

Communiqué #1 – King Island Response Team

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Message from the Premier and Minister for Trade and Major Investment, and Chair of the King Island Response Team, Jeremy Rockliff.

I recently received a warm welcome to King Island, where I was pleased to Chair the very first meeting of the King Island Response Team. This team has been formed in response to the announcement by Saputo that this will be their last operating season on King Island.

As I have previously stated, this is an incredibly disappointing decision and I want to reassure everyone that the Tasmanian Government recognises the gravity of this decision and remains fully committed to supporting the King Island community.

Joining me on the team will be:

- Australian Government: Senator Anne Urquhart
- Tasmanian Government: Craig Limkin, Secretary, Department of State Growth
- Local Government:
 - Mayor Marcus Blackie, King Island City Council
 - Deputy Mayor, Vernon Philbey, King Island Council
- Saputo Australia: Paul Davies, Regional Operations Manager, Tasmania
- United Workers Union: Mr Godfrey Moase
- Local Industry:
 - Heidi Weitjens, President, King Island Chamber of Commerce

- Adam Hely, President, King Island Tourism Association
- Nick Lyttle, President, King Island Beef Producers Group.

Together we will be working with the people of King Island to identify actions and opportunities to support business and community into the future and through the transition, should the Dairy close.

I have attached to this email the Terms of Reference for the King Island Response Team, which explains in some detail the focus and objectives of this group. We will be meeting monthly, and/or as required, and post each meeting we will provide regular updates to the workers and community with respect to the work being undertaken.

I do want to point out that the activities of the Response Team are not being undertaken in isolation. Jobs Tasmania will be working with Saputo to ensure that we are doing whatever we can to assist workers impacted by this decision, noting that we are still some months away from the potential closure.

Another critical element of the Government's response is already underway, and that is the work that is being undertaken by the Office of the Coordinator-General (OCG) to try and find a new operator for the Dairy. The OCG are actively working with Saputo to proactively approach the market to seek interest from potential investors and operators.

Make no mistake, this is our absolute preferred outcome and is the priority of the Government.

Unfortunately, in life there are few guarantees, so we also need to consider what happens if that process is unsuccessful. For that reason, I am expecting the work of the Response Team to run in parallel with that process. This team will be focused on other areas of activity that can provide increased economic benefit and job creation to the Island. That includes looking at what is already happening on Island, what's in the pipeline, and what new things should be considered.

I firmly believe that we can all play a critical role in helping to shape a resilient, innovative and sustainable future for King Island, and I look forward to the positive outcomes that will be achieved.

In the meantime, please take some time to look at the services and programs identified below that provide immediate assistance if required. To discuss any of these, or to find out more information, please contact the team at Business Tasmania on 1800 440 026 or by email at ask@business.tas.gov.au

Community support for the recent severe weather event

Community grants are available for eligible individuals affected by the severe weather event of August/September 2024. Further information can be found here:

<https://www.dpac.tas.gov.au/divisions/cpp/community-grants/emergency-assistance-grants>

Access free business advice

Visit <https://www.businessadvice.tas.gov.au/> for information about the Tasmanian Business Advice Service and New Business Support Pilot Program, both of which provide free and independent business advice services.

Access free digital coaching for businesses

The Digital Ready program provides up to four hours of free digital advice and coaching in relation to getting your business online. Register for coaching here:

<https://digitalready.tas.gov.au/>

Small Business Advice and Financial Guidance Program

This program provides grants of between \$1,000 and \$1,500 for specialist financial services or business support to assist in recovery from unexpected events or application of other management strategies. For more information and to apply visit:

https://www.business.tas.gov.au/funding/general/small_business_advice_and_financial_guidance_program_round_4

Enabling Business Grant Program opening on 22 October

This program will provide grants of between \$2,500 and \$10,000 for capital purchases.

Applications will open at **2pm on Tuesday, 22 October 2024**. For more information and to apply visit: https://www.business.tas.gov.au/funding/general/enabling_business_grant_program

Mental health support

There are a range of organisations that provide mental health support and resources for individuals, communities, and small business owners and employees, including Lifeline Tasmania, Beyond Blue, and Rural Alive and Well (RAW). To see the full range of services available, visit the following:

- https://www.business.tas.gov.au/managing/mental_health_and_wellness
- <https://www.lifelinetasmania.org.au/>
- <https://www.beyondblue.org.au/>

Free assistance for businesses with employees

Employer of Choice Assist is a free service that provides tailored assistance for businesses who employ staff, including information on how to retain employees and advice to understand Fair Work and industrial relations requirements. For more information and to register visit:

<https://tcci.com.au/services/business-services/employer-of-choice-assist>

Support available through Business Tasmania

The Tasmanian Government is committed to supporting small businesses and offers a range of services through the Department of State Growth's Business Tasmania service. Connect with the Business Tasmania team on 1800 440 026 or via email at ask@business.tas.gov.au or visit <https://www.business.tas.gov.au/home>

Subscribe to Business Tasmania's newsletter at <https://www.business.tas.gov.au/updates-and-news> for important information and new funding opportunities.

The Department of State Growth acknowledges the traditional owners of the land upon which we work and pay our respects to Elders, past and present.

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