



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

The King Island Response Team (KIRT) had its first meeting of 2025 with the new year bringing renewed hope and cautious optimism.

Saputo confirmed it remains open to finding an alternative outcome for King Island Dairy and is engaging with several interested parties.

The government's Office of the Coordinator General continues to support this process.

We have a way to go but I am quietly confident that we are heading in the right direction.

Members of the KIRT noted this was a reassuring step and they thanked local management for their communication to the team and to the King Island Dairy staff.

During my two-day visit to the Island I was fortunate enough to see how the community is diversifying and securing its economic future.

I visited Kelp Industries, which in terms of its exporting prowess and ingenuity is a standout business.

It was also a fantastic opportunity to see progress of the major expansion happening at Ocean Dunes, which the Tasmanian Government is supporting through a \$10 million loan.

That development, which will support 78 ongoing jobs once complete, is providing the community encouragement and hope for the Island's visitor economy as it will further boost King Island's stellar reputation as an international golf destination.

I also had the pleasure of meeting four of the five current apprentices associated with the project. Local lads that now have a bright future and career without having to leave the Island.

Identifying and supporting projects that lead to the next generation of industry and business on the Island, is fundamental to why I established KIRT.

The Tungsten mine is ramping up and the owners are keen to be a part of the long-term vision of the Island, helping to mitigate reliance on one or two major industries, diversifying the Island's employment base and supporting the shipping demand for the Island, another key objective of KIRT.

The Department of State Growth is also working with the tourism industry to deliver a Plus One Visitation session on the February 26.

Of course, there is always more that can be done, and so the KIRT welcomed Gabriella Conti the CEO of West by North West regional tourism organisation to its meeting.

Ms Conti and the King Island Council discussed the need for more tourism marketing and events support – something the Government will consider during the upcoming budget process.

A \$150,000 feasibility study for the potential expansion of the Port of Grassy will begin public consultation shortly.

I committed to the KIRT that consultants working on that report will speak to the council and the community, and a full briefing on this project will be provided at our next meeting this month.

While we are cautiously optimistic about the future of the King Island Dairy, I also heard loud and clear that various Island industries have ongoing concerns about freight and logistics.

The Tasmanian Government has called on the Federal Government to urgently

implement the recommendations that were tabled just before Christmas in the Senate Select Committee's final report into the Tasmanian Freight Equalisation Scheme.

Further, the recent freight and shipping roundtables that ran last year, will continue in 2025 to bring stakeholders together to work on pinch points as we continue to monitor seasonal conditions for primary producers.

At the request of KIRT we will action these roundtables to occur each year for the foreseeable future, as an ongoing way to support and partner with the Island on its resilience.

The KIRT will meet again in February as we continue to work together on ensuring the Island enjoys a strong and secure future.

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

Primary Producers Emergency Response Grant Program

Grants of up to \$10,000 are available to eligible primary producers statewide to cover costs associated with clean-up and recovery following the August/September 2024 severe weather event. For more information and to apply, visit the Department of Natural Resources and Environment Tasmania here:

<https://nre.tas.gov.au/agriculture/government-and-community-programs/primary-producer-storm-recovery-2024>

Rural Relief Fund

Farming families impacted by disasters such as drought, flood or bushfires may be eligible for a grant of up to \$2,500 as crisis relief through the Rural Relief Fund. For

more information and to apply, visit Rural Business Tasmania website here:

<https://www.ruralbusiness Tasmania.org.au/relief-fund>

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.

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>

Multicultural Small Business Grant Program

The Multicultural Small Business Grant Program is still open for applications. This program supports Tasmania's multicultural small businesses in obtaining advice, coaching, training or delivering projects that promote sustainable growth. For more information and to apply visit: <https://www.business.tas.gov.au/funding/>

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/>

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> for important information and new funding opportunities.



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