TASMANIA

PREMIER OF TASMANIA

14 October 2026

Dr Rosalie Woodruff MP
Greens Member for Franklin
Parliament House
Email: rosalie.woodruff@parliament.tas.gov.au

Dear Dr Woodruff

Thank you for your question to the Honourable Felix Ellis MP, Minister for Police, Fire and Emergency Management, in Parliament on 18 August 2026 regarding recovery funding for the Huon Valley community following the 2018-19 bushfires. As disaster recovery is the responsibility of the Premier, your question was forwarded to me for response.

The Huon Valley community understands better than most the significant impact that bushfire can have on people, businesses, infrastructure and the natural environment. The 2018-19 bushfires were among the most significant emergency events experienced in Tasmania in recent years. The recovery journey that followed demonstrated both the challenges posed by bushfire and the extraordinary resilience of the affected communities.

The then Premier released the 2018-19 Bushfires Final Recovery Plan on 3 June 2019. The Plan outlined several measures to support the recovery of affected communities. Our Government has worked hard to deliver these measures, including:

- over $6.5 million in grants to affected households
- over $2.5 million in support to small businesses and primary producers
- $2.14 million to support the Huon Valley Council to upgrade Arve Road to promote local tourism
- a $9.9 million community recovery fund, including a community grants program and tourism promotion campaign.

Our Government spent over $21.2 million on these measures and I am confident that they have helped Huon Valley communities rebuild, recover and strengthen their preparedness for future bushfires. An independent evaluation of the outcomes of the community recovery fund found that it made a positive contribution to recovery and wellbeing outcomes by supporting local businesses, restoring community assets, improving access to recovery assistance, and strengthening social cohesion. The evaluation also found evidence of increased community belonging and improved preparedness for future disasters, with local projects helping to strengthen community identity, pride and connection to place.

I note the motion of the Huon Valley Council related to the DarkLab Transformer project and the recent decision by DarkLab not to proceed with the project. The Final Recovery Plan did include a commitment from the Tasmanian Government to this project, so I understand that members of the community are disappointed by DarkLab's decision.

No Tasmanian Government funds have been provided to DarkLab for this project and therefore no funds need to be recovered. Unspent funding was reappropriated through the Government's standard budget and financial management processes, through which funding allocations are periodically reviewed and adjusted to reflect evolving priorities.

Our Government is continuing to build on the lessons we've learned from previous disasters through implementation of the *Tasmanian Disaster Resilience Strategy* (Strategy). The Strategy provides a coordinated, whole-of-community approach to strengthening resilience before disasters occur. It recognises that governments, communities, businesses and non-government organisations all have a role to play in reducing risk and increasing preparedness.

For communities such as the Huon Valley, this means continuing to support local preparedness, strengthening community networks, improving access to resilience-building programs and ensuring lessons from previous disasters inform future planning and decision-making. Our Government remains committed to working alongside local communities to ensure all Tasmanians are better prepared for future bushfires and other natural hazards.

The experience of the 2018-19 bushfires demonstrated the strength, adaptability and determination of the Huon Valley community. While the risk of bushfire remains, the recovery achieved since that time, together with the ongoing implementation of the Strategy, provides a strong foundation for a more resilient future.

Yours sincerely



Jeremy Rockliff MP
Premier