



PREMIER OF TASMANIA

Mr John Tucker MP
Independent Member for Lyons
By Email: john.tucker@parliament.tas.gov.au

Dear John -

I am writing in response to your letter of 12 January 2024, in which you repeated public statements you made on 4 January 2024 regarding animal welfare and the new High-Performance Centre and threatened to withdraw your existing pledge of confidence and supply for my Government. I note you state, "If we are unable to come to a resolution [on these matters], I must advise you that I fully intend to follow through on my public undertaking to withdraw my commitment to confidence and supply."

Firstly, I am confident that the work being led by Minister Palmer and undertaken by the Livestock Processing Taskforce will significantly improve animal welfare outcomes in our state, particularly in our abattoirs. This Government will accept no less.

I am advised that the Taskforce work, looking at mandatory video surveillance and a new standard and guidelines, is already well progressed, as is the NRE Tas program of abattoir audits and spot inspections. I am confident that the work will deliver outcomes consistent with your Parliamentary motion.

Minister Palmer will report back to Parliament regarding the animal welfare motion on March 5. The Taskforce is meeting fortnightly between now and March, with updates provided to the Minister. Potential reforms will be recommended prior to Parliament resuming.

Secondly, in relation to the AFL High-Performance Centre, as has been stated, this project was included in the 2023-24 State Budget, which passed the House with the support of all members.

As explained to you at a recent meeting, initial works for the facility relate to planning and design, with any substantial construction commencement not expected for 12 to 15 months.

It is necessary to keep the momentum and the planning of this project going if we are to meet the required deadlines and milestones for our own AFL team. Consequently, my Government will not be pausing work on this project as you have requested.

Your public statements about these matters and follow-up written confirmation of your intent has given me pause to consider the best way forward for Tasmania.

In my view, my Government has upheld and delivered on our end of our existing Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) substantially:

- The Macquarie Point Stadium has been declared a Project of State Significance, and the Act amended to require a Parliamentary vote at the end of the process;

- The AFL agreements have been published in full; and
- Additionally (although not written into the Agreement), my Government supported a parliamentary Inquiry to allow for further scrutiny of the Marinus Project.

It has unfortunately become clear to me that due to the shifting of the goalposts and “gaming” of Parliamentary motions by Labor, the current Agreement we have with you and Ms Alexander is not providing the stability and certainty Tasmania needs.

Although the MOU purports to provide supply and confidence, you and Mrs Alexander have repeatedly threatened to tear the agreement up if you don't get the policy outcomes you are seeking – policy outcomes that extend beyond those originally agreed.

Your support for political motions by Labor and the Greens, coupled with repeated statements about bringing down the Government is bad for business and investor confidence and is damaging Tasmania.

As a result, the Parliament is becoming unworkable.

Proposed Way Forward

I would therefore like to propose that you and Mrs Alexander enter a new confidence and supply agreement for the remainder of the term, an agreement which provides the stability and certainty Tasmanians deserve and indeed voted for at the last election.

Key tenets of this new Agreement would include:

- You and Mrs Alexander to commit to providing Confidence and Supply except in instances of corruption and malfeasance;
- You and Mrs Alexander to commit to not support Labor, Green or other independent bills, amendments to bills, or motions unless agreed by the Government;
- You and Mrs Alexander to retain the right to bring forward your own motions and amendments to Government bills; and
- Other practical matters that might be agreed.

For the avoidance of doubt, I wish to be clear: additional policy outcomes are not up for negotiation as part of either the formulation of a new Agreement or on the floor of the Parliament afterwards in return for continuing confidence and supply.

While I am happy to work with you on policy and constituent issues, it is not acceptable that every discussion be held with a ‘my way or the highway’ approach. I will accept genuine cooperation that is in the best interests of Tasmanians, but I will not allow the Government to be held to ransom every sitting week.

I wish to remind you that both you and Mrs Alexander were elected as Liberal candidates on a platform of providing stable, majority government.

A new Agreement along the lines of what I have outlined will provide Tasmanians with the stability and certainty they voted for while allowing you and Ms Alexander to independently raise issues, concerns and proposals on behalf of your constituents.

Needless to say, if we are unable to reach a new Agreement prior to the resumption of Parliament on 5 March 2024, and in light of your correspondence to me, I will be forced to consider all options, including potentially advising the Governor to dissolve the House.

John, in conclusion, I hope we are able to reach a new Agreement along the lines I have outlined. There is much to be done for Tasmanians in the year ahead, and I don't want an early election if one can be avoided.

I would welcome a written response from you outlining your position and priorities for this year. Our next weekly meeting is scheduled for Friday, 9 February; I propose we dedicate this time to canvassing these matters further.

I look forward to seeing you then.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Jeremy Rockliff', written in a cursive style. The signature is positioned above the printed name and title.

Jeremy Rockliff MP
Premier

