



PRIME MINISTER

FOR MEDIA

Monday, 21 March 1983

ATTACHED IS A COPY OF THE LETTER I FORWARDED TO THE
TASMANIAN PREMIER, MR GRAY, ON FRIDAY 18 MARCH

PRIME MINISTER

CANBERRA

Hon Robin Gray, MHA
Premier of Tasmania
Parliament House
HOBART TAS 7000

18 MAR 1983

My dear Premier

As Prime Minister, I and my Government confirm our endeavours to reconcile differences in the community and to negotiate rational settlements on matters upon which there are differences. One such matter affecting both your Government and mine is the question of the Gordon below Franklin Dam.

During the election period in my address to a public meeting in Launceston on 11th February, I stated:

"My Party has a very clear view about this issue. Simply stated, it is that the Franklin Dam should not be built and, when we are elected to government on March 5, we will ensure that our commitment is carried out".

In my private conversation with you, my Party's position was clearly put, as it was when I gave our policy speech at the Opera House on 16th February.

Through that period and since, we have made it very clear that the Federal Labor Government is totally committed to achieving that position.

We believe the issue is one of national significance and that we have a very clear mandate to put our policy into effect.

In achieving that objective, we repeat our commitment to:

ensure the long term energy needs of Tasmania are met;

- . assist in developing a regional economic plan aimed at both short and long term employment needs; and
- . assist the development of a South West Tasmania Management Authority.

We request your co-operation in opening up discussions to determine the way in which we can best together achieve these objectives.

We will give appropriate assistance to absorb the existing workforce into other programs which can be rapidly undertaken.

In suggesting such alternative short term transitional employment for the current construction workforce, we would clearly be guided by your Government in terms of the most appropriate program.

We do suggest that the workforce and contractors should be almost immediately absorbed in such projects as:-

- . speeding up the construction of the Pieman Scheme;
- . continuation of the work on the Crotty Road and extension to Kelly's Basin;
- . upgrading of work on the Zeehan-Strahan Road;
- . refurbishing of the Murchison Highway where needed;
- . a commencement on one or all of the proposed water conservation programs at Warners Creek, Coal River and Cascades Dam;
- . reforestation programs already planned for the West Coast; and
- . upgrading of access to and facilities in National Parks, including staffing of these areas.

We understand that the West and North West Coast Councils have submitted public works programs in recent years which have not been funded due to lack of capital. Such programs could also be the basis of discussion.

These suggestions are not meant to be exhaustive, nor do they preclude the need for long term permanent employment and economic development as mentioned above, but are put forward as a basis for discussion to cover the transitional period.

We would appreciate your early consideration and response to our request to negotiations as outlined above, and for such a response to be available to me no later than Monday, March 28th, 1983.

It is my view and the view of my Government that our differences can be resolved - that alternative energy sources can be guaranteed, and alternative employment created to protect those affected by cancelling this project.

We seek your co-operation in reconciling the differences over this issue in the national interest.

Yours sincerely



R.J.L. Hawke