

Legislative Council

Hansard

Thursday 21 May 2026

The President, Mr Farrell, took the Chair at 11 a.m., acknowledged the Traditional People and read Prayers.

[excerpt...]

Liberty Bell Bay Manganese Smelter

Ms WEBB question to LEADER for the GOVERNMENT in the LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL, Ms RATTRAY

[2.34 p.m.]

This question is perhaps a little out of date now. The Liberty Bell Bay manganese smelter in George Town is in voluntary administration and there are reports that 175 jobs will be lost unless workers agree to take unpaid leave from 24 April this year. Can the government please:

- (1) detail whether the government has explored the option of providing repayable financial loans to the administrator for the purpose of securing the current workforce for the duration of future sale and wrap-up processes?
- (2) if so, provide any modelling undertaken detailing financial amounts required to maintain the workforce over specified timeframes, such as six or 12 months or some other period until either the smelter's purchase or ultimate permanent closure?
- (3) disclose whether any negotiations occurred with either Liberty Bell Bay, or its administrators, Ernst & Young, canvassing the option of repayable loans for the purpose of securing the workforce from this particular shutdown, until the administrator's determination that either a viable sale is to be finalised or the smelter is to be closed permanently;
- (4) whether the state has requested the federal government to explore provision of a repayable financial loan to the administrator, either of its own accord, or in joint arrangement with the state, noting it is no longer particularly relevant, but we might as well get it on the record.

ANSWER

- (1) On 23 April 2026, the Tasmanian and Australian governments jointly announced a \$3 million loan for the purpose of meeting employee wage obligations, while the administrators conduct an accelerated sales process.
- (2) The cost of meeting wages and associated statutory on-costs, including superannuation contributions and applicable payroll tax obligations, for the full Liberty Bell Bay workforce is approximately \$1.6 million per fortnight.
- (3) The Tasmanian government is working closely with the administrators Ernst & Young (EY). The \$3 million in wage support funding has been provided to

Liberty Bell Bay Pty Ltd (administrators appointed, receivers and managers appointed), in the form of a loan.

- (4) The Tasmanian government has partnered with the Australian Government to provide a time-limited loan to Liberty Bell Bay on a 50:50 basis for the purpose of meeting employee wage obligations during the Ernst & Young's sales campaign.

