



# **PARLIAMENT OF TASMANIA**

**TRANSCRIPT**

**LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL**

**ESTIMATES COMMITTEE B**

Hon. Jeremy Rockliff MP

**Tuesday 18 November 2025**

## **MEMBERS**

Hon Rosemary Armitage MLC (Chair)

Hon Luke Edmunds MLC

Hon Mike Gaffney MLC

Hon Casey Hiscutt MLC

Hon Meg Webb MLC

## **OTHER PARTICIPATING MEMBERS**

**IN ATTENDANCE**

**HON. JEREMY ROCKLIFF MP**

Premier

**Kathrine Morgan-Wicks**

Secretary, Department of Premier and Cabinet

**Shane Gregory**

Associate Secretary, Department of Premier and Cabinet

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**Ned Whitehouse**

Chief of Staff, Ministerial Office

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**Sarah Clark**

Chief Executive Officer, Tourism Tasmania

**Mark Jones**

Chief Operating Officer, Tourism Tasmania

**Edwina Morris**

Director, Office of the CEO. Tourism Tasmania

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**Craig Limkin**

Secretary, Department of State Growth

**Brett Stewart**

Deputy Secretary, Creative Industries, Sports and Visitor Economy, Department of State Growth

**Camilla Thomas**

Manager Tourism and Hospitality, Department of State Growth

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**Ned Whitehouse**

Chief of Staff, Ministerial Office

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## **The Committee met at 9 a.m.**

**CHAIR** (Ms Armitage) - Welcome everyone to the second day of Budget Estimates. Thank you, Premier. I will introduce to you the members of Committee Estimates B at the table. Honourable Luke Edmunds will be here shortly. Honourable Mike Gaffney, member for Mersey. I'm Rosemary Armitage, member for Launceston. Honourable Casey Hiscutt, member for Montgomery and Honourable Meg Webb, member for Nelson. We also have secretariat support from James and we have Gaye from Hansard. This is our team at the table, Premier. We invite you to introduce your team.

**Mr ROCKLIFF** - Thank you very much, Chair, Deputy Chair and committee members. With me, to my right, I have Kathrine Morgan-Wicks, the Secretary of Department of Premier and Cabinet, and Associate Secretary to Kath's right, Shane Gregory, and to my left is my Chief of Staff, Ned Whitehouse.

**CHAIR** - Thank you. If you wish to take some questions on notice, the committee will consolidate the outstanding responses to the questions and provide them to you for a written response. If you could provide a brief opening statement and the committee will then have some short questions around the overview and then we'll proceed to questions. Thank you.

**Mr ROCKLIFF** - Thank you very much, Chair. I'll make a brief opening statement.

The Department of Premier and Cabinet, and as part of a continuous improvement focus, has recently completed a governance review to improve the delivery of services through the alignment of similar functions and a clearer structure to aid engagement with the community and our stakeholders. The review has delivered a contemporary structure to deliver on key priorities for the government and our community.

Machinery-of-government changes to better align functions, including the State Planning Office, Regional Partnerships and Homes Tasmania transferred to the Department of State Growth. Aboriginal Heritage Tasmania transferred to the Department of Natural Resources and Environment Tasmania, as the core functions are primarily operational and include the delivery of regulatory assessments and advice and programs to support the protection, management and understanding of tangible and intangible Aboriginal cultural heritage. Strengthened governance committees to drive accountability and delivery and stabilisation of senior leadership structure to provide certainty for staff and key stakeholders.

The department has also progressed internal work to strengthen budget development monitoring and reporting arrangements. As an example, the delivery of People Central, which is a single integrated human resources information system to manage all people working for the Tasmanian State Service. People Central will replace Empower and more than 40 legacy systems with a single integrated system, making HR processes simpler, more consistent and easier for staff and managers. It will also reduce manual processes and administrative burden, freeing frontline managers to focus on delivering services to Tasmanians.

Other major initiatives from the department this year include the Change for Children Strategy, Tasmania's 10-year strategy, which outlines our commitment to uphold the rights of children by preventing, identifying and responding to child sexual abuse across government and community settings, leading the reform agenda which has included the delivery of COI

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recommendations, the expanded Tell Someone Community Awareness Program and the establishment of the Child Sexual Abuse Victim-survivor Advisory Group.

Supporting communities affected by natural disasters and managing recovery grants, delivering the government's agenda and fostering supportive communities with action plans for older Tasmanians and our multicultural community. Most recently, we have announced the development of a nation-leading redress scheme for historic forced adoption practices and a national first compensation scheme for people previously convicted of homosexuality offences.

Our department is also progressing a government transformation required under the National Agreement on Closing the Gap. On Friday this week, Tasmania is hosting the National Joint Council meeting of all Aboriginal Affairs ministers and a coalition of peak Aboriginal leaders in Hobart. This is a great opportunity for people across Australia to be on Aboriginal land and experience the rich Tasmanian Aboriginal culture and business, with the Palawa Business Hub being showcased at a welcome event on Thursday night. The Budget commits funding of \$800,000 over four years to the hub to support and grow Aboriginal community-controlled enterprise on our land.

The department also supports me in the role as chair of the Council of Australian Federation, known as CAF, in 2025. I'm honoured to be the Chair of CAF this year as the Tasmanian Premier. CAF has been heavily and rightly focused on key negotiations with the Australian Government to give effect to the health and disability commitments made at National Cabinet in December 2023 to provide fairer health funding to Tasmania and other states.

Most recently, I released a discussion paper so that Tasmanians can have their say on how ministerial diaries are disclosed. This is part of our commitment to delivering increased transparency for Tasmanians and, through initiatives like the Independent RTI Review and the RTI Uplift Project, we're building a stronger, more transparent public sector that earns and maintains the trust of Tasmanians.

Lastly, Chair, I table the Change for Children Strategy, Change for Children Tasmania's 10-year strategy, for members. Thank you and I welcome your questions, and I formally table that.

**CHAIR** - Thank you, Premier. Thank you, James, if we could table it? Any questions on the overview? Ms Webb. Did you have any questions?

**Ms WEBB** - I think they'll mostly be grouped as strategic policy and government.

**DIVISION 10 (b)**  
**Department of Premier and Cabinet**  
**Premier**

**Output 1.1.**  
**Strategic Policy and Government Priorities**

**CHAIR** - No, that's fine, did you have one? In that case, we'll go first to output 1.1. Strategic Policy and Government Priorities. Ms Webb.

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**Ms WEBB** - Thank you, Chair. Premier, you like to claim fairly frequently that your government is open and transparent. On Monday 16 June this year, state MPs received a letter from the CEO of the Integrity Commission advising the proposed new 2025 Lobbyist Code of conduct will not be proceeding at this time. Apparently the reasoning for this was mainly due to objections raised in written correspondence received by the commission close to the date of implementation from both the government and the opposition.

The question I have for you, Premier, is what were the concerns of the government with the new proposed Lobbyist Code of Conduct and the framework? Will you table the correspondence citing the government's objections sent to the Integrity Commission?

**Mr ROCKLIFF** - Thank you, Ms Webb. I'm happy to have a chat to you about that. There are a lot of objections around the onerous nature around these matters, but I've got some information for you. We'll have to seek out the letter. I believe all parties including the Greens had expressed some concerns as well.

**Ms WEBB** - The Greens have clarified theirs as not being material to the progress of it.

**Mr ROCKLIFF** - All right. The most important thing I want to say is that we are a government that's committed to openness and transparency and improving so we have done an enormous amount of work over the course of the last decade and we've shown that consistently by our actions.

Since coming to government, we have put in place numerous transparency measures right across government that were kept a secret, in fact, under previous governments. And we continue. This is about continuous improvement around transparency.

But, of course, a few things that we've done is the release of ministerial diaries on a quarterly basis. We became the fourth jurisdiction in 2023 to proactively release ministerial diaries. Real-time reporting of key performance indicators in our major hospitals, and in 2024, we began publishing new performance data to help drive improvements in our health system. This information that was previously published quarterly has moved to monthly and now daily and we're working to get more information pushed out of that as well.

A new government information gateway webpage, this is available on the DPAC website, ensures proactive information will be routinely disclosed easier for all Tasmanians to find. A significant expansion of routine disclosures since -

**Ms WEBB** - Excuse me, Chair. Through you, we've got pretty limited time with the Premier, and this is nothing related to the question that I asked. Could he perhaps be directed to answer the question?

**CHAIR** - Thank you. Premier, if you could answer the specific question.

**Ms WEBB** - I'll just repeat it. It is: what were the concerns your government had with the new proposed Lobbyist Code of Conduct framework, and will you table the correspondence that expressed that?

**Mr ROCKLIFF** - Yes, we're happy to table the correspondence which clearly outlines a number of those matters.

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**CHAIR** - Thank you, Premier.

**Ms WEBB** - And you're not going to outline any of the concerns at this point in time?

**Mr ROCKLIFF** - I have outlined - I will just say, we need a workable system and one that is conducive to openness and transparency. Of course, that is exactly what we and I have demonstrated by reading a number of these matters here today around RTI annual report, electoral act reforms, publication of submissions, delegated all ministerial RTIs to agencies, we reformed the pecuniary interest disclosures for all members of parliament, supported the Ombudsman -

**Ms WEBB** - Yes, thank you.

**Mr ROCKLIFF** - We have supported the Integrity Commission with greater investment; we have regular disclosures of child sex allegations across public service.

**Ms WEBB** - So in terms of the Lobbyist Code of Conduct, just recalling that DPAC used to be responsible for the Lobbyist Register that was transferred to the Integrity Commission in 2022 and they were tasked with updating the framework, should we take the government's attitude to that work done by the Integrity Commission as a lack of confidence in the value of the Integrity Commission's work -

**Mr ROCKLIFF** - Absolutely not.

**Ms WEBB** - and the rigour of the development process that they went through over a two-year period to develop that new framework?

**Mr ROCKLIFF** - On the Code of Conduct for lobbyists?

**Ms WEBB** - On the lobbyist framework, yes.

**Mr ROCKLIFF** - No, I would not characterise that at all. I mean, things have to be practical, and we want a system that is not overburdensome, that ties people up in knots so they cannot do their jobs. It is about a system that is workable, that does what it is meant to do but is workable.

**Ms WEBB** - I am interested in that. I will look to see the letter and where that outlines the bits that are not workable. Does the government participate in the development process across a two-year period, across two tranches of consultation in the development of that framework?

**Mr ROCKLIFF** - I will take that on notice.

**Ms WEBB** - Thank you, Premier.

**CHAIR** - Do you have a further question?

**Ms WEBB** - Yes, plenty, but you can switch to somebody else whenever you like.

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Premier, in relation to RTI review and the RTI uplift project, noting the government has yet to formally respond to the Getting Back on Track independent review of Tasmania's right to information framework undertaken by Professor Tim McCormack and Adjunct Professor Rick Snell, released in September, nonetheless, this independent report does recommend comprehensive legislative review and reforms amongst 43 recommendations.

Are you able to provide an indication of when we might expect the government's formal response to this important review? Will it occur before parliament rises at the end of this year? My other question relating to the review is, how much was invested in that comprehensive review?

**Mr ROCKLIFF** - In terms of funds invested?

**Ms WEBB** - Yes.

**Mr ROCKLIFF** - I will take that on notice in terms of funds invested.

First, I thank Professor Tim McCormack and also Professor Rick Snell for the work that they have done with respect to that. I was able to receive the report from them in parliament, as you say, in September. I thank them for a considerable body of work. I want to affirm, of course, the government's commitment to building a public sector that sees transparency not as a risk but as a key responsibility.

When it comes to the review and the RTI framework, I am very pleased to have received the final report, as I say, of the independent review into the Tasmanian's right to information framework, released on 23 September. This review was commissioned to ensure our RTI system continues to serve the Tasmanian community with integrity, transparency and accountability.

I have acknowledged Professor Tim McCormack and Associate Professor Rick Snell for the dedication to this important piece of work. I must say their expertise, thoughtful analysis and commitment to open and transparent government has delivered a report that will assist us to ensure the RTI processes are the very best they can be.

Incidentally, the cumulative total to date across two financial years, when it comes to your question, Ms Webb, 2024-25, \$134,087; 2025-26, to date, \$117,343. A total of \$251,430 to date.

**Ms WEBB** - Was that the investment in the review that you were reading just then?

**Mr ROCKLIFF** - Yes.

**Ms WEBB** - Thank you.

**Mr ROCKLIFF** - RTI independent review, DPAC expenditure.

So, Getting Back on Track is the title. It confirms that Tasmania's RTI legislation is fundamentally sound but there are improvements that we can make. The reviewers have clearly undertaken a broad and inclusive consultation process engaging over 75 stakeholders across

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the Tasmanian community, state and local government and other key users of our information framework.

The report identifies practical opportunities to strengthen and improve admin processes. It highlights the need to reflect on how the public service approaches the management of information and how we can foster and lead a greater culture of transparency in relation to the provision of information.

We are considering all 43 recommendations in the report, both administrative and legislative, and we will work to respond in a way that focuses on practical implementation, solutions and strengthens trust for the Tasmanian community. A formal government response is currently being developed and will be released in due course. The full report, including public submissions, is available on the Department of Premier and Cabinet website. I thank very much, as I say, the reviewers for the work that they have done.

We want to make it easier for Tasmanians to request and receive information that they are seeking, and this includes the delivery of the RTI uplift project, which has seen government agencies collaborating to develop standardised policies and processes and new training modules for RTI officers in public authorities across the state. These improvements are already making it easier for Tasmanians to access the information that they are seeking. I might - Kath.

**Ms WEBB** - May I clarify two things that you have said there?

**Mr ROCKLIFF** - Yes.

**Ms WEBB** - In terms of the response from government, you said 'in due course'. The question was, is it likely to happen before we rise from parliament this year? Can you give an indication before that or after that.

**Mr ROCKLIFF** - I am going to confer with the secretary to see how we are going with the recommendations and the work that is being done. Thanks for the question, Meg.

**Ms WEBB** - May I also clarify in relation to the amounts of money you read out in terms of the investment? Is that just on the review itself to the two reviewers, or does that include implementation of any sort?

**Mr ROCKLIFF** - Just on the independent review.

**Ms WEBB** - Thank you.

**Mr ROCKLIFF** - Of course, further to your question, we have committed \$500,000 over two years in the 2022-23 to support the significant work of the uplift of RTI capability in practice.

**Ms WEBB** - In previous Budgets? So not in this Budget, though? Is there any RTI-designated funding in this Budget?

**Mr ROCKLIFF** - We have to implement the recommendations, so there will be a funding source probably needed for that, which we will most likely see in the May Budget, I suspect, but - Kath?

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**Ms MORGAN-WICKS** - Through the Premier, we expect to have the response completed and considered by government by the end of this year. I just need to check in terms of timings of Cabinet, et cetera, and the rise of parliament.

As part of that advice, we will look to see in terms of the cost of implementation of the recommendations, which we would take through into our 2026-27 Budget submission, but I would certainly be looking to - to the extent that agencies are implementing the recommendations for that to be part of their usual business in terms of their budgets. Certainly for DPAC we would be absorbing that cost.

**Ms WEBB** - Rather than additional funding being required?

**Ms MORGAN-WICKS** - Yes, I do not think in terms of looking at the recommendations, but I am happy to be contradicted on that, but in terms of significant costs and that RTI is standard business for agencies and they should be improving that.

**Ms WEBB** - In terms of continual, ongoing scrutiny of the implementation of those recommendations and the RTI space, where does that responsibility sit in terms of portfolios? Is it with you, Premier, and with DPAC in an overarching way? How will we scrutinise that going forward?

**Mr ROCKLIFF** - Yes, me.

**Ms WEBB** - Great. Thank you. Appreciate that. May I keep going?

**CHAIR** - That is all right. Other members do not have questions at this time.

**Ms WEBB** - Great. Premier, the DPAC budget papers in this Budget, page 205 of Budget paper 2, volume 1, describes the department as working to support, and I quote, 'Diverse, inclusive, and vibrant communities where all Tasmanians have equal rights and respect.' Which is a great sentiment.

**Mr ROCKLIFF** - Thank you.

**Ms WEBB** - Yet the interim Budget papers in 2025-26 that we are looking at, we are missing the gender budget impact statement, and the Women and Prevention of Family Violence portfolio receives departmental support from your department, from DPAC. I am wondering were you consulted about the intention to forgo a gender budget impact statement in this Budget? If so, when were you consulted about that?

**Mr ROCKLIFF** - We had a gender budget statement in the previous Budget that was tabled in May this year, which unfortunately did not get through the parliament because we were forced to an election by the Labor opposition. But we will have a gender budget next year, next May.

**Ms WEBB** - I take it that you were not consulted about the non-inclusion of a gender budget impact statement with this Budget?

**Mr ROCKLIFF** - Well, it was an interim Budget and it is one that we had to go through very quickly because of the shenanigans following the election and the extra caretaker period.

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More broadly though, since 2022 gender budget statements have been a key deliverable under Equal Means Equal: Tasmanian Women's Strategy 2022-27. Due to, as I say, post-election time constraints and the interim nature of this Budget, a gender budget statement was not able to be produced for the interim Budget.

I want to be clear that does not reflect a change in policy or commitment. It is solely due to the compressed timeframe for preparing the interim Budget. We are firmly committed to doing so into the future, as I have said. The gender budget statement process is robust and data-informed. It goes beyond describing gender inequality by providing detailed analysis of the gendered impacts of policies, including those that may appear gender-neutral at first glance. Continuance work is vital. It makes sure that the government decisions deliver better outcomes for women and girls in Tasmania, creating equal opportunities, improving safety and supporting economic security and wellbeing.

**Ms WEBB** - Thank you. It is good to hear you say all that, Premier, and I agree. You know I am a fan of gender budget impact statements. In fact, my motion calling for it helped prompt them to start occurring, and they have been getting better every time. So I am absolutely acknowledging -

**Mr ROCKLIFF** - Good, thank you. I was proud of the one delivered in May this year. It was very good.

**Ms WEBB** - Yes, I am acknowledging that, absolutely.

**Mr ROCKLIFF** - Have improved, yes.

**Ms WEBB** - In terms of the decision not to include one with the interim Budget, where did that decision sit?

**Mr ROCKLIFF** - Well, perhaps with Treasury, was it? Treasury.

**Ms WEBB** - Okay, and was the minister for Women consulted on the decision?

**Mr ROCKLIFF** - You would have to ask the minister for Women.

**Ms WEBB** - Okay, we will ask the minister for Women later. It is a shame - noting that there was not even an explanation provided as to the fact that there was not a gender budget impact statement with this Budget. It did not get mentioned in the speech. It did not get mentioned anywhere by the government. It does make it seem like that it is an easily -

**Ms MORGAN-WICKS**: With respect -

**Ms WEBB** - Yes, I am getting to it.

**CHAIR** - Yes, I think we are just going to ask questions rather than going to comments.

**Ms WEBB** - Yes, I am getting to my question. Do you agree, Premier, that it is unacceptable to have not even mentioned that it was being dispensed with through this Budget, or provided an explanation; that it makes it seem like it is an afterthought?

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**Mr ROCKLIFF** - No, never an afterthought. And across a whole range of areas in the last 10 years, whether it is inclusivity in Tasmania - I mean, we talk about economics and we talk about unemployment and we talk about economic growth and we talk about our \$40 billion economy, which has grown enormously, and all the great economic achievements of this government and investment in vital social infrastructure.

But this is a government that has a very proud record when it comes to including Tasmanians, supporting vulnerable Tasmanians, and investing in family and gender-based violence. The social reforms that we have made often go understated by our political opponents. But it was our government that first introduced the gender budget statement, of which I am very proud of, and we will continue those statements forever and a day. And we need to be balanced and fair when it comes to the achievements of this government when it comes to the social reforms that we have made.

**CHAIR** - Thank you, Premier. I might go to a different area, the boards. Board representation is always something I am interested in and I am happy to take the answer on notice.

**Mr ROCKLIFF** - Sure.

**CHAIR** - If you would be able to provide the regional representation, and I am not interested in gender balance. It is more regional representation - whether it be north, north-west, south, interstate - for the GBEs and the state-owned companies. As I said, I am more than happy to receive that information.

**Mr ROCKLIFF** - If I can find it for you, because I know that this is a question on your mind most years so it is a good question.

**CHAIR** - That is quite a bit that there is - it is, but I am happy if you want to provide it.

**Mr ROCKLIFF** - In the midst of not wanting to hold up the committee, but if we can find the information for you, we have -

**CHAIR** - It is just there are quite a number of GBEs and state-owned companies. I thought, in the interests of time, you might want to provide it.

**Mr ROCKLIFF** - I have last year's numbers, which you may well have already been across. As of 20 September 2024 there were 120 Tasmanian government boards, including those for government business enterprises and state-owned companies. As of 20 September 2024 there were 904 members appointed to these boards. Of these, over 90 per cent are located in Tasmania, and with 573 being located in the south, 159 located in the north and 84 in the north-west; 84 members, or less than 10 per cent, are located interstate. I have a feeling you might already have these figures but I will provide updated figures.

**CHAIR** - If I could have an up-to-date list it would be really good.

**Mr ROCKLIFF** - Maybe we can get that updated to September this year or whenever the case may be. Now, probably.

**CHAIR** - Whenever it is available. We will provide you with a question on notice.

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**Mr ROCKLIFF** - Thank you. I look forward to it.

**CHAIR** - One more question before I go back to the honourable member for Nelson. Another area totally, and my understanding is that you are the person who negotiates with the federal government with NDIS. It was suggested to me by the Disability minister that perhaps I should ask where the negotiations are when you have been meeting with your federal counterpart with regard to NDIS in Tasmania.

**Mr ROCKLIFF** - So from a broader level, thank you, Chair.

**CHAIR** - Yes, because it is quite interesting. I know many of my constituents have great concerns with regard to it, and when I asked, the Disability minister did point out that possibly it was worth asking you because you are the person who negotiates.

**Mr ROCKLIFF** - The Disability minister has been working very hard with all Disability ministers across the nation, and particularly the previous federal Disability minister, Bill Shorten, who was, alongside Julia Gillard, the architect of the NDIS. It is a very, very significant and positive national reform.

In that, the health agreement and the matters pertaining to the NDIS and its sustainability - which is largely the federal government's responsibility, of course - what we have to be very mindful of in Tasmania is that, while we are always there to support people with disability, we have to ensure that our investments are sustainable. This is a national commitment and policy, and we need to be mindful of states' ability to support people with disability to ensure that there is a fair funding model and arrangements between state and federal government.

When it comes to the health reform agreement, it is quite some story, but in around 2011, if my memory serves me correctly, there was a commitment for the federal government to fund health to 50 per cent in 2017. Now, there have been protracted negotiations to that point. What we got to in December 2023 was an agreement between all first ministers and the prime minister around the National Cabinet table to fund health to 45 per cent federal government in 2035. An interim step then was to 2030.

**Ms MORGAN-WICKS**: Yes, 42.5.

**Mr ROCKLIFF** - It was 42.5. Now, there seems to be some renegeing on that commitment, which I am very, very concerned about, because what that means for our state health system over the next five years is a decrease in \$673 million. Now, that is just a fact. And so often people say, 'Well, you are passing the buck and, you know, arguing,' and all those sorts of things. It is not the case.

The federal agreement - albeit the federal agreement of 2035 at 45 per cent is not at the 2017 agreement at 50 per cent. Nonetheless, that is the agreement we struck and so we are in negotiations now. And so as the chair of CAF, as I stated before, I am involved with that with state and territory premiers and chief ministers as well. Exactly the same thing if there was a Coalition government, and they've done so previously when it comes to funding, health, and particularly our primary health care sector.

**CHAIR** - Thank you, Premier. No, I appreciate it.

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**Mr ROCKLIFF** - Kath is also chairing the negotiations as well. I'm not sure if you can add any further to that, Kath.

**Ms MORGAN-WICKS** - Certainly, Premier, because, to be honest - and thank you very much for the question, Chair - this is a significant matter for the budget. The Premier has mentioned there's \$673 million which is basically missing from the forward Estimates.

**CHAIR** - It cuts across many services, I would imagine, in health.

**Ms MORGAN-WICKS** - Absolutely. Over 10 years, it's over \$2 billion that's missing in revenue in our budget pages. I know from my years at Treasury that this revenue is not recognised unless an agreement is actually entered into with the Commonwealth. We have been attempting to negotiate the next five-year NHRA agreement for several years now.

Since 2023 National Cabinet, we were basically forced into a one-year agreement with a lot of pressure from every other state and territory. Tasmania was the last state to be recommended to join up, and after some significant improvement for Tasmania. But we need the five-year agreement and we need that certainty in terms of revenue, which would make a significant difference to the budget papers.

We are at the moment answering questions about budget papers which do not have an uplift from the Commonwealth for health in the forwards, and that's a really significant issue that needs to be drawn out. Certainly, I'm the co-chair of the state and territory, and it's across portfolio negotiating group. It's the first time that we've actually done that with the Commonwealth. Our group is a mixture of secretaries of treasuries, of health, and of premiers and cabinets across the country. We've picked a team from each state, and we are attempting to negotiate, but we're trying to get the Commonwealth to lift in terms of their investment, and to be honest, we're billions apart at the moment.

**CHAIR** - Thank you. I appreciate it.

**Ms MORGAN-WICKS** - Thank you.

**Mr GAFFNEY** - Further to that, I'm really interested, because best-case scenario, they come up with the funding, back to square 1. Worst-case scenario, they don't. What's plan B because of the impact that that may have on our budgets next year, the year after, the year after? How do you cater for that hole in the budget, or what's the plan B if they say, 'No, not playing in this space'? Just a question.

**Ms MORGAN-WICKS** - We're already enacting plan B, because the state has had to put in hundreds of millions of dollars into health to meet the gap in terms of health expenditure. As a previous health secretary, we know they are continuing to provide amazing services 24/7 every single day of the year, but it costs, and the state is filling that hole that Commonwealth revenue is not being recognised for.

In terms of plan B, it's already there across the forwards, but you can see the impact on the budget bottom line by not having that additional revenue from the Commonwealth. If the Commonwealth stick to the current offer, we will drop to some 35 per cent Commonwealth funding for health. Sorry for being very passionate about this, but there is a long-standing

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agreement that the Commonwealth should meet 45 per cent of public hospital funding, and they have never done it.

**Mr ROCKLIFF** - It's not just Liberal premiers. This is Labor premiers, Labor chief ministers. This is a united push by all premiers and first ministers across the country. We accept our responsibility for the acute care system, as we should. We're reaching more into the primary health care system, which is evident in our policy commitments.

What does concern us is the over 90 Tasmanians waiting for discharge from a hospital to go into NDIS or an aged care setting of which there's not the places for them. We've tried again to be proactive in that. You'll recall yesterday, in November 2023, we held a forum of all aged care providers in my office about how we can, within the current system, alleviate some of those pressures. There were some good findings from that and matters no doubt attended to, but we're being squeezed, really, at the acute care sector by underinvestment at the primary health care level and the aged care and NDIS level either side.

That being said, I've always given the federal government around supporting urgent care centres of which we're partnered with, the new Single Employer Model for GPs, the heart centre in Launceston. I've always been very fair and reasonable and thankful to the federal Labor government, particularly in recent years, but they do need to step up now and fund health properly. Thank you.

**CHAIR** - Thank you, Premier.

**Mr ROCKLIFF** - Chair, my apologies. I have some current composition of government business boards by region.

**CHAIR** - Thank you.

**Mr ROCKLIFF** - The current number of board members: 79, made up of 33 in the south; 13 in the north; three in the north-west; and interstate, 30. I can table that for you, if you like.

**CHAIR** - Thank you. That would be lovely. Ms Webb, further questions?

**Ms WEBB** - Thanks, Chair. I'm going to pick up where I left off, Premier, in some ways. The budget announcement of the new Efficiency and Productivity Unit, the EPU, appears to be a more nicely named version of what we might previously described as a public sector razor gang, essentially. I absolutely agree there would undoubtedly be areas for improvements, some of which might be suggested in good faith by some but risks serious implications for others in that unintended way that can happen. I'm interested about will a rigorous gender lens be applied to all recommendations received by the EPU?

A gender lens involves looking at that intersectionality of impacts and includes gender-diverse and non-binary considerations. Are you intending, on your comments earlier, acknowledging the value and importance of a gender lens being applied to budget decisions and policy outcomes? Will you be applying to the work of the EPU?

**Mr ROCKLIFF** - That would be my expectation, yes.

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**Ms WEBB** - Will we have a way that we can see that that's been applied? Would that be publicly reported on, for example, when you're giving updates on the work of the EPU?

**Mr ROCKLIFF** - Outside of the gender budget statement, which will be delivered in May next year, I'm happy to - how would you like to visualise that?

**Ms WEBB** - I'm imagining that, if there's ever times you're giving updates on the work of that unit, it would be clear that you have implemented a gender lens on the work that it's doing so we can see what has come out of that work in terms of a gender analysis.

**Mr ROCKLIFF** - Yes, that's my expectation. We'd reinforce that. It's a good idea, and we'll make sure that happens.

**Ms WEBB** - Thank you for undertaking to do that. Can I move on to another topic?

Premier, it's a topic that you'll be familiar with that we speak about at various times. You announced last year on 16 October that State Growth had engaged Deloitte Access Economics to undertake an analysis of the social and economic impact of the government's then poker machine mandatory pre-commitment card policy.

The final terms of reference for that and the final report are yet to be publicly released. As you are no doubt aware - perhaps you can confirm - the Legislative Council voted on 29 October last year to call for the terms of reference of that review to be released, which has not yet occurred. Will you now release the terms of reference for the work being done by Deloitte Access Economics as per the Legislative Council motion that was passed last year? There is a more receptive approach, I think, to complying with motions of the upper House under this term of parliament, perhaps. Will you now comply with that motion?

**Mr ROCKLIFF** - I stand to be corrected. I thought we released the terms of reference.

**Ms WEBB** - They were not a terms of reference that you released. You released a list of dot points that were principles relating to that review, but we don't have a copy of the terms of reference.

**Mr ROCKLIFF** - More broadly, however, in line with previous announcements, we are developing a range of harm minimisation measures to reduce harm from EGMs while development of a mandatory pre-commitment card-based gaming system is deferred. I have written to all first ministers across the country asking for a national approach.

The Department of State Growth has entered into an agreement with Deloitte to develop a report into the social and economic impact of electronic gaming machine reform used in Tasmania. The report has yet to be received by the government, and as previously committed, the report will be released when it's received.

**Ms WEBB** - Could I clarify whether a draft report has been received by the government?

**Mr ROCKLIFF** - I don't believe so. Yes, has received. Yes.

**Ms WEBB** - Sorry?

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**Mr ROCKLIFF** - I believe so, yes.

**Ms WEBB** - A draft report has been received by government? When was that received, Premier?

**Mr ROCKLIFF** - I'll take that on notice.

**Ms WEBB** - Can you confirm then, given that a draft report has been received, that here we are a year later and we've yet to see the final report, and you said you haven't received a final report, I believe. So has that been deliberately stalled? Has there been a choice of you or someone else in your government to stall the work being done on that report in order to finalise it?

**Mr ROCKLIFF** - Not to my knowledge, no.

**Ms WEBB** - So why is it taking this long? What's the agreement with Deloitte about a delivery date on a final report?

**Mr ROCKLIFF** - I'll take that on notice.

**Ms WEBB** - Right. How much did the Deloitte review - how much has that cost?

**Mr ROCKLIFF** - Yes, I'll get that information for you. Yes, this is a matter for Treasury more broadly, of course.

**Ms WEBB** - Well, no, but you have a keen interest in it, Premier, as I do, and have taken leadership in making announcements about it in times past, so I think it's a fair question to you in terms of progress. Presumably, it was your decision, Premier, as premier, to dispense with the poker machine card policy. Would that be fair to say? It was your personal decision as premier?

**Mr ROCKLIFF** - We were focusing on other harm minimisation measures, and that was a decision of Cabinet.

**Ms WEBB** - Yes. Was that proposed by you, or by the minister for Finance responsible for that area?

**Mr ROCKLIFF** - That's a decision of Cabinet. I can't go into Cabinet deliberations.

**Ms WEBB** - Well, you can tell me who brought it to Cabinet, whose portfolio responsibility was it considered under.

**Mr ROCKLIFF** - I'm not going to go into any Cabinet deliberations.

**CHAIR** - I think the Premier's answered the question, Ms Webb.

**Ms WEBB** - Thank you.

**CHAIR** - If you could move on.

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**Ms WEBB** - Yes. Sure can. The area of climate change. Climate change and climate justice present urgent and intergenerational policy challenges. Tasmania's not immune from this at all, and we know there's growing concern across the community that the state's approach appears to be business as usual rather than particularly proactive, seems to lack urgency or leadership and vision from the top. What whole-of-government leadership are you as Premier and your department providing to ensure that it's a top policy priority in a whole-of-government sense?

**Mr ROCKLIFF** - Well, in a range of areas, of course, focusing on renewable energy development. Marinus would be a very good example of that, ensuring that we attract investment into Tasmania, whether it be solar, wind, investment in upgrading turbines, supporting Hydro Tasmania, of course, and there's Tarraleah developments and other areas around the state. Based on the latest available data, Tasmania was the first jurisdiction in Australia to achieve net zero emissions in 2014 and subsequently maintain this level each year to 2023.

Tasmania's latest net emissions performance for 2023 was minus 4.3 megatonnes of carbon dioxide equivalent, which is a 125.2 per cent decrease from the 1990 baseline level of 19.54 megatonnes of carbon dioxide equivalent. The *Climate Change (State Action) Act 2008* sets the Tasmanian government's legislative framework action on climate change. Key deliverables under legislation include Tasmania's climate change action plan, six sectoral emissions reduction and resilience plans and statewide climate change risk assessment.

We're focused on finalising projects from the action plan and delivering projects from the six sector-based emissions reduction and resilience plans and the statewide climate change risk assessment. We've got 98 cross-government actions, practical actions that will improve information and knowledge about climate change, reduce emissions and build resilience to the changing climate. Funding of \$14.3 million has been allocated to deliver programs, including the delivery of legislated measures under the Climate Change Act. Estimated total funding across government for all actions in the plan is over \$250 million.

Progress on the action plan was publicly reported in an annual climate change activity statement in September last year, and the next activity statement is being prepared. The risk assessment identifies 40 climate-related risks and opportunities that influence the natural, social, built, and economic domains.

Managing Tasmania's risks and opportunities is the Tasmanian government's response to the risks, opportunities and themes identified in the risk assessment and sets out our strategic direction for climate adaptation in response to the evidence presented in the risk assessment and the government response to that was released, I understand, in November of last year.

A whole-of-economy roadmap has also been released that outlines the links between the plans and the statewide climate change risk assessment and cross-cutting issues and opportunities and actions committed as part of the plans are already underway. So a fair bit happening there.

**Ms WEBB** - There's certainly a lot of plans being produced. I'm wondering about actual outcomes. We know that not cutting down trees is the way we've achieved net zero and the decision to continue keeping certain areas where we don't cut down trees.

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**Mr ROCKLIFF** - It's a combination of a range of areas -

**Ms WEBB** - Well, can you point to another tangible -

**Mr ROCKLIFF** - Including our hydro industrialisation and renewable energy, and lots of things.

**Ms WEBB** - Can you point to another area where we have reduced emissions through any of our sectoral emissions reduction targets? Not that we have targets, actually, we just have plans, so have we actually reduced emissions across any one of those sector?

**Mr ROCKLIFF** - Yes, so there's areas around - you know, if I could look at the Boyer Mill, for example, in New Norfolk, where plans to transition from coal to electricity is an example of government support for that. I've mentioned the figures in terms of megatonnes and that reduction, significant reduction, since 1990 levels, which is also very pleasing.

**Ms WEBB** - It's a global achievement, really. It's not your government's decisions that have led us to that, I don't believe.

**Mr ROCKLIFF** - Well, Tasmania's achievements.

**CHAIR** - Questions, please.

**Ms WEBB** - Can we get to the sustainability strategy? It doesn't appear to have any funding allocated to the sustainability strategy to implement its actions. Is that the case? If so, whose portfolio responsibility is the sustainability strategy, and how will it be delivered in a meaningful manner without allocation of resources?

**Mr ROCKLIFF** - Thank you. Sustainability strategy. This is our sustainability agenda we're committed to in the long term. Right now, we've got some very significant priorities we are focusing on, and when we're able, we'll return to this agenda. We know that Tasmania is one of the greatest places in the world to live, to work, raise a family, invest and we're committed to keeping it this way for the generations to come.

Our Tasmanian Positive Sustainability Strategy will clearly outline how our government is working to sustain and improve the wellbeing of Tasmanians across generations. This includes innovation and technology, improving efficiency by reducing waste and emissions, developing circular economies, enhancing the management of natural resources and protecting biodiversity.

The sustainability strategy will be released in the coming months, to your question. A significant amount of work on the development of the strategy has been undertaken collaboratively across agencies and in conjunction with the Tasmanian community and business sectors.

**Ms WEBB** - Whose portfolio responsibility will that be, given that it is across various agencies and sectors? Will there be money funded to it in the May Budget?

**Mr ROCKLIFF** - We'll work through the May Budget, of course, in terms of that, but I'll take responsibility for it.

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**Ms WEBB** - Under your remit. Thank you.

Premier, the Closing the Gap: our state plan for Closing the Gap 2025-2028 is a whole-of-government policy, obviously, and I've just asked some questions about the priority actions that DPAC plays a lead role in, if I may, and I'll focus on ones that have a target date for completion either this budget year or in the imminent forward Estimate.

**Mr ROCKLIFF** - Sure.

**Ms WEBB** - The first question relates to the key deliverables table in the Budget papers. Most portfolios include a key deliverables table but do not indicate their Closing the Gap responsibilities even where they have a lead portfolio responsibility. The DPAC key deliverables table, which is 11.1 on page 207 of budget paper 2, number 1, has a line item called 'Closing the Gap and Other Aboriginal Projects'. May I suggest, and will you commit to, a separate Closing the Gap line item to be included in future budgets to enable clear tracking of progress and that that be required across all portfolios with lead portfolio responsibilities?

**Mr ROCKLIFF** - I will take that on notice and put that in the good idea, worth exploring area.

**Ms WEBB** - Can I run through a couple of the Closing the Gap priority reform actions, then, and get an update? Priority reform 1, by 2025-26, so this financial year and beyond, we were to - and I quote - 'engage with the Tasmanian Aboriginal community to progress truth telling and healing, as a Tasmanian Government priority'. Can you report progress on that priority action, premier?

**Mr ROCKLIFF** - We announced earlier this year the setting up of the commissioners around truth telling and healing, and that was under Mrs Petrusma's responsibility. It's now Ms Archer's responsibility, who has embraced the opportunity, of course. It is a very important matter, which I believe needs to be progressed, in terms of being led by Aboriginal people, provide Tasmanian Aboriginal people with safe and supportive opportunities to speak their truth, and by doing so, help the Tasmanian community understand the ongoing impacts of colonisation and dispossession, and preserve Tasmanian history and storytelling for the future, and facilitate healing and reconciliation.

The announcement of funding for truth telling and healing commissioners was openly welcomed by the Aboriginal Elders Council of Tasmania, the Aboriginal Land Council of Tasmania, Marrawah Law, the Tasmanian Regional Aboriginal Communities Alliance, and Aboriginal Advisory Group for Truth Telling and Treaty and Reconciliation Tasmania. I know that Ms Archer, as the new minister, would like some time to hear from and listen further from Tasmanian Aboriginal people, of course, to gain a deeper understanding of the Aboriginal standpoint of truth telling and healing.

We're wanting an alignment and strong focus on Closing the Gap priorities and delivering on those priorities for Tasmanian Aboriginal people. To support the progress of truth telling and healing, this Budget is providing funding as committed over two years, of around \$880,000. This funding will enable organisations, including the Elders Council of Tasmania and Reconciliation Tasmania, to facilitate understanding, gathering of truths, and input into what will be Aboriginal-led process, importantly. Funding will also support the determination of the form that the truth telling and healing process will take.

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**Ms WEBB** - Thank you. Priority reform 10, which is also 2025-26, due by then, DPAC was to work with external consultants to finalise the audit of Tasmanian Government Aboriginal expenditure, 2021-22 and 2022-23, and then develop a government Aboriginal expenditure report. Are we on track to complete this within the designated timeframe, and will it then be used to inform the Budget?

**CHAIR** - If we could have quick answers, rather than - we're just running short on time.

**Mr ROCKLIFF** - My apologies, Chair.

**CHAIR** - No, that's quite all right.

**Mr ROCKLIFF** - I could ask Mel at the table to talk.

**Ms WEBB** - We don't really need to hear about it in detail. I'm really - it's an update I'm looking for. Are we on track to deliver that government Aboriginal expenditure report?

**Mr ROCKLIFF** - Mel Gray is the expert around these matters, and if I can just invite Mel to the table. Melissa Gray, the Deputy Secretary of Policy and Reform.

**CHAIR** - We do need reasonably concise answers, because we are still on the first output.

**Ms GRAY** - Thank you, Premier. The answer is yes, we are - can I say one more sentence? It's almost complete. It's been a really long body of work. We have just sat down with the Coalition of Peaks partner, the Tasmanian Aboriginal Centre, in relation to it, and we're in the process of finalising it now.

**Ms WEBB** - Thank you. Good to hear. One more outcome that's in this space is actions C35 and C36, and I'm interested in those ones because of the proposed public sector cuts that we've got looming.

Premier, you've got lead responsibility in finalising a new TSS Aboriginal Employment Strategy and Action Plan 2025-27. Has this been finalised? DPAC was tasked with developing a best practice guide for recruiting Aboriginal people to the Tasmanian State Service. Can we have an update, please, on that guide?

**Mr ROCKLIFF** - All right. Before I throw to the secretary, can I just say how proud I am of the Palawa Business Hub and the work they are doing, and very proud to have launched the Palawa Business Hub, engage with them, and they're doing fantastic work.

I'm equally proud of the announcement we made on the lining licenses in December last year, to allow for social enterprise of the Aboriginal community as well, which is a tremendous, I think, achievement in some of those matters pertaining to Closing the Gap. Kath, would you like to talk further about the -

**Ms MORGAN-WICKS** - Yes. Through the Premier, the next iteration of the Aboriginal Employment Strategy is actually very close to finalisation. I sat down with the team about a week ago, to walk through my suggested edits from a head of the State Service perspective.

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It's a very small team within our State Service Management Office, but an amazing one, and noting that their work on the strategy has been interspersed with significant training efforts across the State Service. I think we've now had some 700 state servants who have participated in that training that's been led by that team. In terms of inclusion, it should be shortly able to be provided to the Premier to consider.

**Ms WEBB** - Great. Thank you for the update. It's appreciated.

**CHAIR** - Thank you. Mr Gaffney has a question.

**Mr GAFFNEY** - Thank you. Just a quick one. I'm going through the key deliverables, 11.1, and I'm really pleased that the women in leadership scholarship program has seen 200 women, and that's under your - I think that's great, and I think it's wonderful when we see young women in parliament going to that program and that course. The one that caught my eye, though, was the International Women's Day Small Grant Program, of \$40 000 a year, for the forward Estimates.

It's International Men's Day tomorrow. There's no funding at all for International Men's Day in this Budget. There are two programs that I know in the state, recognising International Men's Day this week. I'm raising that as an issue, that I think that if men are going to be part of the solution, we've got to be supported in getting our voices out there.

**CHAIR** - So ask the question.

**Mr GAFFNEY** - The question is - please don't come back to me and say, 'We've put our money into Men's Sheds', because that's what's going to happen. Have you considered perhaps offering some funding for International Men's Day to promote that day, which hardly anybody knows about in Tasmania, for equity?

**Mr ROCKLIFF** - Thank you. It's a good question, and I won't talk about Men's Sheds.

**Mr GAFFNEY** - Please don't.

**Mr ROCKLIFF** - Notwithstanding the value of the Men's Sheds. I know you've asked these questions before, and this organisation - is an MRT?

**Mr GAFFNEY** - Yes. Men's Resource Tasmania.

**Mr ROCKLIFF** - I noticed they've produced a very good booklet a number of years ago. I'll take that on notice. We haven't funded International Men's Day or RITE, but I will consider that as -

**Mr GAFFNEY** - This is an interim Budget. I'm raising that as an anomaly, I think, but thank you for the consideration.

**Mr ROCKLIFF** - Absolutely, I will.

**Mr GAFFNEY** - Thank you.

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**Mr ROCKLIFF** - I know you raised it. Your advocacy is appreciated, I know, by those groups. So thank you.

**CHAIR** - Thank you. Premier, my question is regarding TasInsure.

**Mr ROCKLIFF** - Excellent.

**CHAIR** - Well, you may not think so. The concern - and -

**Mr ROCKLIFF** - Well, I thought I was being -

**CHAIR** - Yes. I've just got a couple of questions. Absolutely, I appreciate that - obviously the government at the time sold the TGIO, in 1993, and now we've come up with TasInsure. My concern is, with the Royal Automobile Club of Tasmania, RACT, which is our, as they say on their website, Tasmania's only local insurer, so do you consider that TasInsure - and we all want cheaper insurance for everyone. We all know it's very difficult, particularly for businesses.

**Mr ROCKLIFF** - Thank goodness to hear that. I mean, the Labor Party doesn't want cheaper insurance, but I'm pleased to hear you say it.

**CHAIR** - Who doesn't want cheaper insurance?

**Mr ROCKLIFF** - The Labor Party. They don't want -

**CHAIR** - I'm not getting political. As I said, I'm an Independent member, and we've all received, I'm sure, a letter from RACT, with regard to insurance and meeting with them. Do you consider that creating TasInsure is actually going into opposition with Tasmania's only local insurers, they call themselves - and was it considered that rather than trying to recreate the TGIO, which obviously for reasons was sold along with - I think most states have sold their insurance companies, their own companies, to actually support RACT or going into business with them to try to lower premiums, rather to recreate and go into opposition with a Tasmanian-based insurer?

**Mr ROCKLIFF** - Thank you for the very considered question. We're not there to recreate the TGIO. We are there to insert a policy, and this is a policy of ideas and elections about policies of ideas. Our policy was TasInsure because we have consistently, and I have, as I travel Tasmania - people have raised this issue as a massive input and increasing input cost into their small businesses, for example. People are either not insured, under insuring or not obtaining insurance. The RACT, at this point in time, did not offer small business insurance. They have other products, such as automobile insurance, of which we are not stepping into that market.

The insurance industry nationally reached \$6 billion of profits last year, and I've spoken to small businesses in Queenstown, a small business in Queenstown, who's had a 300 per cent increase in premiums since around 2020 or so. So the system is broken, and the system needs intervention, and I want to protect Tasmanians from rising insurance premiums based on mainland prices. It's simply not fair. I have raised this nationally. This is not something that I've suddenly become concerned about.

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I've been to, particularly, Tourism forums with ministers across the country, including the federal minister where I've put this on the agenda, particularly as it hurts the visitor economy and tourism and hospitality businesses, as I best understand it. In the absence of a national approach to this - and there were moves for a national approach to address some of these challenges - we decided to have the policy TasInsure. I have a discussion paper, Chair, and we've released a preliminary draft bill as well, but to your very good question around the RACT, which I have engaged with -

**CHAIR** - So were they approached with working with the government rather than creating a new insurer, perhaps, for them in consultation or with the government to take on small business to work together with them to actually increase their business rather than create a whole new entity?

**Mr ROCKLIFF** - Yes. Notwithstanding, the RACT is, as I understand, the only mutual insurance firm, if I can call that, left in Australia. I agree with you. They are a very good corporate citizen, and they've got a very strong and trusted brand. On page 7 of the discussion paper, I talk about key policy issues and questions for consultation. Part of that - and I'll quote from it, Chair, because it's very relevant to your question:

Views in relation to the proposed model, framework or structure of TasInsure, including considerations around scope, mandate and product offering. The design and components of the implementation plan, including phasing in arrangements, prioritisation of product offerings and target customers and groups. Potential partnerships or delivery models that may support TasInsure and its objectives, including local councils and community organisations.

And so very open to working with the RACT.

**CHAIR** - I guess my question is, with respect, did the government contact or communicate with RACT about the fact, as you've mentioned, they don't do small business insurance? I don't know whether they do or not because I've never actually tried, but I'll take the fact that you've said they don't. Did the government communicate with RACT to see if they would be willing to join with the government to increase - to put money into something that's already there rather than try to recreate a whole new entity such as TasInsure?

**Mr ROCKLIFF** - As I say, I'm happy to engage with the RACT in the delivery of this policy.

**CHAIR** - So they haven't already. I guess that's my question. When you came up with the policy with TasInsure, there was no intent to -

**Mr ROCKLIFF** - I had no personal engagement with the RACT, but we are happy to engage with their ideas and deliver on the policy and the policy commitments and objectives. No one's saying that TasInsure will cover 100 per cent of the market, and, indeed, this is, if you like, a mum's and dad's small business policy for those people and businesses. This is not about the big business, or the Woolworths, or the Coles or the large businesses. This is about mums and dads and small businesses. There's no doubt in my mind that insurance companies need to sharpen their pencil, seriously sharpen their pencil, when it comes to insurance. It is not fair

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that Tasmanians have not even been able to insure, even if they want to, and it's not fair on Tasmanians that they're either underinsuring or not insuring at all.

**CHAIR** - I think you've answered my question, Premier.

**Mr ROCKLIFF** - Well, the system's broken, and so when the system's broken, there needs to be a policy that intervenes, and that's what we've done.

**CHAIR** - I understand. I'm not going to go on, but the actual answer is no. The government did not endeavour to work with RACT to take over small business insurance rather than create an insurer.

**Mr ROCKLIFF** - Yes. I've had no personal engagement with them.

**CHAIR** - So it's just small business. Home and contents, I'm assuming, would be something else TasInsure would undertake? Small business insurance, home and contents?

**Mr ROCKLIFF** - We want to support our mums and dads and our families, yes. That's our intention, but again -

**CHAIR** - Not-for-profit?

**Mr ROCKLIFF** - Well, that's the point. See, insurance premiums have increased by some 35 per cent on average, I'm informed. MAIB, the Tasmanian-owned insurer - and premiums have increased by some 5 per cent over a similar period - are managing their business very well, in my opinion, also have a role to play. So notwithstanding the comment I made yesterday, one minute everyone's building me up about selling off GBEs, and the next minute, you're trying to create a GBE that supports Tasmanians, and everyone flies off the handle.

**CHAIR** - It depends if you're going to -

**Ms WEBB** - It's a straw man argument. Just move on from it.

**Mr ROCKLIFF** - No, no. Well, it's true. It's true.

**Ms WEBB** - Not cutting them is not the same as not wanting to create a new one.

**Mr ROCKLIFF** - I would disagree with that. Anyway.

**Ms WEBB** - It's a false equivalency.

**CHAIR** - I appreciate your answer, Premier.

**Mr ROCKLIFF** - We cover, in the discussion paper, product scope, financial risk management, the regulatory context as well. I'm happy to table the discussion paper and -

**CHAIR** - If you could, that would be good.

**Mr ROCKLIFF** - Or discussion paper, at the very least, at this stage.

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**CHAIR** - Yes.

**Mr ROCKLIFF** - The draft bill is also out there for public consumption, and I'm very pleased to be able to do so.

**CHAIR** - Thank you, Premier. I have one question. I'm not sure it fits in this area. You're probably going to say it's not even yours, and that's fine - before I go back to Ms Webb. It's regarding some consultation, and the reason I will ask in this area, it was to do - because I know that you've been involved in many aspects - it was to do with the short-term accommodation. I know that's not your portfolio, but what I'm going to ask you is, it was from a director of the Short Term Accommodation Association, and it was to do with that consultation that's happening. It was to say, 'I've received advice from Premier Rockliff's office earlier this week', hence the reason I'm asking you, 'that the government intends to release a draft Short Term Rental Accommodation Tax Levy Bill and accompanying discussion paper for consultation', and it was the consultation period from 2 December to 27 January.

Premier, you would have to say in a short term -

**Mr ROCKLIFF** - So eight weeks.

**CHAIR** - It's over the Christmas period, 2 December to 27 January. Would you not consider, particularly when we're looking at short-term accommodation, something which is holiday rental mainly that - so can I have an understanding from you that perhaps that could be increased for the government to actually go out - any consultation, regardless of what it is - over a Christmas period, I'm sure that you would have to consider that's really inappropriate. 2 December to 27 January.

**Mr ROCKLIFF** - It's a short consultation.

**CHAIR** - It is over a Christmas period. That's the issue that I have, and it's the issue that they have.

**Mr ROCKLIFF** - Would you like me to increase it by a fortnight?

**CHAIR** - I believe it definitely needs to at least go into February. Yes.

**Mr ROCKLIFF** - All right. We'll do that. Very good. Thank you for the question.

## **1.2 Child and Youth Wellbeing.**

**CHAIR** - Thank you, Premier. Ms Webb, are you happy to move on to the next area and perhaps, if we have time, we could come back to 1.1?

**Ms WEBB** - Yes.

**CHAIR** - Unless members have any more questions. So, 1.2 Child and Youth Wellbeing. Ms Webb. Thank you, Premier, for that.

**Mr ROCKLIFF** - Thank you, Chair. Thanks for the questions.

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**Ms WEBB** - Just shuffling my bits and bobs around here. Some of the things I'm interested to talk to you about in this area, in the child and youth wellbeing, relate to some commission of inquiry-type matters that still sit with DPAC and most likely under your purview, to some extent, Premier.

One relates to your government's commitment to a whole-of-government trauma-informed approach, which is admirable, in relation to commission of inquiry findings and really important. Can you confirm that all victim-survivor support programs and services established as part of the government's formal response are maintained and will continue to be maintained through the forward Estimates period at least.

**Mr ROCKLIFF** - I wasn't advised that they won't. Naturally, we'll have the May Budget to detail those matters, but the answer's yes.

**Ms WEBB** - Yes, great. So the concerns that a survivor support service might be wound up at the end of 2026-27 are not well-founded concerns.

**Mr ROCKLIFF** - Not well founded.

**Ms WEBB** - Great.

**Mr ROCKLIFF** - Understandable in terms of asking the question, but we're committed to those investments. Thank you.

**Ms WEBB** - I appreciate you confirming that. I wanted to ask questions around the child wellbeing strategy, which did sit with DPAC and now essentially has been, I gather, shifted to DECYP and into Department of Health in some fashion as relevant to the matters in the strategy.

The thing that concerns me about that is whether then it becomes harder for us to track progress and track funding being applied to the elements that are in the child wellbeing strategy. Such an admirable strategy, the development of that back in the day, I think it was released in 2021.

**Mr ROCKLIFF** - It was. Correct.

**Ms WEBB** - The development process was exemplary. I absolutely recognise that, but now I'm concerned that it's drifting away from us and that we are moving on to other priorities which, while worthy, take us away from actually still having this be a living strategy. Can you respond to those concerns and talk about how your oversight and whole-of-government oversight of that - what that still looks like.

**Mr ROCKLIFF** - Thank you. I'll throw to Kath in just a moment, but I see this as always my responsibility and my level of accountability as the head of government in terms of the premier of the day, in terms of implementation of the commission of inquiry recommendations, but more broadly, the strategies you speak of within the purview of DECYP and Department of Health, which are the main funders of the strategy. Notwithstanding that, though, there will always be a high level of accountability back to me as premier. Kath.

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**Ms MORGAN-WICKS** - Through the premier, and also in having a look at the structure of DPAC, the number of priorities that DPAC's managing, but also the tendency for DPAC to step in to establish or to lead the commissioning of a reform.

But once and often that's involving the coordination of agencies, ensuring that agencies are actually delivering to agreed outcomes, the child and youth wellbeing strategy has recurrent funding for established projects, which are well within the remit of DECYP and Health, and as such we have transferred that responsibility for the strategy to those agencies.

That is not to say that, for example, Secretary's Board wouldn't seek updates in relation to the ongoing performance under the strategy or for those items, but DPAC does need to look at each of the priorities that we continue to manage as new priorities also emerge. Another factor into that has also been the significant amount of work under the commission of inquiry, which DPAC needed to squarely step into as the central coordinating agency for that.

**Ms WEBB** - Thank you. I understand that, in terms of it, though, not having one single agency now responsible for, say, reporting, where does, say, the annual report production on the Child and Youth Wellbeing Strategy? Where does that responsibility sit, given that it is across various agencies?

**Ms MORGAN-WICKS** - Through the premier, in terms of the next stage of supporting, we are, at the moment, undertaking a review of the audit of the programs, noting that we have recurrent funding that's ongoing. This review would need to consider whether there needs to be another action plan, and in terms of that reporting, we're happy to take that into account.

In terms of what ongoing reporting could occur in relation to the outcomes being achieved by, for example, the kids care clinics, which have been established and which are now under the purview of Health, the sustained nurse home visiting program, again delivered by CHaPS, and well within the purview of Health. Bringing Baby Home, which is being delivered by DECYP, and also the Child and Family Learning Centre staged outreach model delivered by DECYP, which should all be reported in their annual reports, also in terms of key programs and deliverables.

**Ms WEBB** - The thing that concerns me about that, because obviously they are all wonderful programs and important, we had a strategy with a first action plan, 2021-25, and it's just been described, it's now under consideration whether we even have a next action plan under this strategy, which, if we don't choose to have another action plan, essentially the strategy as a separate concept, comes to an end, which seems a great shame, given that it is - the development of it was so comprehensive. It's set around those areas of importance for children and development, and it did have data outcomes that were supposed to be reported on.

Without there being an action plan that draws the connections between all those different funded services and reports against data outcomes, how are we actually tracking progress then on child wellbeing in the state? All we'd be tracking is progress on funded services, not tracking progress on child wellbeing, if we don't have an action plan and we don't have central reporting.

**Mr ROCKLIFF** - Under the Department of Children and Youth, we'll be tracking that wellbeing progress. I know that the Department of Education, when I was Education minister, at the very least, had a wellbeing survey from year 4 to year 12, which we started maybe in

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around 2017, I thought from memory, but which was a good idea, in tracking wellbeing and the like. The strategy, of course, was released in 2021.

I believe the department came together after the strategy was released, but I'll just check the record on those dates as well. So now we've got that whole department working on all matters, not just education, but youth as well. It's the important department to be driving the strategy but also being held accountable to its role as well.

**Ms WEBB** - But if we're not reporting against the strategy, we'll lose track of how we're going against the domains that are outlined in that strategy. We set up particular outcome measurements, we set up data snapshots, which - I'm not sure how many iterations of the data snapshot were produced. I can't find one past 2022, but we seem to have abandoned the idea of measuring ourselves against the strategy, the domains in it and the data and outcomes that we had gone to great pains to put together under that strategy.

**Mr ROCKLIFF** - Thank you. I think we would value Courtney's -

**Ms WEBB** - In the interest of time, perhaps, can we register, in terms of a review that's being undergone, a concern that actually we may abandon this work in a meaningful sense, in a comprehensive sense? It was such exemplary work to begin with, Premier. Can I register my concern about that and ask that you and your department give some thought to how that doesn't occur?

**Mr ROCKLIFF** - Sure. Absolutely. It's not my intention, but okay.

**Ms MORGAN-WICKS** - Through the Premier, very happy to note that concern, but noting that the Child and Youth Wellbeing Strategy and the enormous amount of work that went into it was in a very different time in terms of governance structures and departments and prior to the commission of inquiry, which is also impacting in terms of child and youth wellbeing.

I am noting that a strategy that has been born out of 2021 period and onwards and now the significant, very positive programs that have developed out of that strategy, which to be honest may not have occurred if that strategy had not been pulled together.

But there does come a time in terms of strategic policy support and monitoring, et cetera, ask the question, how many pieces remain as a strategy and monitored as per that? How many become business as usual for government departments? Or how many, noting the creation of the Department of Education, Children and Youth, that are also pursuing their own reform and strategic policy pieces, that it is into that next iteration of policy development.

But we'll absolutely take your concerns into note and I'll have a conversation with the secretaries of both DECYP and Health to ask how will they continue to report in terms of the outcomes of the programs that have been set up under the strategy.

**Ms WEBB** - Thank you, I appreciate that, particularly the indicators that have been there.

**Ms MORGAN-WICKS** - Thank you. Noted.

**CHAIR** - Mr Hiscutt has a question.

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**Mr HISCUTT** - Thank you. Premier, in relation to the key deliverable youth participation and engagement, \$35,000 next year, I understand it. I'm wondering what the participation was, to participate in what? I'm not sure if I'm reading it correctly in that is youth participation across government community or it is the understanding of youth participation across government community? If you could give me an explanation on it then I might have a follow-up question.

**Mr ROCKLIFF** - Yes, sure. It surrounds increasing employment opportunities for young Tasmanians and supporting the employment of young people in the Tasmanian State Service enables a workforce that is both the right size and shape to deliver services to the Tasmanian community, but also a workforce with a balanced age profile.

**Mr HISCUTT** - So it is workforce participation.

**Mr ROCKLIFF** - Yes, and ensuring that vital skills and knowledge are transferred and renewed, supporting a continuous pipeline of talent of young people, of course, which is enormous, and also future career options as well when it comes to this particular matter. As of interest, 30 June 2025, there were 5397 people under the age of 30 working in the Tasmanian State Service, compared to 5219 at the same time last year. So it is a 14.4 per cent increase. Actually, it probably wouldn't be that much. This represents an increase. I'll get those figures for you. But that is important, and the growth is encouraging, and we know there's more to be done. So that is good.

**Mr HISCUTT** - I am happy with the answer.

**Mr ROCKLIFF** - Of course we've also made commitments to supporting youth employment in the Tasmanian State Service, et cetera. I've just also been informed as well, notwithstanding the importance of youth engagement and workforce participation and getting more young people into the employment areas within the State Service, but also an organisation that may well have come across your interactions, no doubt, would be YNOT which does a very good job, and that particular line item, was it \$35,000?

**Mr HISCUTT** - Yes.

**Mr ROCKLIFF** - Refers to support to that organisation, YNOT, which is a youth representative organisation.

**Mr HISCUTT** - Thank you.

**Ms WEBB** - Which stands for Youth Network of Tasmania.

**Mr HISCUTT** - Follow on from that, an area of public service is also elected representatives. Is there any commitment or any funding in the Budget for encouraging youth to stand for local government or parliament sector, something that I've tried to encourage in my area in the past.

**Mr ROCKLIFF** - That's a very good and noble cause. Of course, we have our youth parliament here, which is very good and encourages youth from across the state to participate within the Chamber of the House of Assembly, which is always very good and good, strong

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debates there. So confidence in the future of Tasmania, given the participation, at least what I see in the youth area.

Local government, it is a question for them in terms of encouragement, but we more broadly, we all have a responsibility, in my view, Mr Hiscutt, as we go out and about to encourage people to put their hand up for various roles within local government, irrespective of their political colour, of course.

The Premier's Youth Advisory Council is also an area that the Department of Premier and Cabinet supports, and that gives a direct mechanism to advise government on issues affecting children and young people. It currently has 24 young people aged between 12 and 25, and they are appointed for two terms in a staggered basis. The Premier, the Minister for Children and Youth and the CEO of the Youth Network of Tasmania - YNOT, I mentioned before - are standing members. It meets or attempts to meet some three times a year in person with additional out-of-session meetings as required.

There's another youth engagement meeting with MPs, meeting with ministers, et cetera, which provides for an opportunity to discuss a range of issues affecting youth from their perspective, education system, equity and access, neurodiversity awareness and classroom engagements being discussed, transport access for rural students and barriers to learning, to drive, bus services, mentoring programs. They're terrific topics for discussion which is very valuable to the minister for Education and me. Proposed national social media regulation, including minimum age settings, we've discussed. Youth justice reform, including diversion, protective factors, and youth engagement strategies as well, pertaining to your question as well. That is a very valuable forum as well.

**Mr HISCUTT** - Thank you for the answer.

**CHAIR** - Thank you, Premier, and realistically, with it almost being 10.30, it is probably a good time to take a break. If we could stop the broadcast, please, and if we could return just a couple of minutes before 10.45.

**Mr ROCKLIFF** - Thank you, Chair.

**The Committee suspended from 10.27 a.m. to 10.44 a.m.**

**CHAIR** - Thank you, Premier, for the answer to your questions. We still have a couple more questions on 1.2, Ms Webb.

**Ms WEBB** - Thank you, Chair. I do have other opportunities to scrutinise this area, I'll just focus on a couple of questions. One relates to the updating on the implementation of commission of inquiry recommendations, and we have the quarterly report through to 31 October with that update.

**Mr ROCKLIFF** - Released last Friday, I believe, yes.

**Ms WEBB** - Yes. I'm just wanting to get you, if you will, to confirm that, in terms of any recommendations in that where there's a delay indicated in implementation, can you confirm that those delays in any instances have occurred because of current funding cuts or constraints, or vacancy control measures, or any of those budget considerations?

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**Mr ROCKLIFF** - Kath, would you like to speak to that, please?

**Ms MORGAN-WICKS** - I can confirm that the delays are not due to a budget cut or constraint within, for example, I think, DECYP probably has a large number of the recommendations that have moved in time, certainly because those budget efficiency dividends, for example, I am advised, have been quarantined from those particular areas: for example, out-of-home care, the closure and transition of Ashley Youth Detention Centre to the Pontville site, et cetera. In fact, budget funding has increased in those areas.

In terms of the budget and the way in which we've been managing the COI budget, from a central point in the DPAC team, we actually do monitor expenditure per allocation in COI. Certainly, where there's been under-expenditure, we have reprofiled particular amounts, for example, or shifted it, for example, providing additional funding into victim-survivor support services in a particular year, but that's often meant that funding has then been reinserted into an outer year, et cetera.

We're looking at, and we always knew and we did our absolute best effort when we received the 191 recommendations. We did our original estimates in terms of the budget, which then achieved, I think, slightly over the \$400 million in terms of the allocation in the 2024-25 Budget, but as we get deeper into the implementation, as we do the design and the planning work, we will keep coming back in terms of budget committee.

I know that there are recommendations in there, for example, as we shift out to the 2026 and 2029 recommendations, where we will be having a conversation about the forward budget and increases that might be required. At the moment, these delays - there are recommendations that actually have moved forward. We've moved forward some recommendations from 2029.

Each and every one, we've sat down with Robert Benjamin to discuss those reasons, and it's absolutely on the focus on getting it right and making sure that the quality is right, and that we're not just trying to tick something off quickly and not doing it properly, and also to try to make sure that we have integration.

These recommendations aren't able to be delivered on their own. Many are integrated and require foundational work before we can fully complete. We're absolutely, as a DPAC-coordinating centre, working very closely with our departments to make sure that they are responding to each and every recommendation.

**Ms WEBB** - I appreciate that confirmation. Thank you. In terms of the central work that's being done still within DPAC, just to check in that they're still a central unit under your responsibility, Premier, and the head of the State Service that is responsible for the investigation and progressing of relevant ED5 matters, some of which have been very ongoing. That's still sitting with DPAC and under your purview in that sense?

**Mr ROCKLIFF** - Yes.

**Ms MORGAN-WICKS** - Yes.

**Ms WEBB** - Okay. I won't delve into that in much detail, but I do want to check in about the ones that people are often quite interested in, which is the very long-term, ongoing

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investigations of suspended state servants in this area, some of which are now pushing out beyond 1800 days on full pay.

What I note when I look at the updates that are provided as part of routine disclosures on the DPAC site, the note that sits at the bottom of the current update, page 13, in relation to some of these very long-duration suspensions on full pay, and it's note B which talks about the fact that there are nine ED5 processes that have been ongoing for these very extended periods, and they've been subject to additional allegations requiring further investigation.

My concern is does that indicate to us that, if new allegations come to light on these particular individuals who are currently being investigated under ED5 protocols, that is just going to keep pushing this out further and further? Or is there not a point at which you can complete the current matters that are being investigated, regardless of any new ones that crop up, and come to at least an assessment of the ones that have been in place there for a long time as allegations? What is this process? Can it just keep getting kicked down the road?

**Mr ROCKLIFF** - Thank you for the question.

**Ms MORGAN-WICKS** - Thank you. Noting that we have our Shared Capability and Investigations Unit that is set up and is dedicated within DPAC to manage those serious matters of misconduct, at the moment that unit is focusing on the long-term suspension matters involving Ashley Youth Detention Centre.

That unit is very grateful for the assistance of Regina Weiss, an esteemed barrister who has been appointed to speak to victim-survivors and members of the public that have come forward with information that is relevant to those matters.

In relation to the number of complaints, if I can just reflect, many of these long suspension matters have multiple complainants that have now come forward to speak. It is quite difficult, because it's absolutely challenging for people to come forward to share their stories and their complaint in relation to a person. They don't do it all at a single point in time. They often will hear of someone else who has come forward and then choose to share that information.

With each approach, we're obviously handling that in a trauma-informed matter, which might mean that it takes several meetings to actually receive the full story that they wish to tell. For example, in one matter that we're currently handling, I would not identify any person, but it now involves 28 complainants: 28 complainant statements over 45 allegations of breach was mentioned in the Ashley class action, has had national redress claims and civil claims, but is also taking several steps in the Tasmanian Industrial Commission in relation to each action that we take. These are very complex matters. We are absolutely - and in absolute fairness to employees that are involved, making sure that they have the information in relation to the allegations that have been made.

I absolutely get the line-in-the-sand comment. I review, as head of the State Service, every single matter in this unit on a monthly basis and push in terms of, 'Is there sufficient evidence for a decision-maker to make a decision in relation to the allegations against the employee?' We are absolutely pushing, and I hope to have many of these matters finalised in the next couple of months.

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**Ms WEBB** - Thank you for that update. I appreciate it. It's certainly concerning. If there's ongoing allegations coming forward, it's concerning in and of itself, but it's also helpful ultimately if we can have accountability, if there's accountability that's required.

**Ms MORGAN-WICKS** - If I can be clear, ongoing allegations against employees that are suspended, so not in the workplace.

**Ms WEBB** - Yes, thank you.

**CHAIR** - Thank you.

**Ms WEBB** - Happy to move on, if you want to.

### 1.3 Security and emergency management.

**CHAIR** - Yes, if we could. We can always come back to these areas if we have more time. If there's no further questions from members on 1.2, I'll move on to 1.3: Security and emergency management.

Premier, if I could ask you, regarding the severe weather event in the north of the state in September 2024, has there been any review into the effectiveness of the emergency response? If so, what worked well and what challenges were encountered?

**Mr ROCKLIFF** - Thank you very much for the question. I touched on it very briefly yesterday, albeit not directly as per your question. What I did say yesterday was how well our agency responded to - and across government - to requests for assistance.

The number of grants that were processed very quickly to ensure that people had funds within their bank accounts, particularly with the loss of food and those matters, and I'll just quickly touch on that again.

Regarding the Disaster Ready Fund, which is a partnership of the Australian government, we've secured \$7.6 million in new Australian funding in round two to support the delivery of new projects.

Pertaining to your question, we have delivered grants to 34 local government projects as part of the evacuation resources project, the physical assets needed for evacuation recovery centres, of course, during the storms in late last year which you refer to and widespread power outages.

We also provided funding to support communities including over 750 emergency assistance grants to households, 13,700 emergency food grants, over 2300 temporary living support payments and almost 50 grants to support households replace or repair household items.

To your question, Chair, and you'd be well aware of the unique circumstances of that time and your patch and I understand the great interest that you have around this, and it was uniquely challenging in terms of the large number of adverse weather events in Tasmania requiring TasNetworks to respond to what is unprecedented storm damage. At its peak, the

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major outage affected around 47,000 customers who were left simultaneously without power across almost 230 individual outages.

Now, \$20 million was spent in storm recovery efforts, impacting budget across the year and contributing to an \$8.2 million after tax profit result for business. Major improvements were implemented across the entire business following the 24 storm review recommendations, the results of which Tasmanians could all see in the TasNetworks' swift and effective response.

The more recent storms we experienced at the start of October this year, and I have the Department of Premier and Cabinet Resilience and Recovery Tasmania highlights for the financial year 2024 which I will also table.

**CHAIR** - Thank you.

**Mr ROCKLIFF** - Despite the impact of the storms, TasNetworks reduced its operating expenses by 3 per cent during the 2024-25, and has an increase in investment in vegetation management. They did a tremendous job when it comes to addressing those important matters. There was a review undertaken following that storm event which I believe we have released. Have we got that at hand anywhere? I know it's publicly available. It's on the website.

**CHAIR** - It's on the website.

**Mr ROCKLIFF** - It's on the ReCFIT website, as I understand it. Thank you.

**CHAIR** - Thank you. One further question. In the Budget papers, and I notice it's not really a footnote, but there is a comment, 'The decrease in total expenditures also reflects the profile of national partnership commitments for the Disaster Ready Fund,' because there is a significant decrease, and I think 2024-25, \$24.379 million, till 2028-29, \$2.737 million. So just asking, are the reductions in expenses over the forward Estimates an indication of reduced scope or activity under this output? If so, what activities or programs are affected?

**Mr ROCKLIFF** - We will support Tasmanians when they need support, so there's no matters to be concerned of there. We have very much appreciated the Australian Government partnership when it comes to their support in these matters, and of course, we reach a threshold to have that support. A total of eight projects will receive funding across Tasmania as part of round three of the Australian Government's flagship Disaster Ready Fund, helping to make the state more resilient to natural hazards.

Tasmanian communities will be more resilient to increasingly frequent and severe weather events, and with that \$9.71 million to be invested in projects that will enhance hazard mapping, develop planning tools, conduct flood modelling and analysis, reduce fire risk through land management practises and improve emergency response intelligence.

Of course our communications network with which we've invested some up to \$700 million or more over the TasGRN, which hasn't been highlighted as such a significant investment as it should, but that's been a massive investment, which of course can improve our emergency response to Tasmanians.

We will work and respond as we need to for all Tasmanian disasters and we need to, Chair, because the fact is that we - as predicted in our modelling - we will have more bushfires

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and more floods as we move forward, and, you know, more of those type of events, fires more recently and -

**CHAIR** - Events. Thank you.

**Mr ROCKLIFF** - But you will remember the floods of 2011, 2016 and 2022 as an example.

**CHAIR** - Right. Thank you, Premier. You have one, Ms Webb?

**Ms WEBB** - Yes, thank you. Premier, can you confirm that the Resilience and Recovery Tasmania's focus is mainly on what's referred to as 'natural disasters', of fires and floods that we've just been talking about there and those one-off disastrous events, because they are usually characterised by having a specific impact time duration and in a particular recovery time duration. I'm wondering about - because we've recently had to contend with, of course, the COVID-19 pandemic which was disastrous in its own way for our community. We were in an official emergency declaration of official emergency for over a year. I'm wondering what evaluations of that form of longer-term ongoing disaster and its impacts have been undertaken and incorporated into our forward planning here.

**Mr ROCKLIFF** - More broadly, Resilience and Recovery Tasmania is an emergency management centre of excellence for the Tasmanian government. It is located within the Department of Premier and Cabinet to coordinate a whole of government and strategic approach to your question of security and emergency management. Coordinating disaster, recovery support and delivers security uplift emergency management communications, disaster risk reduction and resilience activities. I've got information around TasALERT recovery security and the like. I'm just not quite understanding your question fully.

**Ms WEBB** - So emergency management relating to the sorts of emergencies that aren't floods and fires but are like COVID-19 and still have that massive - like we're in a state of emergency that's declared and for an extended period of time under COVID, and where's the planning and the forward planning of that, and where does responsibility sit and what's being done in that space?

**Mr ROCKLIFF** - Yes. We can speak of national security, counter terrorism and critical infrastructure as well within those areas, and our department's leading a substantial whole-of-government program to continually uplift security and resilience across the state. Our departments work program highlights some of the measures we are taking to safeguard our interests. We're now in our third year of implementing Tasmania's protective security policy framework, as an example, which establishes best practice whole-of-government protective security standards.

Agencies have strengthened security governance and my department continues to drive key initiatives such as: information classification project to support whole-of-government implementation, working on critical infrastructure onus through the Critical Infrastructure Resilience Forum Tasmania to drive industry and government collaboration, building resilience to all hazards and preparing us all to effectively respond to threats, and we're also regularly engaging with national security partners and other states and territories to maintain awareness of emerging security threats and trends, collaborate across jurisdictions and ensure a nationally consistent approach.

**Ms WEBB** - I think we're probably talking at cross purposes. It's okay. Perhaps there isn't a crossover into this space around the sorts of emergencies or disasters that I was speaking about like our COVID pandemic state of emergency.

**Ms MORGAN-WICKS** - Through the Premier, the team is also working on the Tasmanian Disaster Resilience Strategy, which is picking up the lessons learned from COVID. That's being led by Resilience and Recovery Tasmania within DPAC.

**Ms WEBB** - Thank you.

## **OUTPUT GROUP 2**

### **Government System Support**

#### **2.1 Support Services for Government, Ministerial Parliamentary Offices and office of the Governor**

**CHAIR** - Thank you. If there are no other questions in this area, we will go to 2.1, Support Services for Government, Ministerial Parliamentary Offices and Office of the Governor. Mr Gaffney.

**Mr GAFFNEY** - Thank you. Premier, to me, this is a nuts-and-bolts sort of line item, but there is a little bit of an explanation there about the decrease between 2026-27 to 2027-28. Perhaps you'd like to put that on the record of that support there why there's a change there.

**Mr ROCKLIFF** - Thanks, Mr Gaffney. I'll just get some information regarding that for you. My advice is it's a reduction in ministerial advisers.

**Mr GAFFNEY** - That's a good thing. However, I would like to ask the second question there. It does say in this group the Efficiency and Productivity Unit is also funded through this output. Could you just explain what that is and how much is that funding in that output? What does that mean? What do they do?

**Mr ROCKLIFF** - The Efficiency and Productivity Unit is there and designed to look across the whole of government for exactly that: efficiencies and more productivity. We've also set up a portal, which requests of public servants across the State Service to also feed in ideas in terms of where they can see efficiencies themselves. We've had some good feedback, particularly, as I understand it, from a number of people.

As 16 November, there have been 245 responses to the survey, putting forward 432 suggestions to improve the efficiency and productivity of the State Service. The majority of respondents, as I was leading to, were frontline workers, such as teachers, doctors, nurses, police officers, rangers, customer service officers.

Employees from the Department of Health have provided the most responses, some almost 30 per cent, followed by the Department of Natural Resources and Environment. The theme of responses to date as follows: in the area of digital data and technology, internal processes, policy and regulation, procurement and resources, staff health and well-being, and workforce culture. Kath, would you like to talk more about the unit?

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**Ms MORGAN-WICKS** - I was going to provide, through you, Premier, some further examples.

**Mr ROCKLIFF** - Yes, okay. Sorry.

**Ms MORGAN-WICKS** - I'm sorry. Examples of the feedback that has been received by going out to our staff to ask them to identify matters of efficiency and productivity: for example, the vehicle fleet, which is currently managed by individual business units rather than a pool of fleet vehicles per site, meaning significant inefficiencies with fleet utilisation so suggested as an area to look at; opportunities for AI to streamline routine work processes, and in the voice of the person submitting, 'I can think of some regulatory processes that could be made more efficient through the use of AI', is what has come in to us; review delegations to ensure that straightforward issues can be dealt with at a lower level and avoid bottlenecks in approval chains; and procurement and resources, such as efficiencies in purchasing, contracts, or use of assets and resources; investment in systems for departmental human resource and payroll management, which is actually being achieved through HRIS and People Central.

**Mr GAFFNEY** - That seems like a great initiative. Just a couple of questions there: when you say a 'unit', is that a group of people, or something comes in and that gets pushed out to the relevant department to investigate or look at? How does that function?

**Ms MORGAN-WICKS** - The EP Unit will actually be analysing each of the responses and trying to gather them in terms of the highest value and most return, I suppose, in terms of a department having a look at the prioritisation and lists. EPU won't just funnel out the items that individually come in direct to departments to then add to their workload. We'll be working in a strategic way, but that is not the only source obviously for EPU in terms of the work program that they will undertake.

**Mr GAFFNEY** - Another couple of quick questions: how long has the portal been in place? How long have you been using that sort of system?

**Mr ROCKLIFF** - Just a couple of weeks.

**Ms MORGAN-WICKS** - Since Budget day.

**Mr ROCKLIFF** - Budget day.

**Mr GAFFNEY** - It's been efficient so far?

**Mr ROCKLIFF** - I'm pleased with the response. It was designed to engage people across the State Service who know like no other where we can provide more efficiencies. The 432 suggestions and 245 -

**Mr GAFFNEY** - In a couple of weeks.

**Mr ROCKLIFF** - Yes.

**Ms MORGAN-WICKS** - In a couple of weeks.

**Mr GAFFNEY** - That's awesome.

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**Mr ROCKLIFF** - As of 16 November.

**Mr GAFFNEY** - Was that designed inhouse, or did you have to get that from somewhere else, the portal?

**Mr ROCKLIFF** - Inhouse.

**Mr GAFFNEY** - That's terrific.

**Mr ROCKLIFF** - It's very efficient.

**Mr GAFFNEY** - I hope the portal will be used in other organisations. It would be very good.

**Ms WEBB** - Mr Gaffney's interested in portals in other areas.

**Mr GAFFNEY** - Thank you. That's good.

**CHAIR** - Mr Edmunds has a question.

**Mr EDMUNDS** - Thank you. With the suggestion around AI, what sort of work do you see that could be done or tasks?

**Mr ROCKLIFF** - That's a very good question, and we're working through that now. I touched on it very briefly yesterday, Mr Edmunds, in terms of the opportunity. I'll come to that in a moment, but I have to say, increasingly so.

I refer to when the federal minister, Katy Gallagher, recently speaking about the use of AI in the Australian public service and the desire of the government to see it widely taken up. The federal minister said to take hold of the opportunities that AI presents, and there are enormous opportunities. There are also some learnings and there are some cautions as well we need to be very mindful of, but for Tasmania, too, in fact, surveys have found the real productivity benefits saving up an hour a day in some cases.

During the year, work was completed on the national AI assurance framework, and our government has published guidelines for responsible AI use, developed a future policy roadmap, as well as contributing to ongoing national AI regulation discussions.

In terms of digitisation, we now have 132,000 customers with a myService digital account with Service Tasmania, we have over 90,000 TasALERT users on the new app, and we have 7500 network users across our Tasmanian Government Radio Network. The project has won a major national award, and Tasmania's the only jurisdictional globally with all emergency services on a single platform.

I've mentioned Human Resources Information System earlier today, and Justice Connect is focusing on a major digital transformation of the state's justice system. We've got eCabinet, and we're also working on a Fisheries digital transition project as well.

**Mr EDMUNDS** - Yes, the specific tasks. That's what I'm interested in.

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**Ms MORGAN-WICKS** - It's probably also to make the point that AI is pretty much being used by every single person every day. The minute you do a Google search, it's providing you already with an AI-generated summary of most of the representations on search results.

For the public service, we absolutely do need to embrace AI but to do in a safe way and to do it in a transparent way and to have that open conversation with our staff. There's the head of the State Service. That's probably where I'm trying to lean forward in terms of a positive sense towards that.

In conversations with our interstate colleagues, there are many, many examples of work under way in other states and territories in terms of the use. We've got the Victorian government, for example, cutting red tape and reducing waste in public process by digitising forms and using AI to triage responses received via digital forms. We've got Queensland that has QChat, for example, a generative AI tool to assist with everyday tools, such as the drafting of documents, with other states implementing similar tools.

In New South Wales, for example, I know also from our experiences in reviewing the LA fires, the rural fire service in New South Wales is using an AI system called Athena to predict bushfire behaviour, and that's something that we've recently had a briefing in relation to that prediction and what was used and is being developed out of the LA fire example from our own fire service. For example, within our own Department of Premier and Cabinet, we are working with a local vendor to trial the use of an internal AI tool, certainly to help in terms of efficiencies and administrative, and also policy development, when significant numbers of submissions, for example, are received, and to try to receive a near immediate review of those submissions, but in an internal and safely secure tool, certainly that is assisting us.

It doesn't always take away, however, the human effort, and teams backing up and pulling out various submissions, et cetera, but to give you the quick sense of where something may be heading so that someone can continue to work on that policy development at the same time as a human and manual process of reviewing submissions. That's the benefit of that tool.

From our perspective, we absolutely want to see the positive and safe use and expansion of AI to develop and deliver a better service for Tasmanians.

**Mr EDMUNDS** - I'll ask a specific question because I had something put to me that specifically in terms of policy development, this was done through AI and then submitted to OPC. Is that correct?

**CHAIR** - I think Hansard probably needs to - the TasInsure?

**Mr EDMUNDS** - Sorry. The TasInsure policy was done via AI and then put through OPC and then ended up in that document. Is that correct? Is that the beginning of this process that you just talked about with policy development?

**Mr ROCKLIFF** - The policy was done during the election.

**CHAIR** - Thank you, Premier. We have a follow-up question from Mr Hiscutt.

**Mr HISCUTT** - Thank you. Just following up on the use of AI, and I take a little bit of issue. I know that's the common language that's used, but it's a lot more probably automation

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and technology than it is actual artificial intelligence, and language is important. What strategies is the government taking to mitigate the risks of misinformation within that?

I mean, there's plenty of times where I've searched something on Google, and the AI has told me something that is clearly not right because it's of a technical nature, and also the security risks that might come from using technologies that are outside of government control. If you're asking it to review all these submissions or something like that, that it's not then providing information that shouldn't be public to a system that may not be on government service. So both those questions.

**Ms MORGAN-WICKS** - Through the Premier, that was through an internal secure AI tool. We certainly wouldn't be putting it into the public domain.

**Mr HISCUTT** - So developed, yes.

**Ms MORGAN-WICKS** - So we absolutely take the treatment of all submissions through to a government process in a secure and safe way.

**Mr HISCUTT** - Thank you. And the triaging to make sure the accuracy of that, is that something that's reviewed?

**Ms MORGAN-WICKS** - Through the Premier, yes, absolutely. That's why it's about actually piloting the use of the AI tools against both a manual - so human-reading process to read 8000 submissions that may be received with tight deadlines in terms of preparing the response against the accuracy of what an internal and secure AI tool can produce.

**Mr HISCUTT** - I get concerned, obviously, and the statement is a caution of things like the Robodebt and things like that that are done by automation that have caused lots of problems in the past. So it's just a cautionary tale, I guess.

**Mr ROCKLIFF** - You're very right to ask us a very good question. We do have the Guidance for the Use of Artificial Intelligence in the Tasmanian Government. It was released in September last year. I believe it's online, but it highlights the importance of your question.

**Mr HISCUTT** - Thank you.

**CHAIR** - Would you like to table it, perhaps? Are you able to table that document?

**Mr ROCKLIFF** - Yes.

**Ms MORGAN-WICKS** - Through the Premier, I think, and also with respect to the Robodebt example, there were of fundamental human decision-making failures that have been discovered through a review of that in allowing that automated tool to continue.

**CHAIR** - Thank you. Ms Webb, do you have a question?

**Ms WEBB** - It was going to be about whether there's a set of guidelines available that's in a public domain for people to be able to see what is guiding the use of AI and automated technology in the government.

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**CHAIR** - So that's been answered.

**Ms WEBB** - The existence of this document that's just been tabled, how often is that updated given the fast-moving pace of this technology space?

**Mr ROCKLIFF** - That's a good question. The latest date, September last year. I'm not sure how often, but -

**Ms MORGAN-WICKS** - Through the Premier, I'd pretty much say I'd be happy to guarantee it's under regular review in terms of our - and particularly given our own digital services unit that sits within DPAC.

**Ms WEBB** - Then underneath that guideline, is there a set of policies that all state servants must be aware of and able to be implementing in their roles when it comes to the use of AI?

**Ms MORGAN-WICKS** - Through the Premier, the guidelines are the guidelines at the moment. This is an evolving space, and, really, we are giving that indication of our intention to lean into it, and I expect furthermore detailed guidelines to roll out.

**Ms WEBB** - Thank you. Can I just add one follow up one to the earlier questions?

**CHAIR** - Question? Because we are -

**Ms WEBB** - It's a quick one. It may have been answered and I missed it when Mr Gaffney was asking about the EPU. Is there a specified amount that's being spent on the EPU this financial year and over the forward Estimates? Has that been detailed?

**Mr ROCKLIFF** - That was a question from Mr Gaffney. It was.

**Ms WEBB** - Sorry. Then I will go back and look.

**Mr ROCKLIFF** - But we can - no, no. I didn't answer it. I don't know if we answered the question.

**Ms WEBB** - You mentioned it was in the Budget, in this line item, but I wanted a break-out amount.

**Mr ROCKLIFF** - Yes, \$1.5 million in the 2025-26 year and \$1.5 million in the 2026-27 year.

**Ms WEBB** - Across the two years, thank you.

**Mr ROCKLIFF** - Yes, three in total, I believe.

**CHAIR** - Thank you. Mr Edmunds has a quick question.

**Mr EDMUNDS** - Thank you. I misspoke before. I didn't mean the policy. I meant when you were doing the draft bill. Was the draft bill developed using AI?

**Mr ROCKLIFF** - The draft bill was developed by OPC.

**Mr EDMUNDS** - But before it got to OPC, had it gone through AI?

**Mr ROCKLIFF** - It was worked up in a number of areas. Possibly.

**Mr EDMUNDS** - Thank you.

**CHAIR** - Thank you. Thank you, premier.

## **2.2 Principal and Subordinate Legislation**

**CHAIR** - Mr Hiscutt.

**Mr HISCUTT** - As we're speaking about OPC, given the government's important commitment to enable the Independent members more access to OPC into the future, I wanted to confirm that there's sufficient funding available for that potential increased usage of that service? The budget doesn't show any particular upticks.

**Mr ROCKLIFF** - That's our understanding. The challenge we have with OPC is the access to drafters nationwide. There's a shortage, I understand.

**Ms MORGAN-WICKS** - Through the Premier, as advised by OPC, they currently have seven legislative drafters and four administration officers. They advise it takes approximately seven years to train a legislative drafter to be able to work on moderately complex legislation with minimal supervision. They currently have three vacancies from entry-level drafters to more experienced drafters, and so that is a continual recruitment effort to try to attract legislative drafters, but it's not impacted by any budget concern there. It's trying to get the best people.

**Mr HISCUTT** - Do you know how long those positions have been vacant for?

**Ms MORGAN-WICKS** - I don't know that, but I could inquire with OPC.

**Mr HISCUTT** - Yes, if you wouldn't mind taking that on notice.

I noticed a small dip in 2027-28 in the Budget on page 214. I wanted to see if there was any explanation of why there's nothing in the notes regarding that line item to describe that, and I wanted to know why it would go down for a year before going back up when most other items steadily increase.

**Mr ROCKLIFF** - Thank you for the question, Mr Hiscutt. I'll provide the answer for you. Thank you.

**Ms MORGAN-WICKS** - Sorry. I'm just looking. It looks like about \$28,000.

**Mr HISCUTT** - Yes. It's not large. Normally they trend a particular way. So I wanted to know if there was an explanation.

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**Ms MORGAN-WICKS** - That might be something that Shane can speak to on the 27th pay.

**Mr GREGORY** - Through the Premier, the year before the dip, there's 27 pays, and then the following year, there's 26.

**Mr HISCUTT** - Yes. I thought I'd seen that previously.

**Ms MORGAN-WICKS** - Yes, and that's a Treasury phenomenon in - well, no. I shouldn't say it's a Treasury phenomenon. My Treasury colleagues won't be happy, but they plan for the 27th pay, which occurs -

**Mr HISCUTT** - I thought that occurred in the 2025-26 year because it'd be the end of -

**Mr GREGORY** - It can happen in different years. It depends on when they pay weeks fall.

**Mr HISCUTT** - So across different departments, might be different. Yes, okay. Maybe that's the issue, then.

**Mr GREGORY** - Yes, you could even have - if different departments are on different pay weeks, you could even have -

**Ms MORGAN-WICKS** - And they accrue in readiness for the 27th pay and then budget for it.

**Mr ROCKLIFF** - Yes, that's all right. In lots of other areas it's been on the 2025-26 line items and uptick, but this one must be on the 2026-27. So understood. Thank you.

**CHAIR** - Thank you.

**Mr HISCUTT** - I don't have any further questions.

**CHAIR** - If it's quick, yes.

**Ms WEBB** - Yes, it's a quick follow-up on the OPC questions. I wanted to check in with you, Premier, about the key principle when there's drafting work being done by OPC on behalf of MPs, non-government MPs, that that work is understood to be confidential, as in legal advice, essentially, between the drafter and the member. I was recently made aware of an amendment I was having drafted which was seen by a relevant government minister's office before I had approved and finalised it. Given that recent experience, can you clarify that the policy position from your government, when non-government MPs are accessing OPC, that that is confidential legal work being done for the MP?

**Mr ROCKLIFF** - To the best of my knowledge, yes.

**Ms WEBB** - Thank you.

### **2.3 State Service Employment and Management**

**CHAIR** - Thank you. We will now move on to item 2.3, State Service Employment and Management, and Mr Edmunds.

**Mr EDMUNDS** - Thank you, Chair. I know we're starting to run out of time, so I'll be pretty to the point. Who came up with 3 per cent global wage offer? Where did that come from?

**Mr ROCKLIFF** - Where did it come from? We have a public service - what's the full name?

**Ms MORGAN-WICKS** - The Public Service Industrial Relations Committee.

**Mr ROCKLIFF** - Yes, and they provide recommendations. It then becomes government policy, should they be accepted. But ultimately, Cabinet makes those calls.

**Mr EDMUNDS** - And who forms that committee? Where is it drawn from?

**Mr ROCKLIFF** - It's drawn from members of the public service and members of Cabinet.

**Mr EDMUNDS** - Okay. Then, if that was the offer, why does the budget assume 2.5 per cent wage growth?

**Mr ROCKLIFF** - That's a standard matter for budgets, 2.5 per cent, as I understand it. But the offer is, of course, 3 per cent and that's to allow us the time to sit down with industrial advocates and unions, of course, to work through a longer term agreement.

**Mr EDMUNDS** - You did mention before about the reduction in numbers across advisers, but in terms of pay, does this 3 per cent or 2.5 per cent apply to ministerial advisers, or has it applied?

**Mr ROCKLIFF** - My understanding - I'll seek some advice on that. It hasn't applied. My advice, it is determined the same as SES.

**CHAIR** - If I could ask a question, Premier, and you've probably noticed recently there's been some media with regard to a healthy pay for executives recently in our local newspapers, so it would appear that some agencies have had significant salary increases at secretary level, Health, State Growth, and while I accept that many executives do take pay cuts to work in Tasmania, these increases appear to be well above State Service wage increases. What processes are in place to ensure that the most senior executives in agencies are paid fairly, but also in a manner that's consistent with community expectations and the increases or offers that are made to the general public sector employees?

**Mr ROCKLIFF** - Thank you, Chair. Mercer Consulting Australia was engaged to undertake a review and make recommendations regarding the current head of agency remuneration framework. Due to the value of the contract, details of the procurement and contract were published on the government's tender website in May 2023.

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Mercer Consulting has provided an initial review report. The review does not make recommendations regarding the remuneration paid to individual heads of agencies. The review was initiated to incorporate all heads of agencies, including state authorities, into the remuneration framework. Is there any further advice there, Kathrine?

**Ms MORGAN-WICKS** - Through the Premier, in terms of salary increases for heads of agencies, it's a decision of the Premier as employer and that the salary increases that have applied are the same as the SES, which has been the same as PSUWA, so consistent with state servants.

**CHAIR** - Thank you. Do we have any further questions?

**Ms WEBB** - Yes, I've got questions in this area.

**CHAIR** - Ms Webb.

**Ms WEBB** - Thank you. Premier, I'm interested to discuss some matters arising regarding the recent Talking Point opinion piece published in the *Mercury* on 11 October this year by Coordinator-General, Mr John Perry. As you'd be well aware, an apolitical State Service is key to a fully functioning Westminster parliamentary system. It's crucial to maintain public confidence in our systems of robust governance.

I'm aware that the Coordinator-General stated at a recent PAC hearing that he took the initiative to undertake some private and non-requested work on the proposed AFL Stadium, and he then sought permission to submit it for publication in the newspaper. I believe that's an accurate description of what he's put on the public record. My understanding is that the Coordinator-General is a head of agency in terms of a level and that as a result of that, it's you under the State Service Code of Conduct that would deal with complaints regarding a head of agency.

In light of the sensitivities regarding the risk of the perception of politicising the State Service, when he came to you with that request, did you seek advice from the State Service Management Office or anyone else regarding the appropriateness of a head of agency publishing an apparently personal opinion piece specifically germane to current government policy?

**Mr ROCKLIFF** - Well, of course, it's his job to attract investment. I mean, this is the Coordinator-General's job. I thought his work was a very good analysis in terms of adding over 206,000 commercial nights in Greater Hobart, particularly off-peak periods, expecting to attract 104,000 interstate and overseas visitors and up to 184,000 intrastate visitors.

**Ms WEBB** - My question isn't about the content of the report, and I'm deliberately not engaging in the content. My question under this line item is about State Service management and about the politicisation of the public -

**Mr ROCKLIFF** - There's no politicisation here.

**Ms WEBB** - Was the work done at the request of government as part of the work of his agency?

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**Mr ROCKLIFF** - Well, his job, the Coordinator-General's job, is to attract investment and this is a key investment of enabling infrastructure for the state. I would expect the Coordinator-General to be out there advocating for Tasmania, particularly if the enabling infrastructure -

**Ms WEBB** - Was he asked by your government to do this analysis?

**Mr ROCKLIFF** - I didn't ask him to do the work, no. No.

**Ms WEBB** - He stated that he'd undertaken it in a personal capacity, which does risk politicisation. We only have to understand that by presenting ourselves with a counterfactual. If a head of agency decided to personally analyse a key government policy and come up with, for example, a critical result from that analysis and wish to publish it as a personal opinion piece, that wouldn't be seen as appropriate by your government or approved by your government, I would assume. So in this case, why was a personal opinion piece by a head of a state agency allowed to go through? Are you confirming that you didn't get advice on this?

**Mr ROCKLIFF** - I got a briefing from the Coordinator-General on this matter, but I didn't ask him to do the work.

**Ms WEBB** - No, no. Not from the Coordinator-General. You didn't get advice from the State Service Management Office or your head of State Service on the appropriateness of a head of agency putting a personal opinion piece in the media germane to a key government policy that wasn't official government work done in his agency on that policy?

**Mr ROCKLIFF** - No.

**Ms WEBB** - Thank you for confirming that. Did you give permission in writing.

**Mr ROCKLIFF** - But his job is to attract investment. I mean, that's what we expect the Coordinator-General to do.

**Ms WEBB** - Well, the head of Treasury's job is probably to make sure that our finances are in good shape, but if he went and did a piece of personal analysis that was critical of government policy or direction -

**Mr ROCKLIFF** - The head of Treasury has briefed the crossbench of the situation in an open and transparent manner, Ms Webb.

**CHAIR** - Let's get back to our questions.

**Ms WEBB** - Sorry, I didn't catch that.

**Mr ROCKLIFF** - The head of Treasury has briefed the crossbench and others, no doubt, on -

**Ms WEBB** - It's the job of a head of agency, is it not, to promote government policy in the execution of their duties, not to hold a personal political opinion or put that into the public domain. Is that not the case?

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**Mr ROCKLIFF** - No, I believe that the Coordinator-General has acted appropriately because his job is to attract investment.

**Ms WEBB** - But he wasn't acting in his role, was he, when he put this opinion piece in the paper? He said he was acting in a personal capacity.

**Mr ROCKLIFF** - If that's what he said, that's what he said.

**Ms WEBB** - So therefore that breaches the State Service Code of Conduct.

**Mr ROCKLIFF** - Well, not in my view.

**Ms WEBB** - It's not your view that it breaches the State Service Code of Conduct for a head of agency to put a personal view into the public domain?

**Mr ROCKLIFF** - The Coordinator-General's job is to attract investment into Tasmania.

**CHAIR** - Yes.

**Ms WEBB** - Thank you. I have one final specific question on this then. In terms of the permission he sought on his evidence to PAC from minister Abetz and from yourself about publishing his personal opinion piece, did you provide permission in writing? Was there a written exchange in relation to that permission?

**Mr ROCKLIFF** - Not to my knowledge, no. I can't recall that, no.

**Ms WEBB** - Again, so nothing documented about a head of agency wanting to put a personal opinion piece into the media about a key government contentious policy?

**Mr ROCKLIFF** - No.

**CHAIR** - The Premier has answered the question.

**Ms WEBB** - That's fine. I want that very clearly on the record, Chair. Would never be allowed in the national service.

**CHAIR** - Thank you. One quick question through you, Premier, and possibly to Ms Morgan-Wicks, with regard to public service numbers and another media noticing that public service numbers rose despite job cut goals, and noticing that Brand Tasmania was one of the fastest growing. Brand Tasmania is coming up later. Can you give us an indication of how that is actually progressing? I noticed that by - was it 2032, looking to cut about 2500 workers?

**Mr ROCKLIFF** - By 2032, 2800 numbers. 2800.

**CHAIR** - Well, the media's probably wrong.

**Mr ROCKLIFF** - No, that's okay. The figure was 2500 for some time and it's now 2800 by 2032.

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**CHAIR** - Thank you. If I could have an update as to how that's progressing?

**Mr ROCKLIFF** - Sure. Kath?

**Ms MORGAN-WICKS** - Through the Premier, and I should note since the announcement of the non-essential freeze from, I think, around 12 March or the beginning of March this year there has actually been a slowing in the growth of the public service. So you are absolutely right, Chair, in terms of pointing out that from 30 June 2024 to 30 June 2025 there was actually a 3.3 per cent increase in paid headcount and a 3.6 per cent increase in paid FTE in the Tasmanian State Service. But the growth was actually much higher between June 2024 and March with the announcement of that freeze. So we had some 2.6 per cent of the growth for paid headcount, 2.7 for paid FTE, in that first period of the financial year.

From 12 March to 5 November growth has slowed, and it's to 1.4 per cent. So we are seeing the impact of that in terms of paid headcount, 1.2 per cent in terms of FTE. And if we only look since 30 June this year, we are down to 0.7 per cent, so 0.7 per cent growth in paid headcount and 0.4 per cent in paid FTE.

We have been working very closely with agency heads in relation to their management of headcount and paid FTE within their agencies. I spoke a little to this yesterday at the end of the session, that we do actually have some significant separation levels across agencies. For example, within 2024-25, we are running attrition rates of between 7 per cent and 15 per cent across our large departments. Some 7 per cent in DECYP, for example, or 743 separations; Health at 10.4 per cent or 1384 FTE; DPFEM at 11 per cent; and Justice at 15.3 per cent.

In adding up and looking at those separations, this does equate to close to 3000 separations this financial year or, sorry, the 2024-25 financial year. What we are encouraging each head is to look at each separation carefully. I'm not saying that all those 3000 could not be replaced, but to ask the question.

**CHAIR** - Yes, to assess it carefully.

**Ms MORGAN-WICKS** - It is much easier to make a decision in relation to a job that a person has resigned from or retired from than to be looking at, for example, targeted or voluntary redundancies, et cetera. So it's to look at that and try to manage, particularly through natural attrition, as closely as we can.

**CHAIR** - All right, thank you. Thank you, Premier. If there are no further questions?

**Ms WEBB** - Just one short one.

**CHAIR** - One quick one?

**Ms WEBB** - Yes, it is relating to the Woolcott review and the government response. Just quickly, and we don't need to go into a long commentary on the Woolcott review in it. Government response, will you be responding to part A and part B separately, or are we having to wait for a government response until after part B comes to light?

**Mr ROCKLIFF** - I think it's a good question. We're expecting part B towards the end of the year, is that right?

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**Ms WEBB** - In December, is my understanding.

**Mr ROCKLIFF** - December, yes. And yes, so the nature of part A and part B and the interrelated recommendations, we will most likely have a response covering both parts.

**Ms WEBB** - Thank you.

## OUTPUT GROUP 3

### Community and Government Service Delivery

#### 3.2 Management and Ongoing Development of Services

**CHAIR** - Thank you. If we move on now to 3.2, Management and Ongoing Development of Service Tasmania. I have a quick question with regard to Service Tasmania. We're talking about AI and I noticed that many online and digital services have become with Service Tasmania. Are they still having all their services actually able for people to walk into Service Tasmania or are many of their services now only online? Can someone basically, without computer skills, walk into Service Tasmania and conduct any of their business, or are some aspects only online?

**Mr ROCKLIFF** - Thank you for the question. First, can I quickly shout out to the great work of Service Tasmania? We have face-to-face services at 27 centres. We have phone services and we have services available online and now through the digital portal and app.

Today customers can access over 500 services over the counter, over the phone or online. Just to give you a picture of that, in the year to June 2025 there were over 1 million customer inquiries, in person or by phone; over 132,000 unique myServiceTas accounts created; and over 122,000 transactions completed. As well as paying your bills, new services continue to be added to the range of digital options since we've established the new portal. Of course, we've already added fire permits, and in 2024-25 Service Tasmania formed a Community Grants and Programs Unit so they can now manage Seniors and Companion Cards, the Veterans' Wellbeing Voucher Program, and the Tasmanian Concessions and Discount Guide and Community Grants. They also swiftly deliver emergency assistance grants in times of disaster and recovery, and we've spoken about that as well.

For your information, soon they'll be able to handle the temporary upgrade permit for short-term heavy vehicle registration. They'll be able to connect through to the Marine and Safety Tasmania portal for boat licensing registration and moorings. They'll be able to process digital renewals for the registration to work with vulnerable people. And Face ID will be introduced to the MyServiceTas app. I have a Service Tasmania key highlights document which I can table as well.

**CHAIR** - Thank you, Premier. One last question with regard to Service Tasmania. What measures are in place to ensure the security and the safety of customer's personal and payment information online? Obviously there's a lot of information held. What measures have we got in place to ensure that safety?

**Mr ROCKLIFF** - Perhaps if Noelene -

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**Ms MORGAN-WICKS** - Through the Premier, just to note in relation to your previous question, Chair. So all the services that the state provides are available in person, is my understanding, over the counter.

**CHAIR** - Are available in person? Right, good.

**Ms MORGAN-WICKS** - For example, the Commonwealth services that we actually provide are a desktop computer and assistance to customers to be able to access Commonwealth services in ServiceTas. They might not be able to do those transactions over our ServiceTas counter, but we provide that facility and assistance.

**CHAIR** - Thank you. No, access there. I appreciate that, thank you.

**Mr ROCKLIFF** - Thank you, Noelene Kelly.

**Ms KELLY** - Thank you, Premier. With MyServiceTas and the MyServiceTas portal, it links into the existing major systems of the government agencies. For example, the motor registry system, so we don't actually keep specific information around customers and that sort of thing.

**CHAIR** - So it's all secure?

**Ms KELLY** - Yes, absolutely.

**CHAIR** - Thank you, Premier.

**Ms WEBB** - Can I have a quick follow-up on something that was mentioned there about opportunity or an upcoming option for facial ID identification through ServiceTasmania?

**Mr ROCKLIFF** - For the app. Yes, ServiceTas app.

**Ms WEBB** - For the app. Is that going to be via people's phones with their facial ID things that they have on that for their phones already, or is it a system we're having separately and utilising, for example, the information we collect in relation to driver's licences on biometrics and facial ID?

**Mr ROCKLIFF** - Thank you for the question. Noelene.

**Ms KELLY** - Through you, Premier. The facial recognition is specifically in relation to renewals for working with vulnerable people and the process will be - so an individual's photo is included within the working with vulnerable people system, and in terms of the renewals, the customer will take a photo and it will be sent through to the system to do an immediate check, and as soon as that check's done, the photo will be discarded. So there's no storing at that point of the individual's face other than the official photo, if you like, that's included in the working with vulnerable people system.

**Ms WEBB** - Interesting.

**Ms KELLY** - That's a piece of new technology that we're putting in as we speak in preparation for - I think there's about 50,000 renewals for working with vulnerable people that

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needs to occur in the next 12 months or so. That's a process that's being put in place to assist with that.

**Ms WEBB** - Is that being used in lieu of providing identity documents of some sort to prove your identity to renew?

**Ms KELLY** - So there's still the option if people want to come in through a ServiceTasmania shop and do it that way, but this is to provide an alternative option.

**Ms WEBB** - To confirm identity?

**Ms KELLY** - Sorry, yes.

**Ms WEBB** - Right. Thank you.

**CHAIR** - Mr Hiscutt had a quick question.

**Mr HISCUTT** - Thank you. There was a lot of discussion in local government about co-location of ServiceTas within local government buildings.

**Mr ROCKLIFF** - Yes.

**Mr HISCUTT** - Obviously a lot of people go to pay their rates at ServiceTas and go to pay their fines at the local council and get confused. Has there been any update on where that is progressing? Is there any movement in that area or is that something that's sort of off the table at the moment?

**Mr ROCKLIFF** - Thank you. It's a very good question. In my local patch, of course, the Paranal Centre in Devonport contains a very good ServiceTas, which incorporates the local government staff, as well as many other areas of service delivery, including the local Devonport library.

**Ms MORGAN-WICKS** - Beaconsfield.

**Mr ROCKLIFF** - Beaconsfield and further afield.

**Ms MORGAN-WICKS** - Through you, Premier. We have four sites co-located with councils: Beaconsfield, Oatlands, Devonport and the King Island Council. We also take services on behalf of six of the 29 councils, so: Devonport Council, Dorset Council, George Town, Kentish, Meander Valley and Northern Midlands Council.

**Mr HISCUTT** - Is there a program to pursue that further or is that just on a case-by-case basis?

**Mr ROCKLIFF** - I would like to see it progress further, Mr Hiscutt, because it provides efficiencies for, not only the teams of staff of course and the IT and the infrastructure and all those matters, but also efficiency for the customers, most importantly.

**Ms MORGAN-WICKS** - Through the Premier, we also have co-location with libraries, in different areas. Where it might be an option due to potentially the age of a local government

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building or not having sufficient space to accommodate a Service Tasmania. In George Town, for example, if I'm correct in remembering when I visited, it's co-located together with a library and also a child and family learning centre, noting that families are coming in and they can also avail themselves of opportunity for a Service Tasmania transaction at the same time.

**Mr HISCUTT** - To answer the question though, although there's a want to do that, there's no policy objective to do that. It'll only be on a transfer case basis.

**Mr ROCKLIFF** - There's the policy objective to support it and encourage it and it'll be done wherever applicable. There might be different arrangements in local government. They might, you know, change some infrastructure or go to a different location or -

**Mr HISCUTT** - I won't find it in here.

**Mr ROCKLIFF** - Probably not in there.

**Mr HISCUTT** - That's fine.

**Ms MORGAN-WICKS** - Through the Premier, we regularly also evaluate the quality and standard of our accommodation for Service Tasmania. They're very proud of the upgrades that they've actually been undertaking across many of our shopfronts, but it really would, in terms of a policy, we don't want to move from an upgraded site that's to security and safety standards, for example, given the management of cash, and also at times some customers' behaviours that need to be carefully monitored, to a council site that might not have as safe an accommodation that could be offered. But we always, in terms of looking for more efficient and better customer offering, we would look at local government sites.

**Mr HISCUTT** - Thank you for answering the question. I appreciate it.

**CHAIR** - Thank you. Do we have any questions on capital investment program, members? No. We will then move on to Ministerial and Parliamentary Support, 1.1 Support for Ministers and Certain Parliamentary Office Holders. Mr Edmunds.

### **DIVISION 7**

#### **Ministerial and Parliamentary Support**

#### **OUTPUT GROUP 1**

#### **Support for Members of Parliament**

**Mr EDMUNDS** - Thank you, Chair. You talked about the vacancy control applying to ministerial offices. I'm interested if that also applied to the comms office?

**Mr ROCKLIFF** - Applies to, yes.

**Mr EDMUNDS** - Yes. Great. In years past, through I think this forum, you've tabled the breakdown of who's in each ministerial office and the band they're on. I'm wondering if you could take on notice and potentially provide that to the committee.

**Mr ROCKLIFF** - Take it on notice. Thank you, Mr Edmunds.

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**Mr EDMUNDS** - Thank you very much.

**Mr ROCKLIFF** - Is it on the website, is it? The 30 September, I understand, it was uploaded on the DPAC website.

**Mr EDMUNDS** - Is that a quarterly disclosure?

**Mr ROCKLIFF** - It is a six-monthly.

**Mr EDMUNDS** - Thank you. Appreciate it. Are you able to confirm all non-government MPs' staff and resource levels have been maintained at last year's levels?

**Mr ROCKLIFF** - I will seek some advice on that.

**Mr EDMUNDS** - I understand we've had some changes in who's a non-government MP.

**Mr ROCKLIFF** - My advice is yes.

**Mr EDMUNDS** - Yes. Have any MPs or parties been provided with additional staffing or resources?

**Mr ROCKLIFF** - My advice to that question, Mr Edmunds, is that the Labor Party and the Greens Party get a party loading.

**Mr EDMUNDS** - As in since last year?

**Mr ROCKLIFF** - Yes, last year as well.

**Mr EDMUNDS** - Okay. So in terms of crossbench MPs, et cetera, their staffing is the same as it was?

**Ms WEBB** - Crossbench Independent MPs - are you asking about consistency there; is that what you're asking about?

**Mr EDMUNDS** - No, I'm just asking whether it was the same as last year moving forward to this year?

**Mr ROCKLIFF** - My advice is yes.

**Mr EDMUNDS** - Yes. I'm sure others may wish to ask about the - the member for Nelson's got some questions.

**Ms WEBB** - I thought you were just clarifying that downstairs they had consistent funding across the crossbench MPs who are Independent.

**CHAIR** - Thank you.

**Mr ROCKLIFF** - Which they do, I understand. Yes. Thank you.

**CHAIR** - Any further questions in this area?

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**Mr EDMUNDS** - Not on that one, no.

**Ms WEBB** - Yes, I do have one to follow on. It is in relation, as Mr Edmunds just alluded to, one that we've discussed previously, Premier, in relation to equitable approaches to resourcing across the two Chambers, particularly in terms of Independent members. Can you confirm that you are committed to progressing an equitable arrangement of resourcing across the Chambers to support a strong and effective parliament and the capacity to represent electorates in both Chambers.

**Mr ROCKLIFF** - I want to ensure that every MP has the resources that they need to support MPs doing their job. And I understand, following the recent state Budget, the Treasurer has written to the President and Speaker of both Houses and advised of a range of Budget commitments in the financial year. In regard to staffing, I understand that the Treasurer has written to the Legislative Council confirming an additional \$3 million across the Budget and forward Estimates to support additional staff for electorate officers.

I also wrote to members in September last year and advised them of the additional funding providing for each member to receive funding for one-and-a-half full-time equivalent staff in their electorate offices. There was a further \$1.2 million across the Budget and forward Estimates to meet increased demand arising from the expansion of the House of Assembly.

**Ms WEBB** - Yes. So that still leaves upper House Independents with less resourcing than lower House crossbench Independents. One-and-a-half - well, it's one electorate officer at FTE, plus the \$50,000 provided in this financial year, and I believe next financial year. I'm not sure if it's actually across the two, which is not equitable.

**Mr ROCKLIFF** - We need to probably further these conversations. I know there's a matter in terms of different size of electorates, which is also probably factored in to why, historically, that is.

**CHAIR** - I'm not sure about that, but I'm not going to comment but -

**Ms WEBB** - Let's be clear, lower House electorates are served by seven members each, so while the electorate is bigger, there are seven representatives for that electorate. Upper House electorates are about a third the size and have one elected representative to support them.

**Mr ROCKLIFF** - That's why I said the history. Of course, the size of electorates are, you know, MPs to get around -

**CHAIR** - Perhaps this is something we can have a discussion with the Premier at some stage, perhaps a separate meeting.

**Ms WEBB** - Indeed. Do you -

**Mr ROCKLIFF** - Look, I want MPs to get what they need to service their constituents. I've always believed in that. I actually took and take the lead from former premier, Paul Lennon, who in 2006 provided provide a substantial increase of resources to individual MPs to support them doing their jobs. I thought that was a very good initiative at the time, and I believe he expressed at the time, as I've expressed, that MPs need to have the resources to be able to support their constituents. After all, that's why they're there.

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**CHAIR** - Thank you, Premier. Happy to move on, Ms Webb, and perhaps, as I said, we can organise a meeting at some stage.

**Ms WEBB** - That's okay, those meetings are ongoing, thank you.

**CHAIR** - Yes, they are. Obviously.

**Ms WEBB** - It's just about public record here, Chair, that is I'm asking it in this forum as well as in private meetings, so that there's accountability in the public domain.

### 1.2 Support for Members of the House of Assembly

**CHAIR** - No, that's fine. Certainly accept that, thank you. So 1.2, Support for Members of the House of Assembly. Mr Hiscutt.

**Mr HISCUTT** - Yes, I've sort of kept quiet, because this is, I think, where that's probably more appropriate - the questions. Again, to have on record, what is the total number of staff allocated to non-ministers in each area of parliament, i.e. minor parties, Independents and micro-parties?

**Mr ROCKLIFF** - I will take that on notice, Mr Hiscutt. I thank you very much for the question and I can table that later on.

**CHAIR** - Thank you, Premier.

**Mr HISCUTT** - Thank you for that. Just noticing, sorry, I've lost track because the subject changed, the budgetary line item remains relatively consistent and is explained as to why it is like that with the slight uptick each year as you'd expect. However -

**Mr ROCKLIFF** - Which line? Sorry, I missed it.

**Mr HISCUTT** - Sorry, the support for members of House of Assembly that we're talking about on page 146 of the Budget.

**Mr ROCKLIFF** - Yes, thank you. Yes.

**Mr HISCUTT** - I note in other line items explanations it talks about the current year being higher because of changes to the fit-outs and new members due to the election, understandably. However, I would expect that there would be an election in the 2028-29 forwards and don't see an uptick in that line item for what would presumably be another round of new electorate offices and leasing arrangements and things like that. Have we accounted for -

**Mr ROCKLIFF** - Yes, I believe, Mr Hiscutt, some of those uplift figures, and I stand to be corrected, we're still working through the expansion of the House of Assembly, bearing in mind in 2024 election was the election when we did expand the House of Assembly from 25 to 35. We're still working through that now.

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There wouldn't need to be that uplift because all 35 members would have offices. Just thinking aloud, if members are replaced through that election, then members would go into that office, relevant offices certainly initially anyway.

**Mr HISCUTT** - Less uptick required than in obviously that financial year.

**Mr ROCKLIFF** - That is my explanation.

**Mr HISCUTT** - Thank you for the clarification. No further questions on that one.

**Mr ROCKLIFF** - Yes.

**CHAIR** - Thank you.

### **DIVISION 6**

#### **Office of the Governor**

### **OUTPUT GROUP 1**

#### **The Office of the Governor**

#### **1.1 Support for the Governor**

**CHAIR** - Anyone else have questions? No. We're moving on to support for the Governor. 1.1, Mr Gaffney.

**Mr GAFFNEY** - Yes, because Brand Tasmanian is coming up, I don't think we need to have any questions on this. It seems straightforward, so keep moving on.

**CHAIR** - Thank you.

**Ms WEBB** - Except the roof needs replacing, apparently.

**Mr GAFFNEY** - The roof needs replacing, yes.

**Ms WEBB** - The Governor's roof.

**Mr ROCKLIFF** - Yes, that's in hand.

**Mr HISCUTT** - It's an expensive roof.

**Ms WEBB** - Excellent. In this Budget or -

**Mr ROCKLIFF** - In the last Budget, I believe.

**Ms WEBB** - Ongoing.

**Mr ROCKLIFF** - Yes.

**DIVISION 1**  
**Brand Tasmania**

**OUTPUT GROUP 1**  
**Brand Tasmania**

**1.1 Brand Tasmania**

**CHAIR** - Thank you, Premier. We now move on to Brand Tasmania, 1.1.

**Mr ROCKLIFF** - Yes and we might invite Jess Radford to the table, please.

**CHAIR** - Thank you.

**Mr ROCKLIFF** - Welcome, Jess, and thanks very much for the role that you play in Brand Tasmania and following on from Todd Babiak, we appreciate that, but we appreciate your very good work as well.

I was able to outline to the House of Assembly committee just yesterday the very good partnership between the Department of Health and Brand Tasmania when it comes to recruitment of overseas professionals, of which there's been considerable success because of the work of Brand Tasmania and indeed the Department of Health working together.

**CHAIR** - Thank you, Mr Premier. Could I ask does Brand Tasmania track or benchmark Tasmanian exports such as wine, honey, seafood and fruit, among others? Is data available to show links between the work being done by Brand Tasmania and Tasmanian exports?

**Mr ROCKLIFF** - When it comes to measuring sentiment and research, including public sector cultural project, Brand Tasmania Sentiment and Measurement Program tracks perceptions of Tasmania and audience intent, aligned to strategic goals in trade, to your question, tourism, workforce and population growth, investment attraction and international education.

National and local research confirms that the core strengths of the Tasmanian brand have remained consistent over the past five years, however, new challenges and opportunities have emerged offering fresh ways to leverage our unique identity.

Tasmania's value proposition has local, national and global relevance. We will continue to connect efforts across tourism, exports, to your question, talent, attraction, investment and education, anchored, of course, in the lived experience of Tasmanians and what it means to belong here.

I know that the Department of State Growth has all those exact figures for you when it comes to trade. But you would know in the trade shows, wherever they may be across the globe, that very distinct and unique Tasmanian brand, being the black reverse block branding, which Jess has her badge on and so it's very, very distinguishable not only with the Australian brand but also other brands across the nation as well but, Jess, would you like to add some thoughts?

**Ms RADFORD** - Thank you. The Premier's pointed out the information that Trade Tasmania publishes on its website which is quite comprehensive across sectors. We're actually

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have just started a producer a census on relating to the value of Brand Tasmania and the Tasmanian brand. That commenced last Thursday, so we'll be sharing those results with our partners and broadly with the community early in the new year but already starting to see a really pleasing uptake from our producers, big and small, in participating in that producer census.

You might notice on social media that a lot of our partners in tourism, advanced manufacturing, the TCCI, Smaller chambers around the state are going to be promoting that through their networks as well. I encourage you to talk to your constituents about participating in that for us too.

**CHAIR** - Thank you. Members, questions? I have some more questions, but I was seeing if other members had questions.

**Mr ROCKLIFF** - Can I just -

**CHAIR** - Yes, Premier.

**Mr ROCKLIFF** - A matter that I raised before Jess got to the table around the Department of Health and Brand Tasmania collaboration on a project aimed at attracting health professionals to Tasmania. We've had pilot programs in mental health and oral health have shown promising results, especially with recruits from the UK, graduates from New Zealand, of course, delivering a strong return on investment, but also the face-to-face engagement at international job fairs.

The UK, Ireland, Canada and New Zealand have played a vital role in humanising the recruitment process and supporting the long-term goal of relocating professionals to Tasmania, but when it comes to Brand Tasmania, their presence is well-received at all events. Our state was consistently recognised as offering a unique and attractive proposition, a connected community with strong professional support, enviable lifestyle and meaningful career in healthcare.

Just quickly, across all six fairs, over 1100 prospective candidates were engaged with more than 300 highly interested leads, adding to our international talent register, and pleasingly, 83 per cent of those that joined the talent register expressed strong intent to relocate to Tasmania. We've got here, since April 2024, 1095 staff members have relocated from interstate and overseas, underscoring that these national and international campaigns have had a significant effect. There was an area, Jess, that I was aware of in terms of Brand Tasmania's award and recognition internationally.

**Ms RADFORD** - Through you, Premier. We were recently shortlisted for a City Nation Place best economic development strategy for our talent attraction program that we did with the Department of Health, which was a wonderful recognition for such a pilot project. We did also receive two international awards last year, if I'm allowed to have a quick moment to humbly brag about them.

**Mr ROCKLIFF** - Yes.

**Ms RADFORD** - Our Little Tasmanian project won the kind of best storytelling project through the Place Brand Observer's Place Brand Impact Awards, and our Tasmanian Youth

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Story project won the best citizen engagement strategy globally at the City Nation Place Awards, which was extremely exciting. Actually, just a nod to Tourism Tasmania, who also picked up the best tourism communication strategy for its Come Down for Air campaign as well.

**CHAIR** - Thank you, Premier. Mr Gaffney has a question.

**Mr GAFFNEY** - Thank you, Premier, don't take this as a negative, but I want to ask you, and perhaps through Jess. Congratulations on those awards and recognition. I want to know whether, because of the *Spirit* situation worldwide - we have to be upfront and honest about this, whether that situation has affected brand name Tasmania, not so much Brand Tasmania, but Tasmania's - you know, we've had feedback and comment from international and national people about that unfortunate measurement of the size of the ship and the port.

I want to know have you had any feedback - I think it's a realistic question. Has that impacted on our brand internationally about the way Tasmania does business? That's probably through you, Premier.

**Mr ROCKLIFF** - Look, not to my knowledge, and it's important that we acknowledge the challenges but always be positive in what the ships will bring. Where I can say there needed to be some stronger collaboration, and that is between Brand Tasmania and Tourism Tasmania and TT-Line, which hasn't been evidenced in the past. There is stronger collaboration now and that lack of willingness to collaborate has not been at the fault of Tourism Tasmania or Brand Tasmania.

**Mr GAFFNEY** - Is there a discussion, the thought about how to get that out there through brand tourism and the boats or when the ships come online and are sailing, to do some sort of marketing campaign and say look what can be achieved in Tasmania, there have been setbacks, that sort of thing.

I think within that, are there any forward projections about when the ships come on board, whether Brand Tasmania, Tourism Tasmania and the government are going to get together to put out some big PR stuff up there, and do you have to allow funding for that to occur on an international scale?

**Mr ROCKLIFF** - We would be able to do that within Brand Tasmania and within the Tourism Tasmania marketing. That's a very good suggestion, and we'll need to demonstrate that. It's an exciting time, and there'll be the leverage off when those two ships come on board. Certainly central, Mr Gaffney, to the Brand Tasmania story indeed is overcoming challenges and resilience in adversity, of which this is one example.

**CHAIR** - Premier, we do have two more quick questions, and we have seven minutes.

**Mr ROCKLIFF** - Jess would like to -

**CHAIR** - Very quickly.

**Ms RADFORD** - Through you, Premier. There's other ways we can promote Tasmania that actually don't cost us any money, and we're excited to explore those. We've been providing advice and informal support to a German documentary crew who are in Tasmania at the

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moment. They're filming a two-part documentary series on Tasmania. This is the German public broadcaster, NDR. This will be broadcast, sorry, in France, Germany, Austria, and Switzerland in May 2026. It's an audience of about 190 million people who will have a fantastic exposure to Tasmania, and all we've had to provide is some introductions to people. They're out with Rob Pennicott today filming around Tasman Island and Wineglass Bay, and they will be covering the whole state across the next month.

**Mr GAFFNEY** - Excellent. That's wonderful.

**Mr ROCKLIFF** - That's a great example of the enormous cut-through in terms of millions of people and Tasmania's exposure there, but also the reverse trade missions are also very, very good when you have the customers coming to the actual marketplace and being immersed in Tasmania and those types of things have also proved very, very productive.

**CHAIR** - Thank you. Ms Webb.

**Ms WEBB** - Do you want to go with yours, Chair?

**CHAIR** - No, I'll leave mine.

**Ms WEBB** - Thank you. Premier, Brand Tasmania's first strategic plan, the 2025 to 2030 - I've got this noted down incorrectly, I think. Anyway, the first strategic plan states our brand is more than a logo, but it's also a key asset to the Tasmanian community, a key asset. One of the things I'm wondering about, given that the objective there in the strategic plan is to nurture, enhance, and promote the Tasmanian brand as a shared public asset, has there been any work done to quantify the current value of Tasmania's brand to our economy domestically, and also to leverage access to international markets?

**Mr ROCKLIFF** - Thank you. Jess, would you like to speak of that?

**Ms RADFORD** - Yes. Through you, Premier. To follow on from my earlier point, we have that work happening at the moment. We felt that with the release of the new 2025 to 2030 strategy, it was the right time to really drive into that valuation piece. That will look at both the value of Brand Tasmania as a public sector agency and the work that we provide to Tasmanians, as well as the value of the Tasmanian brand which will be limited to key sectors.

**Ms WEBB** - Right. Is there a description of that work on your website at the moment?

**Ms RADFORD** - One of them has just started, so no, we haven't put a description up, and the other one is being commissioned as we speak.

**Ms WEBB** - Okay. Thank you.

**CHAIR** - Mr Hiscutt.

**Mr HISCUTT** - A quick question, particularly on the finances. On page 20 of Budget paper 2, in the statement of comprehensive income, table 2.4, it marks the supplies and consumables dropping by nearly 60 per cent over the forward Estimates, and I wanted to see what the strategy was going to be taken to - that's a remarkable -

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**Ms WEBB** - No more badges, maybe.

**Mr HISCUTT** - No more badges. I note, for example, in education, it goes down by 0.3 per cent, and this is going down by 60 per cent as a comparison. What drove that number? Happy to take it on notice, given the time.

**Mr ROCKLIFF** - Thank you very much. That's a good question. We'll take that on notice and provide an answer for you.

**CHAIR** - Thank you. The time being 12.13pm, any last really -

**Ms WEBB** - You could squeeze this one in just in two minutes.

**CHAIR** - Go on. Yes.

**Ms WEBB** - Go on. In the strategic plan, it does include details of the intention to embed ongoing research and evaluation as core strategy components. Is there a description anywhere or can you provide us with information about how that's going to be embedded and what we will expect to be able to see then in terms of accountability around that evaluation?

**Mr ROCKLIFF** - Jess, sorry. Yes.

**Ms RADFORD** - Through you, Premier. We're building an impact and evaluation framework at the moment, as well as a community engagement framework. We've already built quite a comprehensive internal dashboard to monitor our KPIs and impact, and I think the results of that you'll see improved reporting throughout annual reports each year and then over time as we can grow that through our toolkit resources that we can produce for our partners and share updates on our work.

**Ms WEBB** - Thank you. Then in terms of the risk that's mentioned there, brand risk and business risk, I'm interested in the brand risk and how that potential brand risk for our state is being identified and analysed and managed?

**Mr ROCKLIFF** - Good question. Thank you.

**Ms RADFORD** - Through you, Premier. We have annual joint board and audit committee meetings to dive deeply into those issues, and we've also strengthened the board in the last year by bringing some key government partners on to really improve the amount of information shared around particular issues.

**Ms WEBB** - I'm not asking about business risk to Brand Tasmania, because you identify in the strategy business risk to Brand Tasmania as one thing, brand risk for Tasmania as a different thing. How is that described and quantified and analysed?

**Ms RADFORD** - Through you, Premier. As I explained, we have annual joint board and audit committee meetings to discuss this and identify issues as they're arising, and the appointments to the board have also been designed to strengthen the monitoring of brand risk throughout the year.

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**Ms WEBB** - Okay. Does that get reported in your annual report then, what's identified and how that's responded to or communicated out?

**Ms RADFORD** - Through you, Premier. Actually, probably more through our sentiment research, which is publicly available on our website through our toolkit for all members of the community to download. We're very open in sharing the findings of our research, which includes issues like brand risk and opportunity as well.

**Ms WEBB** - I'm more interested in how you'd report on how your board and the audit committee have assessed to be brand risks in an ongoing way and how that's reported, and then what mitigations or actions or communications as a result of that. Is that reported on?

**Mr ROCKLIFF** - How about we take that on notice?

**Ms WEBB** - All right.

**CHAIR** - I think that'd be best. With the time being 12.15pm, if you could put that on notice, member.

**Ms WEBB** - Sure.

**CHAIR** - It's probably going to have quite a lengthy answer.

Thank you very much, Premier, for you and your team for being here this morning. Very much appreciate the time that you've actually given and the answers you've provided.

**Mr ROCKLIFF** - Thank you very much.

**CHAIR** - We'll also provide you with a list of the questions to be taken on notice.

**Mr ROCKLIFF** - Thank you very much, Chair. Thank you, Deputy Chair. Thank you, members, for your scrutiny. I thank the Department of Premier and Cabinet for all the preparation that's gone into today and yesterday.

**CHAIR** - Thank you very much. If we could stop the broadcast, please.

**The Committee suspended from 12.16 p.m.**