

Minister for Finance
Minister for Infrastructure and Transport
Minister for State Growth
Minister for Science and Technology
Leader of the House



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Councillor Annie Revie
Mayor
Flinders Island Council

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Dear Mayor

I am writing to reconfirm our commitment to assisting the Flinders Island Council to identify a positive way forward for its Safe Harbour Project.

As all parties are aware, the Tasmanian Government has committed up to \$900 000 to TasPorts for works related to the Safe Harbour Project, on the expectation that all three levels of government will make a contribution. It is noted that the Australian Government's contribution to the project presently stands at \$3.0 million as a result of its approval for \$1.8 million in funding be diverted towards the upgrade of the Whitemark airport runway.

You will recall that I convened a meeting on 29 July 2020 with yourself and Council representatives, together with representatives from the Safe Harbour Action Group, TasPorts and the Federal Member for Bass, Bridget Archer MP.

I felt that the meeting was productive and there was support to continue to develop the TasPorts preliminary proposal in line with three outstanding issues/questions. I acknowledge that the TasPorts offer to carry the project is different to the original vision, but felt that it reflected an affordable approach that Council and the community might be able to support with consensus.



I really do want to emphasise that the Government and TasPorts have no desire or intention to manage the project unless that is the will of your Council and the local community. In short, we share the concerns about project success and offer our services should it be welcome.

I note that as an action arising out of our meeting on 29 July, TasPorts undertook to seek further information from Burbury Consulting regarding the water depth in the Lady Barron Port, the shelter available within the Port from prevailing conditions and the extent of any modelling undertaken regarding the potential for sand build up occurring in the Port as a result of the construction of a breakwater at the proposed Safe Harbour location. I look forward to sharing this advice once received.

I wish to again emphasise that TasPorts option was offered in good faith as a way forward. Beyond this option there is no wish by the Tasmanian Government to take over Council's project and it seems to me that the alternative to not progress the facilities would be a missed opportunity. Ultimately, that will be a decision for Council and the Australian Government.

I appreciate your recent advice that Council identifies the Tasports proposal as its preferred way forward. Whilst I appreciate Council maintaining confidentiality ahead of the meeting of 29 July, I see no reason to prevent Council from communicating its support for its preferred option to the Flinders Island community.

I look forward to continuing to work with Council and local community members who are passionate about this important community infrastructure project.

Yours sincerely 

Michael Ferguson MP
Minister for Infrastructure and Transport