

Communiqué #2 – 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.

On Monday 21 October 2024 I was pleased to host the second meeting of the King Island Response Team (KIRT) where we welcomed new local members representing key King Island business and industry associations to the group;

- Heidi Weitjens, President of the King Island Chamber of Commerce
- Adam Hely, King Island Tourist Association
- Nick Lyttle, King Island Beef Producers Group

And

- Godfrey Moase, United Workers Union, representing the work force at King Island Dairy.

To round out the community representation, we have also invited Ms Sally Haneveer, the manager of Phoenix Community House, to join the group. I'm sure she will be a great complement to the current membership.

As previously advised, the Office of the Coordinator General (OCG) has been tasked with working with Saputo on behalf of the Tasmanian Government to support the attraction for potential investors and operators for the King Island Dairy.

This work is ongoing and we wish Saputo well in this market process and hope for a good outcome for the island.

I can confirm that a senior representative from my office, along with the Tasmanian Coordinator General, met with Executives from Saputo International in the United States last week, to discuss what we would consider the best possible outcome for the Dairy and King Island.

This was an opportunity to reinforce the Tasmanian Government's commitment to supporting

any suitable operator interested in doing business on the island by partnering with them in a variety of ways, including but not limited to reinvestment in the facility, connecting to new markets and uplifting the King Island Cheese brand. The meeting also enabled Saputo to understand the broader support of KIRT's three-tiered government, local business and community approach to reviewing the Island's resilience and focus on identifying strategies and actions to mitigating the risks associated with the key dependency of one or two major island employers.

We don't underestimate the complexity of the current situation and I want to thank those involved. We recognise this is a complex sale proposition and that there is a tremendous amount of work still to be done.

Through the KIRT, the Department of State Growth and Department of Natural Resources and Environment Tasmania (NRET) have been tasked with looking at other activities on the island, and I note that a Freight and Logistics Roundtable was hosted on the 23 October which will undoubtedly provide some interesting feedback that can be considered.

NRET is also visiting later in the year to debrief on lessons from the drought and understand what can be done better to prepare for future events.

In addition Business Tasmania at the Department of State Growth supported activities and promotion of the King Island Small Business Month 2024 October program and are exploring further mechanisms for additional small business support.

We are also working with the King Island Council, business and industry to develop strategies and scenario planning to further diversify the economy into the future. I recommend that you engage with your local Council Members and Council staff to ensure you keep abreast of any opportunity to contribute as a valued resident.

As Chair of KIRT, co-signed by the Senator Anne Urquhart and the Mayor, we will be writing on behalf of the group and the Dairy, to request that Coles and Woolworths continue to keep the King Island Dairy products front and centre on their shelves, to help support the ongoing viability of the Dairy and present a strong proposition during a sale process of the operation.

Mayor Blackie has also provided KIRT with the Council's submission to the recent Select Committee on the Tasmanian Freight Equalisation Scheme that was held on Island at the request of the Senator as part of KIRT. We will be looking for any opportunities to support that submission, which if adopted, will be positive outcome for King Island businesses and the community as a whole.

KIRT is scheduled to meet again next month. I look forward to hearing more about the progress of these and other initiatives to strengthen the island economy into the future.

I encourage you all to stay locally engaged with the members of KIRT. Provide your ideas and feedback into them as your representatives and look after each other.

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

Recovery and Restoration Grants Severe Weather Event August/September 2024

Individuals affected by the recent August/September 2024 floods and storms may be eligible for one or more Recovery and Restoration Grants. For more information, visit the Department of Premier and Cabinet website here:

<https://www.dpac.tas.gov.au/divisions/cpp/community-grants/severe-weather-september-2024/recovery-and-restoration-grants>

Small Business Emergency Response Grant Program

Eligible small businesses can access Tier One grants of \$2,500 and Tier Two grants of up to \$22,500 to cover their clean-up and reinstatement costs resulting from the August/September 2024 severe weather event. For more information and to apply, visit the Business Tasmania website here:

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

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>

Emergency Recovery Grant - Non-profit Organisations

Non-profit organisations impacted by the August/September 2024 severe weather event may be eligible for a grant of up to \$25,000 per organisation to cover clean-up and reinstatement costs. For more information and to apply, visit the Department of Premier and Cabinet website here:

<https://www.dpac.tas.gov.au/divisions/cpp/community-grants/severe-weather-september-2024/emergency-recovery-grant-non-profit-organisations>

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.ruralbusinesstasmania.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>

Access free digital coaching

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/>

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-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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