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## PARLIAMENTARY STANDING COMMITTEE OF PUBLIC ACCOUNTS

20 November 2024

Hon Jeremy Rockliff MP  
Premier  
11th Floor, Executive Building  
15 Murray Street  
HOBART TAS 7000

Email: [jeremy.rockliff@parliament.tas.gov.au](mailto:jeremy.rockliff@parliament.tas.gov.au)

Dear Premier

### **Inquiry into the TT-Lines Spirits Project – Public Hearing (18 November 2024)**

The Committee resolved to write to you to express the Committee's disappointment and frustration in you not meeting your obligation as a witness to attend the Committee's public hearing scheduled for Monday, 18 November 2024. This was despite your attendance being confirmed on a number of occasions: first in your role as Minister for Infrastructure and subsequently as Premier following the appointment of the Hon Kerry Vincent MLC as Minister for Infrastructure.

I remind you that this Committee takes its powers, obligations and responsibilities under the *Public Accounts Committee Act 1970* (the Act) very seriously. For your convenience, I note that under section 7(1) (Evidence before Committee) of the Act:

*The Committee may summon witnesses to appear before it to give evidence and to produce documents, and for that purpose has all the power and authority of a Select Committee of the House of Assembly.*

I refer you to the attached chronology and the fact the Committee has respectfully worked with you and your staff to accommodate your appearance before the Committee over the past four months. Your late notification to me on the evening of 17 November 2024, indicating your inability to attend 'due to your busy schedule', was found to be unacceptable in the circumstances. Further, the Committee notes you made a public statement indicating your non-attendance was due to the fact that you are no longer the Minister for Infrastructure, which was contrary to the advice that you provided to me.

The Committee notes that you have not at any time refused to appear before the Committee and takes comfort that you have agreed to attend a new public hearing on 29 November 2024. Should similar circumstances of non-attendance to the Committee's public hearings occur in the future, the Committee may report the same to Parliament.

I look forward to your attendance and continuing assistance in this Inquiry.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'R. Forrest'.

**Hon Ruth Forrest MLC**  
**CHAIR**

## Chronology

Date	Comment
17 August 2024	The Committee wrote to Hon Michael Ferguson MP in his capacity as then Minister for Infrastructure and Mr Craig Limkin (Secretary, Department of State Growth) on Friday, 27 September 2024 and has set aside 11:30 am to 12:45 pm.
26 August 2024	Hon Michael Ferguson MP resigned from the position of Minister for Infrastructure.
27 August 2024	<p>The Committee communicated to Hon Premier Jeremy Rockliff MP noting that Hon Michael Ferguson MP had resigned from the position of Minister for Infrastructure, noting the Committee had invited then Minister Ferguson and Mr Craig Limkin (Secretary, Department of State Growth) to attend an additional public hearing on Friday, 27 September 2024 between 11:30 am to 12:45 pm.</p> <p>The Committee confirmed its intention to continue with this hearing with the Premier (in his then capacity as Minister for Infrastructure) and Mr Limkin on the day.</p>
6 September 2024	The Premier informed the Committee he was unable to attend this public hearing on that date as he had existing commitments.
12 September 2024	Through the Chair, the Committee acknowledged the Premier's inability to attend on Friday, 27 September 2024 and proposed an alternate date of Tuesday, 8 October 2024 between 11:30 am to 1:00 pm. This was confirmed by the Premier's office as 'booked in'.
13 September 2024	The Premier's office communicated with the Committee noting: <i>'Unfortunately the Premier will not be able to appear on that date as he will be overseas on a Trade Mission to the USA. The Premier is not back in the state until Monday 14 October 2024.'</i>
16 September 2024	<p>The Committee proposed the following options to the Premier's Office and to Mr Limkin noting Mr Limkin's inability to attend a hearing on Fridays, the Committee offered the following options on Monday, 18 November 2024 in Committee Room 2, Parliament House:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Option A: 9:15 am to 10:45 am, or</li> <li>• Option B: 10:30am to 12:00 noon.</li> </ul>
19 September 2024	The Premier's office responded with an offer of 3.00 pm to 4.30 pm on Monday 18 November 2024.
20 September 2024	<p>Through the Chair, the Committee has accepted the new time for the Premier and Mr Limkin to appear at that time on Monday, 18 November 2024.</p> <p>The Premier's office responded:</p> <p><i>'Thank you and please thank the Chair and Committee for accepting the Premier's proposed time to appear for the PAC hearing on Monday 18 November 2024. This is now locked in the Premier's diary.'</i></p>

Date	Comment
3 October 2024	<p>The Committee wrote to the Premier:</p> <p><i>'Additional Scrutiny Request of Premier</i></p> <p><i>Further to previous correspondence on this matter, the Committee has resolved to ask for further details at your and Mr Limkin's scheduled public hearing, with respect to:</i></p> <p><i>1. what, if any, advice was provided by the Department of Premier and Cabinet (DPAC) to TT-line, outside of the general caretaker convention letter that was provided to agencies, government business enterprises and state-owned corporations during the election period.</i></p> <p><i>To this end, you may wish to have the relevant DPAC officers available at the public hearing to assist the Committee with this line of questioning.'</i></p>
28 October 2024	<p>Principal Adviser from the Premier's office wrote to the Committee:</p> <p><i>'Hi Simon,</i></p> <p><i>Apologies for the phone tag. The Parliamentary Standing Committee of Public Accounts had requested the Premier's attendance, in his capacity as Minister for Infrastructure, to a public hearing on 18 November, in relation to the Inquiry in the TT-Line Spirits Project. Given the Premier is no longer the Minister for Infrastructure I am seeking your advice on the committee's request.'</i></p>
29 October 2024	<p>In a follow-up email to the same Principal Adviser it was confirmed:</p> <p><i>'Yes, Premier still expected to attend'.</i></p>
29 October 2024	<p>The Committee responded to the Premier and Hon Kerry Vincent MLC (Minister for Infrastructure):</p> <p><i>Further to previous correspondence on this matter, the Committee has resolved to invite the new Minister for Infrastructure, Hon Kerry Vincent MLC to be at the table with the other witnesses at the scheduled public hearing on Monday, 18 November 2024.</i></p> <p><i>In order to accommodate the Committee's questions, the public hearing has been extended by 30 minutes. To avoid any doubt, the Committee is rescheduled to meet at Committee Room 2, Parliament House on Monday, 18 November 2024 and has set aside 3:00 pm to 5:00 pm for this purpose.</i></p>
13 November 2024	<p>In an email from the Premier's office the Premier's availability changed:</p> <p><i>'Regarding the Premier's attendance at the PAC hearing meeting on Monday 18 November 2024, could you please advise the Chair the Premier will now not be available, noting the new Infrastructure Minister's attendance along with that of the Secretary of State Growth on that day.'</i></p> <p>The Chair had a conversation by phone with the Premier and agreed to alter the time of the Premier's appearance to 30 minutes at the beginning of the hearing in his role as Premier with oversight of the project and head of the Department of Premier and Cabinet. This was verbally agreed by the Premier and followed up by an email to the Premier's office.</p>

Date	Comment
15 November 2024	<p>Email from Committee to Premier's office:</p> <p><i>'I have tried to ring but to no avail: I can confirm that the Premier agreed to be at the public hearing from 3:00 to 3:30 pm as per a direct conversation with the Chair by phone.'</i></p> <p>Email response from the Premier's office:</p> <p><i>'Thanks for letting me know. I will now schedule in the Premier's diary.'</i></p>
17 November 2024	<p>Text message sent to Committee Chair by Premier at 6:18 pm stating that he could no longer attend due to a Cabinet meeting and other meetings being scheduled.</p>
18 November 2024	<p>The Committee resolved that the Chair contact the Premier via text message to seek to re-schedule. The Chair offered two alternate dates with Friday 29 November 2024 8:40 am agreed to and a request that this be confirmed by email to the Committee.</p> <p>The Committee issued a media statement indicating the Premier would not be appearing before the Committee as scheduled and is seeking to re-schedule his appearance.</p> <p>The Premier stated in a media appearance he was not attending as he was no longer the Minister for Infrastructure and that he was planning to re-schedule his appearance.</p>