



PRIME MINISTER

CANBERRA

28 MAR 1983

Dear Mr Premier

We are most disappointed at your decision to reject our request for discussion and negotiations on the matter of the Gordon below Franklin Dam, as expressed in your telex received on March 22, 1983.

We are well aware of the election results at both a State and Federal level within the State of Tasmania. We are equally conscious of the result Australia-wide and that we gave an unequivocal commitment on this issue, which has been well and truly endorsed by the Australian people.

We do not accept the view that Tasmania is separate from the rest of the country, nor do we accept the view that what occurs in Tasmania is purely the business of Tasmanians.

We have made it clear that we have the utmost respect for State Governments and their rights.

The question of the Gordon below Franklin is one that extends well beyond State boundaries, and indeed national boundaries.

It has been recognised by the World Heritage Commission as an area of international importance, one that should be preserved for future benefit.

It is not a question of I, or my Ministers, being ignorant of your arguments, nor of viewing the area in order to understand Tasmania's power requirements, the need for alternative employment and the State's energy options.

As a matter of information, if you are not already aware, many of my Ministers have visited the area when in Opposition.

During the course of negotiations over the settlement of this issue I will naturally be visiting Tasmania and will be pleased to take up the offer to view the area we are committed to preserving for the future.

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We repeat our position that we are committed to ensuring alternative schemes, including hydro, are found to guarantee the energy needs of Tasmania in the future, allowing for the growth rates that you refer to and your expected industrial expansion.

We repeat our unequivocal commitment to assisting in the transfer of employment from that site to other projects, and further repeat our assurance of presenting to you in negotiations, an economic package aimed at a transition period and at facilitating future development in Tasmania and a consequent reduction in unemployment levels.

Our commitment to reducing unemployment levels and creating job opportunities was made clear during the election campaign and has been repeated since. The whole endeavour of my Government will be towards this objective.

The people of Tasmania will benefit from those general policies and our explicit package aimed at compensating for the cessation of the development of the Gordon below Franklin.

We are prepared to enter into serious negotiations in order to resolve the issue and to eliminate the bitter divisions it has created within Tasmania.

In our view the people of Tasmania want:-

- . guaranteed energy supplies to cover both the present and future needs;
- . equivalent employment opportunities; and
- . the resolution of this conflict.

These legitimate objectives can only be attained by discussion and negotiation.

We call upon your Government as an act of good faith to declare a moratorium on the current works on the Gordon below Franklin and to commence discussions with my Government on alternative power and employment initiatives.

During the period of the moratorium and discussions we will guarantee the income of those directly affected through the course of their transfer to other employment - such employment to be determined during the discussions.

We believe our approach is more than reasonable. We believe we are offering to yourself, your Government and the people of Tasmania the possibility of healing divisions, of guaranteeing the energy supplies required and of helping to alleviate the unemployment levels of your State.

We would appreciate your response by Wednesday next,  
30 March.

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