

Legislative Council

Hansard

Thursday 11 December 2025

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

[excerpt...]

TAXATION AND RELATED LEGISLATION (FIRST HOME OWNER AND PAYROLL RELIEF) BILL 2025 (No. 43)

Second Reading

[12.14 a.m.]

Ms WEBB (Nelson) – Mr President, I wasn't necessarily going to make a contribution, but I've appreciated the contributions made by others and will briefly put my thoughts on the record as part of the debate. I've particularly appreciated hearing the questions raised by the members. I particularly appreciated the member for Murchison's very forensic contribution and thoughts on putting forward the amendment she's put forward. It just makes me reflect that here we are yet again considering something in this Chamber that is a result of this government making policy in the interests of political self-interest and expediency connected to elections and we're dealing with it right at the end of the year.

This is not the way we should be leading a state. It's not the way we should be seeking to solve the challenges we face as a state. It's a symptom of elections that have been held too frequently over recent years because the government is limping along, trying anything to hold onto power. What we've seen in so many of our crucial areas of policy in this state, our biggest challenges in this state, like housing, the one we're talking about today, is a government that's desperate to get re-elected at our too frequent elections. It is throwing out promises that are sugar hits designed to tempt voters, not to solve problems. That is to the detriment of our state in terms of actually achieving outcomes. It's to the detriment of our state in terms of responsible use of public resources. And it is not something we should be encouraging or supporting in this place.

We need to be calling it out at every opportunity we have, and we need to be saying to this government, stop putting your self-interest first, your political self-interest, your political expediency and your electoral outcomes first and start putting the state first, public interest of our state. Mr President, with this government it is a pipe dream.

Ms Forrest - Delusional.

Ms WEBB - Call me delusional, it must be a Christmas delusion looming. But that's what the Tasmanian community expect of us and retain optimism that they will get from our political leaders and our parliament. I don't believe we should be disappointing our constituents, our voters, our Tasmanian community members on that. We just shouldn't be.

Ms Forrest - By rewarding the government.

Ms WEBB - Indeed, by rewarding a government that rushes into expedient sugar-hit announcements during elections and then spends the time when they are supposed to be

governing in the best interest of our state, actually trying to deliver on ill-conceived, irresponsible announcements made and then working back from that. It's shocking.

Quite briefly, really, housing is one of our biggest challenges in this state. I was speaking with a constituent on the phone just this morning. We were reflecting on the fact if there are two things that we could do to transform our community here, it wouldn't necessarily be a big infrastructure project, it would be two things of make sure people have secure, affordable housing, and lift our literacy rates, genuinely.

Those are the two silver bullets –

Ms Forrest - You have to have one to get the other.

Ms WEBB - Exactly right. That's the two silver bullets that would transform this state. It should be the focus of every bit of attention we can give to them, both those areas, and yet we're just distracted time after time by things that are more politically exciting, more politically expedient but less in the overall interest of our community and its outcomes.

Housing is something I am deeply interested in. From the time before I came to this place, I worked in the community services area where we see every day the results of Tasmanians who do not have access to secure affordable housing and what that means. It's a social determinant of health, education, employment and participation in our community, having secure affordable housing.

It is the building block on which everything else can be done. Therefore, whenever we're talking about any policy in this area of housing, we should be coming at that with the most comprehensive evidence-based strategic. I mean short-, medium- and long-term strategic policy approach. We should be able to justify anything put forward in this place on housing policy in those terms as part of a comprehensive evidence-based strategic long-term approach. That is not what this bill is.

This bill utterly fails on that front.

As the member for Murchison so clearly outlined, and what we all know to be factually true, grants of this sort inflate prices. They just do. And when we make them retrospective, I don't even think they deliver extra supply at inflated prices. They really just cement supply already coming down the pipeline.

That's a shockingly irresponsible way to use public funds, then, when we have emails come to us from people in the industry saying, 'if we don't pass this today, there's certain- poor families, Tasmanian families out there whose contracts can't go forward, because they've factored it in.' That's actually quite manipulative to be putting that in front of us, because we are here to think about the well-being and the public interest of all Tasmanians.

Of course, I feel deeply sorry for any Tasmanian families who've entered into contracts, who have entered into arrangements that relied on this being passed by Parliament, and if we were not to pass it, or take on board the amendments from the member for Murchison, they would no longer be able to go ahead with their contracts.

Of course that's a tragic situation for those families. But for every one of those families that would be directly impacted by the lack of passage of this bill, we could point to a hundred other Tasmanian families who will suffer because of the price inflation that will occur because of this bill and no longer be able to enter the housing market either. But they're not ones we can bring forward and put in front of us right now and put a face and a name to, and a contract to.

It's not fair to manipulate and put people in front of us and say, 'this family is going to miss out on their contract,' when we well know there's a hundred families behind them who will be negatively impacted by this sort of irresponsible policy. A non-evidence-based, irresponsible, 'sugar hit' policy designed to be in interests of the political party that announced it in an election and no one else. Well, actually, probably someone else - probably the building industry.

Mr President, it's the end of the year. This sort of thing really is a clear demonstration and illustration of an irresponsible government who is really not even bothering now to pretend that it's making decisions in the interests of this state. It's really just trying to either serve its own interests or serve the interests of the people that it likes or agrees with or are mates with - and that's just sad.

On this bill, I do support the member for Murchison's amendments. Overall, that's in the interests of the state, in the interests of all Tasmanians. It's not responsible to support irresponsible policy, and so therefore I will not be doing that in this Chamber today.