

QUESTION WITHOUT NOTICE

Legislative Council 2026

ASKED BY: The Hon. Meg Webb Member for Nelson

ANSWERED BY: Leader for the Government in the Legislative Council, the Honourable Tania Rattray MLC

QUESTION:

Regarding the 24th of February announcement by the Premier of the \$10 million state tax-payer funded contribution towards the privately developed and owned convention centre in Launceston, can the government:

1. Confirm whether or not alternative arrangements were first explored to ensure Tasmanian taxpayers would receive a direct long-term benefit or return, such as receiving a share of any future profits or eventual capital gains pending the commercial development's finalisation and operations?;
2. Clarify whether the government sought an equity stake in the development, and if not why not?;
3. Clarify whether the government sought any other form of revenue-sharing arrangement, and if not why not?;
4. Clarify whether consideration was given to providing financial support as a subordinated loan at a concessional rate, and if not why not?;
5. Detail whether any other commercially sound options structured to provide long-term benefits to Tasmanian taxpayers were considered, and if so, why such options were not adopted?

ANSWER:

The proposal from the proponent, which was publicly supported and backed by \$5 million commitment from Launceston City Council, sought a one-off investment of \$10 million from the State Government to help establish a purpose-built convention facility and boardwalk to maximise the opportunity for Launceston and the region.

Council's commitment was also contingent on the State Government's support.

I note that there was bi-partisan support for this project, with the Labor party committing \$20 million to it during the last State Election.

This project has been supported by the State Government following a recent demand study by Visit Northern Tasmania and industry calls for such a purpose-built facility.

The study outcomes included an estimated doubling of business events bringing around \$30 million of economic activity returns per annum to the city and region (and State).

I am advised that part of ongoing negotiations with the proponent, the State Government has secured access to the convention space for the first decade of operations from its \$10 million commitment, to help enable more events to be held in the region and enhance the return on investment. This includes an annual credit (\$440,000 inclusive of GST) of convention space each year for ten years.

In addition, the final grant deed negotiations seek to ensure that the State's investment is protected in the unlikely instance of the facility being sold in its first decade of operations, such as the State and Council having first right of refusal to purchase the facility.

We continue to finalise these arrangements with the proponent (and Council) with relevant processes towards this project getting underway as soon as possible.

APPROVED

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'J. Hall', written in a cursive style.

Minister for Tourism, Events and Hospitality

Date: 24 March 2026