

PRESIDENT'S REPORT – NOVEMBER 2020

November 16th, 2020

As I write people are flocking into Tasmania as the borders are open to most states. Unfortunately, South Australia has had an outbreak that has forced borders to close to travellers from there, which sounds an ominous warning for Christmas travel. What if we get to our destination and our Premier locks the door behind us or we are forced into quarantine there?

Speaking of the Premier; we had an enjoyable dinner with him at Wellers Inn on Friday evening. Mr Gutwein outlined the state budget he brought down on Thursday, explaining the need for significant spending and subsequent debt – we are fortunate we have record low interest rates so hopefully the debt does not spiral out of control. 70 attended the dinner including state and federal politicians, mayors and representatives of TCCI and TasPlan (who sponsor the day's events).

Overall, I think the budget was very positive and we need to spend money to get the state moving again. The money for infrastructure must be fast tracked so these major projects can get started – the employment of lots of apprentices is mandatory and a great move for our young people.

The local economy seems to be strengthening nicely. Many retailers are reporting strong sales and foot traffic around the CBD appears to be growing. Hotels and motels had a good October and those on JobKeeper should be well positioned for the tourist season if the borders remain open.

Interestingly, I spoke to a hospitality operator this morning who said their sales last month were the best in two years, another said sales are up year on year, which was great news. Hobart accommodation and hospitality businesses seem to be suffering as Hobartians have been travelling to the regions and not spending their money "at home" - what a pleasant change for us!

Our breakfast events continue to attract good numbers with 27 attending to hear State Opposition Leader Rebecca White talk of *A Better, Fairer Tasmania*. This week we have Lalla Mackenzie of MAS National speaking to us regarding the trainee and scheme available via the support of state and federal governments. On December 2nd we have Sam Marshall from nbn Co speaking on *Burnie Business Fibre Zone - levelling the playing field for regional business*. The breakfast will be followed by a morning seminar on the Fibre Zone which will be particularly interesting for users with higher bandwidth requirements.

Our Renew Burnie project is attracting plenty of attention with our *Living History Pop Up Cinema* in Shop 8 of the Plaza Arcade being open to the public each day until Sunday from 11-3pm. Cyndia has done a great job sourcing old films of Burnie and surrounds and it is bringing back fond memories for many of those who have stopped by. This week Cyndia will even be providing fresh popcorn to those who drop in.

We are also working on creating a Christmas promotion in Shop 2 & 3 at The Plaza Arcade. Local children can visit Santa in his grotto at nominated times during

December, take photos and make some gifts for their families. There is even a stall for his reindeer to rest in whilst Santa is attending to his duties.

Last week was NAIDOC week and we joined in the celebration with an [art installation](#) in a vacant shop in the Plaza Arcade by local indigenous elder Alan Radford. It features several carvings and paintings plus a triptych piece that follows the NAIDOC theme *Always Was, Always Will Be*, telling the story of Tasmania's dark past, its moves towards reconciliation and the rebirth of palawa language and culture.

The project to light up the Norfolk pine tree in Mount Street is well underway and we are currently awaiting lights and controllers to arrive from Melbourne so we can commence the set up and testing phase before the physical installation starts in mid-December.

Our Regional Employment Training project *Helping Burnie Work* has been rescheduled to 2021 as our JobActive partners were unable to obtain sufficient numbers to attend due to concurrent competing schemes plus the preference of unemployed people to do courses online rather than face to face and our RET is an in-person type course.

We are rapidly approaching the festive season and next week I will be advising when and where we will have our Christmas function.

Until next month.



Ian Jones

President

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