



PRIME MINISTER

The attached letter was sent to the Tasmanian Premier,
Mr Gray on May 17, 1983.

PRIME MINISTER

CANBERRA

17 MAY 1983

Dear Mr Gray

As you are aware, by the end of May the High Court is likely to have commenced its hearing on matters affecting the future of the Gordon below Franklin dam.

For the sake of the workforce related to that project and the well-being of the Tasmanian community in general, it seems sensible to prepare for any contingency that can possibly arise out of the High Court decision - the most critical being the need to develop interim measures to protect the workforce which will possibly be affected by the decision.

I understand that at the political or Government-to-Government level, you could be reluctant at present to enter into negotiations, as it may appear to be a concession in anticipation of an adverse result to your position.

While understanding a possible reluctance on your part, I consider it advisable to try and cover all contingencies that could flow from the High Court decision. The most urgent contingency is to prepare for the implementation of transitional work programs in order that they take effect as soon as possible if a decision is brought down in our favour.

Accordingly, we would appreciate you agreeing to allowing without prejudice discussions to commence at a Departmental level between the relevant State and Federal counterparts.

Those discussions, amongst other matters, would need to examine alternative power-generating programs and socially and economically justifiable works programs designed to cover the transitional period. Such discussions may need to involve community groups, employers, unions and representatives of West Coast municipalities.

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I consider the matter urgent, as every outcome must be covered to protect the Tasmanian workforce.

I would appreciate your early response.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read 'R.J.L. Hawke', written in a cursive style.

(R.J.L. Hawke)

The Hon R.T. Gray, MHA
Premier of Tasmania
HOBART TAS 7000