



MEDIA RELEASE

30 July 2026

Council calls for a community-led plan for Huon Valley tourism recovery funds

Huon Valley Council is calling on the State and Federal governments to recover the funding from the failed Transformer project and reserve it for a community-led master planning process guiding tourism investment and economic recovery across the Huon Valley.

At its meeting on 29 July 2026, Council noted with disappointment the failure of the Transformer project, which was to be funded under the 2018-19 Bushfires Final Recovery Plan.

Huon Valley Mayor Sally Doyle said the funding must stay in the Valley, and that whatever comes next should be shaped by the community rather than designed for it.

"These funds were committed to help our communities recover from the devastating bushfires, and that need has not changed. What has changed is our understanding that a project can only succeed if the community leads it. We are not asking for a plan to be handed to us, we are asking for the time, the process and the resources to build one together, with our businesses, our volunteers and our communities in the far South at the centre of it."

Recognising the strong interest from businesses and the community, and the legitimate calls for an inclusive and consultative process, Council calls on both levels of government to honour the original intent of the funding and reserve it for recovery projects in the Huon Valley.

"An independent, transparent process is the best way to restore confidence after the Transformer project's cancellation and the redirection of promised Hastings Pool funding," Mayor Doyle said. "While Council welcomes today's \$1.75 million announcement for the Hastings Pools complex revitalisation, it doesn't fully deliver on the Tasmanian Liberal Government's broken election promise of \$3 million for the Hastings Pool."

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“Businesses, particularly in the far South, have waited patiently while carrying the impact of the bushfires and then the uncertainty of a project that never arrived. They now need a process they can trust and a genuine say in what is funded next.”

Jane Gallichan and Anita Harrison of community action group, Fair Go for the Far South said, “Every cent promised to the Far South by both state and federal politicians must be spent in the far south and we welcome the Huon Valley Councils support for a community led master planning process.

“We look forward to working closely with Council to make the master plan and the promised money finally materialize for our community that will drive visitation and economic activity in the far south.”

Huon Valley Council will continue to advocate for these funds to be retained in the Huon Valley and invested in line with an evidence-based master plan to be commissioned as the first step in redirecting the funding.

ENDS

Council’s motion in full:

RESOLVED Motion 13.001/26

That Council:

- 1. Notes with disappointment the failure of the Transformer project that was to be funded under the *2018-19 Bushfires Final Recovery Plan* and which had the potential to provide much needed stimulus to our Tourism businesses that were significantly harmed by the Bushfires.**
- 2. Noting that Dark Lab has made public statements that they intend to return the entirety of the grant, calls on the State Government to take all necessary actions to recover the Grant, and, along with the Federal Government, honours the original intent of the grant and reserve the funds for recovery projects in the Huon Valley.**
- 3. Recognising the strong interest from the businesses and community especially in the far South, and the legitimate calls for an inclusive and consultative master planning process that is community lead to engage the Huon Valley community in the re-allocation of these funds, calls on the State AND federal government to drawn on these funds and commission a**

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comprehensive Master Plan project to establish an Activation Plan for the Huon Valley that will, at least, identify:

- a) issues limiting the Tourism sector in the Huon Valley,**
 - b) strategic enablers required to boost visitation,**
 - c) broad parameters for future projects that funding could be used for building business and community resilience across the community.**
- 4. Calls on the State Government to seek independent project management from an organisation (such as Regional Development Australia Tasmania) to manage a community lead and evidence based process – including the Tourism Activation project and a call for an Expression of Interest no later than June 2027 for projects to meet the intent of the Master Plan.**

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