



**THE HON ANGUS TAYLOR MP
LEADER OF THE OPPOSITION
FEDERAL MEMBER FOR HUME**

**TRANSCRIPT
JOINT DOORSTOP INTERVIEW
BELL BAY, TASMANIA**

Friday, 24 July 2026

SUSIE BOWER:

It's fantastic today to be able to welcome the Leader of the Opposition, Angus Taylor, to Bell Bay. I know that Angus already has a great relationship here with Bell Bay. He's done some work here before, 30 years ago, so we know that he is very concerned about what we're facing now at the moment around a power deal for Bell Bay Aluminium.

Also, I have the great honour to have Senator Colbeck here, as well as Senator Askew, and our northern mayors – Greg Keiser, Matthew Garwood, Christina Holmdahl and Rhys Beattie from Dorset as well. So, it's fantastic to have this amount of support. I think this really signifies how critical this power deal is to Tasmania.

Now, you know, I do want to make some commentary too. I've seen some things being said around this word called 'subsidy' - why should we subsidise our industries in Tasmania? I want to be very clear. Bell Bay Aluminium is not asking for a subsidy. It is asking for a fair price, and that is a very different thing. So, this is why we're here today.

I also want to say, on Monday, I actually stood with over 200 employees as they were told they no longer had a job. Now, that gives me a very heavy heart, and one man in particular said to me, he said, "As hard as today is, at least we now have a decision, because it was the waiting that actually did our heads in."

Let's not do that to another 550 employees at Bell Bay Aluminium. I do call on Hydro and the Government to do a power deal now. These negotiations have been going on for over two years. Do the deal. Give security to that 550 employee base and also allow some confidence back into the Tasmanian economy for our supply chain, who have just taken a major hit with Liberty Bell Bay.

Now, I'll hand over to Senator Colbeck.

SENATOR FOR TASMANIA, SENATOR THE HON. RICHARD COLBECK:

Thanks, Susie, and thanks for your advocacy for the people in this community.

We know how much people have suffered over the last few weeks with the loss of both Boags and, this week, with Bell Bay, but also the impact that's being seen out in the north-east, where we were with Angus this morning, talking to the community in Scottsdale concerned about the decision with respect to Rushy Lagoon, and it's good to have TasFarmers representatives with us here today as well, as well as Rhys Beattie, the Mayor from Dorset, whose community will be impacted.

So today we've been talking to two communities that are severely impacted by the current economic situation and also decisions of the Australian Government. As Susie said, the power deal for Bell Bay Aluminium is absolutely critical. It needs to be done. The Federal Government, though, must play their part, and from everything that I can see so far, they've been completely absent.

We know that the Tasmanian Government has been working hard and doing what they can in terms of the power deal, but the Federal Government can and should be playing their part, and Angus probably better than anybody understands that role.

We need to see the Federal Government engaged now. As Susie said, this deal needs to be done as soon as possible so that this community more broadly, as well as the 550 employees and the 1,200-odd contractors at Bell Bay Aluminium have some certainty. But we cannot take another hit. This community cannot take another major hit like we've just seen with Boags and Liberty. We cannot take another hit.

And so, all stops must be pulled out to get this deal over the line as soon as possible so that the community here can get on with things, Bell Bay can get on with their investment plans, and the supply chains downstream can get on with their role as well. Bell Bay Aluminium has significant ties through the Tasmanian economy – to Kymera next door who is 100 per cent reliant on Bell Bay Aluminium. Their products are critical to the operations of Nyrstar. So, if Bell Bay Aluminium goes, you can see what the implications are.

The Federal Government are spending a lot of money – a lot of taxpayers' money – all around the country supporting major industrials. We want to see their presence here in Tasmania. It is vital. Tasmania has just as much right to see its manufacturing base supported as all of the other states do. They're spending close to a billion dollars in South Australia with Whyalla. They've spent between \$300 to \$470 million for Tomago in New South Wales. They are spending nearly a billion dollars at other sites as well.

We need to see the Federal Government presence here as part of the deal to get Bell Bay Aluminium supported.

We also need to see, as far as the north-east is concerned, the Federal Government doing their job and supporting that community in their opposition to the purchase and conversion of Rushy Lagoon to trees. It's a bad deal. It was never in Australia's interests, and Julie Collins, who has been completely and utterly missing in action, should step up and do her job.

Angus, thank you for being here. You understand the importance of these things to our community. It was great to have you in Scottsdale this morning and it's really important that you're here at Bell Bay later in the day.

LEADER OF THE OPPOSITION, THE HON. ANGUS TAYLOR MP:

Well, thank you, Richard. Great to be with you here, and with Wendy, with Susie, and many stakeholders, mayors from across this region, to have this important discussion here at Bell Bay.

It was, as Susie said, almost exactly 30 years ago I first came here working here with Bell Bay Aluminium. There was concern at that time about the future of the smelter. It's wonderful to see 30 years later the smelter is still operating, and we must ensure that it continues to operate.

Can I acknowledge, before I say more about that, the workers who have lost their jobs in the last few days at Liberty Bell Bay. This is a tough time for them and their families, and my heart goes out to them at this very, very difficult time.

We have an economic crisis in this country. We have seen the biggest collapse in living standards that any developed country in the world has seen in the last four years since Labor has been in power. We're seeing industry going offshore. We're seeing an energy crisis in this country as the Government has failed to contain energy prices. We are seeing a situation where so many Australians are giving up hope. We cannot let that happen here at Bell Bay and in northern Tasmania.

We cannot let that happen.

There are two specific cases where there's a real risk of that happening right now in front of us that I've seen this morning.

First of all, here at Bell Bay, again there is a cloud over the future of Bell Bay Aluminium. We know that the key to a successful aluminium smelter is affordable, reliable energy. Chris Bowen should be here, now, talking to the local community, talking to Bell Bay Aluminium about how the Federal Government can play a role in ensuring the future of Bell Bay Aluminium. He should come here now. He should be here. But he's nowhere to be seen because he hasn't been focused on what we need as a country – ensuring that industry stays in this country. He's adding taxes to Australian industry through his hyped-up carbon tax in the safeguard mechanism. He's making it harder for industry, not easier, and he should be here right now.

It is absolutely essential we continue to see the operation of the Bell Bay Aluminium smelter in the coming years. I'd like to see it going another 30 years.

It's a great credit to this local community here that it's been as successful as it has over such a long period of time.

Now, I was at Scottsdale earlier today and at Scottsdale we see another hammer blow to the local community and the local economy, where at Rushy Lagoon we've seen a purchase occurring right now to take that land out of traditional agricultural production with dreadful economic consequences as a result.

Julie Collins can step in and prevent this from happening.

She has the power to veto access to carbon credits for this purchaser and that should be based and it's based on taking land out of productive agricultural use.

She has that power now and she's said absolutely nothing – complete and utter silence.

This would be another hammer blow to northern Tasmania.

This is a Government that is asleep at the wheel when it comes to the industries that count in northern Tasmania, and it's asleep at the wheel when it comes to the economic crisis and energy crisis this country is facing.

Northern Tasmania deserves better. Australians deserve better than what we are seeing from these two ministers.

Happy to take questions.

JOURNALIST:

Should Bell Bay Aluminium be allowed to access green steel production subsidies?

LEADER OF THE OPPOSITION:

Well, it should be made sustainable and there's lots of levers the Government has access to to achieve that. The Energy Minister, in particular, has a crucial role in this. We know that aluminium is just solid electricity. That's the point. The Energy Minister is nowhere to be seen.

Now, I was the Energy Minister at the time when we renegotiated arrangements with the Portland Aluminium Smelter in Victoria. I played a lead role in making sure, working with the state government, to make sure that there was a future for that smelter at that time. Chris Bowen should be doing exactly the same, working with Tim Ayres and, importantly, working with the state government to ensure that there is a sustainable future for Bell Bay smelter.

JOURNALIST:

So, Mr Taylor, Jeremy Rockliff is the Tasmanian Premier. He's a Liberal. Are you telling him to fix the deal with Bell Bay Aluminium?

LEADER OF THE OPPOSITION:

He's got to be part of it. My point here is it's got to be state and federal, and the Energy Minister has to be part of it, and he's nowhere to be seen. Where is he? Where is he? He's nowhere to be seen. So, they've all got to be part of it.

Look, when we renegotiated the arrangements with the Portland Aluminium Smelter, which is quite analogous to here, I worked closely with the state government. It was a Labor state government. I worked closely with Alcoa. We managed to put together an arrangement that gave a sustainable electricity and energy arrangement for the future of that smelter. That's what should be happening here today.

JOURNALIST:

Have you talked to Jeremy Rockliff about this?

LEADER OF THE OPPOSITION:

As I said, the state government has to be part of doing this.

Yeah, I speak to Jeremy regularly and he knows how important Bell Bay Aluminium is to the future of this region. As I say, it's got to be an arrangement across federal and state government alongside Rio Tinto and Bell Bay Aluminium.

JOURNALIST:

The union said the Federal Government already came to the table and it's now the Liberal state government's issue. What's your response?

LEADER OF THE OPPOSITION:

What's Chris Bowen done? Has he been here? He hasn't been here. I mean, seriously. This guy is asleep at the wheel when it comes to Australian industry. He is asleep when it comes to energy policy.

Every single time he just abandons ship because Australians are paying more for electricity in this country, whether it's households or industry, because of Chris Bowen's failures. We don't want to see another Chris Bowen failure that ends with Bell Bay Aluminium closing. That would be an absolute disaster for this region.

JOURNALIST:

Regarding Liberty Bell Bay, should the state and federal governments have been offering more money or more power concessions to get a deal done?

LEADER OF THE OPPOSITION:

Well, I make the same point with regard to Liberty Bell Bay. Obviously, it's a very tough situation for the workers – it really is – to see that closure this week. These are energy-intensive businesses and the solution will always involve energy as a critical part of that.

JOURNALIST:

The state government has said it threw everything at Liberty Bell Bay. Are you saying more should have been done?

LEADER OF THE OPPOSITION:

Well, as I say, I don't know the details of what was being negotiated there. It's very hard for me to comment. What I will say is that we've got a Federal Energy Minister who doesn't turn up when it comes to industry like this, and he should have been here. He should be here now.

JOURNALIST:

Why hold this roundtable now and not before 200 Tasmanians lost their jobs?

LEADER OF THE OPPOSITION:

Yeah, look, I've been down here before. It's not the first time I've been here to Bell Bay, I can assure you. I've been here many times. But, as I say, this is a really tragic situation. I'm here talking to the local community about Bell Bay Aluminium and we want to make sure that it's not repeated.

JOURNALIST:

Can we chat Rushy Lagoon? Is the Coalition going to take any actions to try and reverse the approval of this sale?

LEADER OF THE OPPOSITION:

Look, there's several aspects to this. The CEFC should not be putting, money into this, equity into this. They shouldn't be doing it. This is taking agricultural land out of traditional agricultural production and it should not be happening. The CEFC shouldn't be part of it. I understand there was an \$8.8 million grant as well on top of that.

But on top of that, there's the carbon credits, and Julie Collins, as Agriculture Minister, has the power to say no to those carbon credits. She has the power to do that, and she should exercise it and make a commitment that she will not provide those carbon credits. It's very clear that, in the absence of that, this current acquisition wouldn't be taking place.

So, she should step in and she should step up. We keep seeing, when it comes to this part of the world, Labor ministers who are not even turning up. It's her own state. I mean, seriously.

This is a big deal for Scottsdale. I heard that this morning. There are very clear, deep concerns in the community, and they're very understandable concerns.

JOURNALIST:

Are you going to be taking any actions to get information about how the Government handled this potential conflict of interest between the Clean Energy Finance Corporation and the Foreign Investment Review Board?

LEADER OF THE OPPOSITION:

Yeah, we're going to keep probing on this.

As you rightly say, the Clean Energy Finance Corporation has been an important part of the financing of this deal. We're going to keep pressing hard in the Parliament to find out more about how this came about.

But I think at this stage the most important thing is Julie Collins, the Agriculture Minister, could step up and say that they won't get access to the carbon credits.

JOURNALIST:

How are you going to respond to Pauline Hanson's letter proposing to work together to pass new counter-terrorism measures?

LEADER OF THE OPPOSITION:

Well, can I say, for many months now I've been very clear on what we need to do here and what the Government, most importantly, should be doing here.

First of all, it shouldn't be issuing visas to terrorist sympathisers or people who have worked with ISIS.

Secondly, they should be issuing temporary exclusion orders - TEOs. They have the power to do that.

Thirdly, they could join us and pass legislation to prevent third parties repatriating these ISIS sympathisers, these terrorist sympathisers, and members of a terrorist organisation, preventing them from coming to the country.

I implore all members of the Parliament, including One Nation, to work with us to do that.

We've seen in the last couple of days new news about Dr Jihadi, who is apparently alive in a jail in Iraq. The Government has apparently been sitting on this since 2022. They've known it for a long time.

He wants to come back to the country. The Government should be saying straight out they will not allow that to happen.

As I say, I'll work with any of my parliamentary colleagues, including One Nation, to continue to prosecute the case on that.

JOURNALIST:

The Trump Administration has confirmed a new 12.5 per cent tariff. What's your response to that?

LEADER OF THE OPPOSITION:

Well, they shouldn't. They are a great friend, and they shouldn't impose taxes on our exports to the United States. They shouldn't be doing that. We're dead against it, and we'll work with the Government and others to do everything we can to roll that back. It shouldn't be happening.

JOURNALIST:

Are Australia's modern slavery laws strong enough?

LEADER OF THE OPPOSITION:

Look, in the end, I think this was not about that. I assume you're linking this to the tariff question? There's been an enormous amount of work done over a long period of time on this.

I don't think that's the issue here, though. I think the United States has decided to impose a higher tariff on Australia and that's the wrong thing for this country.

I call on all of my parliamentary colleagues to flat out oppose this tariff increase and the tariffs being imposed on Australian exports.

We're standing here in a place that exports to the world – manufactured goods, agricultural goods. That's critical to the economy of northern Tasmania and Australia more generally. We don't want to see these tariffs, particularly from our friends.

JOURNALIST:

The hearings in New South Wales on Monday will examine Dallas McInerney. Have you gone back to check any of his work?

LEADER OF THE OPPOSITION:

Honestly, I'm not party to any of that, so I really don't have a comment.

[ENDS]