes to strengthen safeguards and accountability.

At the same time, thousands of frontline staff across Health, Education, Justice and Community Services have undertaken training to embed trauma-informed and child-safe practice.

Alongside system reform, the government is improving support for victim/survivors. The government has expanded access to specialist sexual violence counselling across the state, and is significantly reducing processing times for victim compensation.

Children and young people are also directly shaping reform through advisory groups and participation initiatives across Health, Education, care and youth justice.

The current status of the program set out by the commission of inquiry is at its midpoint of a six-year reform. Many recommendations involve major system reform, including new service models and workforce capability. They also incorporate the creation and appointment of new roles in the system, which have been progressing. That work is essential to achieving the deeper cultural and behavioural change the commission and the committee are seeking. When delivering reform at this magnitude, it is important to build foundational pieces to secure the success of the reform program being embedded into the future.

This also included taking some immediate but important operational steps to build safety for our most vulnerable children and young people. In youth justice, concrete steps have been taken to improve safety at Ashley Youth Detention Centre while progressing longer-term reform. This includes strengthening leadership and culture, upgrading safety and surveillance arrangements, and progressing diversionary and community-based alternatives. These actions reflect both immediate safeguards and the broader transition to a different therapeutic youth justice model.

Out of Home Care is progressing system redesign with a focus on participation, oversight and workforce capability. This includes establishing new advisory groups, progressing the Office of the Chief Practitioner, releasing trauma-informed practice guidance, and delivering mandatory safeguarding training to more than 12,000 staff. This work is foundational to delivering a more child-centred and accountable system.

Concurrent to this, the government is progressing major practice and service reform. Steps are being taken to build a new therapeutic youth justice facility and strengthening the out-of-home care system. There is much more work to be done in this area.

Work will continue closely with the Implementation Monitor and the committee to ensure that progress is measured not just by what is published but by the difference it makes to the safety and experience of children and young people. The government looks forward to engaging further with the committee in due course.

[9.47 p.m.]

Ms WEBB - Thank you, Mr President. Just briefly, I appreciate the government's contribution on the report and note that ongoing work and the commitment to continuing to work with the committee. We certainly were intending to do our diligent work scrutinising. Thank you particularly to the member for Rumney for her contribution as a fellow member of the committee and the very generous comments you made. It is very positive to hear that the committee, I agree, has a very good sense of working together towards a common goal, and I have appreciated the input and support from all members in putting this work forward. Thank you to everybody and I commend the report.

Motion agreed to.

JUSTICE AND RELATED LEGISLATION (MISCELLANEOUS AMENDMENTS) BILL (No. 2) 2025 (No. 39)

First Reading

Bill received from the House of Assembly and read the first time.

[9.49 p.m.]

Ms RATTRAY - Mr President, I move -

That the second reading of the bill be made an order of the day for Tuesday next.

Motion agreed to.

ADJOURNMENT

[9.50 p.m.]

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

That at its rising the Council adjourn until 11.00 a.m. Wednesday 20 May 2026.

Motion agreed to.

Ms RATTRAY - Before I move that the Council do now adjourn, just a gentle reminder that there are some briefings scheduled for 9 a.m., and I think a message has been sent to members in regard to another member organising a briefing, so, I'll leave that for them.

Mr President, I move -

That the Council do now adjourn.

Project Marinus - Compulsory Acquisitions

Mr GAFFNEY (Mersey) - Mr President, I rise today as Tasmania stands at a crossroads. The decisions we make in this parliament shape the future of this state for generations to come. They determine not only the economic future of Tasmania, but whether ordinary Tasmanians can still trust this government. At the epicentre of this moment stands the Marinus Link and the North West Transmission Developments (NWTd), better known as Project Marinus.

Just recently, Tasmanians watched in total disbelief as TasNetworks began the compulsory acquisition process to force easements over private land for the NWTd project. Whilst affected landholders received an official TasNetworks Notice to Treat in January, they were given less than 24 hours notice that their properties were about to be publicly listed in the *Gazette*. Imagine learning within 24 hours that your family's farm, your livelihood, your home and your future is about to become the subject of public speculation within the compulsory acquisition powers of the government.

What makes this even more troubling is that there are ongoing Tasmanian Civil and Administrative Tribunal appeals challenging current approvals connected to the NWTd and Marinus developments. Yet despite these proceedings, TasNetworks has pressed ahead with compulsory acquisition processes as though the outcome is already settled.

What message does that send to the Tasmanian people? What message does it send to those who exercise their lawful right to seek a review before an independent tribunal? It sends the message that decisions have already been made behind closed doors - by politicians in government offices - regardless of what the tribunal may ultimately decide.

That perception strikes at the very foundations of due process and the rule of law. We must ensure the government and its agents respect tribunal processes. They are not merely procedural obstacles to be ignored whilst government machinery rides roughshod over anything it disagrees with.

The Energy minister has repeatedly spoken about the need to keep project deadlines on track. There is a real difference between responsible governance and reckless endangerment. Pushing ahead with these projects to satisfy speculative timelines is a cavalier endeavour, the act of a caddish government.

Sometimes the bravest and wisest decision a government can make is to pause. There are many reasons why Tasmanians should pause and seriously consider Project Marinus.

Earlier this year, a deeply troubling piece of research was published as a major nationwide cohort study in Switzerland. It examined the effect of long-term residential

exposure to electromagnetic fields from high-voltage powerlines and ran over an 18-year period in a study involving millions of people. There was found to be an association between long-term exposure to high-voltage powerlines and increased mortality from Alzheimer's disease and other forms of dementia - a shocking outcome.

Before our government commits Tasmania to more overhead power transmission infrastructure, we must be certain we are not exposing future generations to risks we do not fully understand.

The authors themselves acknowledge that more research is needed. Scientific caution is important. The precautionary principle is equally important. If credible evidence suggests the possibility of long-term harm to human health, governments have a duty to proceed with the utmost caution.

Considering this, the government must reconsider burying all future transmission infrastructure. It's a proposal the Energy minister has previously rejected as being too expensive. Yet, the entire 90-kilometre length of the mainland connection will be buried 1.2 metres underground so that existing land use and agriculture will be unaffected. I assume the additional cost will be paid for out of our share and we'll have to make do with the overhead powerlines that also kill our migrating birds and towers that obstruct our farmers' paddocks.

Public confidence in Project Marinus has also been shaken by the government's handling of the Marinus Final Investment Decision. The Energy minister signed the agreement with the federal government during the caretaker period. Serious questions remain as to whether he possessed proper statutory or executive authority at that time to bind Tasmania to the Marinus agreement.

The government had promised that the Whole-of-State Business Case would be publicly released 30 days before the Final Investment Decision. That promise was broken. There was no informed public discussion, no public scrutiny. Essentially, Tasmanians had no say in the largest proposed investment in our history, and when the business case was at last released, Tasmanians were faced with pages upon pages of heavy redactions. Parliamentarians themselves describe entire sections being blacked out, including matters relating to transmission pricing impacts, project debt exposure, Hydro profitability projections and financial risks.

Tasmanians have every right to ask what risks are being concealed, especially when Treasury's own Fiscal Sustainability Report warns that Tasmania's total public sector debt could well approach \$146 billion or more by 2040 - unless corrective action is taken. We are approaching a period of extreme fiscal danger; \$146 billion is not merely a number on a spreadsheet, it is the certainty of future generations inheriting a fully indebted Tasmania - going backwards with a crumbling public services and fewer opportunities. We must stop and carefully examine whether Tasmania can truly afford multibillion-dollar developments of this scale.

I call on the government to halt all preliminary works and compulsory acquisitions associated with Project Marinus until all legal appeals have been fully resolved.

I additionally call on the government to reassess the redactions within the Whole-of-State Business Case and release all information that has been unjustifiably withheld from the Tasmanian people.

Finally, I call on the government to ensure that any questions regarding ministerial authority and the legality of agreements entered into during the caretaker period are examined by an independent authority.

This parliament is approaching critical budget decisions at the moment that may well be a turning point in Tasmania's history. What we decide now will determine the future of Tasmania - long after every person currently sitting in this Chamber is gone. That is an enormous responsibility and one we must take very seriously.

The Council adjourned at 9.57 p.m.