

UNCORRECTED PROOF ISSUE

Thursday 6 June 2019 - Estimates Committee B (Barnett)

HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY

ESTIMATES COMMITTEE B

Thursday 6 June 2019

MEMBERS

Dr Broad
Mr O'Byrne
Mrs Rylah (Chair)
Mr Tucker (Deputy Chair)
Dr Woodruff

SUBSTITUTE MEMBERS

Dr Broad
Ms Butler
Ms Dow
Ms O'Connor

IN ATTENDANCE

Hon. Guy Barnett MP, Minister for Primary Industries and Water; Minister for Energy; Minister for Veterans' Affairs

Ministerial Office

Ashley Bastock, Chief of Staff
Laura Richardson, Senior Adviser
Stewart Pedersen, Senior Adviser
Matthew Hochman, Senior Adviser
Vanessa Pinto, Senior Adviser
Adrian Lacey, Senior Adviser

Department of Primary Industries, Parks, Water and Environment

Dr John Whittington, Secretary
Ms Deidre Wilson, Deputy Secretary
Ms Carole Rodger, Acting Deputy Secretary
Mr Adrian Pearce, Manager, Finance
Mr Stuart Fletcher, General Manager, Land Tasmania

UNCORRECTED PROOF ISSUE

Mr Tim Grant, Valuer-General, Land Tasmania, Office of the Valuer-General

Dr Lloyd Klumpp, General Manager, Biosecurity Tasmania

Ms Fionna Bourne, General Manager, Water and Marine Resources

Mr Jason Jacobi, Deputy Secretary, Parks and Wildlife Service

Department of State Growth (Energy)

Kim Evans, Secretary

Gary Swain, Deputy Secretary, Transport Services

Sue Morrison, Acting Executive Director, Energy

Andrew Rayner, Acting Director, Energy Market Development

Department of Communities Tasmania (Veterans' Affairs)

Kate Kent, Deputy Secretary, Communities, Sport and Recreation

Nick Atkins, Acting Manager, Policy and Programs

Scott French, Principal Business Analyst

David Phelan, Senior Coordinator, Executive Coordination and Communication Department

Inland Fisheries Service

Mr John Diggle, Director, Inland Fisheries Service

The Committee met at 9 a.m.

DIVISION 10

(Department of Primary Industries, Parks, Water and Environment)

CHAIR - Welcome everyone to the fourth day of Estimates for Committee B. I welcome the minister, Guy Barnett, to the committee. Minister, would you be kind enough to introduce John to the committee for the benefit of Hansard, including his title.

Mr BARNETT - Thank you very much, Chair. Dr John Whittington, Secretary of the Department.

CHAIR - Thank you very much, minister. The time schedule for Estimates for Primary Industries and Water is four hours. We will take a break at 11.00 a.m., halfway through. Members are familiar with the practice of questions on notice. You must state them, you must put them in writing and the minister must agree, and then the minister will sign them off at the end of the day. Minister, would you like to begin with your overview?

Mr BARNETT - Thank you very much, Chair and members. It is a great honour to be here and I am very pleased to have the opportunity to speak to the budget proposals in and around my portfolio, Primary Industries and Water, of which I am very proud,.

The Budget continues to deliver our Agri-Food Plan for 2018-2023 and our comprehensive framework for growing strong and sustainable agriculture and seafood industries. We are supporting our farmers, our fishers and our rural communities directly in this year's Budget. In this

year's Budget, \$100 million is being invested to continue a range of initiatives to help achieve our target to grow the farmgate value of agriculture to \$10 billion by 2050.

I note that according to the latest statistic, the value of Tasmania's agricultural production increased by more than 9 per cent in the 2017-18 year to just over \$1.6 billion. This is very good news.

We have \$16 million in our Budget supporting industry development across all key agriculture sectors: rural financial counselling, business mentoring, Blundstone scholarships, Tasmanian Women in Agriculture, Rural Youth Tasmania, TFGA's Living Next Door to a Farmer campaign, Agri-Growth liaison officers and the FarmPoint website and helpline. This also includes additional funding for the Tasmanian Institute of Agriculture for agricultural innovation support. Other initiatives include, for example, \$70 million for the Pipeline to Prosperity tranche 3 in addition to the Commonwealth's \$100 million. That is very encouraging. That will deliver the first phase of at least five irrigation projects to proceed while Tasmanian Irrigation continues with the planning for the other proposed schemes.

We are continuing our very popular On-farm Energy and Irrigation Audit and Capital Grants Program and the Tasmanian Irrigation Renewable Energy Project, a very exciting project which I spoke about just two days ago in the northern Midlands.

There is \$3 million to continue investing in Landcare across the state and \$4.8 million for the Weed Action Fund. An amount of \$13.8 million is being invested in initiatives to support our world-class wild catch and farmed seafood sector, including funding for the new Blue Economy Cooperative Research Centre, Analytical Services Tasmania, the East Coast Rock Lobster Translocation Program, the Fisheries Digital Transition Project for efficient fisheries management and quota monitoring, the abalone industry development, the Tasmanian Seafood Industry Council policy support, Shellfish Quality Assurance Program, ShellMAP, and the Oyster and Shellfish Real Time Sensor Monitoring research into sustainable fisheries opportunities through IMAS.

In this year's Budget we have also delivered significant funding to the area of Biosecurity to ensure we have the systems in place to recognise the challenges in being part of the twenty-first century global marketplace. It features an additional \$26 million per year into frontline border security initiatives which include, among other actions, more Biosecurity inspectors doing more inspections of high-risk produce and imported freight and goods, and industry-Biosecurity partnerships and a new tourism biosecurity program. This additional investment will be supported by changes to the partial cost recovery of inspection service fees, and further information will be outlined in a regulatory impact statement to be released for consultation.

Finally, a critical issue for this portfolio in this past year has been our meat processing sector. In summary, the Government secured a two-year agreement for Tasmanian Quality Meats to operate the pork line at the Devonport city abattoir facility after its closure by JBS Swift. Through the Department of State Growth over \$800 000 has already been committed to help smaller processing works build capacity. This is in addition to the \$1 million that we have already committed to the meat industry development over four years from 2018-19. Through the Tasmanian Meat Industry Working Group, made up of industry stakeholders, we have engaged with producers, processors and others throughout the supply chain. The working group's report and the Government's response to the independent feasibility report into processing capacity from Meridian Agriculture was released yesterday. The Government has accepted all 26 findings and recommendations of the Meat Industry Working Group and used this information to inform the long-term strategy for Tasmania's

UNCORRECTED PROOF ISSUE

multimillion-dollar livestock industry. I acknowledge the staff of the Department of Primary Industries, Parks, Water and Environment. They bring expertise and knowledge across a wide range of areas to this portfolio and on a daily basis provide important public services vital in continuing to grow these significant areas. I look forward to taking questions, Madam Chair.

CHAIR - Thank you, minister. Yes, we'll go to Dr Broad.

Dr BROAD - Thank you, Chair. Minister, are we any closer to knowing what killed 16 ponies on the TT Line?

Mr BARNETT - I can advise and confirm what I have shared in parliament and publicly. Through the department, we have done a good deal of work. I'll just give you some details and you have the report. In late January 2018, a total of 16 of 18 horses on a single transport unit were found dead following arrival at Melbourne after a voyage on the Spirit. DPIPWE has advised the animal welfare investigation by Biosecurity Tasmania has been referred to the Office of the Director of Public Prosecutions. I have shared that previously in parliament and advised Biosecurity Tasmania has been engaging with the Office of the Director of Public Prosecutions as appropriate whilst undertaking investigations. After meetings between Biosecurity Tasmania and staff in the office of Director of Public Prosecutions in July and August last year, a preliminary brief was submitted to the Director of Public Prosecutions in August 2018. The department continues to act under advice and in consultation with the Office of the Director of Public Prosecutions. I am not able to provide any further comment on this case until after the Director of Public Prosecutions has decided on how the matter should proceed. The department has provided information to the equine industry the matter appears to be an isolated one, and no ongoing concerns have been identified in relation to the movement of horses or other livestock across Bass Strait in line with animal welfare regulations.

Dr BROAD - So, in that regard you've said there should not be anything to worry about. How can we have those assurances when we have no answer on what actually caused the deaths, or even speculation on what caused the deaths?

Mr BARNETT - Yes. I will clarify. We are in the overview, Madam Chair?

CHAIR - Yes, we are.

Mr BARNETT - So, we're moving to output - yes, so I am clarifying for the committee's sake. If you can bear with me. Your question relates to confidence going forward.

Dr BROAD - Yes, you have said you have informed the industry there's pretty much nothing to worry about and it was an isolated incident. Yet we have absolutely no details on what caused the deaths.

Mr BARNETT - Yes. Of course Biosecurity Tasmania undertakes a range of work to ensure animal welfare guidelines are met and to ensure the law is upheld. With respect to those operational matters I am more than happy to seek the support of the head of Biosecurity Tasmania to better inform the committee to answer that question. If I could introduce him at this time because we have moved from overview into a particular output, but that's fine - we will assist the committee accordingly. At the table is Lloyd Klumpp, head of Biosecurity Tasmania.

CHAIR - Minister, can I clarify we are going to remain in overview?

UNCORRECTED PROOF ISSUE

Mr BARNETT - That's okay. We are trying to assist the committee. Lloyd Klumpp is the head of Biosecurity Tasmania. Lloyd, if you could add to my answer, it would be appreciated.

Dr KLUMP - We have done a lot of work investigating what is actually a legal case, and through that investigation we are very confident - it has been proven by numbers of horses that have been transported on the ferry since - that it is safe to transport horses as long as they are transported legally under the standards in the law.

We are not in a position to comment on the legal case and the investigation itself until the DPP has settled it because it could compromise the legal case.

Dr BROAD - What standards are you referring to when you say as long as they are transported in a standard way, in accordance with the standards? In terms of ventilation?

Dr KLUMPP - There are national livestock land transport standards we have underpinned in Tasmanian legislation.

Dr BROAD - That involves the amount the ventilation and space for horses and so on?

Dr KLUMPP - It involves a range of factors around transport - the density on transports; the provision of adequate ventilation is one the general standards.

Dr BROAD - Have there been any changes to livestock transport as a result of this issue? What changes to livestock transport, if any, have been implemented?

Dr KLUMPP - Through the minister, we have worked with TT-Line to look at their procedures and processes to safeguard any future incidents and make some improvements.

Dr BROAD - Have there been any other incidents on TT-Line?

Dr KLUMPP - There was an incident with a dog. Under our service agreement with the RSPCA, it is a responsibility of the RSPCA to investigate. They did that but unfortunately the report came when there was no ability to collect any sort of evidence about the nature of the death of the dog or the circumstances around it. That investigation was not able to reach any conclusions. However, if that process again - the methods of management of dogs on the ferry - were looked at, the RSPCA and TT-Line would work to understand any sort of improvements that could happen.

Dr BROAD - There have been a number of dog deaths over the years. Have changes been implemented? Are there going to be no ongoing issues, in your opinion?

Dr KLUMPP - Of the ones I am aware of, I think they have all been under very different circumstances. What the RSPCA has done with TT-Line is look at the standards of travel more generally.

I do not know whether they have gone back and looked at each individual case, but they looked at the housing of dogs. The RSPCA has provided TT-Line with advice on things like cage sizes, ventilation, those sorts of things for small animals as well. We are also planning for new vessels, so all of these things will be considered in the design and fit out of the new vessels.

UNCORRECTED PROOF ISSUE

Dr BROAD - Minister, are you concerned about the Ombudsman's report into the RTI requests around the polo ponies? Have any changes to the RTI process been implemented?

Mr BARNETT - The Ombudsman reviewed the RTI decision made by DPIPWE on the request by media outlets for information relating to the pony death investigations. The important thing about RTI is that it is independent and at arm's length. It was assessed by department officers. I am advised that the department is taking the Ombudsman's findings on board. In his decision, the Ombudsman has recognised the sensitive issue of not releasing information that could prejudice the animal investigation underway. I want to emphasise the importance of that during this interaction of not prejudicing any future legal investigation or current legal investigation.

A relatively large amount of information was determined to be exempt under section 13 of the act - that is, information relating to the enforcement of the law. Nevertheless, I discussed this matter with my secretary and asked him to review the circumstances around the matter to ensure the processes are consistent with the proper application of the RTI act. At the same time, the Secretary of DPAC was conducting a procedural review of this matter and liaising with DPIPWE. The Secretary of DPIPWE and the Secretary of DPAC discussed the outcomes of the DPAC procedural review, which the Secretary of DPIPWE also utilised to assist in conducting an internal review I had requested.

Both reviews identified that the communications with the Ombudsman's office is an area for improvement as there was a misunderstanding as to what DPIPWE was required to provide to the Ombudsman. DPIPWE processes in relation to section 19 are consistent with the RTI act. This particular application required careful consideration by DPIPWE and the areas for improvement have been identified. The department's procedures are consistent with the proper application of the RTI act.

Dr BROAD - Minister, was it a concern that the Ombudsman advised the department that a failure to comply with a third direction would, in the Ombudsman's view, constitute an offence which would be referred to the Office of the Director of Public Prosecutions? Are you describing that as a 'misunderstanding'?

Mr BARNETT - I have answered your question. I think the question you have just asked, I have responded to. I can repeat the question and my answer to you, but I have answered that. I am happy for the secretary to outline it in further detail. I have raised it with the secretary. The secretary has raised it with the head of the Department of Premier and Cabinet - as in, the secretary - and I am very confident these unique circumstances have been dealt with. We have responded to that, and we are acting consistently with the proper application of the RTI act.

I will just check if my secretary wants to add anything to that answer, but I think I have answered it pretty comprehensively.

Dr WOODRUFF - Minister, you have made a lot about your salmon industry growth plan, and I know that you have given yourself an A with an internal departmental review of that growth plan. I am struggling to understand, and so are most people in southern Tasmania, what the basis for that review could be, because the evidence in so many areas is that the salmon industry in Tasmania is failing to look after the environment in the massive expansion, and failing to listen to consumers who want to have truth in advertising - failing to listen to the community.

UNCORRECTED PROOF ISSUE

I want to go to the process for the massive expansion into Storm Bay. The Marine Farming Review Panel was your advisory panel, and it was undertaking the assessment of that expansion. It was a sorry saga and ultimately ended in the two best and most expert marine scientists resigning in protest over the process.

Minister, can you explain why one of the most notable submissions to the Marine Farming Branch's review from the Derwent Estuary Program, which was given in the submissions that they made along with hundreds of other people in the review process, was not considered by the Marine Farming Branch to 'create any need for modification' in their statement of opinion of merit? What that means is, in the opinion of the Marine Farming Branch, there was no reason to make any amendment to the proposals by the companies to expand and the activities they were going to undertake. My question is about the fact that the Derwent Estuary Program is the foremost authority on the Derwent, and its submission was utterly dismissed, despite the fact it raised some incredibly important issues that ought to have been addressed by the panel. That is the question. Why was it dismissed? Why was it that nothing needed to be adjusted at all, despite the fact they raised massive issues with water quality, substrates, fauna, marine vegetation, threatened species, environment management?

Mr BARNETT - I will do my best to respond to your comprehensive observations of the salmon industry plan and salmon farming in Tasmania and will then do my best to address at least a number of your questions as it was a very long outline of your views and I will respond accordingly.

With the respect to the observations in regard the salmon industry in Tasmania and to note strong support of the Hodgman Liberal Government for the salmon industry. It creates thousands of jobs across, particularly, rural and regional Tasmania and is a very important part of primary industry sector. In fact, a \$850 million part, the biggest sector of our primary industries. It is much appreciated and is why the Government supports the salmon industry. We have built a salmon industry growth plan and support the industries objectives to achieve a \$2 billion per year growth target by 2030.

I do not accept the allegations you have made with respect to the salmon industry and note on the record your strong criticisms and attack of the industry, but we do not share those views.

Dr WOODRUFF - That is not true we attack.

CHAIR - Order, Dr woodruff you do not have the call.

Mr BARNETT - You asked about the one-year review and want to make it very clear the one-year review -

Dr WOODRUFF - Internal review.

CHAIR - Order.

Mr BARNETT - It was a one-year review we said we would do in an election promise. We have delivered and it is backing the industry. We made it clear we have progressed and implemented our promises. We have made promises, implemented those commitments and promises and it has delivered a whole range of things including a plan with respect to zero tolerance

UNCORRECTED PROOF ISSUE

on marine debris, improved fish health, improved transparency, advancing industry biosecurity planning - which is incredibly important - and increased regulatory compliance and monitoring.

In accordance with the plan, levies on the companies have increased and this has allowed the Government to increase monitoring and compliance activities commensurate of the growth in the sector. Industry is striving to achieve not only compliance, but also world's best practice and we are pleased and think that is really important.

It is a \$835 million part of our economy and we are proud of the support we give it. With respect to Storm Bay, which the particular second part of your observations and question, I make it clear that we are progressing a sustainable and responsible expansion of the marine farming industry in that sector. We acting in accordance within the law, which is the Marine Farm Planning Act of 1995.

Dr WOODRUFF - Why did you disregard the Derwent Estuary?

CHAIR - Order. Dr Woodruff, you had a very long question, please allow the minister -

Mr BARNETT - I am more than happy; you had a very long speech in advance and asked a number of questions at the end. I am trying to address a number of those questions and happy to come back to you to try to answer some further of those questions.

The Marine Farm Planning Review Panel, the statutory body established under the act, has provided detailed reports and recommendations to approve Tassal, Huon Aquaculture and Petuna planning proposals to expand their salmon farming operations in Storm Bay. The proposals for Tassal and Huon Aquaculture were granted in September 2018 by my predecessor. I became minister responsible on the 31 October last year and have recently given planning approval for a third proposal in Storm Bay for tuna.

It has been a rigorous process for all three approvals and included a comprehensive environmental impact statement public submission. I am concluding my answer to Dr Woodruff

Dr WOODRUFF - Slight abuse of the process.

Mr BARNETT - I am making the point. Comprehensive environmental impact statement, public submissions, representations and public hearings and a review by the independent Marine Farm Planning Review Panel resulted in a recommendation that should be respected accordingly. That is how I have acted.

Dr WOODRUFF - Hold on. That was five minutes and no answer. Why did the farming branch completely override the really serious issues that were raised by the Derwent Estuary Program in its submission to the panel? Why did the branch make a decision prior to them going to the panel that they didn't create or merit any need to modify the draft amendment? In other words, the panel had no requirement to look at them.

CHAIR - The minister shall answer the questions as he sees fit, Dr Woodruff.

Mr BARNETT - I appreciate the opportunity to provide an answer. Then I will refer to the Secretary, John Whittington or Fiona Bourne, General Manager, Water and Marine Resources. You are dealing with operational matters. Let me say, I have confidence in the panel. I have met

with the Chair; I have recently reappointed a number of the panel members. I have met with the panel; I have confidence in the panel. I thank the panel members for their work. I have thanked the former panel members for their work as well.

Dr WOODRUFF - Did you meet with the ones who resigned?

CHAIR - Order, Dr Woodruff.

Dr WHITTINGTON - The matters raised in the Derwent Estuary Program submission were covered by the EISs. Those matters are regulated by the EPA under the environmental licence that will be issued associated with operations for those leases going forward.

Dr WOODRUFF - Wow. That is quite a broad statement moving over the top of all of that information.

Dr BROAD - Would you agree with the proposition that Tasmania produces the best lamb in the country?

Mr BARNETT - I was at the launch of the Lamb of Tasmania at Cressy, just a couple of weeks ago. It was a terrific launch. Congratulations to Tasmanian Quality Meats. I have a lot of support and admiration for our meat industry in Tasmania, specifically lamb. It is fantastic. I was born and raised on a farm at Hagley; we grew lamb. I know it is a top-quality product.

Dr BROAD - Best in the country perhaps?

Mr BARNETT - I admire our sheep and lamb producers in Tasmania, absolutely amongst the best in the country.

Dr BROAD - Do you agree that the Tasmanian brand, especially when it comes to meat products, is a powerful marketing tool?

Mr BARNETT - Beef and lamb? The Tasmanian brand?

Dr BROAD - Yes. Do you agree with the proposition that Tasmanians would prefer to be buying Tasmanian meat products as opposed to other options from mainland or overseas?

Mr BARNETT - You would hope so.

Dr BROAD - Do you think that is the consumers' behaviour?

Mr BARNETT - A consumer has to weigh up a whole range of things, including cost and, of course, quality. The Tasmanian brand is important. We have a lot to offer in this state. That is why I am very proud minister of a very successful and growing primary industry sector, with its huge potential, specifically agriculture and specifically the meat sector.

Dr BROAD - Do you think that Tasmanian consumers when they choose to purchase a meat product behave in a similar fashion to the rest of Australia in terms of their purchasing? When they select, do they tend to select a Tasmanian product or would they select an undifferentiated product?

CHAIR - Dr Broad, can I remind you we are examining the Budget and not consumer preference?

Mr BARNETT - We have had three questions on the Tasmanian brand, which is specifically the Premier's portfolio. I am delighted to talk about the Tasmanian brand and agriculture because it is a key part of the Tasmanian brand. It is something of which we can all be proud around this table and across the state.

Yes, I think Tasmanians consider all those factors you have raised, Dr Broad, when they are looking at purchasing a product. They weigh all those things up with price and quality and geography, like myself and, hopefully, like yourself, are proud Tasmanians.

Dr BROAD - Do you think that price is ultimately the dominant consideration when people are purchasing Tasmanian products?

Mr BARNETT - In my last three answers I've referred to the ingredient of price as being a key ingredient.

Dr BROAD - No, the dominant one.

Mr BARNETT - I said a key ingredient.

Dr BROAD - I'm asking is it the dominant one?

Mr BARNETT - We are talking about budget Estimates. This is the fourth question on these matters, but I think very broadly it is a very important point, for sure.

Dr BROAD - In the final version of Meridian Agriculture's report on the feasibility of establishing further meat processing capacity in Tasmania, some of the key assumptions are that Tasmanian consumers behave in the same way as the rest of Australians and that price is ultimately the dominant consideration and that the lowest cost processor is able to deliver the lowest price to the consumer. These are the key assumptions in the report. Do you agree with those key assumptions?

Mr BARNETT - That is why I appointed a red meat working group. Now we can talk about the Red Meat Working Group because it was a very important decision we made last year and I'm very pleased and proud of their efforts and contributions, and I thank them personally for that. They had to take on board the Meridian report you are referring to and weigh it up and deliver a report and recommendations. All of that information has come back to the Government and I announced yesterday and confirmed on the record today in my opening remarks that we support the report findings and all their recommendations. We back it to the hilt.

Dr BROAD - We have a report based on the assumption that Tasmanian consumers behave in the same fashion, that, in the marketplace, price is the dominant consideration in the purchase of red meat, and that the lowest cost processor is able to deliver the lowest price to the consumer; therefore we should be looking at price at the key consideration. That is the key assumption to this report and so the recommendations of the working group flow from a report that has an assumption that the Tasmanian brand is not of value and that it will ultimately be cost that drives the Tasmanian meat industry.

Mr BARNETT - You don't support the working group's findings?

Dr BROAD - We'll go through the findings if you like. I'm talking about the key assumptions in this report that Tasmanian meat products are an undifferentiable product in terms of capturing value.

Mr BARNETT - During a process, the Red Meat Working Group met a whole range of key stakeholders across Tasmania; they got that input. They took that on board, also from their own perspectives, as key stakeholders in the sector. I met with them a number of times, ably chaired by Leonie Hiscutt MLC and Deputy Chair Jim Wilson, and all the key members did a great job. They met, they consulted with key stakeholders in the industry, they met with the consultants from Meridian, and you are reading from the Meridian report. They have taken on board, no doubt, all the views they have received from around Tasmania, from all the key stakeholders and the consultants from Meridian. Meridian has consulted with them, taken that on board and delivered a report with findings and recommendations, for which the Government is very grateful and which we back.

Dr BROAD - This is the key report into aspects of processing, whether or not it's viable for another processing facility to be constructed or expanded in Tasmania. This is the key part of that consideration, as reflected in the findings of the working group. Yet, the assumption here is that consumers -

Mr BARNETT - Are you reading from the Meridian report?

Dr BROAD - Yes -

Tasmanian consumers are similar to those in the whole of the Australian demographic and that price is ultimately the dominant consideration in the decision to purchase red meat.

This downplays the power of the Tasmanian brand; therefore, we have a consultant's report, if the Tasmanian brand is downplayed and there's no benefit from the Tasmanian brand, obviously we are going to have a meat processing industry that goes to the lowest cost, which is on the scale of Swift's Brooklyn facility in Victoria and is the death knell of the Tasmanian industry. If that's what the industry is headed towards, the lowest cost processor will not be in Tasmania.

CHAIR - Do we have a question?

Dr BROAD - Yes, I am trying get the minister's opinion on this report and these key assumptions.

Mr BARNETT - I am delighted to respond to the rhetorical question because I think perhaps Dr Broad is attempting to justify the unfortunate policy position of the Labor party last year, or earlier this year, and you have got yourself into a bit of bind because you didn't support due process and a proper consultation with the industry, which is what I set up, and what I did, and what our Government did. We set up a good process, we got the key people to consult with the industry, the key stakeholders, and deliver a report and recommendation in advance of the due date. They have delivered it, and we are backing it to the hilt and we are backing the industry.

UNCORRECTED PROOF ISSUE

What's more, the TFGA yesterday put out a statement supporting that and welcoming the reports. I don't know if you have seen that, but I draw it to your attention, Dr Broad, and your support for the meat industry as the shadow would be greatly appreciated, rather than throwing these political barbs to try and justify your earlier decision as a Labor party policy.

I read recommendation 10 because I think it is entirely relevant to the question on branding -

The Tasmanian Meat Industry working group recommends that there be continuing government support for private sector marketing and branding via endorsements and other mechanisms, noting the following points -

- provenance branding sits well with an economic growth strategy, and brands are best built by individual or small groupings of businesses heavily invested in maintaining the quality of the brand with expertise in marketing product using brand provenance.

What did the Government say about that? We accepted that recommendation and finding, and we said in addition -

The Government acknowledges the work being undertaken through the Tasmanian Trade Strategy, which the Premier is leading and doing a terrific job, which sets out a whole-of-government approach to working with business to grow trade, both in Australia and internationally, and Brand Tasmania's work to further develop the overarching Tasmanian brand that embodies the spirit of Tasmania and its people.

Dr Broad has been talking about the importance of brand and Brand Tasmania. We have backed the recommendation of the working group; we have accepted it, and we are backing it to the hilt.

Dr BROAD - The proposition, though, is that would Tasmania's brand be still applicable to sheep processed in Victoria? Do you think that consumers should have confidence that Tasmanian sheep processed in Victoria are being able to be marketed and branded as Tasmanian?

Mr BARNETT - What we have is very clearly a government policy position backing the findings and recommendations of the report. I encourage Dr Broad and anybody else to read it in full. We are strong supporters of on-island processing and value adding. I have said that from day one; I have said it since I was in the Senate - I say it every single day, the importance of that - and guess what? We are delivering on that. We have welcomed the federal government investments and commitments, at least in TQM at Cressy for the upgrade of that facility.

We are backing this \$400 million red meat sector. Of course we have stepped in, and I thank Peter Gutwein as Minister for State Growth in terms of the Devonport City Abattoir. We had a real challenge before us before Christmas last year with that decision. We stepped in and in terms of continuing, TQM is continuing that on a short-term basis, and now we are injecting investment and funds into building capacity for the smaller processors, whether it be Stowport or Cradoc or discussions with Scottsdale Pork.

We are working at a grassroots level, hands on, trying to get the job done, working with State Growth, working with my department, working with the industry, working with stakeholders. We

have received strong support from the TFGA yesterday for our report and recommendations and the Government's response.

I am not sure what more you could be suggesting right now, Dr Broad. I would say get on board and support the industry and support where we are going with the red meat sector.

Dr WOODRUFF - Minister, why did you allow the Marine Farming Planning Review Panel to continue in its role of providing you with advice on the Storm Bay expansion when you were well aware it did not have four crucial members sitting on the panel at the time? These were people with expertise in environmental management in fish health and biosecurity, in boating, recreational and navigational issues, and a person with training expertise appointed by the Tasmanian Planning Commission.

Mr BARNETT - Thank you very much for the question, Dr Woodruff. In terms of the panel approval for [inaudible] chair, I am informed by the panel chair that in relation to the two-amendment panel amendment plans for Tassal and Huon Aquaculture developments, the motions to recommend were unanimous. That is what I was advised, and no dissenting views were tabled. In making a final recommendation to me to approve Petuna's application, the panel determined that it did have the necessary expertise and experience required under the act to make such recommendations. That is different to your view, but that is the advice.

Dr WOODRUFF - Sorry, I accept that the panel was legally correct in making the decision, enabled to make the decision under the act, however, given the gravity of that -

Mr BARNETT - Can I finish my answer and then I will go back to -

Dr WOODRUFF - The point is that there are four of nine not present.

CHAIR - Dr Woodruff, can you allow the minister to finish, if the minister wants to finish?

Mr BARNETT - I just wanted to finish my answer to your question. I appreciate you have a different view to the Government on this matter. We have strong support for the salmon industry, and I have said earlier that I have confidence in the panel. I have met with the chair and I have met with the panel members. In addition to that I wanted to make it clear to the committee, and through you, Chair, that I was advised by the secretary of the department that the panel was properly constituted at the time of making its termination to recommend that I approve the draft plan. In short, due process was followed. It is important that is recognised and is on the record. I strongly support it and due process was followed. That is the problem with the Greens, unfortunately. They are happy to shoot the independent umpire when it suits them.

Dr WOODRUFF - I, on behalf of people around the Storm Bay community and people in the environment movement and scientists and all the people who made submissions around Storm Bay, am speaking about the fact that there was no person on the panel at the time those decisions were made with expertise in fish health and biosecurity or environmental management or navigation and recreational and boating issues - the three areas of most controversy about your approval process.

The point is: why are you not concerned that those incredibly important areas of expertise were absent from the panel when the decision were made? Instead it was stacked with people who were nominated by yourself, people who had expertise in local government that had nothing to do with science of the expansion into Storm Bay, and a person with expertise in marine farming, a person

UNCORRECTED PROOF ISSUE

from the industry. It was stacked with people from your department, from local government and from the industry itself. It's not surprising it got approved, is it?

Mr BARNETT - A rhetorical question, of course. A little bit of political mischief I would suggest, Dr Woodruff, but that is the fun and games of Estimates, I guess. The Greens have a clear position in terms of opposition to salmon and salmon farming and I reject the -

Dr WOODRUFF - Chair, I am very frustrated with the minister continuing to pedal these mistruths about the Greens' position on development. We are pro-development that supports the clean and green brand and listens to the community and the science.

CHAIR - Thank you, Dr Woodruff, the minister has the call. Please don't interrupt, I have allowed you to have your say. It is the minister's call now, so please listen in silence.

Mr BARNETT - In response to Dr Woodruff, and just to make it very clear, I totally reject the allegations made by Dr Woodruff, particularly the public assertions attempting to discredit the panel members and the robust planning process these proposals have gone through, so I reject those allegations, Dr Woodruff.

In addition to the consultation I referred to earlier, I confirm consultation was undertaken by the companies proposing the developments, and the Government provided an opportunity for public comment and input for two months - the maximum period allowed under the Marine Farm Planning Act of 1995.

Dr WOODRUFF - Every single one of them was disregarded by your department. Here we are, pages and pages and pages, all disregarded.

CHAIR - Dr Woodruff, please, Dr Woodruff.

Dr WOODRUFF - All the submissions totally disregarded by your panel -

CHAIR - Please do not be disorderly, Dr Woodruff. I have asked for order.

Dr WOODRUFF - that was stacked with people from your department.

CHAIR - Dr Woodruff, I warn you.

Mr BARNETT - Madam Chair, I am attempting to answer the question again. I reject the allegations made by Dr Woodruff. Every one of the written representations was electronically received and electronically acknowledged at the time of the submission, I am advised. The planning authority prepared a detailed report for the panel that responds to each representation. The panel's final report detailing its consideration of the representations and information provided through public hearings has also been published. We are talking about transparency. These reports are available on the department's website. The waters, as the Greens have previously falsely alleged, are not privatised. They remain crown land, as it were. However, a lease of up to 30 years refers a right of exclusive occupation on the leaseholder -

Dr WOODRUFF - Private, by any other name.

UNCORRECTED PROOF ISSUE

Mr BARNETT - You know the process, you are aware of the process and you are disregarding the process.

Dr WOODRUFF - There is no process. This is totally corrupted.

CHAIR - Dr Woodruff, if you would like a follow-up question, please be orderly.

Dr WOODRUFF - Thank you, Chair.

CHAIR - I will give you a follow-up question if you are orderly. If you are not, I will pass it to Dr Broad.

Dr WOODRUFF - Thank you, Chair. Minister, can you explain why, on page 17 of the Sustainable Industry Growth Plan for the salmon industry - which I have here, if you do not have a copy - the flowchart that describes the process for approvals by the Marine Farming Planning Review Panel does not indicate any opportunity for the panel to decline a proposal if it doesn't pass their assessment process?

Mr BARNETT - The report and the flowchart you are referring to is based upon the law. The panel is an advisory body that provides advice to the minister, and I am the minister. The flowchart is accurate and it reflects the law. That is why.

Dr WOODRUFF - Can I ask a question?

CHAIR - You can.

Dr WOODRUFF - The law, you are right in saying, gives you the ability to override a recommendation or to make a decision that you wish, as minister. I am not asking that question. Why does the flowchart say the words are that the Marine Farming Planning Review Panel recommends to the minister that the draft marine farming development proposal should be approved, including additional commitments? There is no opportunity for the panel to say it should not be approved. You have the ability under the law to override the decision of the panel but that is not what this flowchart shows. The flowchart shows, and the panel members have been told, there is no opportunity for them to provide you with a report that does anything other than recommend approval.

CHAIR - Thank you, Dr Woodruff. I think we have the drift of that.

Mr BARNETT - Yes, we have the drift of it. The panel is an advisory body, they provide advice and recommendations to the minister, who is acting in accordance with the law. With respect to operational matters of the panel's statutory ability, I will pass to the secretary or Fionna Bourne.

Ms BOURNE - The panel's powers are advisory in that the ultimate decision-maker is the minister, and it would be inconsistent with those powers for the panel to have an ultimate rejection of a proposal. The panel does have the opportunity under the act to make recommendations to modify, reject, the draft plan. If it rejects the draft plan, it goes back to the planning authority for the planning authority to address the concerns raised by the panel that resulted in the rejection. The planning authority addresses those concerns and resubmits it back to the panel for their consideration. The panel does not have the power to reject because it is advisory in nature.

UNCORRECTED PROOF ISSUE

Dr WOODRUFF - Thank you, Ms Bourne. That takes us to the nub of the issue, minister, which is that there is no capacity under your salmon growth plan for the panel to provide advice that a development should not go ahead. I accept there is this Orwellian loop the panel becomes stuck in with the department. This is one of the panel members said to me, 'There is this endless loop that drives people down.'

What if the proposal is something that simply cannot be approved in the first place due to the nature of the science? In this case, two panel members resigned because they felt they could not fulfil their professional scientific obligations to do what they are required to under the act. Why can't the panel provide advice to you that the development shouldn't go ahead? You have created a process so corrupted it circulates around this loop until it is approved.

CHAIR - Thank you, Dr Woodruff.

Mr BARNETT - I strongly reject the allegation made by Dr Woodruff with respect to corruption. That is totally -

Dr WOODRUFF - Corrupted process?

Mr BARNETT - That is inappropriate and unprofessional of Dr Woodruff; I reject it outright.

Dr WOODRUFF - It is absolutely not. The panel member thought this was a spelling mistake and brought it to the attention of someone in the branch.

CHAIR - Order.

Mr BARNETT - There is a very rigorous process in place, Dr Woodruff, and others around this table and elsewhere know about the process: it is on the record. There are details on the department's website and it is all consistent with legislation regarding marine farming and growth of the salmon industry. I am backing the industry.

Dr WOODRUFF - This process is a stitch-up to only receive an approval from the committee.

CHAIR - Order, Dr Woodruff, I warn you for the second time. It is a long session. If you want to stay and ask questions, so we don't have to shut the committee down - I don't want to name you - please be quiet and allow the minister to give his answer.

Mr BARNETT - It is all consistent with the legislation we have had before us in this parliament. It has been through the parliament, and was supported by the House of Assembly and the Legislative Council. It has gone through due process and the Greens have a different view. I will strongly object to the flinging off of words like corruption or corrupt regarding the process in marine farm planning.

Dr WOODRUFF - How about stitch-up?

Mr BARNETT - The salmon industry totally rejects it. That is not unusual for the Greens. It is totally unacceptable. We back the industry, we back the process, we are into best practice and continual improvement and if we can do that, we always will.

UNCORRECTED PROOF ISSUE

Dr BROAD - Minister, how can consumers be assured of the brand provenance of the Tasmanian brand if they are purchasing meat that is processed on the mainland?

Mr BARNETT - We have a report and a recommendation. The working group was established before the end of last year, which I appointed. They have done lot of work. They have received feedback from key stakeholders and they have been consulting with Meridian, which put forward its feasibility study, much of which relates to brand and the importance of brand in Tasmania. I was at the launch of Lamb of Tasmania and I congratulate TQM on that launch. Tasmanians are aware of the importance of quality Tasmanian lamb. Our Government will do everything we can to support the industry, promote quality produce and the brand of Tasmania. We recognised that in recommendation 10, in the government's response to it. There are 16 findings and recommendations. We back that report and those recommendations to the hilt, as we are backing the red meat sector. You asked about lamb and we are backing that sector.

Dr BROAD - Minister, if I had a market for 100 lambs a week somewhere in Australia or overseas and part of the key marketing was that it was Tasmanian lamb, where would I be able to able to have those lambs processed?

Mr BARNETT - You are getting into what you would call operational matters. I am not sure it is specifically in respect of the Tasmanian budget, which is backing the red meat sector. We have a million dollars in the Budget over the next four years plus funding support of \$800 000 to build capacity for on-island processing, creating jobs, growth and value adding in Tasmania. We are backing that. In addition last year we funded the Pasture and Livestock Productivity Project. The Budget is backing the industry.

We are very active with a range of taxpayer funds that are well spent with good return on funds invested. We are backing this comprehensive report and will do everything we can to implement it.

Dr BROAD - This is the situation faced by Melrose Meats that has carved out a market niche for Tasmanian lamb in Queensland, and now they have no ability to get that lamb processed in Tasmania. What would you say?

Mr BARNETT - Why do you say that?

Dr BROAD - Because they can't. Where would they have it processed? Where would they have 100 lambs a week processed? There is no service skill facility that will handle 100 lambs a week. How can Melrose Meats continue to brand their product as Tasmanian when it has to go to across Bass Strait, on a boat to a facility in Victoria to be processed?

CHAIR - Minister, this is miles away from the Budget.

Mr BARNETT - I am happy to answer the question, it is broad-ranging, but let us make it clear: the Government has welcomed the federal government's promise and commitment of \$8 million to upgrade Tasmanian Quality Meats at Cressy. As a government we support value-adding downstream-processing in Tasmania wherever possible and feasible, and guess what? The federal government is backing this with an \$8 million commitment to upgrade that facility which will double the capacity for lamb production at Cressy.

UNCORRECTED PROOF ISSUE

The advice from TQM is it will double production. They have to go through a process; no doubt there will be terms and conditions with the federal government. You can talk to TQM, Brian Oliver and others who are involved. We say congratulations, well done and is part of the process that will create jobs, development, opportunity and downstream processing in Tasmania. That is part of the tapestry of the red meat industry as to where we are and where we are going. I would really encourage the shadow minister to get behind the red meat industry and back it.

Dr BROAD - I am behind the red meat industry, thank you, minister. Recommendation 10, which you have accepted -

Provenance branding sits well with an economic growth strategy and brands are best built by individual or small groupings of businesses heavily invested in maintaining the quality of the brand with expertise in marketing product using brand provenance.

Again, minister, if we have a product of any volume such as a 100 a week, for example, where would an individual or a small grouping of business heavily invested in maintaining the quality of brand with expertise in marketing product and brand provenance have those animals processed?

Mr BARNETT - We have backed that recommendation. I have given the Government's response which I read in response and an answer to Dr Broad a few moments ago. I have referred to the Premier's strong support of our trade strategy as the Minister for Trade. The member and my shadow is now asking hypothetical questions about what may or may not occur on the mainland. The fact is, I have indicated there is further value-adding and downstream-processing, further investment in Tasmania, one TQM at Cressy and, thanks to the Minister for State Growth's support, \$800 000 we have committed. I announced that yesterday - \$800 000 to grow capacity for our smaller processors here in Tasmania. Guess what? That means more jobs in those areas.

Dr BROAD - There are 700 000 lambs being exported at the moment and those jobs are gone.

Mr BARNETT - That is fantastic. We have been able to build capacity for those smaller abattoirs at Stowport Abattoir, Cradoc Hill Abattoir in the south, and, of course, Scottsdale Pork. We have worked hard; we have got our hands dirty. We are the stakeholders who have been out there. We are on the ground delivering for the meat industry in Tasmania and to get these little petty queries from across the table -

Dr BROAD - It is not petty; it is quite a specific question.

Mr BARNETT - I encourage the opposition to support the industry. Why would the Tasmanian Farmers and Graziers Association back our report and the Government's response to the red meat industry report? The TFGA is the peak body for farmers and graziers in Tasmania. Why would they back the Government's action? Do you want me to read you word for word what they have said? They backed it; they are backing our response to the red meat working industry -.

Dr BROAD - You don't want scrutiny. Point of order, Chair, I am asking questions specifically about the meat industry and in relation to Meridian's report. I note that Mr Tucker has arrived at the table. He is one of the people interviewed as part of the Meridian process. Is there a potential conflict?

CHAIR - I will seek advice.

UNCORRECTED PROOF ISSUE

Dr BROAD - That is a legitimate question, isn't it?

CHAIR - Dr Broad, the advice that I have received - I do not absolutely agree with it. I hope we are not voting on anything. You are not asking questions of Mr Tucker; he is not answering any questions. You are asking questions of the minister.

Dr BROAD - Minister, are you concerned that Coles and Woolworths no longer process Tasmanian lamb in Tasmania?

Mr BARNETT - They do not process it?

Dr BROAD - They did; they were in Devonport.

Mr BARNETT - You said 'process the lamb'; you mean 'buy processed lamb'.

Dr BROAD - No, buy processed lamb.

Mr BARNETT - Let's get your question right. I am helping my shadow with his question. That is okay, I am happy to assist.

CHAIR - Sorry. I did not get the drift of the question. What is the final version?

Mr BARNETT - Do you want me to repeat the question or do you want to repeat it?

Dr BROAD - Or you could just answer.

CHAIR - I want to understand.

Mr BARNETT - Repeat the question, I think, otherwise I am trying to assist the shadow with his question.

Dr BROAD - I understand Woolworths no longer has the ability to buy Tasmanian lamb processed in Tasmania. Does that concern you?

Mr BARNETT - First, you asked about Melrose. I will make the point about Melrose before going onto this question about Coles and Woolworths. Melrose was consulted during the process. They had input into the working group's report and recommendation. The other point to make about your question about Coles and Woolworths is that the Tasmanian producers are supplying the big supermarkets, through you, Chair. That is my response.

Dr BROAD - It comes from Victoria though, minister. As part of the Meridian report and the whole meat industry working group, how many pork producers were consulted?

Mr BARNETT - Sorry, say that again.

Dr BROAD - How many pork producers were consulted?

Mr BARNETT - Are you talking about -

UNCORRECTED PROOF ISSUE

Dr BROAD - The Meridian, for example.

Mr BARNETT - The Tasmanian Meat Working Group report or Meridian's?

Dr BROAD - Both. If you go into the appendix of the Meridian report, it highlights the industries the respondents were associated with. It does not appear that there is even a column for pork producers. I am just wondering how many pork producers were consulted as part of this Meridian report.

CHAIR - Again, minister, this is a very long bow from the Budget, but it is up to you.

Mr BARNETT - I just love talking about the red meat industry. I know this is part of budget Estimates but as minister I love talking about the red meat industry because I am so supportive of it. I am so delighted that we took the decision to set up the Red Meat Industry Working Group last year. Guess what? One of the key members of the working group was Alan Broomby from the Pork Producers, a key pork producer. I have visited his farm. I have looked at his pigs and his piglets. It is a great operation. I congratulate him; I thank him for his input. You have got one of the key stakeholders in the pork industry in Tasmania who is a member of the Red Meat Industry Working Group and has input into it. The working group consulted with a whole range of key stakeholders -

Dr BROAD - How many of those were in the pork industry?

Mr BARNETT - Whether it be pork or lamb or beef, the processors are the farmers. We have people from across Tasmania - the small processors, the large processors, Greenham and Swifts, TQM. They had so many different people. Guess what? I gave them the remit under the stewardship of Leonie Hiscutt to consult with whomever they thought was appropriate to get the best advice and research possible to make the best decisions possible. Guess what? I believe they did. I am thankful for that. They have delivered a report and recommendations which we are now backing.

A government response was delivered yesterday. I am happy to flesh it out in further detail, but we are backing it to the hilt. They have consulted who was necessary. Of course, in addition to Allan Broomby on the working group, you had Jennifer Robinson, from Sprout Tasmania, who represents the micro-producers.

Those on the group were very carefully selected; a great working group. They consulted broadly and widely with the key stakeholders. They got the information to deliver the best decisions possible for the industry going forward. I am proud of their efforts, and would back them 100 per cent.

Dr WOODRUFF - Thank you. Minister, you will be pleased for a detailed question about the Budget in the budget papers on page 257, 'Salmon farming has ramped up significantly' under your Government,

Can you please explain why marine farm fees and recoveries have basically only kept pace with indexation?

Mr BARNETT - First of all, I totally agree that the salmon industry growth has ramped up under our Government. We are delighted with the growth in the salmon industry. One of the

reasons for that is the terrific leadership of my predecessor, Jeremy Rockliff, in setting the framework, building the law and regulations in and around salmon farming going forward, and, of course, Ms Courtney. I am really following up on that since 31 October last year. It is a great honour and a privilege to support the salmon industry. With respect to the operational parts of the funding in the Budget, I will ask the secretary to respond.

Dr WHITTINGTON - The way we collect revenue from the salmon industry is through three revenue streams. We have marine farming licence and rental renewals, regulatory fees; then we have fees that we collect on behalf of industry peak bodies; and then we have salmon industry planning and policy levies. For the rental and licence renewals and regulatory fees, so far to date in 2018-19, we have collected \$1.351 million, with all those funds receipted directly to consolidated revenue.

Dr WOODRUFF - Through you, minister? From the salmon industry?

Dr WHITTINGTON - Yes. For industry peak body fees, we have collected \$108 000. Those funds are then directed to the relevant peak bodies. The Salmon Industry Planning Levy has collected to date in 2018-19, \$1.836 million. All those funds are retained by the department to fund the work that we do. Of that money, \$750 000 is directed to the EPA to part fund the regulatory activities of the salmon industry. This is a new levy. The remaining \$1.086 million is retained in water and resources to fund salmon industry planning and policy work. The major activities funded by this levy include marine debris management, salmon industry planning, industry data movement

Dr WOODRUFF - With respect, minister -

Mr BARNETT - Excuse me, Chair, but the secretary has not finished.

CHAIR - Yes, no, you should not interrupt, Dr Woodruff.

Mr BARNETT - Allow the secretary to conclude.

Dr WHITTINGTON - The total amount of revenue collected to support the work of the Government in regulating the industry is substantial and has increased recently.

Dr WOODRUFF - Through you, minister, to the secretary, could he please answer the question which is: why, given the substantial increase in the salmon industry, particularly the expansion into Storm Bay, can you, or he, through you, explain why the fees and recoveries for the marine farms have only kept pace with indexation over the forward Estimates?

Mr BARNETT - Thank you. I will pass to the secretary in one moment. I just want to make it very clear that the levies have increased upwards of \$1 million. I increased them very soon after I was appointed minister on 31 October. The secretary has made that clear.

Dr WOODRUFF - I am talking about the forward Estimates, minister.

Mr BARNETT - I am just making it clear that the levies have increased. The secretary has just outlined that. It is important, and we are doing everything we can to insure that we have a sustainable industry and it is complying with the law accordingly.

UNCORRECTED PROOF ISSUE

I will pass back to the secretary to see if he can add to that answer.

Ms BOURNE - The levies that we collect are determined under the Living Marine Resources Management Act. The forward Estimates are based on a presumption that the current levy will not be redetermined going forward. That decision hasn't been confirmed, but the minister can redetermine that levy at any time.

Dr WOODRUFF - Also on page 257, the abalone licence fees are about six times the amount exacted upon the salmon farming industry. Can you explain why marine farm fees and recoveries are about one-sixth of the value of the abalone licence fees, despite the fact that the marine farm industry is about six times higher in the amount of money both turned over and profit?

Mr BARNETT - This is obviously an operational matter which I will refer to the secretary to respond to. It's a different industry and a different perspective, and different rules apply.

We have an Abalone Industry Reinvestment Fund. We are very pleased with that \$5 million fund and we are reinvesting that in consultation with the abalone industry and the key parts of that. We consult with them carefully. I meet with the industry sector. They have been very active actually and put forward a range of positive initiatives. I am pleased with where we are at. There are some challenges with centrostephanus on the east coast, which affects not just abalone and the marine environment, which I am sure Dr Woodruff would be concerned about and I'm happy to respond further about, but also the rock lobster industry.

I will pass to the secretary to respond on the detail.

Dr WHITTINGTON - The amount of revenue collected through abalone is based on a different formula. With marine farming, we retain fees for leases and licences for the area that's being fished plus the levies that we spoke to before. The abalone licence revenue outlined there includes a royalty on the abalone collected. A percentage of the value of the abalone is retained by the Government as part of that process. The abalone is a Crown resource, the abalone is caught and a part of the value of that abalone is retained by government, and that has been a longstanding arrangement.

Dr WOODRUFF - This gets to the point that one industry is paying its fair share for the use of the marine environment and another industry is paying essentially almost nothing, like \$1 million. The turnover for the salmon industry in Storm Bay is anticipated to be in the order of \$211 million and that of the abalone industry in similar areas is \$2.4 million. We are talking about a gross underpayment from the salmon industry for the marine environment and the damage it is doing to the marine environment and the money that needs to go towards protecting the natural values of the marine environment.

CHAIR - Do you have a question?

Dr WOODRUFF - Will you change the levy on the salmon industry, minister?

Mr BARNETT - I have increased the levy by upwards of \$ million.

Dr WOODRUFF - Over the forward Estimates, I meant.

CHAIR - Order, Dr Woodruff.

Dr WOODRUFF - Will you change the levy to reflect the damage that the industry does?

Mr BARNETT - Based on the question, the allegations are unfounded. You are comparing apples and oranges. As it has been made very clear by the secretary and by me, they are different parts of the seafood industry and fishing sector. Abalone clearly is a very important part. We have a reinvestment fund of \$5 million and work closely with the Abalone Council and those in the sector with initiatives to support the industry.

The member from Lyons and St Helens knows how important it is particularly on the east coast, whether it is rock lobster, abalone or our wild finfish sector. We are proud and backing it. You are comparing apples and oranges because it is clear salmon needs and requirements are different to abalone.

I will pass back to the secretary

Dr WOODRUFF - One million dollars in fees for a \$750 million a year industry.

CHAIR - Order

Mr WHITTINGTON - That is received as retained revenue and the balance of that is levy, the actual number is a little bit more than \$3 million a year we recover.

Mr TUCKER - Minister, as I travelled my electorate I have positive feedback from farmers and fishers about their industry of which I am part. I will state that on the record as Shane Broad has done for me already. Can you provide an update on the growth in value of our primary industries?

Mr BARNETT - Yes, I can and want to acknowledge the hard work of the member for Lyons and his close association with the agriculture and fishing sector. Based on the east coast, you know how important it is and I recognise that. It is important to our economy in Tasmania, more so than any other state of Australia, in terms of the latest ABS statistics, and we have seen a 9 per cent increase in the agricultural production output across Tasmania. It is fantastic.

We are sitting at \$1.6 billion for the 2017-18 and will have further statistics late this year. In total the sector is \$2.67 billion for that year. Seafood production and fisheries accounted for \$1.07 billion. You can see how important it is to the Tasmanian economy and the 9 per cent increase is fantastic. We are happy with performance targets and on track because we have a target as a Government. The Hodgman Liberal Government to get to \$10 billion for the farm-back value of agriculture by 2050. We are on track and encouraged with that 9 per cent increase.

With 11 500 Tasmanian jobs - that is a huge number, particularly in those rural and regional areas - in agriculture, forestry and fishing and all those sectors and families involved in supporting indirect flow-on benefits, as the member of Lyons would be fully aware.

Export means jobs for Tasmania; in 2017-18 overseas exports of Tasmanian food and beverage were worth a record \$740 million, a significant \$56 million increase from \$686 million in 2015-16. We're pleased with the increase in exports and the trade strategy, and the Premier is backing to the hilt recently in Japan and in Asia. Taking it to the next level is what our policy is all about.

UNCORRECTED PROOF ISSUE

We are pleased with the commodities data. There is a breakdown of the higher farmgate prices. The value of dairy, for example, has increased by \$103 million, or 32 per cent, to be worth \$429 million. Our dairy was again the highest valued commodity in agriculture in 2017-18; beef production increased by the value of \$42 million, or 14 per cent, to be worth \$337 million as the volume of meat processed in Tasmania increased; and potatoes increased by \$12 million, or 11 per cent, to \$122 million; wool increased by \$9 million, or 8 per cent, to \$116 million due to a strengthening global market for fine Merino wool.

Loved the Campbell Town show last week - best wool in Australia

CHAIR - Minister, can you wind up, please?

Mr BARNETT - Finally, the gross value of fisheries increased by 13 per cent for 2017-18 to \$1.068 billion. We are pleased and proud of our sector; it is going well.

Dr BROAD - Minister, what happens to the Quoiba Abattoir after the readjustment period of two years finishes?

Mr BARNETT - You would be aware, Dr Broad - no doubt you've read the working group's report and recommendations and seen the report and recommendations which backed the Government's support for intervention at Devonport City Abattoir. I thank the Minister for State Growth and Treasurer, Peter Gutwein, for his hands-on involvement. I also thank TQM for stepping up and providing that support for up to two years.

That crosses into State Growth territory in terms of that funding support, but I made it clear yesterday that there has been some \$800 000 for the smaller abattoirs and support for TQM to continue operating for up to two years in pork processing. I've also indicated ongoing consultation with Scottsdale Pork. They are a smaller processing operation at Scottsdale, and I should've indicated earlier in answer to your earlier question about consultation with pork producers, Scottsdale Pork was consulted. The pork industry has had input to the Red Meat Industry Working Group report and we've backed that report and we are pleased with it.

Dr BROAD - Will there be a 'self-sustaining supply chain' beyond this period?

Mr BARNETT - You are now asking about what's going to happen in 18 months time or within that two-year period. I can't predict exactly what's going to happen, but I can predict what I've already said on the record, and that is that we are backing the report. The report makes recommendations about ongoing processing and value-adding in Tasmania, wherever possible and feasible, we are backing that and that's consistent with government policy.

We will do everything we can to ensure a viable, sustainable and profitable agricultural sector, in particular in the meat industry.

Dr BROAD - Minister, will that facility, DCM, still be viable with a 25 per cent reduction in kill?

Mr BARNETT - You are asking a hypothetical question which I can't answer.

Dr BROAD - Minister, it is not. I could add to my question.

Mr BARNETT - I'll answer your question as I did before, but you've asked a hypothetical question. You are asking about what's going to happen in the next year or so. I can't predict what will happen in the next year or so, other than saying we will give a cast-iron guarantee this Government will do everything we can to support and work with the red meat sector to deliver a viable, prosperous, sustainable and profitable industry.

Dr BROAD - Neil Atkins, who is a large pork producer, has telegraphed he will be exiting the industry in September and his production constitutes 25 per cent of the kill at Quoiba. Will this facility still be viable with a 25 per cent reduction from September onwards?

Mr BARNETT - We are getting into the weeds, but that's okay. I'm happy to talk all day about the working group report and the meat industry in Tasmania because we are backing it to the hilt. As you know and I've made it very clear, the working group consulted very broadly, they had many meetings since they first established prior to Christmas; they've delivered a report in advance of the time frame, for which 30 June was the deadline. They've done it well in advance of that, for which I'm grateful. The Government's responded as swiftly as possible to back the industry and its recommendations. Of course they've consulted not just on lamb and beef and sheep, but pork as well. We have a member of the pork industry, Alan Broomby, a key operator who was on the working group. He is fully aware of what's happening at DCM, as is every member of the working group, Jennifer Robinson and the rest of them - they are totally across what's happening at Devonport and are aware of the challenges. There will be challenges ahead. Let me make it very clear. I'm not suggesting it's all plain and rosy going forward, it will be tough. There will be challenges. But there is one thing for sure, there is no better friend of the meat industry in Tasmania than the Hodgman Liberal Government.

Dr BROAD - Minister, one of the recommendations in the Meat Industry Working Group is that the Government - it is around the issue with trade waste. So we have seen Swift in Longford has a significant issue with trade waste, as well as the smaller processors that are now having to ramp up their production to cover the loss of the DCM, so lamb and beef production. Number 14, if you want a number. Recommendation number 14 found that disposal of trade waste was a significant challenge for many processors. In your response you said -

The Government undertakes to work with the Australian government to seek support for trade waste solutions.

Minister, we have just had a federal election. Did you lobby for support for trade waste in terms of support for the meat processing industry?

Mr BARNETT - Certainly recommendation 14 is an important one. We are talking about meat processing, so whether it is large or small, there are issues. I have made it very clear that the Government has stepped in, with credit to the Minister for State Growth with respect to the smaller processors. We have invested \$800 000 to build that capacity, and obviously create more jobs in value-adding downstream processing here in Tasmania. Recommendation 14 is cognisant of that, and aware of where we are coming from there. Of course, we have accepted it. Of course, we have ongoing relationships with the Australian government, with the local government, with the key stakeholders in the meat industry, and we will do everything we can to support downstream processing and value-adding in Tasmania. We have done it, in the past. No doubt, we will be doing it in the future. We are very committed -

Dr BROAD - Did you lobby your -

Mr BARNETT - We are very committed to the sector.

Dr BROAD - Did you lobby your federal colleagues for funding? It says here -

The Government undertakes to work with the Australian government to seek support for trade waste solutions.

Have you spoken to, or lobbied, the Australian Government for funds to support trade waste solutions for the meat industry, or are you waiting until the horse has bolted and the election is over?

Mr BARNETT - Let us make it very clear. I will tell you what we didn't do. We didn't lobby for \$400 million-worth of taxes on Tasmanian individuals, families and businesses like your federal Labor colleagues did. Did you lobby, Dr Broad, your federal Labor colleagues, not to tax the highest taxes on the Australian people ever?

Dr BROAD - I am not here to answer your questions. You are here to answer my questions.

Mr BARNETT - That is a rhetorical question.

Dr BROAD - I think that this is a very serious issue that deserves an answer. In a letter from TasWater to Labor leader, Rebecca White - this was before the election - TasWater obviously has concerns around industrial customers and their trade waste because they wrote -

As we have seen recently, the situation for meat processing trade waste was exacerbated when JBS Australia closed its Devonport abattoir. This increased demand on other smaller local abattoirs and is driving up the volume of trade waste they produce.

They go on to say that, in other areas, they would actually refuse to accept trade waste that has been deposited. We have got this letter from TasWater, we've had a situation where the smaller abattoirs have had to ramp up and they've got trade waste issues, we have got TasWater recognising that there is a significant injection of funds - some \$70 million - to meet trade waste around the state, we have had no word from the Government, and now you have accepted a recommendation around trade waste, and you're committing to lobby the government at some stage. When is that going to happen, minister?

Mr BARNETT - Thank you for the question. Of course, trade waste is a responsibility of Mr Gutwein, as Treasurer, but now that you have raised the issue of TasWater and you have specifically referred to a letter regarding TasWater and their responsibilities, I should remind Dr Broad and the members of the committee of the Government's significant commitment and investment in TasWater to ensure that we keep a cap on those costs flowing from TasWater.

Dr BROAD - We are talking trade waste. We are not talking about the cost of plastics.

Mr BARNETT - Let's make it very clear. This Government - the Hodgman Liberal Government - thanks to Peter Gutwein, is leading the way. With respect to TasWater, we have made that investment a very significant investment, not just now, but for the years to come - which will cap prices, which will help customers across Tasmanian business and otherwise.

UNCORRECTED PROOF ISSUE

Of course there will always be challenges, whether it be trade waste or otherwise, but we have invested to ensure we keep the cost of business down, to keep the cost of living down, wherever possible. It is happening in the Energy portfolio and it is happening across Government. It is a top priority for our Government.

Dr BROAD - What risk management are you putting in place in the event that Swift shuts its Longford facility?

Mr BARNETT - Perhaps Dr Broad didn't hear that the working group consulted broadly, including with the major processes, including with the minor processes, including with the key industry groups across the state. A member of the working group is sitting on my left and it was treated very seriously. You had the Secretary of the Department of Primary Industries and Water, and the Secretary of State Growth also on the working group, supported by department officers. We gave it their full support. The working groups delivered a report and recommendation, they consulted, they have the best evidence available, they have delivered a report and recommendations.

I would say: please consider the merit of getting on board rather than pouring cold water on the working group report and on the industry. Get on board, support it and back it.

Dr BROAD - Basically you are saying there is no problem, it's all fine.

Dr WOODRUFF - Minister, during the last 15 years, the centrostephanus - also known as the long-spined sea urchin - population has been estimated to have grown from 11 million to 15 million animals. According to a recent IMAS survey, it has already destroyed 15 per cent of the east coast rocky reef habitat. Their modelling indicates that if something is not done urgently, about 32 per cent of the east coast rocky reefs will be gone in two years time, and they currently think 50 per cent of some areas, such as in the far north around St Helens, has already disappeared because of sea urchins. Large rock lobsters are the only real substantial predator.

The issue in terms of this Budget is I don't see any funding specifically allocated in the Budget towards an emergency strategy to fund and to deal with this serious problem, which is going to affect not just the marine environment, but all the commercial and recreational fishing industries that depend on it. Can you please tell me, in this financial year, what resources are available to develop an emergency response? Are you recording your own party's questions too, Ms Butler?

Ms BUTLER - I am, that is a minute and a half.

Mr BARNETT - I am pleased to be able to respond to the question, where I think we agreed that it is a serious problem. Centrostephanus on the east coast has been recognised by the Government accordingly, and based on feedback from key stakeholder groups. I have close association and work closely with the rock lobster association and the abalone industry council and the fishing industry more generally, including crayfish Tasmania. Centrostephanus, the long-spined sea urchin, is an issue; it has grown in number, and it is having an impact on the east coast, so we can agree on that.

It is a problem; that is why we have responded. We have made decisions, not just in this Budget, in the past 12 months in support of the Rock Lobster Translocation Program. It is well underway, it is happening. That is a translocation of rock lobsters from south-west Tasmania

through to the east coast. We have invested significantly in that. It was announced in the last 12 months.

In addition to that, through the Abalone Reinvestment Fund, which is \$5.1 million over the five years. There are significant funds. For example, one of those initiatives out of that \$5 million is a subsidy support for abalone divers to go and collect the centrostephanus, the long-spined sea urchin, and take them to a processing facility where they are then processed and exported into Asia or mainland Australia, Melbourne or Sydney.

I was at a processing factory just some weeks ago. It's amazing to see masses - in fact I think it was up to 400 tonnes to date - of centrostephanus has been collected and processed into roe. Give it a try some time; you would call it an acquired taste, but it is certainly appreciated by many in Asia, and indeed many in Sydney and Melbourne. That's a good thing. We hope that it will create a market in due course; we are encouraging that.

We are investing, we are working with the industry, working together to create an opportunity that then becomes, based on the law of supply and demand, the removal of that centrostephanus to create a market in mainland Australia and into Asia.

Dr WOODRUFF - Minister, you didn't actually answer the question because I know those things have been happening - the translocation program has been happening.

My question was about what specific financial allocation has been put into developing an emergency response, because the two things that you have mentioned don't have any scientific evidence that they are adequate to deal with the gravity of the situation we are facing. I would suggest to you it's a bit like using a teaspoon to move 100 tonnes of sand in a day. We are talking about such an enormous response that it requires a different approach, and the evidence from IMAS is that those two things that you have mentioned, nice as they are, useful as they are, are absolutely not substantial enough to deal with the serious sea urchin impact.

Mr BARNETT - Let us clarify for the record that the Government has been working with the abalone industry, and also the abalone industry research fund committee has been working with CSIRO, and they have formed a strategic workplan going forward. They have prioritised a range of projects and research required. Just on the 5 April which is a great day, by the way, which was my birthday, I announced -

Dr WOODRUFF - What about the rock lobster industry, that's where you need to be working with.

CHAIR - Order, Dr Woodruff.

Mr BARNETT - Please let me finish.

Dr WOODRUFF - It's about the rock lobster industry, not the abalone industry.

CHAIR - Dr Woodruff, please.

Mr BARNETT - The 5th of April, a special day. Expressions of interest were advertised for the funding that we have - the \$5.1 million over the five years for proposals for projects. Guess what, we have received 29 applications with respect to that funding support, and I have a number

UNCORRECTED PROOF ISSUE

of examples of the areas and types of suitable projects, and I would like to identify those, because it is not just abalone, as you have indicated, it's in terms of protecting the marine environment and the like with respect to centrostephanus.

Dr WOODRUFF - Where is the evidence that abalone divers will have any effect on the impact? I am simply asking is there any evidence for this issue.

CHAIR - Order, Dr Woodruff. The minister is answering your question.

Dr WOODRUFF - It is such a serious issue.

CHAIR - No, Dr Woodruff.

Mr BARNETT - I am attempting to answer the question of Dr Woodruff. I think we are in agreement that there is a problem there. We are acting and have a committee which is consulting with the CSIRO, and they are basing their initiative and their workplan and their priorities on science. It is based on science, and it is based evidence. In terms of those projects - abalone stock enhancement, habitat survey and long-spined sea urchin barren mapping, management and mitigation of the long-spined sea urchins, effects of global warming on abalone and abalone habitat. I am trying to -

Dr WOODRUFF - We want action, not more research. Where is the evidence in the Budget? Are you putting money into acting?

CHAIR - Order, Dr Woodruff. You asked for science, the minister is answering in that vein. Please allow him to finish his answer.

Mr BARNETT - I am attempting to respond to Dr Woodruff so I will continue.

Improved supply-chain innovation for abalone and long-spined sea urchins, fishery, market development including product diversification for abalone and long-spined urchins, public outreach and education to promote understanding of issues such as abalone fishery management and urchin control strategies. These recommendations, these priorities, are based on research, evidence and consultation with the best brains in Tasmania, in Australia, in the world. We have set up a committee and they are working on that. We have a strategic plan, they have set priorities and we treat it very seriously. We are working with the key stakeholders, we are getting the best advice, we are acting on the recommendations and we have funding to back it. We are delivering and it is a big issue, it is a big challenge and there is more work to do.

CHAIR - You had a follow-up question, Dr Woodruff.

Dr WOODRUFF - Minister, can you point to any IMAS or other monitoring reports that show the Rock Lobster Translocation Program has helped to control centrostephanus? It is widely understood that the Rock Lobster Translocation Program is about supporting rock lobster fishers by improving the quality of the rock lobsters that can be caught and taken to market.

Mr BARNETT - One of the reasons we commenced and backed the Rock Lobster Translocation Program from the south-west to the east coast was based on evidence, research and our consultation with the key stakeholders, not only from the Rock Lobster Fishermen's Association, whose input we were grateful to receive. I and the previous minister took advice from the

UNCORRECTED PROOF ISSUE

department and that recommendation was taken into account. I will pass to the department to provide further detail with regard to that operational question.

Ms BOURNE - Thank you, minister. The Rock Lobster Translocation Program is predominately aiming at rebuilding stocks under the East Coast Rock Lobster Stock Rebuilding Strategy to improve our rock lobster stocks to greater than 20 per cent of the virgin biomass, all unfished stocked, by 2023. *Centrostephanus* is a natural range extension, it is not an invasive marine pest from that perspective.

Dr WOODRUFF - What does that mean?

Ms BOURNE - It is natural range extension from further north in Australia. It has come down rather than being an introduced marine pest from elsewhere in the world. It is coming because of changing climate and changing environment. Dealing with it will be a multi-pronged approach, rock lobster predation is one issue. The current subsidy for divers to remove urchin is another method. We have evidence to suggest that if you have urchin taken away from the environment and you can keep them away then the environment will rehabilitate. IMAS has done some work and had, as part of its education and outreach program, an excellent tank at Agfest around what an urchin barren looks like with urchin and how it can rehabilitate with time if the urchin is taken away.

Dr WOODRUFF - Through the minister, could you please ask for clarification, is there any evidence from IMAS or other monitoring reports that shows that translocation helps to control *centrostephanus*?

Mr BARNETT - I indicated earlier, a range of research, advice, the best information from key stakeholders was collated toward the recommendation, which has been taken on board. I will pass to the department to add anything they wish. We have never said that the translocation program will fix the problem, it will assist in progressing to address the problem.

Dr WOODRUFF - I would like to know why you have come to that conclusion.

Mr BARNETT - That is why we have a range of initiatives in place to address the issue, including the \$5.1 million we have invested in the abalone investment fund.

Ms BOURNE - We have asked IMAS to do some additional work, to conduct an evaluation and provide us with some information as to the efficacy of the current translocation program toward its current aim. The translocation program is not aimed at a *centrostephanus* control. It is aimed at increasing the stocks on the east coast.

Dr WOODRUFF - It does nothing. Well, you don't know that it does anything yet. You've asked IMAS to provide evidence whether it does anything to impact on *centrostephanus*. Your claim that it is doing that is not true.

Mr BARNETT - Through you, Chair, we have been verbaled, the member sitting opposite has tried to put words into my mouth and the Government's mouth and we don't accept that, Chair.

Dr WOODRUFF - I am trying to clarify what appears to be -

Mr BARNETT - We don't accept the member's efforts to verbal the department or me as the minister. We provide the responses, we set out the information. We have taken on board the advice and information of those key stakeholders. The department has made it clear that the translocation program consists of a range of objectives and we will continue to monitor that. Fionna Bourne has indicated that will continue. We are always in the position of looking for best practice, continual improvement, we'll assess the progress, we work with our stakeholders to ensure those objectives as originally set out are achieved. The departmental officer has indicated that we're doing that, which we will continue to do. We will work with those experts and the key stakeholders to achieve the objectives as agreed.

Dr BROAD - Minister, when did you first become aware that the government will be applying a land tax surcharge to international investors in Tasmanian primary production?

Mr BARNETT - Are we talking about the land tax surcharge?

Dr BROAD - Yes.

Mr BARNETT - That's in the Budget?

Dr BROAD - Yes. When did you first become aware?

Mr BARNETT - That's a question directly relevant to the Treasurer but also to me. I can't discuss what is discussed in Cabinet. I'm sure Dr Broad wouldn't want me to discuss what's discussed in Cabinet. I wouldn't suggest that I would break that convention today. The Treasurer has outlined the process for that over the coming months. There will be a consultation process and that's not due to commence until 1 January.

Dr BROAD - Minister, do you have any concerns about the potential impact on international investment in Tasmanian primary production land should there be a land tax surcharge applied?

Mr BARNETT - This Government supports foreign investment in Tasmania. It's a key part of the ingredient for growth in the economy and it has occurred in the past. I'm sure and confident it will occur in future. Tasmania needs domestic and foreign investment in agriculture and across our economy. Foreign investment brings needed capital, finance, technology and innovation. It's a key to enhancing opportunities, increasing productivity, it improves competitiveness in agriculture and across the economy. Australia has a robust foreign investment framework to ensure foreign investment benefits the country. We have a foreign investment review board, which I am sure Dr Broad is aware of.

Dr BROAD - Minister, do you agree that international investment in Tasmanian primary production land assets are a legitimate target for a land tax surcharge?

Mr BARNETT - Foreign investors pay and should pay a fair share of the state taxation and to ensure that occurs and it does not artificially drive up prices by reducing the supply of housing in primary production land, the Government introduced the Foreign Investor Duty Surcharge and the 2019-20 state budget will increase the rate of the FIDS on the purchase on residential property from 3 to 7 per cent, which will bring Tasmania into line with other states.

The rate of the FIDS on the purchase on the primary production land will also increase from 0.5 to 1.5 per cent and be introduced on the 1 January 2020 as the Treasury has made clear. The

UNCORRECTED PROOF ISSUE

review of the definition of 'foreign persons' will also be conducted to ensure it remains consistent with the Government original policy interest and policy objectives.

The Government in consultation with stakeholders is developing a land tax surcharge to apply to foreign ownership of residential and primary production land. The Treasury has made it very clear there will be a process undertaken from now through coming months and a plan for introduction on 1 January 2020.

Dr BROAD - Minister, are you concerned about the perception of sovereign risk as this land tax surcharge will apply retrospectively to international investors who have previously invested in Tasmania agriculture?

Mr BARNETT - What I am and the Australian people are concerned about was the Labor Party's plan for the biggest taxes on Australian people in political history.

Dr BROAD - I am asking specific questions about a land tax surcharge the Government is going to apply from 1 July and the minister is answering me with something completely irrelevant.

Mr BARNETT - You do not like the truth.

Dr BROAD - This is about -

CHAIR - Minister, I cannot direct you answer, but you do understand the subject of the question?

Mr BARNETT - Yes, but the question related to my concerns about foreign investment and investment in Australia and my concerns were far more about Labor's plans to heap the biggest taxes in Australia political history on the people of Australia and Tasmania and their small and large business alike.

The Treasurer has made it clear there is a process, consultation will take place, key stake holders will be consulted and we will have feedback. We want to have the balance right, we want to ensure that yes, they pay their fair share like Tasmanians.

Dr BROAD - Minister, Dutch Mill owns a number of dairy properties in Circular Head and proposing to restart the Edith Creek factory with is a key asset in Circular Head. What would be the potential impact on the land tax surcharge should it apply to them and what impact do you think it will have on the potential restart of the Edith Creek factory?

Mr BARNETT - The Government will consult with the TFGA which has a whole range of farmers and graziers as members and represents the industries.

I am sure those relevant stake holders are concerned and may include Dutch Mill. I would be more than happy to take on board their representations or view and present them to the Treasurer. I have made that clear since the Budget. I am happy to take on board those concerns.

I talked to some farmers and those in agri-business at the Campbell Town Show and I will try to put forward their views and ensure their views are consulted. Whether it is Dutch Mill or any other key stakeholder in the agriculture sector I represent, I would be more than happy to take on board their concerns to ensure the process considers their thoughts on the matter.

Mr TUCKER - We have had a very difficult season for beekeepers, can you outline the assistance provided by the Government to help the industry to recover?

Mr BARNETT - Thank you for the question. The honey industry and beekeepers in Tasmania are really important, We have been working very closely the bee industry. They have had some tough times. You might be aware of up to an 80 per cent drop in production for some of the honey producers in Tasmania. I have had a number of meetings with them. In fact, the Tasmanian Beekeepers Association had what was referred to publicly as a 'crisis meeting' on 14 February - Valentine's Day - and again on 19 March, a crisis meeting. I met with them. I consulted with them. I got feedback from them. I took it on board, together with the departmental representatives who had ongoing consultation and feedback with them. One of the first things I did before that meeting was to provide fee relief on licence fees on crown land. I consulted with Hydro Tasmania and STT. We were able to offer up to 12 months fee relief, and certainly that was welcome. I thank STT for positively considering that fee relief for the hives in forestry areas.

A number of the beekeepers were impacted by bushfires in eligible local government areas, so there was freight subsidy for primary producers there - bushfire business disruption, recovery grants and business recovery concessional loans. Obviously, that was made clear to them. Then I put a number of suggestions to the Beekeepers Association for consideration in terms of possible assistance. That included funding a part-time project officer for 12 months to assist in the implementation of the strategic initiatives of the Bee Industry Futures Program - \$150 000 from the Bee Industry Futures Funding to help supplement winter feeding costs.

This is a big issue. We are going into winter. There is a lack of feed. So, why not? That \$150 000 will help to feed the bees, to keep the bees alive and producing, coming into spring and summer later in this year. A further \$40 000 is to help meet the industry contribution to the cooperative research centres level and research project. That is doing research in and around leatherwood, which, as the member for Lyons knows, is a very important part of the industry in Tasmania.

The Beekeepers Association, after consulting with the Crop Pollination Association, has written back to me advising that the industry supports these three assistance measures. I am pleased that they have agreed and supported that. The department is now progressing the implementation of that going forward. The Government has already committed \$750 000 over three years to support the bee industry futures. It is really important. As I say, crop pollination across agriculture is so important; bees are the lifeline for so much of agriculture and so important to our honey industry in Tasmania. There has been consultation with the TFGA, with Fruit Growers Tasmania and other pollination dependent industries, that is for sure.

Leatherwood is a key concern. Given the bushfires on a number of productive leatherwood areas, the Government acknowledges that this is a key issue. We will keep consulting with the association going forward. It is part of the Tasmanian brand. We discussed that this morning; the importance of the Tasmanian brand. Honey is part of that. The bee industry makes a very important contribution to the wider economy and to the Tasmanian brand. We are supportive of the industry, we are backing it, and I am pleased to announce those initiatives today.

Dr BROAD - Minister, do you believe Botanical Resources Australia in Ulverstone, which owns a number of primary production assets, is not paying their fair share and should be subject to what amounts to an investor tax?

Mr BARNETT - Chair, we have the same question again. We are just using a different company. You referred to Dutch Mill previously, which I visited just some weeks ago, and BRA, which I visited a couple of months ago, are, of course, key parts of our agri-business sector.

Dr BROAD - Agreed. They are significant employers too.

Mr BARNETT - They are very important. We are pleased. We had a very productive and enjoyable visit, that's for sure. I appreciate their input and ongoing consultation with them and many other key stakeholders in agri-business and across the agricultural sector. As I have indicated, and the Treasurer has made very clear, there will be a process between now and 1 January, there will be opportunity for consultation. As minister responsible, I'm more than happy to take on board feedback from those in the sector and ensure that that feedback is fed into the process to ensure that we get the balance right.

CHAIR - It is 11 o'clock. If we could suspend as quickly as we can.

The committee suspended from 11 a.m. to 11.12 a.m.

Dr BROAD - Minister, do you believe that business such as Clovelly Farms, Tasmanian Hop Producers, Laguna Bay dairy farms in Circular Head, Rushy Lagoon, Karanja, for example are legitimate targets for a land tax surcharge and that they are not paying their fair share?

Mr BARNETT - I have talked about the importance of getting the balance right with foreign investment and domestic investment. It is really important to creating jobs, delivering opportunities for families, building up opportunities for businesses to do the best they can. I want Tasmania to achieve its potential and the Government does as well. We are trying to take Tasmania to the next level, to create more jobs and maintain the momentum investing for growth. That is what this Budget is all about. Peter Gutwein has delivered it in that regard. He has made it very clear there will be a process over the coming months with commencement on 1 January next year.

Dr BROAD - Minister, do you believe that farmers who have relocated from countries like the Netherlands or England for example should be subject to a land tax surcharge?

Mr BARNETT - We have made the process very clear; the Treasurer has outlined the process; you received those answers yesterday; you are asking the same question of me today as Minister for Primary Industries.

Dr BROAD - I am asking for your opinion, minister.

Mr BARNETT - I have made my confidence in agriculture very clear. I have outlined the 9 per cent increase in turnover over the 12-month period based on ABS stats and you know what, that is creating more jobs, particularly in rural and regional Tasmania. We have talked very extensively about that and that is why I am so confident and so hopeful and so positive about the future and I hope that you as shadow minister, Dr Broad, would likewise be positive.

Dr BROAD - Minister, what about people like SD Reid and Sons, who have international partners? Do you think they are a legitimate target for a land tax surcharge?

Mr BARNETT - We have just had an incessant direction from you and your questioning over the last number of hours on the exact same issue. I have outlined the process that the Treasurer outlined yesterday. It is very clear that there will be consultation and feedback. What we are on about is getting the balance right, growing our economy and creating more jobs, particularly in rural and regional Tasmania. What I am on about is taking agriculture to the next level to get to that \$10 billion by 2050 at the farmgate value for agriculture - guess what, we got a 9 per cent increase in the last 12 months to \$1.6 billion. We are so pleased and that is why we are working hand-in-glove with the industry and working shoulder to shoulder with the stakeholders to deliver on our plans.

Dr BROAD - How will this land tax surcharge assist in reaching those goals of that increase in production?

Mr BARNETT - When you were handing out how to vote cards with your federal Labor candidate and member for Braddon, which highlighted the \$400 billion-worth of tax -

Dr BROAD - Well, again.

CHAIR - No, I am allowing the minister to answer.

Mr BARNETT - You are talking about tax in Tasmania and you do not want to hear the truth. The truth is out of \$400 billion, Tasmania's share was 2 per cent, \$8 billion-worth of tax for Tasmania. Is that right, Dr Broad?

Dr BROAD - Come on, minister, let's just avoid the bullying answering.

CHAIR - Order. Gentlemen, order.

Mr BARNETT - You should be ashamed of yourself.

Dr BROAD - Well, maybe you should be answering some questions. Are you concerned the continued lack of detail with who this land tax surcharge will apply to? How much it will be and whether it will tackle percentage ownership et cetera? There is absolutely no detail about how this will apply. Are you concerned this continued lack of detail may have an impact on primary production investment until this uncertainty is cleared up?

Mr BARNETT - Chair, I have outlined the process. The Treasurer has been very detailed and comprehensive in his response yesterday.

Dr BROAD - He has not.

Mr BARNETT - There will be a process and an opportunity for consultation. As minister I am happy to take on board feedback from the agriculture sector and primary industries. You know that. I have said it countless times this morning prior to the break. I say it again now - my main concern and the people of Australia's main concern were with the high-taxing agenda of the Labor Party, and you keep talking about tax.

Dr BROAD - You're the one that is talking about tax.

UNCORRECTED PROOF ISSUE

Mr BARNETT - The biggest threat to Tasmania was a massive, unprecedentedly -

Dr BROAD - This is a brand-new tax your Government -

Mr BARNETT - higher tax on Tasmanian individuals, families and business.

CHAIR - Order. Dr Woodruff, you have the call.

Dr WOODRUFF - Thank you. Minister, will you please tell me how many marine farming leases are in existence in Tasmanian waters and could you table who owns each of those leases?

Mr BARNETT - It is an operational matter. I will ask the head of the Marine Farming Branch to come to the table to see if we can assist the committee accordingly. Fiona Bourne is the head of the Marine Farming Section. I'll check with John Whittington, the secretary, if he'd like to introduce and speak to this matter or pass directly to Fiona Bourne.

Dr WHITTINGTON - We do not have the number of leases. We will have to take that on notice and get back to you.

Dr WOODRUFF - And the list of who owns them.

Mr BARNETT - We got a question, Chair; the department and I am happy to take that on notice so if you -

CHAIR - You cannot get it back today?

Mr BARNETT - More than happy to take it on notice and get back to the committee.

CHAIR - Right. You have the option if you have the information today, you can report back.

Mr BARNETT - No, we have said we will take it on notice, Chair, and we will and we will get back to the committee accordingly.

Dr WOODRUFF - Minister, you are responsible, is that correct, for recording information about seal deterrents?

Mr BARNETT - Seal management, yes that is in my bailiwick. Happy to assist.

Dr WOODRUFF - Thank you. Would you be able to provide some information on a number of things to do with seal management?

Mr BARNETT - Yes.

Dr WOODRUFF - Particularly things occurred in this last financial year?

Mr BARNETT - Absolutely, be happy to assist the committee and thanks for the question in terms of seal management.

Dr WOODRUFF - There's a number of particular questions I have in relation to the seals.

UNCORRECTED PROOF ISSUE

Mr BARNETT - Not a problem.

Dr WOODRUFF - Would you like me to table them or -

Mr BARNETT - No, I would like to answer the questions as they arise and I will deal with those questions.

Dr WOODRUFF - Could you please tell me the number of seal deterrents and applications approved.

Mr BARNETT - Well, the first question was about seal management.

CHAIR - Dr Woodruff.

Dr WOODRUFF - No, I said I had some specific questions about seal deterrents, I was asking if you were the person I could ask them of.

CHAIR - You asked that first and then you asked another question about seal management so the minister is answering that.

Mr BARNETT - Let me assist the member and the committee accordingly. We have Seal Management Framework, endorsed by the previous Labor-Greens government in 2012, which we have updated, and I was pleased to be involved. The Seal Management Framework has been updated and the practice of seal relocations ended under the former minister in 2017 in response to community concerns. Animal welfare is an important consideration in any of these matters and the new authorised techniques take that into account. I emphasise that if anyone has information in relation to inappropriate use of authorised deterrents or animal welfare concerns in relation to the use of authorised deterrents, they should be referred to the appropriate authorities.

There are underlying minimum requirements that apply under the framework. The salmon companies continue to develop improved cages to keep seals out, to protect the fish and ensure a safe working environment for those involved in the sector and that should be noted. I am happy to talk more about the deterrents, perhaps the honourable member could put her next question to me.

Dr WOODRUFF - Can you provide details of the number of times the use of bean bags, so-called seal control units or crackers, were used in the last financial year by company?

Mr BARNETT - That is a very specific question. As an introductory measure noting minimum requirements and the deterrents you were referring to, the framework includes wildlife exclusion requirements for new fish pen designs and the removal of what are known as power heads, which are designed for the underwater deployment of bean bags, as an available seal deterrent option. Revised controls around seals sedation activities include improved monitoring and reporting procedures, providing an option for holding a trapped seal in captivity for an approved period as a standalone management tool, and a clearer requirement and controls for humane euthanasia of individual seals if they present an unacceptable and significant safety risk to farm workers. You can see that the framework is quite extensive. Does the secretary have anything to add?

Dr WHITTINGTON - We are collating the data for 2018-19 so we don't have the final data for this financial year. Through an RTI release, the data up to the end of the financial year 2017-18 has been released.

Dr WOODRUFF - Could I take that on notice?

Mr BARNETT - Could I offer to the member and the committee that I would be happy to take that on notice if you would like to put that forward, Dr Woodruff?

Dr WOODRUFF - Thank you, minister. Could you also provide the number of applications made for 'removal by human destruction', I believe that's a term, that were made to the department in the same period?

CHAIR - Could you clarify that? What was the term?

Dr WOODRUFF - Removal by human destruction - it is a term referring to killing seals.

Mr BARNETT - We can assist, and we will take that on notice.

Dr WOODRUFF - Can you also provide the figure for the number of times of tranquiliser guns were used on seals by authorised personnel in that period?

Mr BARNETT - I am happy to take that on notice.

Dr BROAD - Minister, during the federal election campaign the Morrison Government matched Labor's commitment of a \$100 million for tranche 3 irrigation projects. I would like to clarify a few things in the Prime Minister's announcement. During that announcement, Mr Morrison only referred to five projects - the Don Irrigation Scheme, the Sassafras Wesley Vale Irrigation Scheme augmentation, the Fingal Irrigation Scheme, the Northern Midlands Irrigation Scheme and the Tamar Irrigation Scheme. Can you clarify why only five projects were referred to by Mr Morrison?

Mr BARNETT - We are grateful to the Morrison Liberal Government. I thank Michael McCormack. I was among the carrots on the north-west coast when that announcement was made. It was well received by the farmers, graziers, irrigators and rural communities across Tasmania. That \$100 million commitment together with our Government's \$70 million commitment delivers \$170 million towards tranche 3 of the Pipeline to Prosperity and we are so proud of that plan. It's backed 100 per cent by rural stakeholders and I made further announcements around the opportunities with tranche 3 a few days ago.

With respect to the five you've identified - Don, Wesley Vale Sassafras, Northern Midlands, Fingal and Tamar - the commitment is to progress those through the planning and approval process in the normal way. The other five of the top 10 in tranche 3 would continue to progress through the planning process.

Tasmanian Irrigation has put forward a business plan, which has gone to the federal government and has been accepted by Infrastructure Australia as a priority project, for which we are very grateful. A lot of effort has been put into this by the department, my office and Tasmanian Irrigation. Submissions have gone to the National Water Infrastructure Development Fund. The business case has been put. The federal government has responded to that and has indicated a commitment of \$100 million.

The first commitment of tranche 3 is \$170 million in total and we will have irrigator investment on top of that. We are confident that those first five will proceed through the planning and approval

process. With further funding support from the federal government, state government and irrigators, our plan is for all of tranche 3 Pipeline to Prosperity to be delivered. That would deliver nearly \$500 million of investment in those top projects if they come to fruition, delivering 78 000 megalitres of water and thousands of jobs in rural and regional Tasmania. Water is liquid gold and we're backing the industry to the hilt.

Dr BROAD - Minister, is the federal government setting the priorities and saying these five are the priority? Why were these five projects singled out?

Mr BARNETT - It's because TI has gone through a very rigorous process. A lot of effort has gone into the Tasmanian Irrigation's submission. The department and my office have worked very closely with them. I thank the chair, Sam Hogg, for her leadership. The first phase is based on TI's expert advice. It includes projects that have progressed far enough that they could commence within 12 months of a funding agreement, which I'm advised is a key consideration for the National Water Infrastructure Development Fund. That's how the process works. I've outlined the process, we're backing it to the hilt and I'm keen to have bipartisan support.

Dr BROAD - We do support it. We backed it in with \$100 million. What about the South East Irrigation Scheme integration in the Southern Midlands? When will they commence? When will they become a priority?

Mr BARNETT - As I have indicated, those five I have identified and you've referred to and were referred to by the Prime Minister and others have gone through a process based on expert advice and information. Those five have secured the opportunity to progress to the next level to go through a planning approval process. You referred to the South-East Irrigation Scheme and Southern Midlands. Of course, they will then go into the planning process and will be considered in the usual way by Tasmanian Irrigation and the relevant decision-makers in Canberra.

Dr BROAD - Did the Prime Minister not mention these southern projects because they weren't in a marginal electorate?

Mr BARNETT - I think that is obviously an effort on your part to do some pointscoreing or political bashing when you should be supporting irrigation and the importance of jobs and growth and development in rural and regional Tasmania.

As you well know, out of those five that have been identified, Fingal is in the Lyons electorate, Northern Midlands is in the Lyons electorate, Tamar is in Bass and the Don is in Braddon and Wesley Vale and Sassafras are in Braddon.

Political pointscoreing won't do you any good, Dr Broad.

Dr BROAD - What input did you have in selecting the five that were announced?

Mr BARNETT - This is getting really silly now. You are getting really silly with your questions. You know very well there is a process, it's based on expert advice, I've just outlined the process with Tasmanian Irrigation. They have to go through a very vigorous process, it is required by the National Water Infrastructure Fund, it's required by Infrastructure Australia. There is a business case that's put together and it is very comprehensive. They get professional advice, they get independent advice and based on all their advice they put forward their submission. I am absolutely delighted with the professionalism of the work of Tasmanian Irrigation and the work

they have done, so frankly, you are bordering on reflecting on the credibility of Tasmanian Irrigation and those involved in the putting forward of those submissions, so I caution you, Dr Broad, in that regard.

Dr BROAD - Thank you for your caution, minister. In Mr Morrison's press release, he mentions that when these projects are complete, they will deliver 78 000 megalitres of water, 479 kilometres of pipeline, seven dams, 23 pump stations and four power stations.

Mr BARNETT - What are you reading from?

Dr BROAD - From the Prime Minister's major funding to do with irrigation to create jobs, his press releases. The figures of 78 000 megalitres, which you have also quoted in the past. How do you actually arrive at those figures?

Mr BARNETT - Those figures are based on rigorous advice, evidence and feedback, and are prepared by Tasmanian Irrigation. Those figures have been put together in a professional submission which has gone to Canberra. I have referred to those figures; the Prime Minister has referred to those figures. The Pipeline to Prosperity is a wonderful opportunity, tranche 3 of our irrigation projects. We have got runs on the board. This Hodgman Liberal Government has delivered big time. In tranche 2, we've got those four, we've got one to complete and one to do next year at Scottsdale. That is under construction, to be completed next year. We are on track. We are delivering. Of agricultural land, 8 per cent is irrigated, delivering more than 50 per cent of agricultural output. It is fantastic. It is liquid gold and we are making the most of it.

That's why we put forward a professional submission. What you're doing is questioning the credibility of Tasmanian Irrigation.

Dr BROAD - I am just trying to get [inaudible] these figures - where did they come from? I am just trying to get some details here.

Mr BARNETT - You are. By asking that question, you are questioning the credibility of Tasmanian Irrigation and I won't stand for it.

Dr BROAD - I am just trying to get some details here. You have said that there are 78 000 megalitres. The reason I am trying to clarify is that when I look at the Tasmanian Future Irrigation Project, for example, and it goes through these numbers of projects, it doesn't include the Don but I can only add up 46 000 megalitres. I am just trying to understand. Which report should I be looking at to arrive at the figure of 78 000 megalitres, 479 kilometres of pipeline, seven dams, 23 pump stations and four power stations?

Mr BARNETT - That's right. It's all in the business case that has been prepared by Tasmanian Irrigation - 78 000 megalitres - it is on the public record, it is set out in media releases, it is all in the business case that has gone to the National Water Infrastructure Fund and Infrastructure Australia. We're backing it in. Those priority projects they have identified are those top five that I've mentioned. With the funding that we've got, the \$70 million, \$100 million from federal government, the irrigators' funding, which will now go through that process which I kicked off just a few days ago, so it is on the public record. We are very supportive of all these programs, as is the TFGA, and as are so many other people in the farming and rural communities. It is really good and we are on track.

UNCORRECTED PROOF ISSUE

Dr BROAD - I am particularly interested in the power stations. Where will the power stations be in the [inaudible]?

Mr BARNETT - That is a good question. Thank you for the question. We have \$5.5 million in our Budget for renewable energy projects on irrigation assets, so this is really good. TI has been doing work and they will be doing further work. They will be seeking advice and assistance from experts to work out exactly where and when and how those irrigation schemes will be constructed and built. I will give you three examples that already operate: Meander Dam, Winnaleah, and the Northern Midlands. We already have mini-hydro there, and the whole purpose of this is to reduce the cost of doing business for our irrigators, for those in farming communities. This is a really exciting project.

The Government is so backing the benefit of water. We have 1 per cent of Australia's land mass and 13 per cent of Australia's water, and we want to make the most of it. We are doing it for hydro and for energy purposes, and indeed pumped hydro, to use the water again and again and again. Then we are using for reducing the cost of electricity. What this \$5.5 million will do is build mini-hydro and micro-hydro in the right place at the right time, under the right circumstances. That work has to be done by TI to determine exactly the circumstances and the terms and conditions around that. I made that announcement two days ago in the Northern Midlands. It is in a media release, which is on the public record. I am happy to speak further about it, I am very excited about it.

Dr BROAD - Are these power stations going to be on existing projects, or in the tranche 3?

Mr BARNETT - This will be determined by TI in due course. They have to seek advice and feedback. The advice I have is that they will be built on existing infrastructure.

Dr BROAD - Existing infrastructure, not on the new systems. Just to clarify, is that business case detailing the 78 000 megalitres publicly available?

Mr BARNETT - Yes. Could I just make a point Madam Chair? I am happy to assist the member, my shadow, because I am seeking support from everybody. To make it very clear, we are going into TI, which you know is a government business enterprise, obviously later in the year. You are getting into the work of TI and what they do.

Dr BROAD - This is about the funding side.

Mr BARNETT - I am trying to assist you. I am just saying TI is later in the year like every other GBE, but as minister I see no reason why, if you would like a briefing, I am absolutely delighted to offer a briefing from TI to you and others as required on these matters. If you just flick me an email and let's see if we can organise that, so that you can be better briefed.

Dr BROAD - Excellent. Minister, just talking now about the DPIPWE relocation. Why would it cost \$10 000 per person to relocate DPIPWE staff?

Mr BARNETT - In terms of the relocation, I can advise the committee that we are progressing well in terms of the promise we provided prior to the election to move 100 north, north-west. We are at 44, based on the most recent advice.

Dr BROAD - Are they people relocating, or positions filled?

Mr BARNETT - I am just trying to assist the committee accordingly, and the secretary is here with me, so we can give you more detail on that relocation. As of the latest information, we have got funding in the Budget for upgrades and renovations in the north, north-west to ensure we can adequately accommodate the additional presence of those members of DPIPWE up north. I must say I used to visit there with my dad in the 1960s, 1970s and 1980s and I am not sure that a lot has changed from the Prospect offices, but it does need upgrading and funding has been allocated for that. We can fill you in on that if you are interested.

In terms of the 44, I might see if the secretary can add to what I have already answered.

Dr WHITTINGTON - With the Government's commitment to the 100 positions in the north and north-west, the department has developed several policies to implement that commitment. One of those is a voluntary relocation assistance policy, so this is for people who voluntarily want to move from the south to a position in the north or north-west.

Essentially that policy is open to anyone in the department who chooses to work in the north and is happy to find a job in the north. As part of the assistance policy, the policy provides for the costs associated with removal, consistent with anybody who is moving as a requirement of their job. It includes things like assistance with moving your house, your goods, sale of house, those sorts of things, so that the policy is consistent with someone who is being forced to be moved; this is all voluntary.

The other part of the policy is that when any position that becomes vacant within the agency, we make a decision whether that job can be performed in the north. If it can be performed in the north, we advertise in the north. There are exceptions to that, but it is done on a case-by-case basis. Through that process, as the minister said, over about a 12-month period, we have 44 positions that wouldn't have necessarily been in the north now in the north.

Of those, three are people who have voluntarily moved, and the balance are through determining that the role should be in the north. These are positions that weren't previously in the north, so these are new positions in the north, and that is how we got to 44.

Dr BROAD - When you advertised for positions, I have seen on a number of occasions it doesn't specify a location, it says location to be -

Dr WHITTINGTON - Most of our advertisements will say where the location is. If not, there will be a business case reason for that, and it might be that the job has been advertised once already and we haven't been able to fill it, then we have opened up the geography. I know that has happened on several occasions. We have not been doing that for SES positions. We've been doing it for [inaudible] and advertising statewide too.

Dr BROAD - I am still trying to get a handle on how we come to \$10 000 per person, when we have three that have relocated, of 44 positions, and three have located. So how do we actually arrive at that \$10 000 per person figure?

Dr WHITTINGTON - The budget for this initiative is \$2.4 million, of which \$600 000 is for capital, which we are using to upgrade the facilities, and the balance is to assist with the relocation policies. To date we have had three people, and I couldn't tell you the exact cost of their removals, but there is no cap in the sense of the way you are saying it.

Mr BARNETT - You said per person.

Dr BROAD - That is the figure if you do the calculation, 100 positions, and the funding works out to be \$10 000 per person.

Mr BARNETT - The secretary has just advised me that it is \$2.4 million over four years, which includes capital funding of \$600 000 to support the capital works and fit-out of the office spaces.

Dr BROAD - That leaves a substantial amount remaining for those relocation costs, when we have triggered three. Minister, does the secretary count as a northern staff member now, or a southern staff member?

Mr BARNETT - In terms of the secretary, the secretary can respond.

Dr WHITTINGTON - I am not included in the numbers I gave you.

Mr BARNETT - The secretary is based in the north, if that is what your question was.

Ms O'CONNOR - Minister, you are responsible for Crown lands. Are able to tell the committee the total area of Crown land in Tasmania, and the area that is under lease or has been sold?

Mr BARNETT - Let's see if we can have the head of Crown Land Services to come forward, Jason Jacobi, and we will assist in answering that question.

CHAIR - Thank you.

Ms O'CONNOR - The question is, what is the current total area of crown land in Tasmania? What area of that crown land is currently subject to lease, or licence?

Mr JACOBI - I do not have that.

Mr BARNETT - It is quite detailed, but let's see if we can assist, and then we'll see if we can come back to you with further detail, but I will pass to the secretary.

Dr WHITTINGTON - At June 2018, the area of crown land administered by the Parks and Wildlife Service was approximately 445 000 hectares. This figure includes public reserves, the Wellington Park Public Reserve, unallocated crown land and future potential production forest.

Ms O'CONNOR - Thank you, Dr Whittington. Do you have the data for June 2017 and June 2016?

Dr WHITTINGTON - I have it for March 2014.

Ms O'CONNOR - I am happy to have that as well, thanks.

Dr WHITTINGTON - The area of crown land administered by the department was 84 100 hectares in March 2014.

UNCORRECTED PROOF ISSUE

Ms O'CONNOR - Is the difference that the 356 000 hectares of high-conservation value forest is now listed as informal reserves under DPIPWE's management?

Mr BARNETT - Can I suggest that it could be, in part? There may be other reasons for that as well. But I don't see -

Ms O'CONNOR - It should not be a contentious question. They just add it up for you.

Mr BARNETT - No, I will see if the secretary can add to my answer.

Dr WHITTINGTON - The majority of it will be the future potential production forest land, minister.

Ms O'CONNOR - Have there been any negotiations with private developers or commercial interests over access to crown lands outside the Tasmanian Wilderness World Heritage Area and other protected lands under the Nature Conservation Act?

Dr WHITTINGTON - Yes.

Ms O'CONNOR - Are you able to provide any information to the committee on those negotiations, and what those developments on public land are?

Dr WHITTINGTON - I am just trying to think of particular examples.

Mr BARNETT - For *Hansard* purposes, we need to get this. I am sure the member will be interested. You might need to just pull that microphone over a little bit.

Ms O'CONNOR - Just to clarify. Mr Jacobi said they largely relate to the Government's expressions of interest process.

Mr BARNETT - I will assist the committee through you, Chair. Jason Jacobi, could you respond to the question?

Mr JACOBI - Yes, there are some parcels of crown land that are included as part of the expressions of interest process, and they were addressed during the minister for parks' session a couple of days ago.

Ms O'CONNOR - Are you able to, in this session, provide the information to the committee on what those areas of crown land are?

Dr WHITTINGTON - We would have applications to use crown land from a range of sources. Some, as Mr Jacobi has said, would have come through an EOI process - that was the one Jason was referring to - but we also get other applications for use of crown land through the historic process, the direct approach to crown lands for the use of crown land for commercial purposes. Those commercial purposes range from all sorts of things, from use as slipways, for businesses along the coast or for crown land in towns. There is a whole range of business purposes that people use crown land for.

UNCORRECTED PROOF ISSUE

Ms O'CONNOR - Thank you, Dr Whittington, and through you, minister: the question actually related to the expressions of interest process, and how much of the crown land currently subject to lease or licence negotiations relates to the commercial development agenda of your Government.

Mr BARNETT - Perhaps if I could take that question, and then I will check if the secretary has anything else to add. We should note that the EOI process is a process relevant to the Premier and indeed Parks and Wildlife, and we are dealing with crown land, but we are happy to try and assist to the extent that we can with respect to crown land. We are getting questions regarding the EOI process. Obviously, that's relevant to another minister.

Ms O'CONNOR - Thanks for your clarification, minister, but the question was specific to the connection between the EOI process and crown lands that commercial developers are seeking to access, so it is relevant to your portfolio. We are trying to find out what rent seekers are wanting to access particular areas of public land?

Mr BARNETT - So you are asking a question at least in part that relates to crown land and the process for considering leases and licences. I'll pass to the secretary to respond.

Ms O'CONNOR - Could you please ask the secretary to provide information about what areas of crown land, which was three questions ago.

Mr BARNETT - We are doing our best to answer your questions.

Dr WHITTINGTON - The process, as you are very aware, the Coordinator-General's office administers the EOI process. Once a decision has been taken then that application can go through to the lease and licence negotiation.

Ms O'CONNOR - Without public consultation.

Dr WHITTINGTON - Then it goes to relevant minister for their portfolio so -

Ms O'CONNOR - Without public consultation.

Mr BARNETT - Sorry, through you, Chair. I'd really appreciate it if the secretary had the opportunity to answer the question without interruption.

CHAIR - It is the usual process for public servants not to be interrupted.

Dr WHITTINGTON - In this process, if an application has some or all of its footprint on the tenure of crown land, it will come into the portfolio administered by Mr Barnett as crown lands minister. Then we will deal with that application through the normal process that we would have in place for considering lease or licence on crown land.

Ms O'CONNOR - I understand that. Thank you, Dr Whittington, for your answer. That wasn't the question. I understand the process very well, as you pointed out at the beginning of your answer.

What we are trying to establish is what areas of crown land are currently subject to lease and licence through the expressions of interest process for commercial developments on public lands. No idea? Mr Jacobi's shrugging.

UNCORRECTED PROOF ISSUE

Mr BARNETT - It is a very detailed question. We will do our best to answer it. I'll pass to the secretary accordingly.

Dr WHITTINGTON - Once the process goes into leasing and licence negotiation then what I can endeavour to do is to breakdown by tenure the applications that we've got. As you would be aware, sometimes there is a very small part of crown land that might be a part of a project. I don't want to speculate without analysing the applications. But we can do that.

Ms O'CONNOR - Do you want me to put it on notice?

Mr BARNETT - If you would like to. I don't have any problem with taking it on notice. If you could be specific with your question, we'll do our best to answer it.

Ms O'CONNOR - I have been very specific three times.

Mr BARNETT - If you put it through the usual process, we will do our best.

Dr BROAD - Minister, in responses to discussions around an efficiency dividend, the Treasurer has mentioned issues such as methods to reach that efficiency dividend; vacancy control and natural attrition et cetera.

Mr BARNETT - Yes.

Dr BROAD - What impact will that have on the relocation of DPIPWE staff from the south to the north?

Mr BARNETT - There has been extensive discussion with the Treasurer regarding the efficiency dividend. Treasury will be consulting with my secretary in my department with respect to identifying those savings of 0.75 per cent efficiency dividend, much less than many other jurisdictions across the country. Obviously, we are doing our best to minimise the impact on service delivery. That includes in the north and north-west. We have made it very clear that expenditure such as consultants, travel, advertising, targeted vacancies and natural attrition will be particularly relevant. I'm not going to speculate on exactly how that will roll out. We are sitting here in early June. The secretary will be thinking this through and consulting with the Treasury with respect to the relocation north.

We have a policy position of the moving 100 positions north and north-west. That is progressing very well with 44 of the 100. That is over this term of government. We are just over 12 months - a bit more than that - and we are progressing very positively in achieving that objective of 100. We are on track. I will see if the secretary has anything else to add to my answer.

Dr WHITTINGTON - As you have said, we will be working over coming months to develop a savings measures plan that will be designed to meet the budget task with the most impact on the department of service delivery.

Dr BROAD - As you said in your answer previously, the majority of those 44 were new positions that could be potentially applicable to the north, so they were relocated to the north. Would that not be a potential target for natural attrition, so if somebody resigns they will not be moved to the north if you have a vacancy control mechanism in place.

UNCORRECTED PROOF ISSUE

Mr BARNETT - Perhaps if I kick it off and just make it very clear that we have a policy commitment. We took a promise to the election of 100 positions in the north or north-west. We are totally committed to that promise and to implementing it. We are on track with 44, as of the latest advice I have received. The secretary can add to that answer if he feels he can. We are on track and we have every intention of fulfilling our commitment.

Dr WHITTINGTON - I will add to that. The turnover of staff in an agency that has about 1400 people in it is considerable on a yearly basis. So, there will be a lot of opportunities to look for positions to move to the north through that, I believe.

Dr BROAD - Minister, when is the Tasmanian Institute of Agriculture deed due for renewal?

Mr BARNETT - The deed.

Dr BROAD - The agreement between the state Government and the university.

Mr BARNETT - I will check if we have the relevant officer with us at the table for the Tasmanian Institute of Agriculture. When you say the deed, which deed?

Dr BROAD - There is a funding agreement between the Government and the university with regards to funding TIA and its ongoing operations.

Mr BARNETT - Thank you for the question. I will ask the secretary to assist on that matter.

Dr WHITTINGTON - The current joint venture agreement is due for renewal at the end of the financial year.

Dr BROAD - Would that joint venture agreement be potentially subject to an efficiency dividend?

Mr BARNETT - We will be acting on Treasury advice and as instructed by the Treasurer. I have already said in this hearing that we will not be ruling anything in or out. We are focused on consultancies, advertising and travel. The secretary will be liaising with Treasury accordingly so I am not going to pre-empt any decision-making today, tomorrow or in the weeks and months ahead. So, that is the answer.

Dr BROAD - Are you saying that the funding for TIA is not quarantined.

Mr BARNETT - What I am saying is the funding we have provided in the Budget going forward for TIA is in the budget papers. I can fill you in a bit more about that and the strong support we have for research and investment in research that supports not just TIA but the work of research in agriculture, our agricultural farms research facilities in the south and north and the north-west. We are pleased and proud about that. All of that of course will assist us in getting to the \$10 billion by 2050. We have increased the core funding for TIA in the Budget and established a \$3 million agricultural and innovation fund and \$7 million investment to modernise our Crown and TIA research farm assets. We are on track in the Budget

Dr BROAD - I am trying to get an understanding whether or not it is quarantined.

UNCORRECTED PROOF ISSUE

Mr BARNETT - The Budget has increased funding support for TIA: \$3 million for agricultural innovation fund; a \$7 million investment for modernising our crown and TIA research farm assets in the north, north-west and the south; and TIA is the government preferred supplier of publicly funded agricultural RD&E services with opportunity to establish for working in partnership with the private sector, industry-based research and development corporations. Yes, there is a funding agreement with the University of Tasmania also very important.

Dr BROAD - There is a line item appropriate to each department and each output et cetera. We have heard each of those outputs is potentially subject to an efficiency dividend. I am trying to seek clarification whether that commitment to the Tasmanian Institute of Agriculture is quarantined from an efficiency dividend.

Mr BARNETT - The Government has already made a commitment to invest \$7 million over the three years to modernise and to upgrade TIA research farms. We are building on the initial \$2.9 million allocated over four years for research and development. A number of projects are underway. I have met with the TIA advisory board and they do important research work.

I am keen to ensure is their work is providing practical outcomes for our farmers and farm communities. There is a lot of research being undertaken, smart farming is one across different sectors of agriculture, red meat, dairy, crops and the like. There is good work being undertaken, The Treasurer, the secretary and I are not going to rule anything in or out today.

Ms O'CONNOR - Minister, back to the crown land's question, table 10.10, page 246. Why are lease and licence agreement targets ramping up so rapidly. We have gone from 252 in the year 2016-17 to 303 the following year to a target of 410 this year and next year. Can you give us year-to-date figures for the number of lease and licence agreements in this financial year?

Mr BARNETT - We will check if Jason Jacobi, the head of Crown Land Services to assist in answering this question and may want to assist the secretary in answering the question. I should say as an introductory remark because the economy is growing so strongly -

Ms O'CONNOR - Tell that to the people sleeping at the Domain.

Mr BARNETT - and the strongest jurisdiction in Australia, confirmed yesterday, we are very pleased with that and as a result of there is evidence by the land transactions occurring across the crown land asset portfolio. It has a whole range of ramifications and flow-on effect. The secretary and/or the head of Crown Land Services may be able to add to the answer.

Dr WHITTINGTON - I do not have year to date data on the number of leases for this year issued.

Ms O'CONNOR - I will put that on notice.

Mr BARNETT - I am happy to take that specific question on notice in the usual way.

Ms O'CONNOR - Why was the value of sales of crown land \$1 million higher in 2017-18 than it was in the previous year and can you give year-to-date figures of value of sales in this financial year?

Mr BARNETT - With the sale of crown land Parks and Wildlife Service and Treasury advise during the period 1 January 2010 to 24 May 2019, they have totalled 677 parcels. The total area of crown land sold by Parks and Wildlife Services in 2017-18 financial year was 23.8 hectares with an average parcel size of 0.85 hectares. The total area of crown land sold by the Parks and Wildlife Service to 24 May 2019 to 2018-19 financial year is 22.76 hectares with an average parcel size of 0.84 hectares. The most common reasons for wanting to purchase crown land are to rectify an encroachment, provide necessary additional area for a development or secure an access.

Ms O'CONNOR - Minister, I understand the federal government has just announced the deregulation of a range of new genetic modification techniques that are referred to as site-directed nucleases-1 one or SDN-1; did the Tasmanian Government oppose these proposed changes?

Mr BARNETT - Obviously that relates to the GMO moratorium that we have in place. I will commence my response by saying that we do have a moratorium. We have had a consultation process that recently concluded. There was a good deal of feedback from members of the public. We need to act by November this year because legislation is in place to extend that five-year extension of the moratorium and that concludes in November. We have commenced that process. We got feedback from those relevant stakeholders and members of the public as well. Previous reviews have found no reason to change Tasmania's moratorium. The Liberal Government has strongly supported this position in the past, but we are going through due process. It is really important to Tasmania. The Premier was in Japan just a month or so ago and the feedback there, likewise, was to highlight the importance of the GMO moratorium in Tasmania. I note that as introductory remarks in response to your question.

Ms O'CONNOR - Minister, the question was whether the Tasmanian Government opposed the changes and if so, are you prepared to table your response to the proposed deregulation and if not, why not?

Mr BARNETT - In terms of SDN-1 and national gene technology reviews which includes SDN-1, the review of the moratorium follows two recent national reviews of the gene technology regulation. The first was in October 2018 and there was a forum, the Legislative and Governance Forum on Gene Technology. It was made up of representatives from each jurisdiction and endorsed the recommendations of the National Gene Technology Scheme review. The Tasmanian Government supported the recommendation, which will help to ensure that the overarching framework for regulating GMOs in Australia keeps pace with emerging technologies and continues to safeguard health, safety and the environment.

Second, the independent Gene Technology Regulator also undertook a technical review of the Commonwealth Gene Technology Regulations 2001. Significant advances in biotechnology have outdated the legislation for regulating GMOs. This technical review was in part to clarify whether organisms developed using several new technologies are subject to regulation as GMOs and to ensure that new technologies are regulated in a manner commensurate with the risk they pose. In April 2019 -

Ms O'CONNOR - Can I get some clarify, minister - sorry, to interrupt -

Mr BARNETT - I am addressing it, please, if you would just bear with me. In April 2019, the federal Minister for Health announced amendments to the Commonwealth Gene Technology Regulations as proposed by the regulator. These amendments will explicitly regulate most genome editing techniques as being GMOs under the legislation. One technique, known as SDN-1, will,

however, be excluded from regulation. This is based on those organisms modified by SDN-1 techniques posing no different risks and being indistinguishable from non-GMO.

The Tasmanian Government strongly advocated for Tasmania's interests in the context of brand and markets for our agrifood products and as I have said, access to markets - I referred to the Premier's time in Japan - which values our agriculture and food as safe, clean, sustainable and in many cases GMO-free is critical to Tasmania. The Commonwealth changes to regulation will commence in three phases from October 2019 onwards. With our own moratorium review currently underway, this provides both ample time and opportunity for the Tasmanian Government to plan how these changes will be implemented.

Ms O'CONNOR - Minister, can you confirm that the Tasmanian Government remains not only committed to the GMO moratorium, which we would argue should be a permanent ban, and that this moratorium will include organisms modified using SDN-1?

Mr BARNETT - We have put out for public consultation and feedback on GMOs. We have been through that process, we are analysing the feedback and the department will get back to me with a report and advice. The Government has strongly supported a moratorium in the past. I will not pre-empt the Government's position but it will need to be made clear in advance of November this year. There will be further discussion about this.

Ms O'CONNOR - The Tasmanian Government didn't oppose the deregulation of STN-1, is that what you are confirming?

Mr BARNETT - I have already indicated to you that the Tasmanian Government strongly advocated for Tasmania's interests in the context of branded markets -

Ms O'CONNOR - That is not the question.

Mr BARNETT - for our agrifood products.

Ms O'CONNOR - What is the state's position on STN-1.

Mr BARNETT - I was not at the conference.

Ms O'CONNOR - You do not have a briefing as Minister for Primary Industries and Water.

Mr BARNETT - I am the minister, as of 31 October last year. There have been a number of conferences. I think I have answered the question.

Ms O'CONNOR - No, you haven't.

Mr BARNETT - As to changes regarding STN-1, the regulations will be relevant to October.

Ms O'CONNOR - Dr Whittington would have the answer. He would have been the secretary at the time.

Mr BARNETT - That will be relevant to October 2019 and onward and more work needs to be done. There will be more discussion but I will not pre-empt the outcomes of the report and

UNCORRECTED PROOF ISSUE

recommendations to come back to me. I look forward to reviewing that, considering it, discussing it with my Cabinet colleagues and responding accordingly.

Ms O'CONNOR - You haven't discussed it to date because you don't know whether we opposed it.

Ms BUTLER - In respect to your previous answers as to austerity measures and seeking efficiency dividends from your department, in August 2018 I tabled 35 questions on notice in the House of Assembly and I still have not had a response to those questions. They were prorogued and resubmitted. Two of those questions deal with travel and you keep referring to the efficiency dividend coming from that area. Are you interested to answer those questions? If not, may I submit them on notice?

Mr BARNETT - The parliament was prorogued for a time. The efficiency dividend is really important, we have to balance the budget. We have had a \$500 million writedown in revenues for the state Budget. The Treasurer made that very clear in his budget response. We need to adapt and be agile. You have seen what has happened in other jurisdictions under Labor and Liberal governments on the mainland, with efficiency dividends 2 or 3 per cent and we are looking at 0.75 per cent. We are cognisant of the importance of delivering frontline services. The secretary needs to take all these things into account. I cannot pre-empt the decision of the secretary and the department. We want to continue momentum for development and we will be investing for growth.

Ms BUTLER - In respect to staff travel, did any employees of the Department of Primary Industries, Parks, Water and Environment undertake travel during the financial year 2017-18 and, if so, what was the total cost of this staff travel?

Mr BARNETT - I am happy to follow up on questions you have put on notice. I don't have any intention to answer questions put on notice. We will endeavour to respond those.

Ms BUTLER - I would like to have it stated on the *Hansard* that there are over 35 questions that I have put on notice in the House of Assembly from August 2018 and I haven't had a response.

CHAIR - Do you have a question?

Ms BUTLER - Is this usual etiquette for your Department of Primary Industries, Parks, Water and Environment not to answer questions on notice?

Ms O'CONNOR - It's not only the department, it is a culture across government.

Mr BARNETT - I will look into that. Which questions are going on notice? You have already put your questions on notice. I said I am happy to follow up on that. Is there anything else?

Ms BUTLER - I asked if I could submit them on notice now because when they were submitted in the House of Assembly and they have not been since August. There are two that relate to travel, which is pertinent to your austerity measures and efficiency dividend. If I could take those two now.

Mr BARNETT - I am happy to take any questions here today. We are in budget Estimates. I am happy to take questions with respect to the Budget and related matters.

UNCORRECTED PROOF ISSUE

Ms BUTLER - They are.

Mr BARNETT - You need to ask me and we will try to respond to those questions. I will follow up on your 30 or more questions on notice. You said some of those relate to me and some are across government. I am not familiar with the rest of them.

Ms BUTLER - With all due respect, minister, I did ask the first question and you said you were happy to take that on notice.

Mr BARNETT - I said I am happy to follow up and check where they are at. I am not going to take them on notice today. You have to ask me the question and I will try to answer the question. With respect to all the other questions you have put on notice, I will make an inquiry to see what has happened to them.

Ms BUTLER - Okay. Did any employees of the Department of Primary Industries, Parks, Water and Environment undertake travel during the financial year 2017-18? If so, what was the total cost of this staff travel?

Mr BARNETT - You are asking me and the department if any member of staff in the department undertook travel during the financial year?

Ms BUTLER - During the financial year 2017-18 and, if so, what was the total cost of this staff travel?

Mr BARNETT - I can help with the second part of the question. If you are asking whether travel has been undertaken by the staff, I can assure you there has been. They have a lot of work to do across the state, interstate and elsewhere. They do a lot of important work and I am thankful for their work. In terms of the expenditure of travel, that has been passed to the secretary.

Dr WHITTINGTON - I can break it down into domestic and overseas. The financial year 2017-18 domestic travel expenditure as at 30 April was \$955 000. Overseas travel at that same date in that financial year was \$79 180. A lot of the overseas travel is funded by Australian Government funding. The cost to the Consolidated Fund was \$48 535 in the year 2017-18.

Ms BUTLER - Thank you. The second question was; did any ministerial staff of the Minister for Primary Industries and Water's office undertake travel during the financial year 2017 and, if so, what was the total cost of this staff travel?

Mr BARNETT - Members of my staff travel from time to time. They do a great job. I feel very supported by the staff. I am proud of them, they are a great team and they are acting in the best interests of Tasmania and are lifting Tassie agriculture to the next level. Staff travel and accommodation is part of the process. I go to COAG and ministerial meetings interstate and elsewhere from time to time, all that is legitimate travel. My staff go with me from time to time. I have a summary of some of those areas and I can give you a quick summary of those ministerial meetings I have had.

Ms BUTLER - I am looking for the total cost of staff travel.

Mr BARNETT - For which year?

Ms BUTLER - For 2017-18.

Mr BARNETT - I can take that on notice and get back to you. There are no other questions I have from the honourable member on notice. I am happy to follow up on those other matters you have raised.

Ms O'CONNOR - Minister, this relates to the Animal Welfare Inspectorate within DPIPW and Biosecurity Tasmania.

Mr BARNETT - I will introduce Dr Lloyd Klumpp, who is the head of Biosecurity Tasmania.

Ms O'CONNOR - Thank you and further question to you, minister, will probably be answered by Dr Klumpp.

Have there been any reports of animal welfare concerns or potential breaches of the Animal Welfare Act at Van Diemens Land Company since it was taken over by the new owners?

Mr BARNETT - That is a detailed operation question.

Ms O'CONNOR - No, it is not.

Mr BARNETT - I will pass to Lloyd Klumpp who may be able to assist. I am not sure if he is, but we'll check?

Ms O'CONNOR - We have some information there may have been, so we need some transparency here.

Dr KLUMPP - I am not aware of a complaint around Van Diemens Land.

Ms O'CONNOR - At the property?

Dr KLUMPP - The property, yes.

Ms O'CONNOR - You are not aware of any animal welfare issues being raised, or of any inspections at the property?

Mr BARNETT - When are you referring to?

Ms O'CONNOR - Since the property changed hands.

Mr BARNETT - Do you know the date of that? Have you got that information?

Ms O'CONNOR - They changed hand about 2015? The Tasmanian consortium was unsuccessful.

Mr BARNETT - Obviously, as a government and the department cannot go into personal, private and confidential matters, but I certainly will not be allowing confidential information to be released. Obviously, I state up-front we treat animal welfare very seriously. It is a very important matter and have been very proactive. I will check if Lloyd could add to the answer?

UNCORRECTED PROOF ISSUE

Dr KLUMPP - I can tell the committee there have been 289 complaints, statewide. Of those 289, about 10 per cent of those reach our tier 3 or 4 levels.

Ms O'CONNOR - Can you explain to the committee what that means? Does that relate to footnote 12 -

High risk animal use refers to intensive farming activities, that if not controlled adequately, and in accordance with standards, can present an animal welfare risk.

CHAIR - Ms O'Connor, can you please tell us what page you are on, please?

Ms O'CONNOR - Page 243 - table 10.8.

Mr BARNETT - Thank you for that. Page 243, did you say?

Ms O'CONNOR - Table 10.8. We are trying to determine if there have been inspections or concerns raised about animal welfare issues at VDL.

Mr BARNETT - It is a detailed question relating to a range of matters, but I am wondering if Lloyd Klumpp could answer that question.

Dr KLUMPP - I will answer the question about the system we use first. We have had 289 complaints this year. We deal with those complaints through essentially a tiered approach, that applies standards to our officers about how they operate. Of those 289, about 40 per cent were unsubstantiated. It was very easy to work out from the initial complaint it was not an animal welfare thing at all and they might've been complaining about something entirely outside the realm of animal welfare.

Then we have a tiered level - tier 1, 2, 3 and 4. Tier 1 - complaints are assessed as requiring advice, rather than any sort of regulatory action - 40 per cent of the 289 fit into that tier. That may be simply about somebody who needs advice on how to feed in a particular circumstance.

Ms O'CONNOR - Has that taken place and the level of involvement of the Animal Inspectorate Division of Biosecurity Tasmania in the VDL company?

Dr KLUMPP - No, this is generally.

Mr BARNETT - No, let Lloyd answer that part and we will come to your second question.

Ms O'CONNOR - The question is specific to VDL, minister.

Mr BARNETT - I want Lloyd to have the chance to answer your first question.

Dr KLUMPP - Tier 2 are those that are at serious risk and that we require our officers to visit the property and inspect. They have a standard for those ones where they need to conduct that investigation within a period of three days. They have to get out to that property within three days. The assessment is made that the animals are not at immediate risk, but an investigation needs to be conducted fairly quickly.

UNCORRECTED PROOF ISSUE

Tier 3 are those where we want immediate action, so put down the phone, get in your car and deal with it.

Ms O'CONNOR - Minister, to the original question.

Mr BARNETT - Repeat the original question.

Ms O'CONNOR - I am loath to because we have so few questions at the table. If I repeat it, it will be counted as another question.

The original question was: have there been any reports of animal welfare concerns at VDL since it was sold to new owners; if yes, what are they and how have they been resolved?

DR KLUMPP - I am not aware of those complaints. There may well be complaints, but I am not aware of them, but I can't talk about individual investigations while an investigation is happening.

Ms O'CONNOR - Is there an investigation into animal welfare issues at VDL?

Dr KLUMPP - I do not know that and even if I did, I don't know that I would be in a position to name individual cases.

Ms O'CONNOR - You can't say whether or not there has been concern raised about animal welfare issues at VDL? You can't confirm it or deny it?

Dr KLUMPP - I don't have that information.

Ms O'CONNOR - You don't have that information?

Mr BARNETT - It is a very tricky area. Obviously, the officer can't speak about individual investigations, particularly if they are underway. It would be totally inappropriate and unprofessional for Dr Klumpp to do that and Dr Klumpp has indicated that is not possible. He has been able to be of assistance to the member, but we have to be very careful not to cross over into prejudicing any investigation or legal matter.

Ms O'CONNOR - I do respect that very much.

Mr BARNETT - There was a second part to the question, so I would like to see if the secretary can assist the member with second part of the question.

Dr WHITTINGTON - Dr Klumpp was going to explain what the performance measure high-risk food safety areas without significant findings was because you asked what that meant.

Mr BARNETT - Food safety risk?

Ms O'CONNOR - No. This relates to animal welfare.

Dr WHITTINGTON - You asked that question.

UNCORRECTED PROOF ISSUE

Ms O'CONNOR - I was seeking clarification on whether that was the section of the Budget the question related to.

Mr BARNETT - If Dr Klumpp could quickly address that.

Dr KLUMPP - The process we have for maintaining the standards within establishments requires us to audit against a set of standards. There is a set of standards in place, we audit against those standards and the standards range from things that don't have a direct impact on food safety or animal welfare - record keeping, for example - all the way through to what we call significant findings where there is actually an impact on animal welfare or like the food safety outcomes.

Ms O'CONNOR - Thank you, Dr Klumpp, that's fine.

Minister, the new owners also promised fresh milk deliveries to China. Do you know if this has occurred, and has there been any state government inquiry as to why some of the promises made by the new owners have not been met, including the promise to inject \$100 million over five years into Tasmania and to make massive shipments of fresh milk to China?

Mr BARNETT - The answer is, I am not aware and I am not able to answer that question. It may be relevant to State Growth, which may be able to assist you but from -

Ms O'CONNOR - It is a major farm in the north-west. Are they exporting fresh milk or not?

Mr BARNETT - I haven't got the information to assist you. I am happy to take that on notice if you would like me to follow up.

Ms O'CONNOR - Can I clarify with Dr Klumpp before we go to this? Are you confirming that there isn't regular inspection of intensive farming operations? Just from Dr Klumpp's explanation before, I am asking the minister, through you, or perhaps you can answer this, are there not regular inspections of intensive farming operations?

Mr BARNETT - It is fair to say that we take animal welfare very seriously. Of course, the inspector is busy.

Ms O'CONNOR - So seriously that you lifted the ban on 1080 -

CHAIR - Order.

Ms O'CONNOR - You made sure that battery hen industry flourished.

CHAIR - Order, Ms O'Connor.

Mr BARNETT - It is treated very seriously. That is why we support the work of Biosecurity Tasmania and the Inspectorate, and I will see if Dr Klumpp wants to add to that answer.

Dr KLUMPP - Yes, we do.

Ms O'CONNOR - Regular inspections? Audits of intensive farming operations? When was the last intensive farming order -

CHAIR - No, Ms O'Connor that question does not go to public servants.

Dr BROAD - Minister, how will Biosecurity Tasmania orders be collected? That is \$2.626 million per year; how is that going to be collected?

Mr BARNETT - It is a really important matter. I am so pleased you asked this question, Biosecurity is a top priority for our Government, and that is why we are seeking and have obtained further funding in this Budget for biosecurity.

I am pleased to advise that the funding support will provide more inspectors and more inspections, particularly of high-risk produce, and secondly, containers and freight. I can give you more details in that regard. In terms of the collection, there will be partial cost recovery for that, for the \$2.626 million per annum in additional frontline biosecurity that we are supporting with this initiative.

I am happy to see if the head of Biosecurity Tasmania would like to add to that answer in terms of how that is collected.

Dr KLUMPP - How the funds are collected, minister? We charge a range of fees for inspections at present. The fees are for inspections containers and inspections of consignments of horticultural produce et cetera, coming into the state. Those fees are charged at an hourly rate to the importers and invoiced at that hourly rate to the importers. This initiative reduces the subsidisation the Government provides for those fees.

Dr BROAD - Minister, we are not talking about a tariff-like mechanism on incoming fruit.

Mr BARNETT - It is a partial cost recovery for the services that are provided, which will fund more inspectors and more inspections.

We have just had a fruit fly incursion that caused a great deal of concern and angst across Tasmania. I am very proud to say that Biosecurity Tasmania led the way, working with the industry, Fruit Growers Tasmania, TFGA and other key stakeholders to deliver the biggest response to such an incursion in Tasmanian history. We are now better prepared than ever before for any further incursion of pest or disease, whether it be fruit fly, or otherwise.

Because we treat biosecurity as a top priority, we are funding further inspections with further inspectors. We are looking first at high-risk produce so that we cover that 100 per cent of the high-risk produce coming into Tasmania, and then, second, in terms of containers and freight. We will be seeking advice from Biosecurity Tasmania exactly how that will roll out. There will be what is called a risk regulatory impact statement in coming months. There will be consultation and feedback. We have had contact with the relevant stakeholders as far as possible and further consultation will take place before this measure is implemented.

Dr BROAD - Are you talking about a charge on incoming fruit? Not an inspection fee, as such, but a blanket tariff-like mechanism across fruit imported into Tasmania?

Mr BARNETT - I think the head of Biosecurity Tasmania has already answered that question.

Dr BROAD - No.

UNCORRECTED PROOF ISSUE

Mr BARNETT - I think he has. But I am happy to drill down and give you more information. I will pass to the secretary to outline how that process will operate.

Dr WHITTINGTON - We have a range of fees currently in place. Those fees do not meet cost recovery. We are not introducing any new fees all we are proposing is to increase the fees that are already in place, not to full cost recovery but to increase them. There are no new fees, it is simply charging an hourly rate that is closer to full cost recovery.

Dr BROAD - That regulatory impact statement is around the increase in current fees and charges, rather than any proposals for a new mechanism.

Mr BARNETT - Yes, is the answer. Do you want to add to that, Dr Klumpp?

Dr KLUMPP - Through the minister, the increase in the fee requires amendments to the Plant Quarantine Act regulations. To do that required a regulatory impact statement about an increase in the current fees.

Mr BARNETT - As I said, for a regulatory impact statement, there will be consultation to get feedback with the key stakeholders. That is our plan but we want to consult to ensure that it flows out exactly as it should. That is because we are treating biosecurity as a top priority in Tasmania brand, not just keeping out pests and diseases but the Tasmania brand is important.

Dr BROAD - While we are on biosecurity how many detector dogs are currently in active duty?

Mr BARNETT - We gave a special retirement party for Hunta the detector dog at Agfest just a few weeks ago. It was a great celebration with the Premier and I and Biosecurity Tasmania. We are very proud that under the former minister, with great credit to Jeremy Rockliff and the minister Ms Sarah Courtney, we have doubled the number of detector dogs from six to 12.

They are very busy and active around the state. They have wonderful support through Biosecurity Tasmania. To add to my answer, I will ask the secretary to speak to the question.

Dr WHITTINGTON - We have 12 detector dog team. It is the handlers, the teams. At any one time we have more than 12 dogs because we have dogs in training as well as dogs that are active. We have 12 teams that can work at the airport but we have about 15 dogs in airports and ports.

Dr BROAD - How many of those are in training? How many are actively being used?

Mr BARNETT - It goes up and down, depending on the month of the year.

Mr KLUMPP - On average, we have about four puppies coming on. They don't all make it. There is a process we go through. It takes them some time to train but not all of them turn out to be suitable. It varies depending on when you ask the question but we maintain 12 active teams.

Dr BROAD - Each team has a dog, so there are 12 dogs associated with those teams. If we did a count of the number of dogs that are sniffing parcels, checking passengers and going to mail centres the answer is 12

UNCORRECTED PROOF ISSUE

Dr KLUMPP - Yes, we have 12 teams and so there are 12 dogs active at any time. There are back up dogs so we have another four or five dogs; some of them are in training, some are close. It is not like there are 12 dogs that are only there all the time. I am not sure understood the question properly.

Mr BARNETT - I think you have answered the question. We have 12 active detector dogs. They have teams around them. They have handlers. They go to the ports, the airports, the mail centres and other places that require a detection above a pest disease or other concerns.

They are very active and do a great job. The point that Dr Klumpp has been making is that we train puppies and other dogs to fill the spots as and when other dogs retire. So, on any one day of the year there may be one or two extra or there may be some in training but we have 12 detector dogs and 12 teams. They are active. It is an ongoing effort. The answer may change slightly depending on the week or the month of the year. We are treating this very seriously and we are giving them full support.

Dr BROAD - When it comes to the TT-line, what percentage of sailings would there be detector dogs present?

Mr BARNETT - With the sailings of the TT-Line.

Mr KLUMP - The answer is very few because the system we use for TT-Lines does not rely on detector dogs. The system we have for TT-Line is effectively an offshore management system initially and then a quality control system at the Tasmanian end. We do send dogs if we understand there is a high-risk commodity, we have access to manifests and those sorts of things. Where we see it as a risk and we need a dog we will send it, but in general we like to manage the TT-Line risk in Port Melbourne.

Dr BROAD - We have fruit fly arrive in Devonport, the first outbreak from what I can remember was an undefined source close to the TT-Line. Fruit inspections by detector dogs at the TT-Line terminal is a rare occurrence.

Mr BARNETT - On the TT-Line inspection I think Lloyd's answered, but could you provide further information to that question?

Mr KLUMP - We recognise the major risk of fruit fly entering the state is not through passengers on TT-Line. It is through consignments of horticultural produce, fruit fly host material through the supply chain, which is exactly how that fruit fly incursion occurred.

Mr BARNETT - It was not through the TT-Line. That might assist you in the answer; I think you are thinking it is all happened through TT-Line.

Dr BROAD - The first instance was tracked back to the supply chain.

Mr BARNETT - You are suggesting it was the TT-Line.

Dr BROAD - No, I am not. I did not think there was a definitive answer on where the first outbreak came from.

UNCORRECTED PROOF ISSUE

Mr KLUMP - The definitive answer is mangoes from Queensland through the supply chain, through consignments of produce to be sold.

Dr BROAD - How many flights into Tasmania? What percentage of flights arriving in Tasmania would have a detector dog inspection?

Mr BARNETT - For the record, it was not related to the TT-Line, it was fruit fly in a Queensland mango through the supply chain. Your final question, could you repeat that please?

Dr BROAD - What percentage of flights into Tasmania would be met by detector dog inspection?

Mr BARNETT - There are flights through a range of airports in Tasmania and I will ask the secretary or Lloyd Klumpp to respond to that.

Dr WHITTINGTON - Over the past 12 months, 91 per cent of flights at Launceston Airport have been covered by detector dog teams. At Hobart Airport, 84 per cent of flights have been met by detector dog teams in the past 12 months. We have the capacity to target 100 per cent of flights, but we also manage risk by allocating dogs to the appropriate place on a particular day. The reasons why we target 100 per cent we sometimes, in this case, run at 84 per cent for Hobart and 91 per cent for Launceston.

Dr BROAD - What about Burnie and Devonport?

Mr KLUMP - I do not have the numbers for Burnie and Devonport, they are not as high as those airports because of the risk. We do have dogs visit those airports, but we have inspectors stationed at those airports.

Dr BROAD - Can I put that on notice then for those figures around the airports?

Mr BARNETT - The numbers for the other airports. Yes, we can take that on notice.

Mr TUCKER - Minister, can you inform the committee of actions that the Hodgman Liberal Government is taking to enhance understanding and protection for Tasmania's iconic little penguins?

Ms O'CONNOR - That is the first good question you have asked all week, Mr Tucker. Well done and well noticed.

Mr BARNETT - The Greens member has noted what a good question it is. Thank you for that. It is a good question because little penguins face a range of threats, and it is a concern, both in the marine and terrestrial environment. There was series of recent dog attacks resulting in the deaths of over 160 penguins. Effective protection requires cooperative action from all levels of government, the private sector and individuals. I appreciate the opportunity to advise that the department is continuing to actively engage with relevant stakeholders and allocate significant resources to compliance and surveillance activities, education campaigns, as well as targeted monitoring and management activities to continue the enhancement of protection of this iconic species in Tasmania.

We are working with the Cradle Coast NRM in collaboration with key stakeholders to develop a specific project to coordinate monitoring and management of penguins across the state. We are working with the community and NRM groups to enhance penguin habitat through weed removal and the establishment of artificial nesting boxes on both reserved and private land. We are developing penguin-watching guidelines to promote appropriate non-interactive means of observing the penguins, and deployment of Discovery Rangers over the summer months at various locations to provide education services whilst assisting in ensuring the welfare of the birds.

The Government has formed, in addition, the Tasmanian Penguin Advisory Group to enhance the understanding of little penguins and improve their protection across the state. The group first met on 10 April this year. In light of recent attacks, the advice of the advisory group and my response to that as minister, the Government has decided to review the Dog Control Act 2000 with a view to strengthening the law and increasing the penalties associated with dogs attacking wildlife, including little penguins. That is an announcement I am able to advise the committee of today.

More broadly, all reports of unlawful harming of wildlife are taken extremely seriously. I would like to encourage anyone who may have information regarding the distressing incident to contact the department or Crime Stoppers and following the recent dog attacks, also remind dog owners of the critical need to take responsibility for their animals at all times. That is really important.

We are trying to take a measured approach. We want to work with local government, the key stakeholders, to deliver an appropriate response, and we have no intention of following the Greens' advice to deploy snipers at the rookeries.

Ms O'CONNOR - It works in other jurisdictions. You administer the Land Acquisition Act. Are you aware of concerns in the north-west, particularly, about UPC Renewables, which is a company at least 50 per cent foreign-owned, telling local Tasmanian families they are prepared to compulsorily acquire land via the mechanism of the Land Acquisition Act?

CHAIR - Minister, as this is an Energy question, you are going to have the opportunity to answer this in the energy section.

Mr BARNETT - Yes, I know it is an Energy-related question. I am happy to try to assist the member -

Ms O'CONNOR - It also relates to crown land.

Mr BARNETT - As you would be aware, as occurred under previous governments, including the Labor-Greens government, there is a process in place for compulsory acquisition, and those rules remain in place, as under the previous government. Those rules relate to compulsory acquisition, they remain in place, they are important rules that apply and it is always treated as a last resort.

Ms O'CONNOR - Thank you, minister, but so that it is clearly understood at the table that when we were in government we did not use the Land Acquisition Act for private commercial purposes. As you would recall, the cable car has been described as public infrastructure for the purposes of the Land Acquisition Act, when it is private infrastructure. Are you aware that UPC Renewables has been telling local Tasmanian families on the north-west coast that they can

UNCORRECTED PROOF ISSUE

compulsorily acquire their land? Will you rule out using the Land Acquisition Act to enable UPC Renewables to build its transmission line through protected areas?

Mr BARNETT - It is an Energy-related -

Ms O'CONNOR - It is the Land Acquisitions Act.

Mr BARNETT - UPC Renewables has plans for 1200 megawatt farm at Robbins Island and Jim's Plain, a significant wind farm and renewable energy development.

Ms O'CONNOR - Privately owned and operated.

Mr BARNETT - Correct, privately owned and operated, and with plans to grow our wind assets because we have world-class wind in Tasmania.

Ms O'CONNOR - Coming out of your mouth.

CHAIR - Order. No, Ms O'Connor, allow the minister to finish.

Mr BARNETT - Thank you. I am trying to answer the question. Our objective is to strongly support further renewable energy developments in Tasmania. We know how desperately opposed the Greens are to the further renewable energy development, including wind farms.

Ms O'CONNOR - You are completely misrepresenting what we are trying to -

Mr BARNETT - That is very disappointing, including the opposition to the second interconnector, the Marinus Link -

CHAIR - Point of order, Ms O'Connor.

Ms O'CONNOR - We have so few questions at this table. If the minister could go to the substance of the question, that would be helpful.

CHAIR - Ms O'Connor, if I apply the proportion as is written in the orders of the House, you would have far fewer questions than I have given you. Please don't push that line with me.

Ms O'CONNOR - I will restate the question. Can the minister rule out using the Land Acquisition Act in order to allow UPC Renewables to compulsorily acquire private land for a private company, which is 50 per cent foreign-owned, in order to construct its transmission line when you would be aware, minister, that there is an existing infrastructure corridor from the north that UPC Renewables could use?

Mr BARNETT - It is on the record that the Greens are anti-renewable energy development.

Ms O'CONNOR - That is rubbish. Stop fobbing us off, stop telling fibs and answer the question that people on the north-west coast are asking.

CHAIR - Ms O'Connor, order, this is disorderly.

UNCORRECTED PROOF ISSUE

Mr BARNETT - The views of the Greens is on the public record with respect to our major renewable energy developments -

Ms O'CONNOR - The minister is lying. You are lying.

Mr BARNETT - whether it is a major hydro development, the Marinus Link and -

Ms O'CONNOR - You ruled out using the Land Acquisition Act to compulsory acquire people's property for a transmission line.

CHAIR - Ms O'Connor, order.

Mr BARNETT - it is in your policy 11.1. The member is asking a hypothetical question.

Ms O'CONNOR - No. So you are not ruling it out?

Mr BARNETT - It is too early, there is a process.

CHAIR - Ms O'Connor, please.

Mr BARNETT - There is a process that has to progress. I have indicated the law that applied under the Labor-Greens government -

Ms O'CONNOR - You have answered the question - you will use the Land Acquisition Act to facilitate a private development.

CHAIR - Ms O'Connor, you are interrupting the minister. This is disorderly, I warn you.

Mr BARNETT - Thank you, Chair. I have indicated that the law that applied under the Labor-Greens government applies under the majority Liberal Government -

Ms O'CONNOR - It was never used to facilitate private infrastructure.

CHAIR - Ms O'Connor, I warn you a second time.

Mr BARNETT - There is a process, it is continuing and the Government strongly supports renewable energy development. My role as the minister responsible for crown land is another matter. I have outlined the law as it applies and compulsory acquisition is always a last resort.

CHAIR - Dr Broad, you have the call.

Dr BROAD - Is the support for on-farm energy initiatives as detailed on budget paper 1, page 22 coming out of the \$70 million allocated to tranche 3 irrigation schemes?

Mr BARNETT - The on-farm initiatives, as in the \$5.5 million for the renewable energy project? Which initiative are you talking about?

Dr BROAD - Both. On page 122 it states -

UNCORRECTED PROOF ISSUE

The 2019-20 Budget reflects State equity contributions to Tasmanian Irrigation Pty Ltd for Tranche 3 irrigation projects of \$70 million over four years from 2019-20, and support for on farm energy initiatives as announced in the 2018-19 Budget.

I am trying to clarify that it is separate to the \$70 million.

Mr BARNETT - Absolutely, it is separate.

Dr BROAD - Can you give us an update the issue of power poles traversing farm properties?

Mr BARNETT - Can you say that again?

Dr BROAD - The power poles on private properties.

Mr BARNETT - Private power poles have been a challenging issue but we have reached landing point consistent with the recent legal case in the Magistrates Court. Private power poles are a responsibility for the private landowner, consistent with past understanding. I will not go into the details because that is a matter for TasNetworks during GBE scrutiny. It is a matter for the Energy portfolio and I am happy to provide further information this afternoon.

Dr BROAD - If there is a landowner has a transmission line to another property through their property, are they are responsible for all the power poles on their property even if they do not draw any energy from those?

Mr BARNETT - I will not go into hypotheticals.

Dr BROAD - What happens to the abalone royalty reduction policy when it finishes in 2023?

Mr BARNETT - That will be considered in the context of future budgets. We are committed to the industry and it is \$5.1 million over a five-year period. We are working positively with the industry and I meet with the abalone council and their members from time to time. We are backing the fishing industry. We have \$13.8 million in our Budget to support the wild catch and fishing industries. We are proud of the work they do and they provide jobs in regional areas. I am sure support will continue in due course but the funding commitment will be considered in the context of future budgets.

Dr BROAD - Minister, how much did the state make from the Furneaux abalone units in the last financial year?

Mr BARNETT - That is a detailed question relevant to the marine farm section of the department. I will see if the marine farm director is here to assist the member. We are happy to take that question on notice.

Dr BROAD - Thank you.

Mr TUCKER - Minister, I understand the department is undertaking a significant project to bring fisheries management into the digital age. Are you able to provide an update on progress in this area, please?

UNCORRECTED PROOF ISSUE

Mr BARNETT - Yes, I am and it is really good initiative. We are helping commercial fisherman to streamline the process, cut red tape and make it easier and faster to do business. We are about supporting our commercial fisherman to do their job, to go out there and fish. This digital transformation transitional project will deliver to make life easier for them. We are reviewing the business processing, the licensing and the administration arrangements for commercial fisherman. We are putting a range of recommendations in place. We are reviewing and redesigning the data collection form and consolidating and streamlining the business process. Almost 50 per cent of these recommendations have been reviewed in the past five months and, to date, 45 forms have been revised and reduced to 7. Hooray, reducing the red tape and streamlining the process. This is a great way to go and it is consistent with the Hodgman Liberal Government.

Ms O'CONNOR - Settle down.

Mr BARNETT - I am pleased. This is an exciting project. We are delivering.

Ms O'CONNOR - Good on you but control yourself at the table.

Mr BARNETT - This is great for business, small and medium. Communication between industry and the department has been streamlined. We are reducing the need for hard copies of original documents, making it possible via electronic communications and reducing the turnaround time for applications.

There is \$5 million invested to develop digital licensing and catch reporting functionality within the Fisheries Integrated Licensing and Management System; it is working well and will include automated real-time data transfer to deliver further significant benefits for improving efficiency for fishers, reducing the red tape and improving quota management arrangements. I am pleased with that initiative.

Dr BROAD - Minister, what are you and your Government doing to control Chilean needle grass?

Mr BARNETT - As in the Coal Valley?

Dr BROAD - It is more than the Coal Valley.

Mr BARNETT - It is important matter you have raised and we have been active in that regard. I will bring the Biosecurity Tasmania head to us.

We want to do everything we can to address Chilean needle grass. I will ask if Lloyd Klumpp can assist in adding to that answer.

Dr KLUMPP - We are working with the local communities. There is a control program in place working with the local government organisations in the Brighton area and the Coal River area. Those infested areas have been mapped. There are 14 private landholders who are involved in the response as well as land managed by the Department of State Growth and the Southern Midlands Council.

That area covers approximately 600 hectares and about 125 hectares is high density. The first priority as with any Biosecurity response is to prevent the spread. We have controls in place to prevent that spread elsewhere in the state.

The nature of these sorts of investigations is they are difficult to control and difficult to eradicate so it is not a short-term process. We do not simply go on and spray and that is the end of it. There is an intricate process of control, particularly in that sort of semi-urban, peri-urban environment, it requires really good cooperation with the local landholders and their groups and we are getting that.

It has been a very positive response in the area and we are very confident once we go through that quite lengthy process we will control this weed.

Dr BROAD - Is eradication feasible?

Mr KLUMPP - Absolutely. That is our aim.

Mr BARNETT - One of the first actions as minister was to authorise the payment of \$50 000 from the Weeds Action Fund to progress combating the Chilean needle grass. That funding was committed and obviously flowing now, thanks to Biosecurity Tasmania and the work of the key stakeholders.

The Weeds Action Fund is an important government promise and commitment which we are delivering with \$5 million over the forward Estimates. Ian Sauer is the Chair of the Weeds Action Fund and I have been discussing and meeting with him and the department.

We are very committed to addressing weeds, pests and diseases as part of the remit. That is because we love Tasmania and want it to grow and achieve its full potential.

Ms O'CONNOR - Minister, the Land Acquisition Act 1993 is very clear. It is an act to make provision for the acquisition of land by the Crown, public and local authorities and promoters to authorise the acquisition of land for undertakings of a public nature.

Do you believe the UPC Renewables transmission line is public infrastructure, even though it would be installed by a private company?

Mr BARNETT - Clearly this is a matter for the Energy portfolio.

Ms O'CONNOR - No, it is not, minister, because it relates to the Land Acquisitions Act 1993.

CHAIR - Order, Ms O'Connor.

Mr BARNETT - You are talking about the UPC Renewables. Let us summarise and assist the member accordingly.

Ms O'CONNOR - I do not need your assistance. I have read the act.

Mr BARNETT - I am trying to answer the question and if I have the opportunity, I will. UPC Renewables are developing the Robbins Island and Jims Plains wind farms. These wind farms represent significant investment in wind generation on the north-west coast. It is a renewable energy zone. It's regarded as one of the top four renewable energy zones in Australia. Proposed wind farms like other developments of this size and type are subject to the development in environmental approvals, with the optioning for public submissions. It is essential these

developments comply with the rigorous planning and environmental planning approval processes that are in place, and that early and effective engagement with the local community takes place. As part of that development process, UPC Renewables has advised they are considering options to connect the wind farm to Tasmania's transmission network, and have discarded the Leven Canyon area. That's what I am advised.

Ms O'CONNOR - It is still going into the Tarkine and other regional reserves.

Mr BARNETT - I am trying my best to answer without interruptions.

CHAIR - Order, Ms O'Connor.

Mr BARNETT - These options will take into account community feedback and input from groups such as the Nietta Action Group. I understand there was a community forum just recently that provided an opportunity for feedback, with a strong attendance.

UPC Renewables has advised the options for a transmission connection path are at the early stage of assessment, and all options are still being considered.

That is the advice that I have.

Ms O'CONNOR - Is the Woolnorth transmission corridor - okay, minister, thank you. You didn't answer the question about whether or not a privately owned transmission line can be in any reasonable world regarded as public infrastructure, but given that your Government calls a cable car public infrastructure for the purposes of the act I am not surprised.

Has your agency in any way sought to work with UPC Renewables, and talk to them about using the existing transmission line from Woolnorth?

Mr BARNETT - I would prefer to deal with this in the Energy portfolio.

Ms O'CONNOR - Point of order, Chair. I asked two questions in that break to Labor's previous nine, and all I want to know from the minister is then: if we had to do that in Energy, does the minister regard a private transmission line as public infrastructure for the purposes of the Land Acquisitions Act?

CHAIR - You've just repeated the question.

Ms O'CONNOR - But he didn't answer it.

CHAIR - That's right.

Ms O'CONNOR - That's right, thank you for confirming that Chair.

Mr TUCKER - The management of our world-class seafood industry is underpinned by science. Can you provide an overview of the support and work of the Institute for Marine and Antarctic Studies, please?

Mr BARNETT - Yes I can. It is really important and I am very thankful for IMAS and the work that they do, the research they provide, and we want is a sustainable seafood

industry in Tasmania. We are an island state. It's one of our great strengths, seafood - the wild catch and of course the salmon industry, which we are very supportive of, a sustainable growth in the industry in particular.

We have IMAS, the Sustainable Marine Research Collaboration Agreement, which is the SMRCA, and we have the Crown, as in us, and the University of Tasmania. We are all working together for a common interest. We are getting runs on the board. Those research projects are currently being advanced by IMAS through the SMRCA, and it is focusing on those marine resources of Tasmania, and it includes:

- Oysters and the POMS, a really important area.
- Improving the post-harvest survivability of the southern rock lobster in a changing environment. We've got the rock lobster culture systems, cutting-edge aquaculture.
- Rebuilding the southern rock lobster stocks on the east coast of Tasmania, informing options for management which we touched on earlier.
- Improving the risk management of paralytic shellfish toxins in southern rock lobster.
- The calamari fishery in northern Tasmania.
- Waste-to-profit in the urchin fisheries. Fisheries biology of the short-spined sea urchin.
- Managing the ecosystems interactions across differing environments.
- Determining the design output, specifications and samples size for a national, social and economic survey of recreational fishes.

I must say thank you to the recreational fishers; I am one of those. We support our recreational fishers.

Ms O'CONNOR - What's your response to the east coast marine heat wave and the impact that's going to have on -

CHAIR - Warning, Ms O'Connor.

Mr BARNETT - We support our recreational fishers. We've backed it with funding in the Budget. In terms of the post-release survival rate of our recreationally caught swordfish - that's another area of research, and there's a whole range of research.

Ms O'CONNOR - Animal cruelty.

CHAIR - Order, Ms O'Connor, you are being disorderly. I have already warned you twice.

Mr BARNETT - We are such strong supporters of the recreational fishing sector, unlike the Greens.

We are also establishing a market for a Tasmanian Aboriginal cultural fishery -

Ms O'CONNOR - Pont of order, Chair. I just ask the minister to withdraw that. We are strong supporters of the recreational fishing sector, and we are strong supporters of marine environment protection. Do not tell untruths at this table any more than you by default do.

CHAIR - Thank you, Ms O'Connor. It is not a point of order.

Mr BARNETT - In conclusion, the role of the recreational fishery and the stewardship of our fisheries is really important. Looking at our fish stocks to ensure that we have a sustainable fishery. We have a whole range of other research supporting our fishery, and I cannot say enough about the importance of our wild catch fishery and our farmed salmon, and ensuring a sustainable sector going forward. We have backing with \$13.8 million in our Budget. We treat it very seriously, and as an east coaster I know the member knows how important it is.

Ms O'CONNOR - You know it has just experienced a massive marine heatwave, warming eight times faster than any other waters in the world.

Mr BARNETT - I have an answer to the earlier question the member asked, if you would like that now, on the Furneaux Group question. To assist the committee, could we provide that answer?

CHAIR - Do you want to do that privately, or do you want it on the record?

Mr BARNETT - We need to put it on the record I think, very swiftly.

Dr WHITTINGTON - The 2018 tender price for the Furneaux units was \$640 000, and the 2019 tender price for the Furneaux units was \$960 000.

The committee suspended from 1.11 p.m. to 2 p.m.

DIVISION 2

(Department of Communities Tasmania)

Output group 6

Disability services and community development

6.6 Veterans' Affairs -

CHAIR - Good afternoon, everyone. Our examination is of Veterans' Affairs, which is output group 6 on table 2.2. We have an hour or thereabouts for this depending how we go. Minister, could you introduce the people at the table, please?

Mr BARNETT - Thank you, Chair. Thanks for the opportunity to be here. I am pleased to introduce Kate Kent on my left, Deputy Secretary of Communities Tasmania, and Nick Atkins, Acting Manager, Policy and Programs, for this part of Communities Tasmania. I am thankful for their support. If you are happy, I will share some opening remarks.

CHAIR - Over to you, minister, for opening remarks.

Mr BARNETT - I am pleased to be Minister for Veterans' Affairs in the Hodgman Liberal Government. Supporting our veterans and ex-service personnel in Tasmania is a key priority for our Government, with 10 500 veterans and their families around Tasmania. We are pleased and proud to support them. Tasmania does have a long and distinguished military history. That is backed up with the 14 of the 100 Victoria Cross recipients around Australia coming from Tasmania. This year is an important year with the seventy-fifth anniversary of the D-day landings, being today. I recognise that and pay respect to those who were involved. I pay respect and honour to those who served at that time and during World War II for us and for our sake so that we can enjoy the freedoms we have today. It is the eightieth anniversary of the beginning of the World War II and the 100th anniversary of the signing of the Treaty of Versailles.

In the Budget, we have a range of initiatives, in fact record funding support for our veterans. The package includes providing peak body status to RSL Tasmania and that is recognised with core annual funding of \$110 000 to provide assistance and advocacy, with indexation to apply.

We have the \$50 000 support per year for three years to RSL Tasmania to undertake projects to improve service delivery to ex-service personnel in Tasmania. We are still delivering the Teddy Sheean Grants Program, \$100 000 per year for three years, for repairs and maintenance to RSLs and ex-service organisations - a wonderful program much appreciated by RSLs and those veteran organisations. That is conducted on a twice-yearly basis.

In addition to that, we have support for the development of a \$225 000 partnership with the Parks and Wildlife Service to support our veterans in an active recreation and adventure program for our veterans. I should note that in the past year we have seen the formation of a veterans reference group. It is chaired by Brigadier John Withers and I thank him and the members of the reference group for their support and feedback to me. The group includes a number of ex-service personnel and is providing advice and insight on a wide range of veterans-related issues to the Government.

It would be remiss of me not to mention Teddy Sheean and the recent application for an upgrade to his medal to the Defence Honours and Awards and Appeals Tribunal in Hobart Town Hall for two days at the end of March. I appeared there as the applicant on behalf of the state Government, the Royal Australian Navy did as the respondent, and we await the report and recommendation of that tribunal. I know all Tasmanians will be interested in the outcome. If it is to be a Victoria Cross, it has to receive the support of the Government, the Minister for Veterans' Affairs and then the Prime Minister and Cabinet. It then has to go to the Governor-General and to Her Majesty the Queen, Elizabeth II, if it is to be a Victoria Cross. That is what I am hoping for on behalf of the Government and the people of Tasmania. It is possible it could be a Star of Gallantry or something else. The second highest award for bravery in war time is the Star of Gallantry. His memory will live on. I want to pay credit to Garry Ivory, who is a nephew of Teddy Sheean and members of the Sheehan family. It has been a long and hard campaign; 16 years for me, 30 years for Gary and longer for many other members of the family.

In conclusion my thanks to Jenna Webster and, of course, Kate Kent and others for their support for me in this role. I also acknowledge the support of Darren Chester, the federal Minister for Veterans' Affairs and the federal Department of Veterans' Affairs in supporting our ex-service personnel in Tasmania. We will stand shoulder to shoulder in supporting our veterans and ex-service personnel in any way we can.

Ms DOW - We place on the record our respects on this important day. I was hoping that you could explain to me the decrease in funding on page 22. I understand a number of the grants are over two to four years, but it does seem quite significant in the third year. Could you explain that change in funding for me?

Mr BARNETT - I know we had a bit of a chat last year about funding support and the drop off in the out years. I think we answered that with a question on notice in response to the member. Some programs, including for the Centenary of Anzac, do drop off. Obviously, we have just concluded the Centenary of the Anzac period. Of course, a number of the programs like the Teddy Sheehan program go for three years. That will be considered in the context of future governments.

We can be assured of the Government's strong support for our veterans into the future as we have done in the past. I will pass to Kate Kent to provide details around that. I should mention the \$40 000 for the headstone project, which is really important.

Ms O'CONNOR - Hear, hear.

Mr BARNETT - I take that interjection. I support Andrea Gerrard and her wonderful committee of volunteers for the work they have done in the south, and now are focusing more in Launceston in and around the north. That was a \$40 000 one-off grant.

Ms KENT - As the minister has explained, two components of the funding is made up of the recurrent funding and the fixed term budget commitments. The recurrent is the ongoing funding that goes to the RSL, as the peak body. It also includes operational funding which, within that, includes the funding within the department that we provide for the Frank MacDonald Memorial Prize, the Centenary of Anzac Day funding and the Anzac Day Trust core funding, which is around \$22 000 a year.

The fixed term budget commitments are the ones that the minister alluded to, some of which at this stage just go forward for two or three years. The active recreation program, for example, is a three-year project from 2018 through to 2021. The headstone project and project funding for the RSL is only a three-year commitment of \$50 000 for specific projects as well. That is why there is a slight decline in funding for the years in which those are funded.

Ms DOW - I know you have spoken about the active recreation program. Could you tell us how many people have benefited from that this last financial year? What are the plans for the next couple of years for that program?

Mr BARNETT - The funding is still available, \$225 000 over the three-year period. It hasn't commenced. Work is being undertaken as we speak with the establishment of a veterans' reference group. I have asked them for input into the best way to shape that program to ensure the terms and conditions of that program are suitable to younger veterans. They are focusing particularly on mental health and wellbeing, linking the pathway back to training and employment in outdoor education and ecotourism areas. The department is working with the reference group as well looking at the best way to roll it out. It is a little delayed; it is important though. I wanted the reference group to provide input and feedback. I have such good people on the reference group. I am really pleased with their input. It will roll out over coming years; the funding is still there, it has just been deferred.

Ms DOW - It will be rolled over to this financial year? That will be for three years at this point in time?

Mr BARNETT - Kate, did you want to add anything to that?

Ms KENT - The minister has given the explanation. We are into the process now of finalising the specifications around that project, working closely with Parks and Wildlife and with the reference group. That will happen in the next quarter. We expect the project to commence later this year, so the funding for this 2018-19 has been rolled forward to 2019-20.

Ms DOW - With regards to the skills development program, I understand you are doing that in partnership with the THA at RSL clubs? Is that right?

Mr BARNETT - You might have to expand on your question.

Ms DOW - I am wondering how many RSL clubs have been given the opportunity to participate in that and what the outcomes are around skills and training for people within those organisations?

Mr BARNETT - That is a program that is delivered through State Growth. I am happy to provide a high-level response. I am also happy to try to assist with a question on notice, but if I can ask Kate Kent to respond at a high level because it is in another portfolio area.

Ms KENT - Minister, the project funding for that is in State Growth. A project team has been established that works with the THA to develop it. We are aware they have run for some forums recently for a range of clubs, including RSL clubs. I am happy to take the question on notice and come back to you with some more detailed information about how many clubs have attended and the work that has happened at those forums, if you like.

Ms O'CONNOR - Minister, I was interested to hear you talk in your opening address about Tasmania's long and distinguished military history. Do you agree that Tasmania's military history goes back before the Second and First World Wars and, in fact, it goes back to the origins of the colony and the Black Wars?

Mr BARNETT - What I can advise the committee is my respect and honour for our veterans and ex-service personnel going back to, not just Gallipoli; we have just had the centenary of Anzac commemorated around Australia.

The Boer War was commemorated last weekend in Hobart and will be commemorated, I understand, this weekend in Launceston. That's the Boer War, the First World War, and the Second World War.

Ms O'CONNOR - Can I take you back to the question?

Mr BARNETT - I am addressing the question. Those veterans and ex-service personnel of some 10 500. I note on the record that on Anzac Day this year, there was a participation during the Anzac Day service. You may be going there, but whether you are or not, I think this may assist the committee. A decision was made to allow a group representing Tasmanian Aboriginal people who lost their lives during the colonial era to march in this year's Anzac Day parade but the group had not been involved in previous parades and had not registered for this year's event.

UNCORRECTED PROOF ISSUE

The RSL advised they are prepared to have an open dialogue with the Tasmanian Aboriginal groups and have the appropriate future Tasmanian Aboriginal involvement in Anzac Day events.

Ms O'CONNOR - That is good to hear, minister, that is quite positive, but it is not formally recognising the descendants of the first warriors of Tasmania. Have you read Professor Henry Reynolds' book, *The Fate of the Free People*?

Mr BARNETT - I have not read the book. I am certainly aware of Professor Henry Reynolds' views, they have been espoused from time to time over many decades. I am certainly aware of that. I am also aware that the Frontier Wars were a period of conflict between the British colonists and Tasmanian Aboriginals in and around the mid-1820s to 1832. Yes, I am aware of that.

Ms O'CONNOR - Governor Augustus Robinson described the warriors, the first people, in this manner -

They have a tradition amongst them that white men have usurped their territory, they've driven them into the forests; have killed their game and thus robbed them of their chief subsistence; have ravished their wives and daughters; have murdered and butchered their fellow countrymen, and are want, whilst brooding over these complicated ills in a dense part of the forest, to goad each other on to acts of bloodshed and revenge for the injuries done to their ancestors and the persecution offered to themselves through their white enemies.

Robinson goes on to describe them as 'martyrs in the cause of their country'. Professor Henry Reynolds talks about them as, 'great warriors'. We've had a proposition put to us there should be a memorial to the descendants of Tasmania's first true veterans of war, the Aboriginal people. Would you support that?

Mr BARNETT - You have raised a number of issues in your question. I am fully aware of the Frontier Wars. I am also fully aware of the Anzac tradition, which, of course, commenced more than 100 years ago on the shores of Gallipoli, and what occurred in and around that time were important ingredients to the character of the Australian nation today.

Ms O'CONNOR - But, minister, you're not addressing -

Mr BARNETT - Can I finish the answering the question?

CHAIR - Yes.

Ms O'CONNOR - Well, you are not answering the question, you've gone -

Mr BARNETT - I am desperately trying to answer the question.

CHAIR - You do not know where it is going to go, Ms O'Connor.

Ms O'CONNOR - Well, you have actually deflected it through the prism of -

CHAIR - Ms O'Connor -

UNCORRECTED PROOF ISSUE

Ms O'CONNOR - a white view of our history -

CHAIR - Ms O'Connor, order please.

Ms O'CONNOR - and that's a concern. Thank you, Chair.

Mr BARNETT - Thank you. As I was saying, Gallipoli and the Anzac tradition is built on what occurred initially on the beach of Anzac Cove in 1915 and beyond with 100 000 Aussies who died for us and for our sake.

Ms O'CONNOR - Minister -

Mr BARNETT - No. Please stop interrupting me and allow me to -

Ms O'CONNOR - Well, just please answer the question.

Mr BARNETT - Allow me to respond. So, the characteristics important to the Anzac tradition are courage, endurance, mateship and sacrifice.

Ms O'CONNOR - All of that can be said about -

Mr BARNETT - These are key ingredients -

CHAIR - Order.

Ms O'CONNOR - Aboriginal Tasmanians.

CHAIR - Order.

Mr BARNETT - To the Australian -

Ms O'CONNOR - All of that.

Mr BARNETT - character.

Ms O'CONNOR - Yes.

Mr BARNETT - These are key ingredients to what makes Tasmania great, what makes our country great. The Frontier Wars you are referring to are different. These are battles that occurred, and a lot of it was guerrilla warfare, between British colonists and the Aboriginal Tasmanians in around 1820s, 1830s or thereabouts. It was obviously fought largely as a guerilla war by both sides claimed the lives of, I understand, a couple of hundred European colonists at the time and 600 to 900 Aboriginal people. There may have been more and I am sure Henry Reynolds would have words to say in terms of the details. I am aware of that. Aboriginal communities generally maintain current efforts to commemorate Aboriginal service people is limited to military campaigns where Aboriginals fell alongside their non-Aboriginal service men and women. I have actually written in support of commemorating the service of Tasmanian Indigenous people in war where they were recognised mate for mate; shoulder to shoulder, and were treated accordingly.

Ms O'CONNOR - Good on you.

Mr BARNETT - I've written about that with an opinion piece some time ago, but I put it on the record. When they came back they were not treated the same, a disappointing part of our history to be regretted. I put that on the record. I acknowledge their service and sacrifice, and I see that as separate to the Gallipoli and Anzac tradition.

Ms O'CONNOR - Absolutely. I totally agree with you it is separate. As you'd be aware, minister, there are, rightly so, memorials to the Anzacs and the sacrifices they made. This is not about the memorials to the Anzacs. It is about whether you would support an advocate for a memorial that recognises the veterans and their descendants of the Black Wars.

Mr BARNETT - Well, that is another issue altogether. I can see how you are relating that to the Anzac tradition. I see that as entirely separate and different to the Anzac tradition.

Ms O'CONNOR - It is still Veterans Affairs.

Mr BARNETT - Obviously you've had British colonists and the local Aboriginal people and the guerrilla warfare that occurred in and around 1820s and 1830s.

I think our Tasmanian history is something that should be considered carefully. It is important and dates back thousands of years.

I accept in particular the service and sacrifice of our veterans and their families, the 10 500 of them out there. I do my level best to represent them and advocate for them.

Ms O'CONNOR - Minister, a final question. Do you acknowledge then that the Aboriginal people who fought the colonists in the wars that started around 1823 and 1824 were warriors and that the Aboriginal people today are descendants of those veterans?

Mr BARNETT - I would alert the Ms O'Connor to the view of the RSL. I commend the view of RSL Tasmania. Their view is that they are prepared to have an open dialogue with the Tasmanian Aboriginal people, to discuss and talk about the future of the Tasmanian Aboriginal people and their involvement in the Anzac services, specifically the Anzac Day events. I say congratulations, well done. I think that is to be commended and I would support them in that effort.

Ms O'CONNOR - There is no tangible yet that acknowledges the Black Wars and the descendants of the warriors who took part in those wars defending their country.

Ms BUTLER - Minister, veterans and ex-service personnel buried in Anglican burial sites were compromised last year, when the Anglican Church moved to sell over 100 sites across Tasmania. The introduction of perpetuity has provided protection to our community's burial sites. Are you aware of a new risk to the columbariums at churches sold which may be discarded?

Mr BARNETT - A new risk?

Ms BUTLER - The columbariums, the niches, at the churches that have been sold. They are still under the second stage of the Burial and Cremation Act, which is still to be reviewed. We have been receiving complaints that people aren't able to place niches next to their family members because the columbariums may be removed, and some of those columbariums may have veterans' ashes. We have been seeking a briefing with the minister.

Mr BARNETT - And what response have you had to date?

Ms BUTLER - The briefing will be put off until the end of July, I believe. It is an urgent matter because it is a grey zone at the moment.

Mr BARNETT - Thanks for the question. I appreciate that. Obviously, we have made amendments to the Burial and Cremation Act. That commenced at the end of last year.

We have strengthened the regulatory framework around cemeteries and access to those burial sites. There was considerable community concern last year which I acknowledged and take on board regarding the prospective sale of those cemeteries. I think your question certainly relates to that, in part.

I am not the minister responsible for our cemeteries, or the Burial and Cremation Act. Obviously as the minister responsible for our veterans, I take any of the concerns they raise with me very seriously. RSL Tasmania has not raised the specific matter you raised this morning directly with me, but I am happy to take that on board and have a look at it.

I am obviously aware of special commemoration edifices and statues and the like in honour of our veterans. One, for example, is Trooper John Bisdée, a Victoria Cross recipient. That grave is at Jericho. I have visited a number of times and it is a lovely site. It is part of the cemetery there.

I have also had discussions with the Anglican Church, Bishop Richard Condie, and highlighted my role as Veterans minister, the importance of our veterans sector and the importance of protecting and supporting that. The response from Bishop Condie was positive. He could see the importance of it. I would any churches concerned to consult with the local community and with me about their concerns. We can then draw those concerns to the attention of those who are relevant, including the minister.

We should all remind ourselves, as members of parliament, of the honour boards to our veterans in these public places as well as private places such as churches or community halls.

Ms BUTLER - I have reason to believe that the Anglican Diocese and Bishop Condie is looking to have amendments already made to the Burial and Cremation Act in relation to the perpetuity of those graves, with some of those graves being those of veterans and ex-service personnel. Would you step in as Minister for Veterans' Affairs to stop pressure to have the perpetuity amended?

Mr BARNETT - You raise some important points. I'll put on record my thanks to the leadership of the Anglican Church for what they've done in addressing the redress issue. I will work with my colleagues and the veterans community to do my best to represent their interests in any discussions we have around that proposal or any other proposal. I want to do what's in the best interests of Tasmania and will always do what I can to advocate for and support our veterans and their families. I'd like to think I could work with colleagues across the Chamber to support the importance of our military history and to protect our military heritage. We need to get the balance right and do what's in the public interest, but to show honour and respect wherever possible is definitely the way to go.

UNCORRECTED PROOF ISSUE

Ms DOW - Minister, can you please detail for the committee the recipients of the Teddy Sheean grant program and just confirm that there's \$100 000 in this year's Budget?

Ms O'CONNOR - You're giving Mr Barnett an opportunity to talk about Teddy Sheean, Ms Dow.

Ms DOW - I know but I couldn't deny him that, Ms O'Connor.

Mr BARNETT - Thank you very much.

Ms DOW - Could you tell us how much of the fund that has been expended to date?

Mr BARNETT - There is \$100 000 in the Budget this year and the coming three years. The Teddy Sheean memorial grants are appreciated. They are open twice a year, to give the organisations enough time to put in their applications with the support of their members and the local community. In 2018-19, round 2 - would you like to know that, or round 1? I can assist you with both.

Ms DOW - Yes, both would be good. I want to understand who received the grants.

Mr BARNETT - Round 1 in the past 12 months: the Australian Federation of Totally and Permanently Incapacitated Ex-Service Men and Women, memorabilia display unit, \$1865; the Burnie RSL, refurbishment of the kitchen, \$10 000; Circular Head RSL Centenary Poppy Sculpture, \$3000; the Lady Baron Hall and Recreation Special Committee, war memorial project, \$3500; the George Town RSL sub-branch upgrade to Macquarie Street Cenotaph, \$1990; Launceston RSL renovations to the Flanders Room, \$10 000 - it's looking really good, I was there a few weeks ago - the Lenah Valley RSL sub-branch refurbishment of the accessibility toilet, \$10 000; the Queenstown RSL Memorial Wall repairs and display gun refurbishment, \$5000; and the St Helens and St Marys RSL, replacing their copier and security system, \$1698; the Ross RSL sub-branch, the Ross World War II Memorial Stone upgrade, \$2677.

Round 2 for this 2018-19 financial year -

- Bicheno Bowls and RSL sub-branch, internal improvements to existing clubhouse, \$8000
- Launceston RSL, renovations of rooms at the Launceston RSL, \$3500
- Mates for Mates Hobart Recovery Centre rehabilitation exercise equipment, \$4455
- Royal Australian Airforce refurbishment of the social area of the Royal Australian Airforce Association Memorial Centre, \$5000
- Snug Primary School, restore surrounding areas of the war memorial, \$4000
- Swansea RSL sub-branch urgent electrical upgrade, \$4400
- Vietnam Veterans Association, the purchase and laying of carpet, \$2100
- Vietnam Veterans Association, floor insulation, \$1854
- Waratah-Wynyard Council, removal renovations and relocation of the Preolenna War Memorial plaques to the Wynyard Cenotaph Precinct, \$3000
- Westbury RSL sub-branch, replacement of the function room flooring, \$9000 -

Again, I was there a few weeks ago and that is going to be good -

- Wynyard RSL sub-branch, replace commercial dishwasher, \$5000 -

We were both there last weekend for the mural opening. Of course, Madam Chair and others as well, it was a wonderful day, a very special day for the Wynyard and the north-west coast community. I note the president of the sub branch - now the federal member for Braddon, Gavin Pearce - and, of course, his committee and volunteers who did so much to progress that mural. I encourage all members of the public to check it out. And finally -

- Zeehan RSL sub-branch to upgrade the refrigeration equipment, \$4638.

Ms O'CONNOR - Thank you, Chair and minister. I will take you back to Professor Henry Reynold's book. It is a reflection on Anzac Day. He says towards the end of this remarkable and powerful book, which I highly recommend you read -

Anzac Day will never an inclusive national day until the nation also commemorates and mourns black Australians who died defending their homelands from invading Europeans. Such a development might benefit all Australians by providing an antidote to the national tendency to romanticise warfare, to emphasise dying rather than killing, bravery rather than brutality, sacrifice rather than suffering. With frontier warfare as part of the story, the dawn landing at Gallipoli could be juxtaposed with the many dawn raids faced by sleeping Aborigines. Heroic bayonet and cavalry charges were such incidents as John Batten's murderous assault on the unsuspecting Aboriginal camp in north-east Tasmania, and the assassination of true wounded soldiers.

Minister, do you agree that as a society we need to do more, much more, to recognise Aboriginal Tasmanians' contribution to this island, and their history as warriors, and that we should be prepared to share Anzac Day and other significant military days with Aboriginal Tasmanians, as well as commemorate their sacrifices and their warrior skills in the black wars?

Mr BARNETT - I think it is really important we recognise the service and sacrifice of our veterans and the Anzac tradition. I am delighted with the increased numbers in past years, particularly of younger Tasmanians, at the various services, especially on Anzac Day, but including Remembrance Day and other days to commemorate those who have served and the sacrifice they have given, so we can enjoy the freedoms that we do have today.

I also recognise the role of Indigenous Tasmanians in that service in past wars, conflicts and indeed peacekeeping operations over the last 100-plus years. They have served shoulder to shoulder with their Aussie mates and with their Tasmanian mates as part of this great country, and serving as part of and supporting this great country. That should be acknowledged.

I also want to put on record the Premier's strong support to reset the relationship with the Tasmanian Aboriginal community.

Ms O'CONNOR - Which he is epically failing to do.

Mr BARNETT - Well, that is a view that you hold.

Ms O'CONNOR - And many people in the Aboriginal community share.

CHAIR - Order.

Mr BARNETT - I want to acknowledge the leadership of the Premier in that regard.

Ms O'CONNOR - Who handed the portfolio onto another minister.

Mr BARNETT - I want to acknowledge the leadership of the Premier, and indeed the leadership of the minister Jacquie Petrusma, Minister for Indigenous Affairs, who yesterday released the dual naming policy of our Government, and her strong support for that reset agenda.

Of course there should be recognition for the contribution of those parts of the community to Tasmania, because that has helped make Tasmania great.

Ms O'CONNOR - I know these are difficult questions for you, and it is not a personal reflection on you at all. I know you are passionate about Veterans' Affairs, but I am trying to advance an argument that has been put to us that there needs to be much stronger recognition of the descendants of the veterans of the Black Wars in Tasmania, and that in fact the truth is vitally important if we are to have true reconciliation between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal Tasmanians.

I ask you again, minister: do you recognise the merit in what Professor Henry Reynolds has proposed - that there be due recognition given to the warriors, who were the Aboriginal people who fought to defend their country when the first Europeans arrived?

Mr BARNETT - I would like to answer in two parts. First, I would like to emphasise the importance of not having the Government telling everybody what to do. What I would encourage is engagement, consultation and relationship-building between RSL Tasmania and the various veterans organisations and ex-service personnel in Tasmania and their engagement with the local Aboriginal community. I think that is a good thing. It is healthy. I would be at least informed in my thoughts and views, based on that feedback and based on those consultations and discussions. That is the first thing I would say.

Second, yes, in terms of recognition of the role of Indigenous Tasmanians, Indigenous Australians, that is important. In terms of that recognition, of course as a community we do that already in an appropriate way. We have just had a week or so ago Reconciliation Week, and of course we have NAIDOC Week, and there are other ways to recognise and honour the past contribution of Indigenous Tasmanians to this great state, indeed over thousands of years -

Ms O'CONNOR - Tens of thousands.

Mr BARNETT - Tens of thousands of years, over a long period of time, and that contribution can and should be recognised in that appropriate way. I think in terms of your suggestion of recognition of the Black Wars as part of the Anzac tradition is totally another matter, and I would be cautious to have government say this is what should be done. I would seek -

Ms O'CONNOR - You are misinterpreting the question.

UNCORRECTED PROOF ISSUE

Mr BARNETT - the involvement of RSL Tasmania with the local Aboriginal people. They should have those discussions, and I would be very concerned that the Anzac tradition could be impacted or affected. I would be informed, as I say, by those consultations.

Ms O'CONNOR - Minister, you talked earlier about Reconciliation Week and NAIDOC Week, but you would acknowledge that those events are much more about, in many ways, the relationship between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal Australians, and those parts of the relationship that we have yet to resolve or make peace over.

It is a very different contention that we recognise the contribution of Aboriginal warriors, because you would have to agree on the evidence, that our approach to veterans and our memorials to those lost in war are very Euro-centric and exclude Aboriginal Tasmanians.

Mr BARNETT - What I wouldn't want to do in answer to that question is dishonour in any way, shape or form the service and sacrifice of the 10 500 Tasmanians who have served -

Ms O'CONNOR - No-one wants to do that.

Mr BARNETT - in war, various conflicts, or indeed peacekeeping operations, particularly over the last 100-plus years.

Ms O'CONNOR - Minister, nobody wants to do that.

Mr BARNETT - That is what I would not want to do.

Ms O'CONNOR - That is right. Nobody wants to do that.

Mr BARNETT - That is what I want to make clear of my position.

Ms O'CONNOR - And mine. That is not the point.

Mr BARNETT - That is not where I want to go and we have to be cognisant of the view of our ex-service personnel and RSL Tasmania, the peak body for our veterans. I draw that to your attention. I express concern about the conflation of those two matters.

Ms O'CONNOR - It is not conflation. I am putting to you a proposition written in one of the seminal history books about Aboriginal Tasmanians and the Black Wars.

Ms DOW - I would like to understand better, minister, what the Hodgman Liberal Government is doing to provide mental health services for veterans in Tasmanian communities?

Mr BARNETT - It is probably more relevant to the federal Minister for Veteran Affairs who provides services through the Department of Veterans' Affairs.

As a result of the establishment of the Veterans Affairs Reference Group, I asked Luke Brown, Director for Tasmania for Department of Veterans Affairs, to speak to the reference group at its next meeting and address the issues relevant to veterans in Tasmania, which includes mental health.

UNCORRECTED PROOF ISSUE

It is an important issue for our veterans. As a state government, we are more involved in policy development and implementation of that policy. We do not provide the services for veterans. We can do what we possibly can.

Ms DOW - I would have thought there would be veterans in the community who would access state-provided mental health services.

Mr BARNETT - Yes, absolutely. I am not the minister for Health or mental health but it is important. I am aware the federal Minister for Veterans' Affairs, Darren Chester, who is doing a terrific job in that role, has been reappointed to Veterans' Affairs and Defence personnel and indicated on 26 May last week -

I will also be convening a veterans' mental health summit with state ministers, health experts and service providers within weeks to renew the focus on extra steps we can all take to prevent veterans' suicide.

I am with you in acknowledging the importance of mental health for our veterans and their families, particularly our younger veterans. That is one of the reasons we have funding support for the active recreation and adventure program, a \$225 000 commitment.

I am looking forward to meeting again with Darren Chester and my colleague Veterans' Affairs ministers from around Australia in coming weeks. No date as yet but it is not that far away. I would be delighted to take on board any concerns or suggestions you or anybody else in the community might have on what we can do better.

For example, I volunteer in a drop-in centre for homeless and those who need that support, once a month or thereabouts on a Saturday night in Launceston. I have been doing it for 10 years. Our guests as we call them, come and a number over the years have been veterans. They have issues with mental health, drug and alcohol and the like. It is a very difficult and challenging area. We can always do better. I am happy for any input and feedback to help us improve.

Ms DOW - Can you explain to me the Defence Force Veterans' Time Out Workshop and whether that program has commenced? There was \$45 000 over three years in last year's budget.

Mr BARNETT - I will check with my officers. I visited the workshop more than a month ago at Glenorchy. They do a great job. I had an inspection, we bought some woodwork and some lovely Tasmanian timber pens and the like. They do some good work and provide an important service there. I know Nick probably has more information on that program and that initiative.

Mr ATKINS - The workshop received the first instalment of \$15 000 on 27 September last year and they have \$30 000 remaining, and they have the next acquittals by 31 July. I understand the workshop is also a member of the Men's Shed Association as well, so they do a lot of work in that space. The purpose of the funding was to support the ongoing operations at the Defence and Veterans Workshop, and that was to employ a coordinator.

Ms BUTLER - I have a question about the desecration of a war memorial. There was legislation brought in by your Government. I am not 100 per cent familiar with that particular legislation, but I believe that it has a community service element if there is some desecration or vandalism of a war memorial, which includes community service with RSL members. Has that happened and has it been an effective tool?

Mr BARNETT - Yes, it has happened, as in the law was strengthened in 2014 when we came to government. It was one of our policies introduced on our promise and then we implemented that. Our view at the time was that the law on the desecration of war memorials and the like was inadequate and the penalties insufficient.

We have strengthened the law, we have increased the penalties and, yes, there is a community service obligation for those who have been found at fault under the law. That was the law implemented at the time. I am not the Attorney-General or the Minister for Correction, so I can't give you any detail on how many people have been charged or convicted, or what penalties may have been incurred since that time as I am not the relevant minister, but, yes, it has been introduced and it sits with the Attorney-General.

I am pleased with that because I had a bit to do with the commitment that we gave. It sends a message that we do hold dearly the honour and respect of our veterans and that can be demonstrated through how we respond to those war memorials and cenotaphs and the like.

Ms BUTLER - I am interested in whether the community service as an education program of sorts with RSL members with the perpetrator or someone who has vandalised a memorial has been taken up and how effective that has been. I would probably have to go through the Attorney-General to get that information, I believe.

Mr BARNETT - Yes, that would be appropriate; the Attorney-General is the relevant minister in that regard.

Ms O'CONNOR - I wanted to talk to you about the wonderful organisation that we can probably both agree on, which is Legacy Tasmania. As you are aware, Legacy began here in Tasmania and it is the only organisation that represents the widows of war and their children. Are you able to tell the committee what support the state is giving to Legacy Tasmania?

I know that you have acknowledged RSL's contribution and RSL as a peak body; do you acknowledge that Legacy has a particular sphere of concern that is not covered by the RSL necessarily and that Legacy really does need more support?

Mr BARNETT - Thank you for the question. I acknowledge the importance of Legacy. Legacy Hobart, which of course was the first Legacy entity in Australia -

Ms O'CONNOR - In the world - it's wonderful.

Mr BARNETT - In the world, and, of course, Legacy Launceston. I acknowledge my grandfather, HS Barnett, who served in the Royal Flying Corps flew a biplane in World War I and survived, came back and subsequently became president of Legacy Hobart and was quite involved the that wonderful organisation.

I have a bit of a soft spot for Legacy; they do a wonderful job and they are recognised in a range of ways, specifically through the trust. It is called the Anzac Day Trust; it consists of four people appointed by the Governor on recommendation of the responsible minister, which is myself. We have Ricky Bott, who is the Chair; Paul Crew; Warwick Luttrell; and Annette Wyatt. The trust disperses funding through the Treasury primarily to Legacy.

UNCORRECTED PROOF ISSUE

For example, in 2017, it was \$24 000; in 2016, it was \$21 000; in 2015, Legacy got \$20 500, the National Servicemen's Association got \$500 and the Vietnam Veterans got \$2700. It goes back to 2014, when the National Servicemen's Association got \$500 and Legacy got \$20 000. Legacy is recognised by me and the Government as doing a great job.

Ms O'CONNOR - Absolutely, I could not agree with you more. Legacy, as I understand it would like to be recognised as a peak body that represents the families left behind after conflicts. Do you see the argument for Legacy being given peak body status, given the RSL represents returned servicepeople? Legacy is a different cohort of people and group of victims of conflict. Can we agree both require strong support from Government and the community?

Mr BARNETT - We all agree around this table of the importance of our veterans and their families and specifically Legacy Hobart and Legacy Launceston. My counterpart would agree with the importance of their role and, yes, they do have a different role to RSL Tasmania and the various 50 plus RSL subbranches around Tasmania. There are many, in fact dozens, of ex-service personnel organisations and we try to take their needs into account. The Premier and I, each year with special recognition prior to Christmas, say 'Thank you for your service' and frankly, what they need and deserve is more - we can do more and should always be thinking about how we can do more and what we can do better.

You would be aware of a former minister [inaudible] for various community organisations whether it be in sport, community groups or veterans. Normally, there is one peak body and if you start creating too many peak bodies, you want to provide adequate funding support for that peak body and try to have the balance right in terms of peak bodies. That is not to diminish in any way shape or form the importance of Legacy to Tasmania.

Ms O'CONNOR - I agree, Legacy is very important to Tasmania. Have you had representation made to you by Legacy about peak body status or elevating the status in terms of Legacy's funding? Do you acknowledge the RSL while it does fantastic work for return servicemen

Mr BARNETT - And women.

Ms O'CONNOR - I did say returned service people before, but it is late in the day, so returned service people. It is a different objective that drives Legacy historically. Will you take on board that concern about peak body status and work with Legacy because they represent woman and children victims of war, which is different?

Mr BARNETT - I have a soft spot for Legacy with my grandfather being one of its past presidents. I know what a wonderful contribution they make to Tasmania, supporting the children, the Legatees involved and their families. Peak bodies status has not been raised with me directly by Legacy. I am not aware of that ever being raised before, but you can be assured I will do my best to represent, support and help them. We are doing that if there are ways to continually improve and upgrade our efforts and I am happy to take that on board. We are all at one in commending and thanking them for their service.

Ms DOW - My last question is around unemployment for veterans and unemployment services in the state. The Government has partnered with TasCOSS and TCCI across regional Tasmania. I wondered whether there had been a focus on the veterans community as a part of that work around getting people into work and whether you were aware of any programs or initiatives that

UNCORRECTED PROOF ISSUE

Government was currently involved in Tasmania around employment services for veterans and getting them back into the workforce.

Mr BARNETT - These are really good points you have raised there. This is primarily a matter for the federal government through its services to veterans and their families around the country because that's their responsibility whereas we are more interested and more involved in policy positions and supporting them in different ways. In any event, as I indicated earlier, the active recreation program is designed, at least in part, to support our veterans back into employment and back into active service.

Likewise, I have met with Darren Chester. When we have our ministerial meetings, we discuss the importance of getting back to work for our veterans. That has certainly been on the agenda since I have been minister and it is important it remains on the agenda. That is discussed across jurisdictions; it is led by the Commonwealth. They have initiatives and programs in place to support that. They are doing a good job there, but there is always more to do. I want to recognise that. I note and acknowledge that it's an important area and we can always do more.

I am happy for feedback and constructive consultation with others in the community on how we can better support our veterans.

Ms O'CONNOR - I will go back to my original set of questions to close this off. Minister, can you commit to taking on board what we have discussed today about a recognition of the first Tasmanian warriors, working collaboratively with the Tasmanian Aboriginal Centre - TAC - and other representatives of Aboriginal communities in Tasmania to ensure that our respect for veterans is not only for the veterans of the wars of the past century, but the century before that and most specifically the Black Wars?

Mr BARNETT - My response is in two parts. First of all, to confirm what I said earlier with respect to the importance of RSL Tasmania, consulting and working with the Tasmanian Aboriginal community and vice versa.

Ms O'CONNOR - You can't just leave it all to the RSL, though, it needs leadership.

CHAIR - Order, Ms O'Connor.

Mr BARNETT - It is important that those consultations take place. RSL Tasmania is open to that. I have discussed it with them. I say well done, and I hope that the Tasmanian Aboriginal Centre and Aboriginal communities take up that offer to meet with and discuss those matters with the RSL.

Second, where I would be strongly proactive is in supporting Indigenous Tasmanians and Aboriginal groups being involved in our Anzac commemorations and remembrance services across Tasmania to recognise their service and sacrifice. I have written about that in the past in opinion pieces.

Ms O'CONNOR - But recognising their service and sacrifice in the Black Wars is important, too. Their service and sacrifice predate the Anzac landings.

Mr BARNETT - I am trying to finish my answer.

CHAIR - Order, Ms O'Connor.

Mr BARNETT - I am trying my best to indicate my strong support for the recognition of Aboriginal communities and Aboriginal people, specifically their involvement and contribution to the Anzac spirit during that 100-plus years.

Ms O'CONNOR - You are pushing black history through a white lens. It is really regrettable.

Mr BARNETT - I wanted to recognise that. I have written about it, I support it and I have put it on the record. Third, and finally, of course we should be supporting our Indigenous communities through Reconciliation Week, through NAIDOC Week and through other ways to recognise their contribution to the great state of Tasmania.

The committee suspended from 3 p.m. to 3.07 p.m.

DIVISION 11

(Department of State Growth)

Output group 3

Energy Policy and Advice

3.1 Energy Policy and Advice -

CHAIR - Good afternoon, everyone. Thank you. This session is on Energy. I understand it only has one line, is that right?

Mr BARNETT - Yes, thank you very much, Chair.

I am very happy to introduce those at the table: Kim Evans, Secretary of the Department of State Growth; Gary Swain, Deputy Secretary, Transport Services; and Andrew Rayner, Acting Director Energy Market Development. We may need to have Sue Morrison, Acting Executive Director, Energy in due course.

CHAIR - We have had our break so there will be no additional break in this period. Minister, would you like to give your introductory comments?

Mr BARNETT - Thank you very much, Chair. I am very pleased to say that Tasmania has an abundance of renewable energy. We are the renewable energy powerhouse of the nation and we are in a very good position to play an important role in Australia's energy future. We have what the rest of the nation really wants and needs, which is low-cost, reliable and clean energy. We want to take advantage of this and we plan to do that. We are doing it by grasping that opportunity with both hands.

We are keeping the cost of electricity down for Tasmanian households and small business - that is really important. The National Electricity Market is being transformed from one dominated by coal generation to a more diverse combination of generation and renewable sources. Hydro and wind have the potential to play a much more significant role. They already are and we stand ready to act and we have been moving forward. We are working cooperatively with the Australian

UNCORRECTED PROOF ISSUE

Government. I am very grateful to the Morrison coalition government for its commitment. Together \$86 million is supporting our Battery of the Nation project in Tasmania and the Marinus Link, the second interconnector.

These projects are the next generation of Tasmania's renewable energy infrastructure. We are pursuing them on a beneficiary pays basis to deliver for Tasmania. These nationally significant developments have the potential not only to inject billions of dollars into the Tasmanian economy; they will also deliver thousands of jobs, many of these in regional areas.

Alongside the new wind farms, including those under construction at Cattle Hill and Granville Harbour, the Battery of the Nation and the Marinus Link will enable Tasmania to play a bigger role going forward. In addition, one exciting example heading our way is hydrogen. Hydrogen has the potential to be renewable energy and is a cost-competitive energy source. It may present a longer term opportunity for Tasmania. The Tasmanian Government is actively involved in the emerging interest in hydrogen, including progressing a policy agenda at the COAG Energy Council meetings.

We want to get the fundamentals right though. Energy security is really important. In planning for intergenerational energy investments, we are focused on managing the fundamentals of delivering reliable, affordable, clean energy. Important legislative changes to modernise the framework have occurred over the last 12 months so we have implemented the Tasmanian Energy Security Taskforce recommendations with the Energy Co-ordination and Planning Amendment Act 2019. That has formalised the independent monitor and assessor roles overseeing Tasmania's energy security needs. We have enshrined these important roles in legislation.

We have important updates to the gas industry legislation that will streamline the administration process and improve processes for gas supply through the Gas Industry Act 2019. We are looking for a modern, responsible and contemporary environment and we are trying to deliver the lowest possible prices for Tasmanian households and business.

We have capped the annual regulated power price increases to no more than CPI since 2017-18. We have provided \$5.5 million for commercial and industrial users' rebates for those businesses. We are continuing our generous \$45 million in concessions for some 90 000 vulnerable Tasmanians. That is a big commitment. In addition to that to support low-income Tasmanians in reducing their energy usage, we are investing \$1 million in the No Interest Loan Scheme, which is an energy saver loan and subsidy program over the next four years.

We are committed to supporting our farmers for the On-Farm Energy Audit and Capital Grant Program. It's a very successful one to date that provides support for farmers to engage a qualified professional to review their farm energy use and to purchase new energy-efficient capital infrastructure. In addition, \$5.5 million for the Tasmanian Irrigation Renewable Energy project will deliver mini-hydro, micro-hydro and put downward prices on the cost of doing business for irrigators and our farmers.

In conclusion, reducing the cost of living and reducing the cost of doing business are priorities for Tasmania and for our Government. We are delivering. There is a lot more work to do. We have a very big workload ahead of us. We are the renewable energy powerhouse, but we have to take these opportunities.

I say thank you to the department that supports me and my office and the Hodgman Liberal Government. The workload ahead is about to increase with the projects that we have on board. It

UNCORRECTED PROOF ISSUE

is an exciting time. We have many challenges ahead. I am looking forward to the challenge on behalf of the Hodgman Liberal Government.

Mr O'BYRNE - Thank you for that introduction, minister.

Obviously, the Battery of the Nation, Marinus and the opportunity in front of Tasmania will rely very heavily on a national approach and the federal government leading the energy mix into the future. Last year there was an announcement on the National Energy Guarantee. At the time you said -

From Tasmania's point of view a well-designed national energy guarantee can deliver significant benefits for Tasmania. I am working very hard with my COAG energy minister colleagues and the federal minister to ensure that this can occur for Tasmania's sake.

You also said -

This is good for Tasmanians. It is jobs and puts downward pressure on power prices.

The NEG fell over because of politics inside your federal party. How would you now characterise the federal policy and how it benefits Tasmania?

Mr BARNETT - Thank you for the question, which I am absolutely delighted to answer. The Morrison coalition government has committed with the Hodgman Liberal Government \$86 million to support battery of the nation. It is absolutely fantastic news. I can let you know that we are acting on that,

Ms O'CONNOR - Did he send a lump of coal with the cheque?

CHAIR - Order, Ms O'Connor.

Mr BARNETT - We are very pleased with the wonderful support from the Prime Minister. He has been down here; he has been to the west coast. We have been to Lake Cethana. The \$56 million commitment to commence and to progress the first phase of the design and approvals process for Marinus link is exactly what Tasmania needs. We are acting on that. We are working together. The department is working on it, Hydro Tasmania and TasNetworks. We are supported in addition to that through ARENA, with the business case to progress Marinus link. That business case is due to be delivered to the Government at the end of this year.

In addition to that we have an agreement for \$30 million for Hydro Tasmania to progress the feasibility of our top three sites for pumped hydro: Lake Cethana, Lake Rowallan, Tribute Power Station and Lake Murchison on the west coast. These are important opportunities and we want to grasp those opportunities. In addition, the federal government through Angus Taylor, who has just been reappointed as Energy minister as you would be aware, has provided a commitment to our government to progress the UNGI project, which is underwriting new generation investment. That would mean a long-term agreement for Hydro Tasmania to deliver reliable energy into the mainland into the future. That would be on certain terms and conditions and that would provide a guaranteed revenue over that period of that agreement.

UNCORRECTED PROOF ISSUE

We are excited about that. I have been in recent contact with Mr Taylor and we are pleased to progress the UNGI proposal, in particular. All in all, there is wonderful support we have received from our federal counterparts and specifically the Prime Minister, Mr Morrison, and Mr Taylor.

Mr O'BYRNE - There is no doubt there is lots of money flying to Tasmania to support the projects. As you know, and as the industry knows, the biggest threat to Battery of the Nation and to the massive potential of wind projects around the state, is a federal government that encourages and underwrites coal projects that fit into the national energy grid. With the failure of the NEG, what are you doing to advocate a federal government not to underwrite coal energy on the mainland at the expense of Tasmania?

Ms O'CONNOR - Adani?

Mr BARNETT - I was wondering if -

Ms O'CONNOR - Of course you won't respond to that but you are as complicit as each other on that one.

Mr BARNETT - Let's make it clear of the strong support we have from the federal government for our Battery of the Nation plans and proposals. Let's make it clear that we are working cooperatively and we are working together to get the job done that is best for Tasmania. I want everyone on board.

Mr BARNETT - You acknowledge that coal is a risk?

CHAIR - Order, Mr O'Byrne and Ms O'Connor. Please don't interrupt.

Mr BARNETT - I will do my best to respond. Let me answer the question if I could to assist Mr O'Byrne, my counterpart. A better understanding of the National Electricity Market would be good. We have a 12 000 MW demand over the next couple of years for intermittent energy, that is wind and solar. That is on the go. It is happening now as we speak. It is impacting on coal. That is impacting the National Electricity Market.

Secondly, there is a demand over the next 10 to 15 years of some 17 000 MW for storage. That means reliable power. Guess where that comes from? Tasmania, Hydro and Snowy 2.0. We can deliver. We are in a brilliant position to deliver and what will be important is to progress Marinus link, the second interconnector to maximise the potential for Tasmania.

With that demand coming forward over the next 10 to 15-plus years, we are in a brilliant position to progress Battery of the Nation. The federal government has recognised that. They can see that. They want to invest in Battery of the Nation and they want to invest accordingly. The Prime Minister has backed it, as has Mr Taylor.

Mr O'BYRNE - There is no change to your position?

Mr BARNETT - Is there is a change to your position?

Mr O'BYRNE - At a COAG meeting last December, the New South Wales Liberal climate and energy minister, Don Harwin - and we know that it is very important for us in the energy mix that we encourage a push towards renewables - at that meeting, Don Harwin wanted to move a motion around a net zero emissions pathway. This could be nothing but good news for Tasmania,

given the product we would sell into the national market. Why did Tasmania join with South Australia and the federal minister to block that motion being debated?

Mr BARNETT - I think the shadow minister is stuck in the past.

Mr O'BYRNE - This is December of last year.

Mr BARNETT - I would like to quote to you -

Ms O'CONNOR - Mr O'Byrne is talking about a point in time and a statement of fact.

Mr BARNETT - In response to the question, I am quoting to you the re-elected Prime Minister said this:

We have got to get this second interconnector built. Tasmania will be charging up the rest of the nation, the one making the contribution to Australia. It means those that are benefiting will carry the financial cost.

Secondly, Mr Taylor said this:

Projects like this -

He is talking about the interconnector -

Projects like this aren't nice to have, they are necessary to have. We must have them, we stand ready to finance them.

Mr O'BYRNE - But you know the business case is reliant on the market working in our favour.

Minister, I ask you again, why did Tasmania join with South Australia and the federal minister to block a motion by a New South Wales Liberal minister, to talk about a pathway to net zero emissions to 2050? Why would you do that when Tasmania is probably the only state that will get the massive uplift by a renewable energy market focus on the mainland in the national grid? Why would you do that?

Mr BARNETT - This is where there is a misunderstanding of the National Electricity Market by the shadow minister and those on your side of politics because you have not -

Mr O'BYRNE - This is a Liberal -

CHAIR - Order.

Mr BARNETT - Seventeen thousand megawatts of storage is required over the next 10 to 15 plus years.

Ms O'CONNOR - So why don't you back net zero emissions?

Mr BARNETT - We are in a brilliant position to deliver, so irrespective of your emissions target, that demand is sitting there ready for action. Can you understand that? That is a rhetorical question for the Labor Party.

Mr O'BYRNE - Yes, and there is a whole range of coal projects that are being proposed by the Liberal National Party out of Queensland which will change the energy mix on the mainland. It's in Tasmania's benefit to promote renewables. You know that, you have said that in your opening statement. Then, why, at the ministerial council meeting of COAG did you vote against your Liberal counterpart in New South Wales to create an environment where Tasmania would benefit? Why would you vote against that, minister?

Mr BARNETT - You are getting stuck in the past -

Mr O'BYRNE - This is barely six months ago.

Mr BARNETT - You would be aware that, that motion was brought forward without notice -

Ms O'CONNOR - Why shouldn't you explain yourself?

Mr BARNETT - and you would also be aware that the Morrison government has been terrifically supportive. In addition to the \$56 million they put on the table, they have committed another \$17 million for our skills training and education development to energise Tasmania so that we have the skills and the workforce to do the job to develop Battery of the Nation.

Mr O'BYRNE - You can keep repeating -

CHAIR - Order. Please don't interrupt, the minister is still answering.

Mr O'BYRNE - You can keep repeating your opening statement about the benefit but that necessarily means you need to follow-up, lobby and work, to do the work necessary to create the opportunity for Tasmania. You know if more coal comes on line, the business case of Marinus, the business case of Battery of the Nation, in particular, becomes marginal. It is identified as a key risk and so when your Liberal counterpart in New South Wales said:

I am very disappointed by the actions of the federal government at COAG Energy Council in Adelaide today. 'Be it on your own head,' a furious Mr Don Harwin said.

He is a New South Wales Liberal minister. Why did you vote with South Australia and the federal government to block a New South Wales Liberal Party motion that is actually in the interests of Tasmania? Why would you do that?

Mr BARNETT - This is a terrific question. I'm delighted you have asked it because part of your question -

Ms O'CONNOR - You haven't answered it five times.

Mr O'BYRNE - I see, roll over and have your tummy tickled.

CHAIR - Order, please.

UNCORRECTED PROOF ISSUE

Mr BARNETT - Why aren't you working with, why did you collaborate with, why are you cooperating with the federal government? Well, guess what we have been doing? We've been doing all of that and a whole lot more and guess what?

Mr O'BYRNE - What did you trade off?

Mr BARNETT - They're delivering; \$56 million on the table, \$17 million for skills development.

Mr O'BYRNE - Were you at the meeting?

CHAIR - Mr O'Byrne, please.

Mr BARNETT - We have been doing all that with the full support of the Premier and the Hodgman Liberal Government. They're backing our plans for Battery of the Nation. I'd say, get on board.

Mr O'BYRNE - Were you at the meeting, minister?

Mr BARNETT - Of course.

Mr O'BYRNE - You were at the meeting in December of last year.

Mr BARNETT - Ms Courtney was representing us at the December meeting.

Mr O'BYRNE - You weren't at the meeting.

Mr BARNETT - I wasn't at that particular meeting, no.

Mr O'BYRNE - Heading into a federal election on energy policy being key, why weren't you at the meeting?

Mr BARNETT - I was elsewhere at the time. I'm not going to disclose exactly where I was but you know that you can't make it to all the meetings for various reasons, but that's irrelevant -

Mr O'BYRNE - That's not irrelevant. You take on the role as minister, you turn up to meetings; that's what you do.

CHAIR - Mr O'Byrne, do you have a question?

Mr O'BYRNE - What is the national policy apart from a couple of key announcements? We support investment in backing a business case for Marinus and Battery of the Nation but what is the federal Government policy? Are you worried by the change in underwriting of coal energy assets which will upset the business case in future, which will upset the business case?

Mr BARNETT - I have outlined the federal Government's policy with respect to energy and Tasmania. First, they are supporting our plans for Battery of the Nation. We are progressing them. We are going to the next level. It's fantastic and we appreciate their support. Second, we are progressing our plans with the \$56 million for Marinus Link. Third, they are delivering on the UNGI proposal, which is Underwriting New General Investment in Tasmanian hydro. This is a

long-term agreement with long-term revenue guaranteed to the state through Hydro Tasmania. That work is all ahead of us but we have a good understanding of where that's headed.

They are supporting Snowy 2.0 because they know they need reliable power. They have already implemented the retailer reliability obligation, which goes to Tasmania's strength. Tasmania has what the rest of the nation needs and wants, which is low-cost, reliable clean energy. They are providing further support including the energy assistance payments and the Australian Governments election energy commitments are on the website. It's there for all to see and the Australian people voted for the coalition; they didn't vote for record taxes on Tasmanian individuals, families and business.

Ms O'CONNOR - Minister, the Investor Group on Climate Change, which represents companies that manage total funds of more than \$2 trillion in Australia and New Zealand. It is calling for a price on carbon and it is also calling for a net-zero emissions target by 2050. Do you support the Investor Group on Climate Change's call for the nation to be net-zero emissions by 2050 and Tasmania to play an important part of that?

Mr BARNETT - What I support is the Tasmanian Government's policy to advance Tasmania's interests with respect to Battery to the Nation, Marinus Link -

Ms O'CONNOR - Don't you support national action on climate change?

Mr BARNETT - I'm trying my best to answer the question. We have advanced the cause. I want everyone to come on board to support our Tasmania First Energy Policy, which is delivering. It will deliver \$5 billion of investment, thousands of jobs, downward pressure on prices and improved energy security. Come on board. The second part of my answer relates to our Climate Change Action Plan. You are aware of that.

Ms O'CONNOR - It expires in two years.

Mr BARNETT - I know you do not support all of it, I think you support some of it.

Ms O'CONNOR - I don't support your plan to log native forests and -

CHAIR - Ms O'Connor, please do not interrupt. Ms O'Connor, order.

Mr BARNETT - The Minister for the Environment is studiously progressing the plan. Our long-term omission's reduction target of zero net omissions was achieved 2016 and we have that plan through to 2050. We have a range of climate change policies including supporting the roll-out of electric vehicles. I don't know specifically with respect to -

Ms O'CONNOR - I am asking if you support a national target of net-zero emissions by 2050.

CHAIR - Ms O'Connor, please.

Mr BARNETT - Thank you for the supplementary question. Look, we are the renewable energy powerhouse for the nation. Why won't the Greens support us -

Ms O'CONNOR - Oh, control yourself.

UNCORRECTED PROOF ISSUE

CHAIR - Order.

Mr BARNETT - in these efforts? You are talking about climate change policy, this is leading the way and we are way ahead of the rest of the nation and the rest of the world.

Ms O'CONNOR - Why are you voting against a net-zero omissions target.

Mr BARNETT - Why wouldn't you support it? It's bizarre.

Ms O'CONNOR - You're misrepresenting us again.

CHAIR - Order.

Mr BARNETT - You have \$55 million for the fuel reduction burning program, I have mentioned Marinus, I have mentioned the Tasmanian Energy Efficiency Loan Scheme, which was very effective. We have the Tasmanian Irrigation Renewable Energy Program, which discussed this morning. I am happy to talk about mini hydro and micro hydro. I am happy to talk about the NILS program reducing emissions and saving on energy costs. We have \$750 000 for the farm energy irrigation audit and capital grant scheme. There is \$2 million for the fuel reduction burning in the TWWHA and \$2 million for the bushfire preparedness and management program. We are funding the pastures and livestock improvement program. These are all initiatives that are supporting our efforts to mitigate climate change. We are implementing the new biosecurity risk framework addressing the risk posed by climate change. We have a range of initiatives, I have mentioned the electric vehicle charging stations, ChargeSmart businesses and the like. The Minister for the Environment, myself and the Premier are committed, we are delivering what we can and there is a lot more work to do.

Ms O'CONNOR - I want to talk to you about Project Marinus. The Project Marinus initial feasibility report, published in February this year, found the projected cost of the project would be somewhere in the order of \$1.3 billion to \$3 billion. This is the capital cost only, with the other costs in addition and the costs of these projects regularly blow out. When the CEO of TasNetworks, Lance Balcolombe, was asked whether Tasmanians might end up footing the bill, you stated, 'the plain and simple fact right now is that interconnection is priced on a jurisdictional basis, so at a higher level, Tasmania pays half and Victoria pays half'. Will Tasmania's end up footing the bill if this ever goes ahead? With \$1.1 billion in net debt projected into the forward Estimates, can Tasmania afford your pipe dream?

Mr BARNETT - Tasmanians should pay their fair share. This is going to deliver terrific benefits in investment, jobs growth, downward pressure on prices and energy security. I am keen for members around this table and the community to support it and engage with education on the benefits of it. We have full buy-in from the Prime Minister, Mr Taylor and the federal Government and we are all heading in the right direction. I have already quoted the Prime Minister in that beneficiaries should pay and that means that exactly that. Tasmania should only pay their fair share.

Ms O'CONNOR - That is half - what is half of \$3 billion - \$1.5 billion is what Tasmanians would be expected to pay.

Mr BARNETT - I said our fair share.

Ms O'CONNOR - What is our fair share if Lance Balcolombe says half-half?

Mr BARNETT - That is why a business study is being undertaken and will be released, it is expected to be completed at the end of this year. It has always been on the public record I confirm that again today, that will go to the Government and we will consider that and respond. I am happy for Mr Swain, deputy secretary, to provide more detail.

Ms O'CONNOR - Is that the detail of the costs and who would carry them?

Mr BARNETT - In the detail of the costs, a business case is being undertaken as to who pays. We already have the Prime Minister and others agreeing that it is on a 'beneficiaries pay' approach. Let us hear from the deputy secretary and that might assist the committee further.

Mr SWAIN - It is that correct that interconnects in the past have typically been split 50-50 between the two jurisdictions. The national rules don't require that but that has been the practice and it is possible that jurisdictions could agree on a different split and then take that to the relevant price regulator, which is the Australian Energy Regulator. That is quite a difficult process because it involves multiple party agreement, which is part of the reason there is a lot of work going on in the national regulatory arrangements under the COAG processes to review the application of what is called the RIT-T test, the relevant process to interconnect between regions. There is a recognised issue in the national market arrangements to underpin interconnects. There are two roads to achieving what the minister has outlined, which is the beneficiary pays outcome that is articulated in the government document called the Current Situation Assessment that we have talked to the Victorian and Australian Governments about.

Ms O'CONNOR - Is that a public document?

Mr SWAIN - Yes, it is. One of them is adjustments to the regulatory process, which have been worked through with the Energy Security Board and the COAG processes. The other path is capital injections from one or more governments outside of Tasmania. That is what has happened in the case of Snowy. They have similar issues. They have major transmission connections associated with Snowy. Those issues have been dealt with through equal injections rather than through changes to the regulatory processes. There is a clear policy position from the government in that situation assessment about beneficiary pays, which articulates that our modelling indicates that about 90 per cent of the benefits will fall outside of Tasmania and that considerable benefits will fall outside of Tasmania and Victoria. We are working through the regulatory processes and the government to government discussions to look at how to implement that policy position.

Ms O'CONNOR - Okay, thank you, Mr Swain. Minister, a prominent Tasmanian-based economist who you all know but I don't wish to name at this table has significant expertise in the energy field was quoted recently on radio saying -

The economics, you can have one but you can't have both. You can go ahead with Snowy 2 or you can go with pumped hydro Tasmania and by extension, a second interconnector but the economics of both don't stack up.

Do you agree with this statement? Is it an either/or proposition? According to the energy economists, it is an either/or proposition and that places considerable uncertainty over your Project Marinus plans that still look like a pipe-dream.

Mr BARNETT - Thank you for your question, which your Greens candidate for Bass criticised very strongly during the federal election campaign. Infrastructure Australia has recognised Project Marinus as a priority of national significance and it has also been referred to as national infrastructure, so that is very encouraging. In addition, the Australian Energy Market Operator has also recognised it as part of the future plan in the way they envisage the energy market into the future. I have received correspondence from Audrey Zibelman, who is the head of that organisation, confirming this in writing directly to me. Based on expert advice, there is a 17 000-megawatt storage demand over the next 10 to 15 years. That is storage, which includes Snowy 2.0 and Hydro.

Ms O'CONNOR - Do you believe it is possible to have both Snowy 2.0 and Project Marinus even though economists and people with expertise in energy economics are casting doubt, saying it is one or the other?

Mr BARNETT - The answer is yes. We believe there is room for both. Snowy 2.0 is progressing and we say, well done. Battery of the Nation is also progressing. The Prime Minister and federal Minister for Energy have recognised that. They refer to both Snowy 2.0 and Battery of the Nation at the same time and in the same place. The 17 000-megawatt demand over the next 10 to 15 years is for storage. That Snowy 2.0 and Battery of the Nation. Let us put it in perspective. Snowy 2.0 is about 2 000 megawatts. Our megawatt capacity here in Tasmania it is about 2400 or thereabouts. Even if we doubled that and had another 2400, you can see that demand over the next 10 to 15 years is significantly over and above what we can currently deliver. Things could change in the years ahead. Perhaps Mr Swain could assist.

Ms O'CONNOR - That is pretty clear. If you want to make it brief Mr Swain that is fine.

Mr SWAIN - A brief point. Snowy is different to Tasmania in that both Snowy and the hydro system in Tasmania are energy-constrained, not capacity constrained. The storages of Snowy can pump out hundreds of megawatts for a week or two, short periods. With good storage levels, Tasmania's system can pump out firming energy over months. It is a different product we are talking about and Tasmania is very lucky, topographically.

Mr O'BYRNE - Minister, you had to be reminded that you were not at the COAG meeting in December last year when a motion that would have benefited Tasmania was put to be debated in an attempt to have it passed. You said Ms Courtney was the representative. When the federal Government effectively clicked their fingers and we jumped and you supported a motion that was against Tasmania's interest. You say that you are working with the federal Government but legislation was introduced and commenced debate in federal Parliament earlier this year that would give the federal Government the power to force states to privatise energy assets on the basis that prices were not being forced down. The LNP federal Government and a number of people still believe in this kind of legislation, which would force a state to privatise an energy asset like the Hydro. What advocacy have you done to protect Tasmania? Will you rule out Tasmanian Liberal senators voting in favour of that legislation?

Mr BARNETT - You mischaracterise the legislation.

Mr O'BYRNE - There were powers in that legislation -

Mr BARNETT - Sorry, I am trying to answer the question.

CHAIR - Order, Mr O'Byrne.

Mr BARNETT - You mischaracterise the legislation, one of several Treasury laws amendment bills put forward in 2018. The Tasmanian Government's position has been put to my federal counterpart, Mr Taylor, in around February this year. I have communicated this in recent days and weeks. We are a regulated environment, we own our three energy businesses; Hydro Tasmania, TasNetworks and Aurora Energy, so we are different to mainland jurisdictions. I am attempting to answer the question. You have asked the question and I am answering the question. You may not like the answer.

Due to the structure and regulatory arrangements we have in Tasmania, it is not expected that the market manipulation behaviour referred to in the bill would occur in this state. The Department of Treasury and Finance, Hydro Tasmania and Aurora Energy have confirmed this position. Regardless of that, I have written to my federal counterpart expressing concern regarding any potential compliance obligations and resulting market uncertainty. I have been verbally assured by Mr Taylor that this will have no material impact on our government energy businesses.

Mr O'BYRNE - Is it true the legislation will give the federal Government the capacity to compel states to privatise assets if they form a view? You have said you have written, I will take it on face value you have raised this issue with the federal minister. You have received a verbal response. Has he responded in writing? Has he put a commitment on Commonwealth Government ministerial letterhead that this will not impact on Tasmania. On the face of it if there's powers inside that federal legislation to compel that has more power than a letter or a verbal assurance from a federal minister.

Mr BARNETT - Thank you for the question. I think you're mischaracterising the legislation. I've expressed the views and the position of the Tasmanian Government. I've personally relayed that directly to minister Taylor. The concern they have on the mainland is a legitimate one and relates to large vertically integrated retailers. It's different in Tasmania. We have Hydro Tasmania, we have TasNetworks. They're separate GBEs. And then we have Aurora Energy, which is the retailer. So, we have a regulated arrangement for residential and business customers. There's a certain group that are unregulated businesses in terms of the price they pay, hence the rebate we've offered for commercial industrial customers in the past few years. We need to keep downward pressure on prices. We are a different jurisdiction. There's perhaps a misunderstanding in that regard. I've made it very clear with respect to any compliance obligations and any resulting market uncertainty, and I'd expect that to be taken into account.

Mr O'BYRNE - So, the other clear and present threat and danger to Marinus and Battery of the Nation and renewable energies is Senator Abetz's advocacy for nuclear energy. Have you raised this issue directly with him to say that's not something that Tasmanians support and that even if he supports that on mainland Australia, in terms of the energy mix in the future, it could alter market conditions and be a threat to Tasmania? Have you raised this with Senator Abetz?

Mr BARNETT - I wouldn't rely on the record here for Senator Abetz or any Liberal Senator to be verbally by a state Labor MP. You have the opportunity to do that in the public arena, and elsewhere. But I won't allow it here.

Mr O'BYRNE - So, are you not aware of his advocacy for nuclear energy?

Mr BARNETT - I won't allow it here through you, Chair. To make it very clear, this is not an issue for the Tasmanian Government. We are very focused on Battery of the Nation, on hydro,

UNCORRECTED PROOF ISSUE

on wind, and doing everything we can to make sure that Tasmania is the renewal energy powerhouse of the nation, to deliver jobs and lower power prices for Tasmanians. That's my focus, and you know that. It's political shenanigans and a political game you are currently playing.

Mr O'BYRNE - Not at all.

Mr BARNETT - And you should cease and desist and support Battery of the Nation.

Mr O'BYRNE - We'll support once we see the business case -

Mr BARNETT - Come on board.

Ms O'CONNOR - Once that stacks up.

Mr O'BYRNE - But, minister, you know very well the market dynamics on the mainland are crucial to the success of any connection from Tasmania. You've referred to it a number of times. You have a Tasmanian Senator, Senator Abetz, openly talking about, not only coal and underwriting coal generation in the future, which impacts on the market and the business case for Marinus, he's also out there advocating for nuclear energy. It's fairyland stuff. No-one takes him seriously when he says it. He just embarrasses himself. But when he says that he undermines Tasmania's case in Canberra for greater support, because we know there's more money needed to get it beyond the business case and beyond the work TasNetworks and Hydro are doing. What have you done to stop him from talking about it, because it undermines Tasmania's credibility?

Mr BARNETT - We're in a state parliament budget Estimates hearing, and you're taking up the time under budget Estimates to ask me questions about a federal Liberal minister.

Mr O'BYRNE - This is about the business case for the biggest investment -

Mr BARNETT - Can I just let you know about the terrific support I have received and that the state Government has received for the plans we have for Battery of the Nation. The Morrison Liberal Government has backed us with \$56 million to progress the design and approvals phase. Something the Labor Party never did is \$17 million to support our skills, education and training for the skills and workforce we will need to deliver this project.

Mr O'BYRNE - So essentially, we can take from that that you won't advocate with your federal Liberal Party on issues that run counter to Tasmania's interests? You'll just roll over and have your tummy tickled. We don't need to -

Mr BARNETT - I won't be verbally by this shadow minister. You can try.

CHAIR - A question?

Mr O'BYRNE - You're doing it yourself, mate.

CHAIR - Come on, Mr O'Byrne, or I'll pass the call.

Mr O'BYRNE - In an answer through you, minister, Mr Swain talked about the beneficiary pays issue in terms of Marinus and the cost and how that would be allocated. Could you outline

UNCORRECTED PROOF ISSUE

what steps you have taken through the COAG process to put this on the national agenda, beyond having conversations in meetings around difference rooms? Have you raised this at COAG?

Mr BARNETT - I have raised it at COAG.

Mr O'BYRNE - At which COAG meeting did you raise it?

Mr BARNETT - I raised it with my interstate counterparts and my federal counterparts. Everybody around the COAG table knows the importance of Battery of the Nation. It's been raised on a number of occasions at the COAG energy ministers meetings. They know I'm like a dog with a bone, so all you have to do is talk to any of your energy counterparts on the mainland and away you go. There's no doubt about that. In terms of what support we're getting in Tasmania, I note that many of the peak bodies, including the TCCI across the state, a key stakeholder group, are supporting the project. We're keen to get full support from a Labor Party.

Mr TUCKER - Minister, I note Tasmania's electricity concession scheme is running for another year, providing much needed support to low-income households and pensioners. Could you provide some more information about that scheme please?

Mr BARNETT - Yes, it's a very important scheme and it's going up for more than 90 000 vulnerable Tasmanians. We are not just interested in the big picture and jobs and investment in Tasmania, we are interested in vulnerable Tasmanians and insuring that power prices and electricity prices are kept at an affordable level. That's why we are into keeping pressure on.

We have among the most generous concessions in Australia for vulnerable people. I am talking about pensioners and healthcare card holders across the state. It is some \$44.8 million in this Budget 2019-20, for which I thank the Treasurer. On average the annual electricity concession provides a daily discount of 137.98 cents per day. That means an average of \$500 a year to those vulnerable Tasmanians. It's a really important scheme and we back it to hilt. It's terrific that we are able to provide that support in the Budget. It's tax money but it's important to reduce the cost of living for those Tasmanians.

Aurora Energy, our energy retailer, provides further support through the Your Energy Support Program which identifies and assists vulnerable Tasmanian customers to manage their energy usage and affordability. We are proud of the concessions scheme. We are proud of what we do. The YES programs provide assistance and support for those who get on the phone and need help on their energy efficiency measures. I have been to Aurora Energy, I have met many of those who provide that advice and support and I say, thank you, to them for their service because it is a really important service to the people of Tasmania.

Ms O'CONNOR - Minister, as I understand it, there are 17 private land owners along the proposed route of UPC Renewables' 170-kilometre-long, high voltage, overhead transmission line. Some of those land owners received a letter from UPC Renewables. One of them, Mr Jan Winkel, has said that the letter threatens compulsory acquisition of part of his land. In the letter the company says they 'may have to compulsorily acquire land if agreement can't be reached'. Can you confirm that you have had discussions with UPC Renewables about applying the Land Acquisition Act to the transmission route?

Mr BARNETT - Yes, let's make it clear that the Government supports renewable energy development around Tasmania, including at Robbins Island and Jim's Plain by UPC Renewables.

UNCORRECTED PROOF ISSUE

They have a proposed wind farm. Like all other developments of that size and type it is subject to development and planning approvals and environmental approval process. During that process there is an opportunity for public submissions. It is essential that they comply with that rigorous planning and environmental approval process. They are in the early stages, I understand.

In terms of effective engagement with the public, people like you have referred to in your question, I have communicated personally with them the importance of those requirements to engage with the local community and to get their feedback. You asked about compulsory acquisition -

Ms O'CONNOR - I asked if you have met with the company.

Mr BARNETT - I am trying to answer the question. You referred to compulsory acquisition and I am addressing that part of the question. I am trying to assist the member. Parliament has provided legislative provisions where compulsory acquisition may be available to define public authorities, this includes licensed entities for electricity or gas infrastructure. Compulsory acquisitions are a last resort after all avenues of reaching an agreed negotiated outcome have been explored and exhausted. I repeat, a proponent must have exercised all reasonable endeavours to acquire its easement requirements through voluntary agreement with landowners. Just to conclude, this is not an unusual approach, as I said prior to the lunch break. It has been followed by my predecessors in this role, and indeed under successive governments, including the former Labor-Greens government. When important infrastructure is considered that has a broad public benefit, notices of acquisition are only to be used where all other avenues for an agreed negotiated outcome have been exhausted.

Ms O'CONNOR - Perhaps you could answer my question now. I asked the question, have you met with UPC Renewables and discussed with them the application of the Land Acquisitions Act in order to compulsorily acquire private land holdings along the transmission route?

Mr BARNETT - I have helped answer at least part of that question. Let me see if I can assist further. Of course, I have met with UPC and I will meet with other renewable energy developers from time to time, because we want to develop Tasmania as a renewable energy powerhouse in Australia. We have to grasp those opportunities. I won't speculate on statutory decisions I might need to make in the future as a minister. Any future decision would need to be properly considered, and the information available at that time would have regard to the relevant legislative considerations. I reiterate it is essential that developers comply with the rigorous planning and approval processes that are in place, and that early and effective engagement with the local community takes place.

Ms O'CONNOR - Minister, as you have confirmed that you have met with UPC Renewables, at one of the meetings you had with the company there must have been a discussion about the application of the Land Acquisitions Act in order to compulsorily acquire property along that route. This is because the company has written to private landowners threatening compulsory acquisition of their land. They must have had some reassurance from you, as minister, that you would apply that Act if you felt you needed to, in order to progress that transmission line. Is that true, that you discussed the compulsory acquisition of properties along that act, or parts of those properties at your meetings with UPC Renewables?

UNCORRECTED PROOF ISSUE

Mr BARNETT - I can make it very clear that in the meetings I have had with UPC, the importance of community engagement, the importance of renewable energy development and we have absolutely had those discussions.

Ms O'CONNOR - Minister, are you aware of the very high level of concern on the north-west coast about the proposed transmission line which, as a result of the meeting last Wednesday, is apparently now not to go through the Leven Canyon, but will go through a number of reserves. These include the Tarkine, the Arthur Pieman Conservation Area. Have you had any discussions with the company about using the existing transmission corridor from Woolnorth, and can you explain why you are not guiding this company to take a less divisive and destructive approach that doesn't go through reserves and create incredible visual disturbance through a 60-metre-wide swathe that will need to be cut through the landscape for the entire length of the 170-kilometre long transmission line?

Mr BARNETT - The answer to the question is in two parts. First of all, UPC have advised that they are considering options to connect the wind farm to Tasmania's transmission network, and they have discarded the Leven Canyon area, as you have just indicated. That was raised at the public meeting last week, of which I am well aware. I am aware of the community feedback at that meeting, from the feedback I have had. Secondly, I just want to say it is not inconsistent of the Greens to criticise and to oppose major renewable energy developments

Ms O'CONNOR - Point of order, Chair. I am actually offended and I am over it. The minister is misrepresenting our position on renewable energies, and on this project too. We are talking about the transmission line going through regional reserves. We are not talking about the source or the type of the energy. So stop verballing me and misrepresenting the Greens in order to get out of answering the question.

CHAIR - You asked him to stop. No Ms O'Connor, we are not going to have angry rants like we have had before. I don't support your point of order, but I do wish the minister to finish the answer, and then I am going to Mr O'Byrne because he has been waiting patiently.

Mr BARNETT - I will conclude. I want to emphasis again my point, which is not liked by the Greens, and the Greens member opposite. Let us make it very clear, the Greens consistently criticise and oppose major renewable energy developments.

Ms O'CONNOR - You lie.

CHAIR - That is unparliamentary.

Mr BARNETT - You have a track record and I know where you are coming from.

Ms O'CONNOR - Do you?

CHAIR - Ms O'Connor, that was unparliamentary. I ask you to withdraw the word 'lie'.

Ms O'CONNOR - I withdraw the word 'lie', but the minister did not tell the truth.

Mr O'BYRNE - You did not answer the question previously about the issue around beneficiary pays, or maybe I didn't hear. Maybe you could enlighten me. The issue around beneficiary pays.

UNCORRECTED PROOF ISSUE

Is this formally on the COAG agenda? When did you raise it, and when did you put it on the COAG Agenda?

Mr BARNETT - Well there are different parts to that question. I might ask Gary to speak that issue. What the Prime Minister said, I am just saying what he said. We have to get this second interconnector built. Tasmania will be charging up the rest of the nation, the one making the contribution to Australia. It means those that are benefiting will carry the financial cost. If you are interested in the answer, you will -

Mr O'BYRNE - I understand that. I just want to know when you put it on the agenda.

CHAIR - Order, Mr O'Byrne. The minister is trying to answer the question. Can we just let him answer the question?

Mr O'BYRNE - I am trying to help him out.

CHAIR - Order. I am going to move on to Mr Tucker.

Mr BARNETT - Mr Swain may be able to add to my answer, and if he can that would be useful.

Mr SWAIN - The integrated system plan which the minister referred to indirectly before, which has been developed by the Australian Energy Market Operator, is looking at the long-term interconnections required across the nation.

It has identified interconnections in different categories of urgency I mentioned in that plan. The minister has actively been pushing for the review of that plan, and updating of it. When it was developed, one of the issues was that it looked at the temporal life of coal, as opposed to the commercial life of the coal. That has been recognised as an issue which might actually need to be reviewed and updated. In addition to that, there is another process that is being conducted by the Australian Energy Market Commission, which is called COGATIR: Coordination of Generation and Transmission Investment Review, which actually is running parallel, or slightly ahead I believe, of that integrated system plan, which is again trying to really grapple with this issue of how you get pricing frameworks that ensure the right parties pay for this long-life transmission.

There are two or three key issues on the COAG agenda that keep coming back to this issue of interconnection.

Mr O'BYRNE - When was this issue raised at COAG? I understand those processes. That is work that is run in parallel. When did it hit COAG?

Mr BARNETT - You are trying some sort of gotcha moment. The COAG Energy Council -

Mr O'BYRNE - If you cannot give me a date, that's fine.

Mr BARNETT - The COAG Energy Council's last meeting was in December last year. We haven't had one this year.

Mr O'BYRNE - You didn't even know you weren't there.

Mr BARNETT - There has been a federal election.

Mr O'BYRNE - About half an hour ago you didn't even know you weren't there.

CHAIR - That's enough.

Mr BARNETT - Don't be offensive and insulting. You don't need to do that. You really don't.

CHAIR - Order, please. I am going to pass the call to Mr Tucker.

Mr TUCKER - Minister, in addition to the generous energy concessions scheme provided for low income households, the Government has allocated additional funds into the No Interest Loan Scheme for energy-efficient products. Could you provide more details about that, please?

Ms O'CONNOR - You just talked about it before. Why don't you write some proper Dorothy Dixers that are interesting?

CHAIR - Order.

Mr BARNETT - No, that was the concession scheme. The No Interest Loan Scheme for vulnerable Tasmanians is very important.

Ms O'CONNOR - Very important and we rolled out 9500 free energy efficiency upgrades for disadvantaged Tasmanians, didn't we?

CHAIR - Order. Ms O'Connor, please do not continue to disrupt.

Mr BARNETT - I congratulated the Greens on their alternative budget, unlike the Labor Opposition's.

Ms O'CONNOR - No, I was talking about what we did in government.

Mr BARNETT - Despite my disappointment -

Ms O'CONNOR - Tangible returns for low-income people.

CHAIR - Minister, could we go to the answer please?

Mr BARNETT - Yes, indeed. The NILS program is very important and we are backing it. It backs on the back of the TEELS - Tasmanian Energy Efficiency Loans Scheme. It ran for two years, delivered benefits to 4000 Tasmanians, \$35 million to purchase energy savings, whether it be solar panels, or energy efficiency measures in the home, to keep the cost of electricity down, down, down. That is where we are headed.

The NILS scheme is important. That's \$1 million over four years; it's for vulnerable Tasmanians and you have to meet certain criteria. Aurora Energy has been delivering support for that since 2015 and that support is in the order of \$1.8 million subsidy funding for over 1500 Tasmanians. That is a direct benefit. It provides a subsidy towards the purchase cost for new energy efficiency appliances where the product cost is up to the value of \$3000, with one of the most popular investments being the energy efficiency heat pump for the home. The program then

UNCORRECTED PROOF ISSUE

provides a no-interest loan through NILS Tasmania for the remainder of the product cost. This provides a great level of support to Tasmanians who need it. It is a really good program. We can always do more, but it is a good program and we are pleased to back it. I thank the member for his question.

Mr O'BYRNE - Minister, there is effectively \$76 million allocated to work on Project Marinus and Battery of the Nation. What do you get for that? What does that actually guarantee?

Mr BARNETT - Let me correct you, you are wrong.

Mr O'BYRNE - There is \$56 million and then there is \$20 million.

Mr BARNETT - This is where you are wrong. Let me answer your question. It is \$86 million. \$56 million plus \$30 million. Try to remember: 56 plus 30, what does that add up to? 86.

In addition to that, we've got the \$17 million for energising Tasmanian education, skills and training.

Mr O'BYRNE - No, no, I am not talking about the jobs. I am not talking about the \$17 million that was announced.

Mr BARNETT - Let me go to the \$56 million and the \$30 million. You asked what we get for that. It's in two parts.

Ms O'CONNOR - Enormous self-promotion opportunities.

Mr BARNETT - Let's go to the two parts. Firstly, the \$56 million is to progress the next stage of the design and approval process for Marinus Link. Secondly, with the \$30 million, I am giving you a higher level answer here and we can go into the details if you like. We can talk all day about Battery of the Nation. I am delighted and offer briefings and so on. No problem at all because I want everybody to learn more about it.

Mr O'BYRNE - We've had briefings.

Mr BARNETT - The \$56 million is from the federal government; \$30 million is from Hydro Tasmania, which is supported by the Tasmanian Government. That's to do the feasibility study into the next phase of our pumped hydro plans. We have three projects being considered, Lake Cethana, Lake Rowallan and the Tribute Power Station at Lake Murchison on the west coast.

Hydro will undertake that work and come back with a preferred site, we would then wish to progress with in terms of pumped hydro.

Mr O'BYRNE - Essentially is it \$86 million being pumped in and essentially to design. Does that get it to financial close?

Mr BARNETT - The \$56 million will progress phase of the design and approval process and then the financial investment decision is in 2021. That decision will not be made until then. In the meantime, the business case being conducted by TasNetworks, again federal government support with state Government through TasNetworks and Arena and \$10 million to progress this. The interim feasibility study report was in February this year. The business case is due to be completed

at the end of this year. Our Government and the federal government will respond to the business case. That will inform the decision we would then make as a Hodgman Liberal Government and others that may have to respond to that where we go forward post the business case.

Mr O'BYRNE - We are spending \$86 million of taxpayers' dollars and do not get to financial close. We do not get the project. That is a lot of money for a business case and design. That is a lot of money minister, \$86 million. How can you justify that amount of money for that kind of output? It is an important project and not saying it is easy, but \$86 million and you don't even get to financial close.

Mr BARNETT - There are two projects, the Marinus Link interconnector \$56 million federal government funded and they have the \$17 million to support the skills training and development. The \$56 000 will take us the next stage of the design and approvals process.

Mr O'BYRNE - But not financial close?

Mr BARNETT - Not to financial close. Correct. We will have ongoing discussions and involvement with the federal government. They recognise it as important national infrastructure. As per the February report, the 1200-megawatt link could cost anywhere in the vicinity of \$3 billion. A massive project for Tasmania and the significance should not be underestimated. The Ernst and Young report indicated the benefits to Tasmania of investment is some \$5 billion and some 2000 jobs. It is not a quick fix. It is not going to take 1 to 2 years. This will take years to come and we are setting up Tasmania. This is a generational investment. Like hydro industrialisation under previous governments, Labor and Liberal.

Mr O'BYRNE - Mainly Labor.

Mr BARNETT - Hydro industrialisation we are thankful for. It is a valid question and I am trying to help you in understanding that.

Mr O'BYRNE - Let's be clear. We do understand it. We have been briefed by TasNetworks and Hydro, but this is a lot of taxpayers' money to not get further down the track. We understand TasNetworks and Hydro asked for a lot more money but it was refused. Is that right?

Mr BARNETT - It is a step by step thing. Obviously, in terms of the \$56 million that does not complete the design and approvals progress because that takes a period of time.

Mr O'BYRNE - And you wouldn't expect a company to get that. Is it true that TasNetworks asked for something like \$140 million or in the vicinity?

Mr BARNETT - I am not going to go into those sorts of details. As a state Government we are working hand in glove with TasNetworks who are working hand in glove with our federal counterparts to progress the project. I am happy for the Deputy Secretary to fill you in a little more on the detail.

Mr O'BYRNE - Maybe the question is, how was \$56 million arrived at?

Mr BARNETT - It was arrived at in consultation with the federal government around February this year. It was an exchange of letters in and around late February this year there was an exchange of letters, and then we moved into an agreement. I can't see any reason why we can't speak to the

UNCORRECTED PROOF ISSUE

agreement and fill you in on that agreement, which has been signed and effected, and now the \$56 million has been invested in the Tasmanian Government's bank account, so it has been invested prior 30 June. We are very grateful for that, and Gary could speak to you more about that agreement if you would be interested.

Mr SWAIN - The agreement is a GST-exempt agreement negotiated with the federal government. It provides not for the completion of all work through to financial investment decision, but to advance the areas of the operating model. This is not specified in this level of detail in the agreement, but what the work is going to be. We go to the operating model, regulated or unregulated, technical design and the pricing model and the revenue model.

Mr O'BYRNE - Sorry, did you say technical design as well? How deep do you go into that? Is that appropriate at that stage, a bit like a business case?

Mr SWAIN - It's high level. TasNetworks still has to make key decisions like the type of cable they use, where it is located, how it connects into the system, the converter stations and how they integrate with the system, the approvals and planning processes, and the commencement of the procurement strategy and associated documentation, and along with all that, the government in parallel will need to work through all its key policy decisions, including how it will assess the business case. In summary, it is really focusing on the time-critical elements of the project that are required to enable delivery by 2025, in line with the needs of the Australian government and Victorian government.

Mr O'BYRNE - That is a bucket load of money. Based on the explanation today, and in previous briefings, you actually don't get to much closer, that is my concern. That is a lot of money, for what?

CHAIR - That is a statement I am going to move to.

Mr BARNETT - Can I offer to table the project agreement for Marinus Link. It is on the Commonwealth Treasury website.

Mr O'BYRNE - If it's on the website then there is no need to table it.

Ms O'CONNOR - Minister, I have here the notice of intent that was lodged by Robbins Island Renewable Energy Park proponents with the Environmental Protection Authority in November 2017. They are really clear that UBC Renewables - I am quoting from the document - 'focuses on projects with high-quality renewable energy resources and proximity to existing transmission infrastructure'.

Minister, have you had any discussion with the proponent about either, as the community is asking, taking the transmission line out to sea or underground? And I might just put on the record we have some concerns about going underground because of the impact on reserves and wilderness areas. Well, if you think that is amusing taking something through the Arthur Pieman Conservation Area and taking bulldozers through there, keep laughing, minister, but have you had any discussion with the proponent about using the existing Woolnorth transmission corridor?

Mr BARNETT - I think I am being verbally again. I am happy to try to answer that question, but I will see if Gary would like to speak to the process.

Mr SWAIN - I can talk to the process generally. The powers of acquisition are available to a licensed entity for the purpose for which it was licensed, so to enable a generation development to occur rather than for any other purpose. It is not a question for the minister as to whether he agrees with the route or the specific acquisition. That is really a matter for the proponent.

Ms O'CONNOR - Mr Swain, with respect, it is a matter for parliament. It is parliament that will ultimately make this decision. So, my question is, has there been any discussion with the proponent about avoiding this conflict, avoiding the need to displace people from their land, and using the existing Woolnorth transmission corridor?

Mr BARNETT - What I confirm is that I have had ongoing consultations and discussions with UPC and other renewable energy developers in Tasmania. Just a month or so ago I liaised with Palisade in terms of Granville Harbour. Their plans are very significant for Robbins Island - about 1 200 megawatts, and \$1.5 billion development. It is very significant for the local community in the north-west coast in terms of jobs and development. I made it very clear I welcome their plans, but I made it very clear they have a rigorous development approval process that they must follow.

Ms O'CONNOR - It is an assessment process, minister.

Mr BARNETT - They have a very rigorous development approval and assessment process that they must meet. Environmental planning approval and the like. I have indicated the importance of community engagement and relating their plans with the local community. They have been quite active in that space in past months, in the past year or more, as far as I am aware. I think that is good. There was a meeting last week where community engagement was quite active and they have responded to that. My understanding is they responded by not proceeding down the Leven Canyon approach, and they have responded to that, so I encouraged that feedback and involvement with the local community. As I have always said, the last resort is compulsory acquisition.

On the mainland most of the transmission systems are privately operated, and they are licensed for this and proceed accordingly. Of course, you want to have consultation and mutually agreeable outcomes, and the last resort is always compulsory acquisition.

Ms O'CONNOR - Here is a technical question and this might be one for Mr Swain. Is there anything preventing UPC Renewables from using the existing Woolnorth transmission line? I understand there is capacity constraints on the Woolnorth line at the moment, but is there anything technically preventing this proponent from using the existing transmission line space?

Mr SWAIN - I do not have relevant knowledge of that line in terms of who owns it and if it is constrained physically. So I would have to -

Mr BARNETT - Can I just make the comment it is probably more for TasNetworks. TasNetworks has the transmission line. It is relevant to them. It is a GBE matter towards the end of the year, but it is a fair question and I understand where you are coming from. Of course, UPC will want to do what they consider are the best possible outcomes, but they have to take into account the community feedback. They have been having community consultation and feedback. I cannot speculate on statutory decisions that I might need to make in the future as minister. That would be entirely inappropriate, especially here today. They have a rigorous planning development and environmental approval process that they have to go through. They are undertaking community feedback. I have always said compulsory acquisition should be a last resort. I have made that clear. I have put it on the public record and that is currently the position of our Government.

UNCORRECTED PROOF ISSUE

Ms O'CONNOR - Point of order, Chair. I just asked two questions. I thought I had a third available to me.

CHAIR - Why did you think you had a third available to you?

Ms O'CONNOR - Because Mr O'Byrne asked nine and three Labor questions, one Greens question.

Mr O'BYRNE - Some of them were clarification.

Ms O'CONNOR - Yes, I was clarifying something too.

CHAIR - Liberal, a question.

Ms O'CONNOR - I am only asking for fairness. I asked two questions.

CHAIR - Ms O'Connor, I will always endeavour to give proportionality as described as the best I can.

Ms O'CONNOR - Two questions.

CHAIR - Yes, and many questions before that. I have given the call to Mr Tucker.

Ms O'CONNOR - On a point of order, Chair, can I seek clarification from you? By my read, 5, 10, 15, 20, 30, 35, 39 questions to Labor, and 13, 14, 15 questions to me, maybe. I have written down 12, but I may have asked more and not noted them.

CHAIR - The order of the House establishing this committee put the proportionality as three to the opposition, one to the Greens and one to the Government.

Ms O'CONNOR - That is right.

CHAIR - So, one out of five goes to the Greens. Your proportion of one out of five in comparison to what I have in front of me is nowhere near that. I am trying to be fair.

Ms O'CONNOR - No.

CHAIR - Yes, I am. In that proportionality. It is clear that over many years there has been a protocol that has been accepted that we run a line of questions for a while to try to get a -

Ms O'CONNOR - I asked two questions on a subject of significant interest to your constituents in Braddon.

CHAIR - Thank you, Ms O'Connor, I appreciate your asking those questions, but the proportion - pardon?

Ms O'CONNOR - I said, I will let them know you cut me off.

UNCORRECTED PROOF ISSUE

CHAIR - The proportionality is described in the orders of the House. That was really disrespectful and be very careful, Ms O'Connor.

Mr TUCKER - Considering regulated prices have risen by only 1.5 per cent over the last five years and the previous seven years before that under Labor and the Greens they increased by 65 per cent, the Government's Tasmania First Energy policy has set a target of delivering the lowest regulated electricity prices in the nation by 2022. Minister, can you comment on how the Government is tracking with that target?

Mr BARNETT - Thank you to the member for Lyons for his question. It is an important question. Reducing the cost of living and reducing the cost of business is a top priority for our Government, and a top priority for Tasmanian people and businesses.

We are on track. We have set that target to deliver the lowest regulated power prices in Australia by 2022 for regulated residential customers and then regulated business customers. In the meantime, we have put that cap of CPI that we are delivering and that started a couple of years ago now and is continuing. The CPI cap is there and we are keeping the cost of business and the cost of living down - down, down, down. That is what we are pushing for.

We will continue to make that push. That effort is continuing. I am pleased to advise that Energy Consumers Australia has identified Tasmania as having the lowest regulated electricity prices in Australia for business. This is good news for business with those regulated electricity prices. I am also pleased to advise we are amongst the lowest in Australia for residential customers with regulated prices. There is more work to do. The Government is working on that to deliver that target by 2022.

The other target is to be 100 per cent fully self-sufficient in renewable energy by 2022. Likewise, we are on track with the Cattle Hill Wind Farm that is progressing so positively at the moment, even during the winter. There is snow on the ground up there and they are working hard, likewise Granville Harbour on the west coast. With both of those schemes coming on board we are on track to get to that 100 per cent fully self-sufficient, fully renewable by 2022. It is outstanding. We are way ahead of the game compared to our mainland colleagues and other jurisdictions, indeed, other jurisdictions around the world. This is something that we can be proud of.

Mr O'BYRNE - Minister, on that can you tell me why you have cut the Energy Rebate Scheme? You have reduced it. Why have you done that then if you are worried about cost to business?

Mr BARNETT - Very happy to answer that question. We are very pleased to be able to include in this year's Budget \$5.5 million for commercial and industrial customers.

Mr O'BYRNE - That's down from \$10 million, isn't it?

Mr BARNETT - That is a reduction on \$10 million from the previous year and I think it was \$20 million.

Mr O'BYRNE - You are proud to reduce it from \$10 million to \$5 million?

CHAIR - Order.

Mr BARNETT - I think it was \$20 million in the previous year. Yes, \$10 million in 2018-19 was allocated for the Energy Rebate Scheme to help cushion the large business customers for increases in the wholesale electricity price. The wholesale electricity prices go up once they are out of contract. They contract off them for about a three-year period so there is that jump. We tried to take into account that volatile wholesale electricity price on the mainland, in our two previous budgets.

It is not just Aurora Energy; Treasury entered into grant deeds with the ERM Power as well. Together with the carry-forward from 2017-18, a total of \$16.4 million is available for the payment in rebates in 2018-19 and then the funds paid to date under the scheme to 2018--19 total \$11.8 million. Then in the 2019-20 Budget we have \$5.5 million allocated to extend the energy rebate scheme for this financial year. The funding includes a carry forward of unspent funds from 2018-19 of \$2.5 million and 2019-20 allocation is approximately 50 per cent of the support provided in the previous year with scheme to conclude in 2020-21 with the expectation of lower wholesale energy prices. You need to take into account wholesale energy prices and where they are at on the mainland and how it affects business in Tasmania.

Mr O'BYRNE - Minister, this is an example given to us. The old rebate was for up to 1.6-kilowatt hour and new rebate is only up to 0.5-kilowatt hour. If you are an IGA sized supermarket using 300 000-kilowatt hours at 1.1 cent. You have done a DD saying you have cut prices and you are supporting business, but is going to cost that small business and extra \$3300 on those numbers. Why are making virtue of saying you have all these programs but you are cutting them. If I can correct you, I am looking at the Finance General, page 91 of the budget. It does refer to other grants and subsidies, there is \$9 million allocated for the 2019-20 Budget, but then it drops away significantly. In the notes, it explains the decrease in other grants and subsidies across the budget and forward Estimates periods reflect the cessation of the energy rebates for business from 2019-20. How does that work?

Mr BARNETT - I am happy to explain how it works. I have explained it in my former answer.

Mr O'BYRNE - No, you were talking about other things. I am talking about the business rebate scheme.

Mr BARNETT - You keep characterising the response of the Government unfairly and I reject the allegation. I am more than happy for Gary Swain to speak to you.

Mr O'BYRNE - So you have not cut the budget.

Mr BARNETT - Let me try to explain to you again. With the rebate we are providing that support of \$5.5 million in the 2019-20 year. The rebate it is based on the wholesale electricity price and these prices for unregulated business are decided and normally proceed for about a three-year period.

Mr O'BYRNE - It is a small business though.

Mr BARNETT - We have supported small and medium sized businesses that have a contracted out of regulation and it is based perhaps on a wholesale electricity price on the mainland. That price a few years ago was particularly high. It jumps around a little and over a period of time goes up and down. I will ask Gary to speak to that and provide more detail.

UNCORRECTED PROOF ISSUE

Mr SWAIN - A couple of points, minister, that actual policy basis for that program was associated with the spike in Victoria coming out of the closure of Hazelwood.

Mr O'BYRNE - The price has not dropped though has it.

Mr BARNETT - Allow the deputy secretary to answer the question.

Mr SWAIN - The market jumps significantly there, because that was not fully priced in as a change. Some bigger industrials have made decisions about the extent to which they were hedged or not hedged. This was meant to be a transition to deal with an event not anticipated was the basis of it. In terms of the quantum at page 306 in budget paper number two volume one. Which identifies \$5.5 million in budget for 2019-20.

Mr O'BYRNE - How do you explain in administrated expenses grants and subsidies where it stated the decrease in grants and subsidies across the budget page 91 in finance and general on budget paper number two. The decrease in other grants and subsidies across the budget and Forward Estimates period reflects the cessation of energy rebates for business from 2019-20 and the allocation drops off significantly at the end of this financial year.

Mr SWAIN - Sorry I missed the refence. What page number.

Mr O'BYRNE - Page 91. Budget paper number two volume one. We have been contacted by a number of small businesses. I understand the hedging with larger business, but small business saying we are cutting the subsidy and it is going to cost them more. It is table 4.5, footnote 5.

Mr SWAIN - This is a question for the Treasurer. That footnote to me looks to be inconsistent with the Treasury chapter which 306 which has the \$5.5 million.

Mr O'BYRNE - What do we believe then?

Mr SWAIN -It is at the end.

Mr O'BYRNE - You have \$16.5 million in 2018-19; it goes down to \$9 million in 2019-20 and then it goes down to \$34 000. They have justified these figures on a cessation of the business rebate scheme. We understand it has been dropped.

Mr BARNETT - You are talking about the 2020-21 year, I think, with respect, is that right?

Mr O'BYRNE - For 2020-21 there is nothing, 2019-20 there is \$9 million.

Mr BARNETT - On table 4.5 it goes from \$9.034 million to \$34 000.

Mr O'BYRNE - You mentioned in your answer there was a carryover. You have \$9 million there but my understanding is that you announced effectively the program was down to \$5 million in terms of the support. In 2020-21 you have nothing. That is an impost from business, that is the point we are making.

Mr BARNETT - This will be considered in the context of future budgets but it is expected to conclude at the end of that financial year. During all the work we have been doing over the last two

UNCORRECTED PROOF ISSUE

financial years that contract and the volatility has gone up and down. We are trying to take that into account to ease the cost of doing business for medium-size business.

Mr O'BYRNE - Based on this the cost of energy for small business in particular that do not have the ability to hedge goes up. You have just answered a DD on all the great work that you have done driving prices down when your own policy drives it up.

Mr BARNETT - The other option is zero, in the last three years we have had a whole lot more than zero. We will be supporting small business.

Mr O'BYRNE - You can understand your inconsistency there.

Mr BARNETT - There is no inconsistency. We are supporting small- and medium-sized businesses with these rebates over the last two years including \$5.5 million in this financial year, 2019-20.

Ms O'CONNOR - I apologise for what I said to you earlier on a personal level.

CHAIR - Thank you.

Ms O'CONNOR - Minister, last year Dr Woodruff asked you if you thought it was appropriate for a Tasmanian state-owned company to be involved in the Karuma Dam project in Uganda, which has been the subject of some very serious human rights violations and the deaths of workers.

When asked about the due diligence filtering processes, Hydro undertakes Mr Davey assured us that they were stringent and included societal impacts of the project itself. At the table, minister, you stated that you were looking forward to hearing back from the CEO with respect to the report on that matter. Minister, did you receive a report from Hydro on the matter? Can you summarise its contents for us?

Mr BARNETT - Thank you for the question. It is a matter for Hydro Tasmania at a GBE scrutiny hearing. I am happy to note and acknowledge that. You are asking about a development proposal plan by Hydro Tasmania in Africa -

Ms O'CONNOR - You can look at me when you answer.

Mr BARNETT - I am speaking through the Chair.

Ms O'CONNOR - Why were you were prepared to answer questions last year?

Mr BARNETT - Was this at the GBE or in this hearing.

Ms O'CONNOR - It was at the GBEs and, I believe, in Estimates too but I might be wrong about that.

Mr BARNETT - I am happy to take that on notice if you would like me to but it is a matter for Hydro Tasmania and it is a GBE scrutiny matter. I was probably feeling very supportive last year. I will be supportive this year and happy to take it on notice and assist you accordingly.

Ms O'CONNOR - Have you had a briefing or a report back from Hydro Tasmania on the Tasmanian Energy Company involvement in the Karuma Dam?

Mr BARNETT - As I say it's a matter for the GBE and I'm happy to take it on notice.

Ms O'CONNOR - I will ask this question, which can be put on notice. Is that okay? We will try. Did you receive a report from Hydro on the matter? Can you summarise its contents for us? There is an internal email that shows Hydro was aware of the risks as early as October 2016. Were you aware of this email? Did you know about the Karuma Dam's sustainability report and Hydro's decision to go ahead regardless of the fighting?

Mr EVANS - Are they being taken on notice?

Ms O'CONNOR - Yes, that's right but I have to read it out, Mr Evans. Do you believe this is an appropriate way for a government business enterprise to conduct itself? That's in relation to the redactions made by Hydro to the information we procured under RTI that Hydro knew workers were dying and likely to die on this project unnecessarily, that communities would be displaced without proper compensation and that environmental guidelines weren't followed. Do you believe this is an appropriate way for the GBE of which you are a shareholder, minister, to conduct itself? Minister, are you comfortable receiving a dividend from Hydro which is partially derived from a project unnecessarily killing and displacing Ugandans as well as Chinese workers on the site?

Mr BARNETT - Thank you for the various questions; I'm happy to take it on notice. It's a matter for GBE scrutiny. I advise you that I have received a briefing, but I will give you more information on notice when I respond.

Ms O'CONNOR - So you'll respond to my questions on notice in writing?

Mr BARNETT - If you put them in writing, I will respond in writing, in the usual way, no problem.

Ms O'CONNOR - You can't fob those questions off to GBEs.

Mr O'BYRNE - Minister, could you update the committee on the process of getting the 100 Momentum jobs back to Tasmania?

Mr BARNETT - You're talking about the call centre jobs?

Mr O'BYRNE - Yes.

Mr BARNETT - That is a GBE matter.

Mr O'BYRNE - I think you raise them virtually every time in the last couple of Estimates.

Ms O'CONNOR - Retreats behind the GBE whenever it suits.

Mr BARNETT - No.

Mr O'BYRNE - This is a key component of your Government's election.

UNCORRECTED PROOF ISSUE

Mr BARNETT - That's right, it's directly relevant to the GBE.

Mr O'BYRNE - So, if the GBE does it, why were you then putting a release out taking credit for it.

Mr BARNETT - Because it's in the public interest.

Mr O'BYRNE - So could you update the committee on the progress?

Mr BARNETT - I can update the committee to the extent that I can. It's progressing positively.

Mr O'BYRNE - How many jobs are back in Tasmania?

Mr BARNETT - If you recall, the commitment was over the term of the Government. We made that commitment and we have responded to that positively. I made an announcement about that with respect to the jobs.

Mr O'BYRNE - Yes, in the public interest, absolutely. So, no update?

Mr BARNETT - No further update in addition to what I've said publicly.

Mr O'BYRNE - So no sign of the jobs yet?

Mr BARNETT - It's progressing in terms of the announcement that I made. I don't believe there's anything different to what I said publicly at the time.

Mr O'BYRNE - So no update.

Minister, this Budget is plunging the state into over \$1 billion of net debt. It is the first time in 15 years that the state Budget is going into net debt and very reminiscent of previous Liberal governments. There's a deficiency dividend that been required under your outputs. How much is your part of the share and what measures are you taking?

Mr BARNETT - I have no doubt you have asked that question in a range of portfolio areas which you are entitled to do. It's not a problem -

The Treasurer has made very clear that we are maintaining the momentum. We are investing for growth. We will continue to do that with a \$500 million reduction in our revenues coming our way. We've responded accordingly. The secretary will take on board the advice and instructions from Treasury. We'll respond to that and consult accordingly in the weeks and months ahead.

In terms of frontline services, we will do everything we can to preserve them. We will be looking in the first instance through the secretary or consultancies, advertising, travel, things like that. There will be obviously opportunities in terms of natural attrition and those types of arrangements. In terms of exactly what will happen, when and where I can't rule anything in or out.

Mr O'BYRNE - Thank you for that non-answer but I understand the situation you have got yourselves in. You talk very heavily about the role of TasNetworks, Hydro and Aurora play in your portfolio area. There is a massive uplift in dividends being stripped from those companies to prop up your budget.

Are you aware of the Treasurer's comments when he said he could not rule out an increase in the dividends? Does that give you concern about the operation of our GBEs? Are you loading them up with so much debt to cover your budget ineptitude?

Mr BARNETT - In two parts. I am very confident in the GBEs that I have the privilege and honour of being the minister responsible for and confident in their ability to continue to operate on a sustainable and profitable level. That is important. They have delivered in the past and have an expectation that they will continue to deliver in the future.

In terms of what decisions may or may not be made in future, particularly with respect to future budgets, that is a matter that the Treasurer will lead a discussion on, together with his cabinet colleagues and indeed the parliamentary Liberal Party members in the months and years ahead.

Mr O'BYRNE - Minister, on that, it is very important that the Government not only 'talks the talk' but 'walks the walk' in terms of saving dollars and leading by example. You have plunged the state into over \$1 billion of net debt. We saw a massive increase in ministerial staffing. The Government media unit has doubled in size over the last three years. One of the items that was discussed in the Premier's Output on Monday was the credit card spend of chiefs of staff. The total expenditure by chiefs of staff across Government, for your information, is over \$42 000 in the year 1 March 2018 to 31 March 2019. What stands out in that figure is your chief of staff spent \$14 846.64 on the credit card in one year. That represents about one-third of the total chiefs of staff spend. What was that being spent on? Why are you one out of the box on this?

Mr BARNETT - Thanks for the opportunity to clear the air on that one and to respond to that particular question. You are referring to the credit card expenditure -

Mr O'BYRNE - That is what I said.

Mr BARNETT - Let me make it very clear that credit card expenditure relates primarily to booking for travel and accommodation for both me and my staff for attending ministerial meetings.

Mr O'BYRNE - So you don't go through the -

Mr BARNETT - I am trying my best to answer with the interjections of the member opposite.

Mr O'BYRNE - Other ministers go to those meetings as well?

CHAIR - Order. It is getting late.

Mr BARNETT - If you would like an answer, I will give you one. I would like the opportunity to answer your question.

I say thank you to the work of my chief of staff and all members of my staff. They do a lot of hard work and deliver a terrific outcome and work very hard. It is really appreciated and I appreciate it.

That travel and accommodation and the ministerial meetings, it was for both interstate, intrastate travel and accommodation. It includes accommodation expenses for northern staff and

UNCORRECTED PROOF ISSUE

Hobart parliamentary sittings. I make it very clear, ministerial officers can book travel and accommodation on either the chief of staff credit card or through a travel agency.

Obviously, many of my other colleagues go through the travel agency. We have historically used the chief of staff's credit card. My office usually books those expenses using the credit card. They are not additional; they are not unusual expenses. They are all within entitlements and are in the ordinary course of business of being a minister and the travel associated with it.

The Liberal Government discloses expenditure for both travel and credit card expenses on a regular basis, unlike the former government. We support transparency. That information is on the DPAC website. I will finish and then I am happy to have a follow-up.

In relation to my travel expenses during the last 12 months I have had a number of ministerial meetings interstate. I make it very clear. A sample of those types of ministerial meetings interstate from a very busy and hardworking minister. I have attended the following: COAG energy ministers meeting Melbourne, April 2018; building ministers forum Melbourne April 2018; resources minister forestry meeting Melbourne, June 2018; energy and federal ministers meeting Melbourne, August 2018; COAG energy meeting Sydney, August 2018; ministerial meeting Canberra, September 2018; all energy conference Melbourne, October 2018; COAG energy meeting Sydney, October 2018; consumer affairs and veterans meeting October, 2018; ministerial meeting King Island, October 2018; federal agricultural ministers meeting Adelaide, February 2019; federal fisheries meeting Melbourne, February 2019.

My senior adviser also attended the COAG energy ministers' meeting with the Resources minister when I was on leave in December 2018, which is the COAG meeting that you are referring to.

Mr O'BYRNE - You are basically saying that you put all your travel on the credit card. Surely the agency is cheaper? That is why you go through an agency. Why are you so separated from everyone else in doing something different from what other ministers are doing?

Mr BARNETT - It is interesting, isn't it? Certainly, businesses and individuals use credit cards all the time.

Mr O'BYRNE - That is not the point though.

Mr BARNETT - These are all within entitlements, they are all based on the hard work and efforts to do the job of Government. I love my job, I love getting on and doing it and delivering for the people of Tasmania and I will keep trying my hardest.

Mr O'BYRNE - It is a third of the cost. The only thing you could say is because you do your own bookings. That inherently raises the question about cost. You go through an agency and usually it is the cheapest fare available. We will move on but it is wafer thin.

Mr TUCKER - Minister, I understand energy security is in a healthy position, supported by an energy security framework with key roles within the Department of State Growth and the Office of the Tasmanian Economic Regulator. Can you provide further details please?

Ms O'CONNOR - Can you explain why you are cutting funding to energy policy and advice whilst you're at it?

Mr BARNETT - This is an important question. Energy security is a top priority for our Government. We have seen it in the last week and I am happy to respond further on that. As of Monday, this week, the dam levels across the state were at 33.1 per cent. That is an estimated 15 percentage points above the high reliability level. Energy security is very positive. We have the Tamar Valley Power Station, Basslink, and a range of other mechanisms in place. We have implemented the energy security taskforce report and recommendations and we have done that by legislation.

We are monitoring our storages through the Tasmanian Economic Regulator. The regulator's energy security assessment is publicly available with the May monthly dashboard noting no additional monitoring activities are required at this time. The framework is now written into legislation, as I referred to earlier, the Energy Coordination and Planning Act. This is something that hasn't been done before and it locks in our energy security to give confidence to business and consumers alike.

We are delivering for Tasmanian energy security, which is really important particularly on the back of 2015-16. In terms of the Tamar Valley Power Station, I have made it clear it forms an important part of Tasmania's energy security and is readily used when needed. It forms an important part of our state energy assets.

Ms O'CONNOR - Minister, recently one of Tasmania's first adopters of on-farm solar and biodiverse carbon plantings, a farm holder Roderic O'Connor, who is no relation, has said he will be holding off on further investments in solar systems until changes are made to how the power is connected and used. Minister, currently systems are required to be connected to a single meter with unused power fed back into the grid. Multiple systems each require an individual meter with no way of transferring power between meters. Farmers like Mr O'Connor are telling us for this to economically stand up we need smart metering systems. As the minister may be aware, under the Labor-Greens government we did some very significant work on smart grid and smart metering which would allow users to install a large system with power not being used from one system to be transferred to other meters on the farm. Is this important reform something you are looking at?

Mr BARNETT - It is a good and an important question. The answer is yes, of course it is important to the Government to provide opportunities for business in this regard. We support investment in solar-powered generation and have done for a number of years.

We have the Energy on Farms policy, which has invested \$6.25 million over three years in renewable energy generation and On-Farm Energy Audit and Capital Grant program. Many of those grants have supported solar installations. We have other practical measures.

We have received feedback from a range of proponents that support peer-to-peer trading of energy between enterprises and the agribusiness sector. Peer-to-peer trading is supported by block change technology. It is still a relatively new innovation. Its application to the energy market and implications for customers is still being evaluated.

The current national energy market arrangements do not allow customers to generate and share solar directly across multiple separately metered sites, so the new potential market models, such as peer-to-peer trading, are being investigated, for example, through Australian Renewable Energy Agency-funded studies. It is important to recognise that complex technical and regulatory issues

UNCORRECTED PROOF ISSUE

are involved and it is a matter for the proponents to ensure they comply with national and local regulatory and market requirements.

Ms O'CONNOR - Is this the same answer you gave to this question last year when you were asked?

Mr BARNETT - No, it is updated, so bear that in mind.

Ms O'CONNOR - Ring him a big bell.

Mr BARNETT - We are progressing. You have raised it before, I am aware of that. I am aware of the feedback I have had from various stakeholders in the community and the position of the department. I might ask Sue Morrison to fill you in a little bit more on the details. Tasmania is participating in the national reform agenda with a view to ensuring that Tasmanian customers will be able to take advantage of new developments in technology. It will be important to ensure that the benefits of the changes can be realised in a way that is fair to all consumers. We have to try to get the balance right.

Ms O'CONNOR - Before we go there, just so that we can maybe get a fuller answer from the expertise at the table, when we talk about smart metering, we are also talking about being connected to an intelligent grid. I am interested in what development, if any, there has been on the metering system, peer-to-peer exchange of energy, and the smart grid itself, which we are going to need to have in place.

Mr BARNETT - Yes, and we are heading in that direction as a country. Smart metering and smart use of our energy products and system is definitely part of our future.

I might ask Sue Morrison to add to the answer? Sue's correct title is Acting Executive Director of the Office of Energy.

Ms MORRISON - You are right, Ms O'Connor. There is some incredible work going on in relation to grid transformation. This isn't something that is within the exclusive province of this jurisdiction. Most of the rules in relation to distribution pricing, distribution connecting, and how that transfers through from businesses through to the end customer is managed under the national electricity law and rules which are adopted through the national arrangements.

We are participating in reform in the national arrangements, particularly with the national electricity rules. One of the big bodies of work that is going on is being sponsored through Energy Networks Australia, which is the peak body for all of the network businesses, transmission and distribution.

The ENA put out a report called *The Energy Transformation Roadmap*, which looks at the opportunities for using advanced metering to have better outcomes for customers, particularly in relation to time of use, managing transfers around the way in which energy can be used, transferred and traded. These are significant technological changes that current regulatory arrangements do not accommodate particularly well because they were designed for a more traditional grid. So we are moving to a twenty-first century grid that needs to take into consideration the benefits to the customers across the entire customer base. It is not just a matter of saying, 'These customers get a better outcome and these ones will pay'.

Ms O'CONNOR - That's right.

Ms MORRISON - It's a longstanding national reform project that we have been participating in. Some of the opportunities are relating to peer-to-peer trading through block change technology, and they operate slightly outside the traditional arrangements. They provide trading opportunities beyond the grid. TasNetworks is also exploring some of the opportunities available locally where they can improve some of the customer outcomes by changed network connection arrangements.

Ms O'CONNOR - The follow up question to that is: when might Mr O'Connor and other landowners who have been very clear that there are obstacles to further investment in distributed generation without an upgrade in the grid technology, see some sort of shift? We keep having these conversations across the table. When we were in government, which is now six or more years ago, work was being done by TasNetworks on a smart grid and metering system. There is a frustration. Maybe you share it, minister, but there is a frustration that this is happening too slowly.

Mr BARNETT - Thank you for the observation. I can understand the observations and concerns. I get feedback from the local community, relevant stakeholders. I put on record last year that my brother is involved in one of those particular businesses. I put that on the record and say it again so there is no conflict of interest. Whether it is Roderick O'Connor or [inaudible] or other peer-to-peer entities that are involved in supporting that reform, it is the National Electricity Market. We are constrained by those rules and regulations. As a state, we have the opportunity to play our part in trying to reform that framework of laws and regulations. Through the COAG Energy Council and through interdepartmental committees, it would be good to see progress. You raise some good points. Please keep raising them. Let's see if we can progress. As Sue outlined, it is quite complex but we are heading in that direction.

Ms O'CONNOR - The risk is if a major industrial goes down, it is not something any of us wish before you misrepresent me, it does impact on the grid because it would mean there is a whole lot of free-flowing electrons around that will need to go somewhere. If you have a smart grid system it will mitigate the potential impact of that. Has any modelling been done on that in order to prevent problems in the future with the grid?

Mr BARNETT - I think that Sue Morrison indicated that TasNetworks had been undertaking some work. The exact details are for GBE scrutiny, but we aware of that. If Sue Morrison can add any further details I am happy. Otherwise we can move on.

Ms MORRISON - I am not sure I can add further information to that element raised by Ms O'Connor.

Mr O'BYRNE - Chair, in terms of on-farm energy audits, you allocated money for audit grants which provide a subsidy to assist farmers to engage a qualified professional to review their farm energy use, infrastructure, systems and identify savings strategies. Can you update the committee on who accessed that grant and which companies did those audits and what they received?

Mr BARNETT - I can give you an update on the On-Farm Energy Audit and Capital Grant Program. It is all part of our plan to get to our \$10 billion by 2050. It is a very successful one. It is quite popular. The \$750 000 which was announced in the 2018-19 year has been so successful that we brought forward funding support to address and support the applications that have been made. We discussed this yesterday so we have details on the number of applications and the amount of funding that has been supported, first for the audits and secondly, for the capital grants. I am

UNCORRECTED PROOF ISSUE

sure my officers will have that available to assist the committee to give you an update. The total value of applications approved to date are in excess of \$446 000 and the program has been extremely popular, with more than 85 applications submitted in the 2018-19 funding. It was fully subscribed within six months of opening and the 2019-20 Budget allocation has been brought forward to enable the program to remain open.

Mr O'BYRNE - The question I have is about 'engage a qualified professional to review' - what does that mean? Is there a registration process? How many people have actually done it? How many companies conduct those audits?

Mr BARNETT - We can fill you in on the applications and the funding to date. As to who exactly has undertaken the audit, I am not sure if the department would have access to that information but we can support -

Mr O'BYRNE - They are the ones you pay the money to, isn't it?

Mr BARNETT - Whether we have that information with us, let's check. I will check with the Kim Evans.

Mr EVANS - The administration of the scheme operates out of different parts of the organisation, not out of Energy Policy. It is run out of Industry and Business Development and we have an assessment panel with representatives from the Climate Change Office, DPIPWE and also the Department of State Growth through Bob Rutherford's division, and Tasmanian Irrigation to undertake the assessment. I can't tell you exactly which consultants individual applicants have used, that's a matter for the applicants, but we would have that information. It's just I don't have it here.

Mr BARNETT - It's State Growth, isn't it? They are delivering it but it is funded through our department, but State Growth are operating the process.

Mr EVANS - That's right. The funds come through DPIPWE to us to administer, and it is administered out of a separate part of the organisation and the office of Energy Policy.

Mr O'BYRNE - If we were to write to you, you would be able to provide that information?

Mr BARNETT - We have some information here for you. Gary Swain has the second answer.

CHAIR - The time for the examination of this portfolio has expired.

Mr O'BYRNE - Can I put that on notice then, we'll write that up?

CHAIR - Apparently not, after time. Please have a discussion between yourselves. Thank you very much, minister and staff, and Committee B.

Mr BARNETT - I thank the Chair and my officers for their support today - much appreciated.

The committee adjourned at 5.07 p.m.