



PRIME MINISTER

FOR MEDIA

30th March 1983

Regulations will be introduced under the National Parks and Wildlife Conservation Act to halt further work on the Gordon below Franklin dam.

The Federal Government has taken this step only after repeated requests to the Tasmanian Premier for negotiations and discussions were rejected.

The Government is still ready to negotiate a settlement of this issue that acknowledges the legitimate interests of Tasmanians in ensuring adequate future energy needs and the protection and generation of employment.

I am prepared to talk with Mr Gray in Tasmania on Wednesday April 6 about alternative employment proposals and to establish procedures to protect those immediately affected by a halt to work on the dam.

This offer, naturally, depends on the cessation of construction and associated works.

The regulations, known as the World Heritage (Western Tasmania Wilderness) Regulations will come into force as soon as they are gazetted.

The regulations are being made to enable Australia to give effect to its obligations under the World Heritage Convention following the nomination of the Western Tasmania Wilderness National Parks, at the request of Tasmania, for inclusion in the World Heritage List.

The area has now been listed.

The regulations will apply to the Dam construction area and any activity likely adversely to affect the area's cultural and natural heritage.



PRIME MINISTER

CANBERRA

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

My dear Premier

My letters of 28 March 1983 and 18 March 1983 have offered the preferred course of action to resolve the divisions that exist in your State over the Gordon below Franklin Dam. You have rejected both endeavours to negotiate a settlement. Further, you appear not to have understood the essence of our offer.

Put simply, it is:

We have stated repeatedly we will assist in developing alternatives which guarantee your energy supplies to cover both the present and future needs.

We are not opposed to the development of hydro-electricity to meet Tasmania's future energy needs.

We are opposed to the Gordon below Franklin Dam.

We have made it clear we will assist those directly affected by stopping work on the dam and in the transfer of employment from that site to other projects.

We are committed to achieving equivalent employment opportunities for those working on the current project.

Further, we will assist in developing a long-term economic package for the benefit of all Tasmanians.

We acknowledge and accept our responsibility to do all possible for those currently unemployed within your State.

Finally, we have many times stated our commitment to healing the divisions in our society. This issue clearly divides Tasmania.

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The issue will not disappear, nor will the conflict and divisions unless a negotiated settlement is reached, which is broadly based, generally acceptable and preserves the areas affected by the World Heritage Area.

We have done all possible to protect the workforce in Tasmania and we will continue to do so. Your rejection of our offer to negotiate leaves us with the only available alternative.

Regulations will be gazetted under the National Parks and Wildlife Conservation Act 1975. The regulations apply to the dam area and prohibit further work on the construction of the dam site and associated works.

The regulations will come into force immediately they are gazetted. I have arranged for copies to be made available to your Office as soon as possible.

We have taken this course of action with great reluctance.

Your refusal to negotiate left us no choice, and if that attitude is maintained you will through your actions begin to affect the employment of the Tasmanians about whom you express concern.

Whether you refuse to acknowledge it or not, the issue is one which extends well beyond the boundaries of Tasmania. It is one about which many people feel strongly. It is one which is clearly divisive within your own community.

I remind you of your own commitment during the State Election Campaign, which was to set about healing divisions in Tasmanian society.

With the greatest respect, you have not succeeded. Nor will you unless you agree to sit down with the Commonwealth Government and begin to negotiate a settlement which can maintain all of the major objectives of both your Government and mine, including preserving the integrity of the World Heritage area.

I am prepared to meet with you in Hobart on Wednesday, 6 April to negotiate on matters already raised in previous correspondence and to establish the processes required to protect those immediately affected by the gazettal of the abovementioned regulations.

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Finally, the offer to meet on Wednesday 6 April depends on the cessation of the construction on the dam site and associated works.

Yours sincerely

(R.J.L. Hawke)