

## Major medical science precinct taking shape

Australia's most imposing medical science precinct will be created in Hobart when the \$90 million second stage of the Menzies Research Institute is



completed in December 2012. The futuristic Medical Science 1 building (MS1), which accommodates 92 staff, 365 students and 40 PhD candidates from the Health Science Faculty of the University of Tasmania, as well as 374 staff and students from Menzies will be officially opened in April after a five-year gestation.

Medical Science 2 (MS2) will be built by joint-venture contractors Fairbrother and John Holland on a site adjacent to MS1, which is on the corner of Liverpool and Campbell streets. Lyons Architects will work to ensure architectural and design continuity across the two projects. Historic Advocate House will be incorporated into the development. Both building designs incorporate a raft of environmentally friendly construction and operational features. The two stages will be integrated into a world-class medical science precinct adjoining the Royal Hobart Hospital.

The Director of the Menzies Research Institute, Professor Simon Foote said benefits the completed project would bring to Tasmania could not be overstated. "The new building project will provide for the continuing growth and expansion of Menzies as we head towards a new era in health and medical research," he said. "MS2 will assist in accommodating the 374 staff and research students we currently have and provide space for us to reach our desired size of 500 people."

"The new development will attract further high-quality professionals to Tasmania, enable us to expand our research by covering more disease areas, increase our collaborative links throughout Australia and internationally, and provide more opportunities for employment and professional development for researchers and medical professionals," Professor Foote said.

The Federal Government has committed \$44.7 million towards MS2, with further financial support from UTAS, the Tasmanian Government and the US-based Atlantic Philanthropies, which also supported the \$58 million MS1. MS2 will house the clinical research facilities of both the Royal Hobart Hospital and Menzies.

MS1's striking building façade incorporates coloured pre-cast concrete panels, cast-in steel window frames and custom-made double-glazed window units. Staff and students from five different Hobart locations began moving into the five-storey building in December 2009.

Meanwhile, the institute held a symposium in December 2009 to celebrate its 21 years of medical research. Researchers and guests were told that health professionals still did not have all the basic information needed to help prevent cardiovascular disease. Guest speaker and Co-Director of the Menzies Centre for Health Policy at the University of Sydney, Professor Stephen Leeder, said essential research on which preventive measures could be based still had not been carried out. "Basic preventive measures need to be stripped right back and include talking to the town planners, the agricultural people, food suppliers and big industry and developing research that would enable us to be very much clearer than we are at the moment about what we should actually do to better prevent these conditions," he said. "We simply do not know as much as we need to know about the effective prevention and treatment of cardiovascular diseases."

Key initiatives included ensuring cities were better planned to encourage exercise and healthy living, promoting healthy food options and involving employers in preventive health programs.

Professor Leeder said it cost governments almost \$6 billion a year to treat conditions such as cardiovascular disease, but not enough research funding was being made available to tackle the causes.

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### Tasmanians win three tourism awards



The annual Australian Tourism Awards turned into a Tasmanian celebration in February, with the State recognised as having the country's best ecotourism experience; its finest deluxe accommodation; and best tourism marketing brand. Bruny Island Cruises took out the ecotourism category,

Avalon Coastal Retreat, on the east coast, topped the deluxe accommodation category, while Pure Tasmania won the marketing award.

The 2010 awards were held at the Hotel Grand Chancellor in Hobart on 26 February.

The Chief Executive of the Tourism Industry Council of Tasmania, Daniel Hanna, said success in three of 27 categories was outstanding. "This is the best result ever by the Tasmanian tourism industry, and highlights the national significance of our best tourism products," he said. "It is especially pleasing that the categories that Tasmania has excelled in reflect the Tasmanian brand. To be recognised as having the best marketing campaign, best ecotourism experience and best deluxe accommodation demonstrates that Tasmania is a destination that punches above its weight in niche markets and high-end tourism experiences."

Bruny Island Cruises, which runs spectacular coastal cruises from Adventure Bay and also from Port Arthur and Pirate's Bay to Tasman Island, has been a national ecotourism pace-setter for years. It has won many previous awards and was recently included in *Travel and Leisure* magazine's Greatest 100 Trips in the World. The company established the Tasmanian Coast Conservation Fund and also contributes generously to the Parks and Wildlife Service.

Avalon Coastal Retreat is a locally designed accommodation business overlooking Great Oyster Bay south of Swansea. Known as the "glass house" it was built to make guests feel pampered yet totally immersed in the surrounding natural world. "For a Tasmanian accommodation business to ... be recognised as the best deluxe accommodation in the country is a huge honour and a testament to the extremely high standards our industry is reaching," the Chief Executive Officer of Tourism Tasmania, Felicia Mariani, said.

The Federal Group's Pure Tasmania earned its award for marketing packages highlighting such destinations as Cradle Mountain, Strahan and the Freycinet Peninsula. Pure Tasmania also won this award in 2005, the year the brand was launched. It collected an Australian Marketing Institute best new brand award in 2006. "When we launched the Pure Tasmania brand in 2005, we knew we had something special to offer. Brand recognition and what it represented was very strong," Pure Tasmania's Director of Tourism, Bernard Dwyer, told *The Mercury*.

The award successes follow a strong year for Tasmanian tourism. The State welcomed a million visitors in a single year for the first time in 2009.

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### Roncero, Beer commit to Savour Tasmania

Michelin-starred Spanish master chef, Paco Roncero, and Australian culinary trend-setter, Maggie Beer, have signed up for the second Savour Tasmania event to be staged in May and June. Organisers expect to announce the recruitment of several more big names to help showcase Tasmania's finest produce at dinners and master classes in Hobart, Launceston and Burnie.



Paco Roncero is Executive Chef of La Terraza del Casino restaurant at the Casino de Madrid Hotel and also heads up Catering El Bulli within the hotel. He is regarded as one of Spain's top 10 chefs and a pioneer in so-called molecular cuisine. He said recently: "It is very important to continue developing new techniques."

At a recent culinary event, Roncero and a colleague extracted the water content from manchego cheese and emulsified the residue with oil, making a smooth butter to which they added carbon dioxide and methyl cellulose. They then wrapped this mixture in bok choy leaves, placed it in molds, and smoked it over grape-vine trimmings for 24 hours. The methyl cellulose gels over the heat, reforming the mixture into a spreadable *cheese* but with a different texture and intensified flavour. The chefs paired this cheese with tomato, tuna-ham and warm bread.

Roncero completed his studies at Madrid's Superior School of Hotel Management and Tourism in 1990. He took less than a decade to build a reputation as one of Madrid's most creative chefs. In 2000, Roncero was promoted to Head Chef of the Casino de Madrid and was awarded a Michelin star in 2002. He organises annual gala dinners for the Congress Madrid Fusión and has been honoured as Chef of the Future by the International Academy of Gastronomy.



Maggie Beer was named Senior Australian of the Year at an Australia Day ceremony in Canberra in January. She

grew up in Sydney's western suburbs where her parents owned a manufacturing business. Leaving school at an early age, she worked in many different jobs before finding her niche when she and husband Colin Beer moved to the Barossa Valley in South Australia in 1973. They began farming pheasants and opened a farm shop to sell the game birds. The humble shop grew into the famed Pheasant Farm Restaurant, launching Maggie on a gastronomic career spanning more than 30 years and encompassing food production, processing, exporting, cooking, food writing and TV presentation. She features in the long-running ABC TV show, *The Cook and the Chef*, with Simon Bryant.

After receiving her Australia Day award she said: "If I were home, I'd probably be down at Port Parham getting blue swimmer crabs [to prepare] with our own extra virgin olive oil. Simple food - I don't mean complex food - I mean food from our seasons and our area. Everyone should know about it and feel confident to get in the kitchen and have a go."

So Savour Tasmania promises to have something for everyone in 2010.

The event made a spectacular debut in 2009 with sellout dinners featuring Brand Ambassador, Tetsuya Wakuda, Singapore's Emmanuel Stroobant and London's Shane Osborn and Marcus Eaves.

Tetsuya's \$160-a-head six-course dinner at Cambridge's Meadowbank Estate sold out in 36 hours. Organisers were surprised by the level of local support for all the event's dinners, tastings and master classes.

Food and Wine Writer, Graeme Phillips, was quoted in *The Mercury*: "The prices may seem expensive, but compared with what you would pay to eat in the establishments of some of these chefs, they are a bargain. One of the main benefits I see from events like this is that they expose the local dining clientele to the latest trends and fashions in international food and make it easier for local chefs following international trends to be understood."

The Premier, David Bartlett, said: "Savour Tasmania provides an ideal springboard to promote Tasmania. It not only promotes our State as a food experience destination for tourists, but creates professional development opportunities for the local hospitality industry and provides a range of activities to appeal to food-loving Tasmanians. It will again bring world-class chefs to Tasmania who will use our produce to create meals in our restaurants over four days."

Savour Tasmania is co-ordinated by the Department of Economic Development, Tourism and the Arts. Further information: [www.savourtasmania.com.au](http://www.savourtasmania.com.au)

## How do we shackle the Gen Y bolters? By Caroline Ball

Escaping has been a part of the Tasmanian psyche since the fantasy of freedom, fortune



and a better life across Bass Strait haunted Britain's convict exiles in the 1800s. The colonial *bolters* are long gone, but many young Tasmanians are just as set on leaving.

While Tasmania's interstate arrivals have increased in the past five years, the State still has negative migration in the 20-34 age-group, which accounts for 39 per cent of all interstate movers in the nation, according to the Australian Bureau of Statistics. In other words, Tasmania is losing one of its most precious resources, those born between 1980 and 1994 and known as Generation Y.

Professor Wendy Patton, Executive Dean of Education at the University of Queensland, believes universities play a large part in encouraging or discouraging young people to leave their home State. "These days, people who are thinking about going to university ask themselves: 'Where is the best place for the course that I want to do?' Students tend to shop around, look at a university's reputation, and the employment and destination data that's available to them. That all comes into the decision-making process."

If a course isn't available at home, it seems that Tasmania's Gen Y has few reservations about leaving. Student Recruitment and Marketing Manager at the University of Tasmania (UTAS), Jo Bailey, said UTAS offered a broad range of courses across traditional disciplines, but lack of student and industry demand for some specialised courses makes it unsustainable to offer them.

For postgraduate student, Sam Stove, 23, the lack of a specialised study option was the sole reason for his move interstate. Mr Stove, who is studying a Master of Design Science in Audio and Acoustics at the University of Sydney, says he had always been set on pursuing a career in creative sound production. "The decision to move away from Tasmania was made before I'd even left school," Mr Stove explained. "For starters, the course that I needed to do doesn't even exist in Tasmania. Even if it did, the chances and opportunities to get creative professional work in this field would be significantly less there - if they happened at all."

Paul Wallace, 24, moved to Victoria in 2003 for the same reason. "Marcus Oldham College [in Geelong] was the only university in Australia that offered a bachelor degree in business and agricultural management," he said. If UTAS had offered a similar course he would have considered staying.

Conversely, UTAS attracts many students from rural and regional areas, both in Tasmania and interstate. "Certainly, at UTAS we offer some very distinctive science programs," Ms Bailey said. "If you study science here you don't get stuck in a lab - the whole State is a perfect natural lab in which to study."

Other interstate students are attracted to UTAS because of specialised courses not available elsewhere in Australia, or even in the world. The three-year-old Institute of Antarctic and Southern Ocean Studies (IASOS) offers undergraduate and post-graduate coursework and research into all areas pertaining to the southern polar region. As the only institute of its kind, IASOS attracts students and experts from all over the world.

About 10 per cent of the 25,000 students at UTAS come from other States. Ms Bailey believes they are attracted by the small size of the campus and its tight social circles, as well as the range of courses offered. However, some young Tasmanians are keen to leave this smallness behind. Sally Hamilton, 24, moved to Sydney in 2007 to study post-graduate law at the University of Sydney after graduating with a Bachelor of Arts from UTAS in 2006. Ms Hamilton said she was looking for a change of scene. "I was getting a bit sick of the insular nature of Tasmania," Ms Hamilton said. "I was happy there and I wasn't running away from anything, but I must admit I was sick of it."

Ms Hamilton chose the University of Sydney because of the reputation of its Law faculty. "I wasn't really thinking about job opportunities," Ms Hamilton said. "It was more about the experience. I wanted to challenge myself and meet new people."

Another expat, Ailsa Tremayne, said: "The thing I like best about Tasmania is also the thing I like least - you know everybody. Sometimes it's nice to be able to escape that; and escape the friendship circle. Knowing that there was so much more out there, I felt I had to leave."

Escaping the islands means a lifestyle overhaul - and this is something that can surprise expatriates. Heavy traffic, high rental costs and the difficulty of making new friends are big-city challenges.

It took roughly two years for the interviewed expatriates to adjust to the change of lifestyle and properly settle into life in Sydney. The major pluses for both Ms Hamilton and Ms Tremayne were the cosmopolitan nature of the city, the academic opportunities offered and - of course - the proximity of Sydney's famous beaches.

UTAS's Senior Careers Counsellor, Gaon Mitchell, said: "A couple of the key issues are the lure of higher salaries on the mainland and a lack of decent opportunities [in Tasmania]." She said finding a job in Tasmania in the first year out of school or university could be difficult.

Gen Y expatriate Robert Calvert, 28, is now Senior Wool Buyer for the Schneider Group in Sydney. After leaving school in Launceston in 2001, he spent a year looking for a job in the broad rural sector, with no success. After consulting his brother who was already living in Melbourne and working in the wool industry, Mr Calvert applied for a traineeship with French wool-trading company *Compagnie d'Importation de Laines* (CIL). He moved to Victoria immediately upon securing the job and was transferred to Sydney 18 months later as a senior trader. After a further 18 months he secured his present position. "I have no idea what I would have done if I didn't get that traineeship initially," Mr Calvert said. "I would have had to keep looking for a job outside Tasmania because at that stage there were very limited job opportunities in the rural sector. I would have had to move away regardless."

According to Ms Mitchell, there is a trend among UTAS students to apply for graduate positions with large companies that have offices in Sydney, Melbourne and Hobart. "Students will apply for all three," Ms Mitchell says, "but take either the Sydney or Melbourne job for the money."

And the attraction of higher remuneration should not be underestimated. According to the City of Sydney Council, the median income of a city dweller is \$717 a week, compared with a Hobart average of \$527 per week described by Oktravel.

Professor Salvatore Babones, Sociology Lecturer at the University of Sydney, said Gen Y was much more likely to leave home in search of bigger bucks than its predecessors. He believes that changes to housing and income taxation law in the 1970s were designed for the economic advantage of the baby boomers, the parents of Gen Y.

"Australian policy naturally favours the baby boomers because they are the majority in power - and so of course it's easy to get laws passed that will benefit this generation," he said. "The baby boomers were the last generation to be coddled."

As a result, the baby-boomers' children have an unprecedented inherited stockpile. This gives them the freedom to travel and settle interstate without the cost of moving becoming a barrier to the pursuit of their career aspirations.

Professor Patton agrees. "It's hard to separate [young professional interstate migration] from finance. Generation Y have lived in one of the biggest economic booms that Australia has known. Therefore, they have opportunities to move and to engage in things that might not have been available to previous generations," she said.

The whole notion of interstate movement to work has also been made easier by cheaper flights.

Sydney-based marketing consultant Mark McCrindle argues that career aspirations are secondary for many in Gen Y. "The young people of this generation do not live to work - but rather they work to live," McCrindle said. "A job merely provides the income to do what they want to do."

So with glamorous, cosmopolitan cities offering a range of global opportunities, only an hour from home, how is Tasmania coping? When the national broadband rollout began in the State last year, the Premier, David Bartlett, said: "The reason I am so passionate about high-speed broadband is because of what it can do for Tasmanians. The applications are endless and so too are the types of clever jobs that this technology will create here in Tasmania. The jobs our kids used to move to Melbourne and Sydney for will be based right here in Tasmania. In fact, better jobs."

According to Mr Bartlett, Government initiatives are creating more jobs for Tasmanians every day and this is being reflected in better employment rates than the national average. "In education, planning, water reform, irrigation, renewable energy and optic fibre we are positioning Tasmania to be an economic power house," he said.

However, others warn that education reform and other infrastructure initiatives are not enough to stem the Gen Y outflow.

Sustainable Infrastructure Australia's Stewart Prins has argued that continued funding into Tasmania's creative industries, initiated by the late Premier Jim Bacon in 1998, is the appropriate industry-stimulation to attract greater numbers from interstate. "By recreating the image of Tasmania in the mould of a Creative Class centre, the rhetoric becomes something of a self-fulfilling prophecy by attracting more talented people to live in the State, and, therefore, increasing diversity and stimulating further economic growth," Mr Prins said.

While the path to retaining Gen Y may not be clearly cut, nearly every interviewed expatriate expressed a desire to return to the State within the next 10 years. "It's such a beautiful environment to grow up in and a place everyone wants to get back to," Mr Calvert said. "There's just a certain sense of fulfilment in tasting what the rest of the world has to offer first."

*Caroline Ball is an expatriate Tasmanian studying in Sydney for a degree in journalism*

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### Turf-roofed visitor centre for Springs



A curved building with a turf-covered roof will be built at The Springs, halfway up Mount Wellington, following Hobart City Council approval in February. The Sultan Holdings proposal also includes new public toilets, a snow plough shed, an 80-space carpark and a walkway. Existing toilets and a stone day-use shelter will be demolished to make way for the new building which will house an interpretation area, shop and a restaurant over two levels.

Only one alderman voted against the \$3 million proposal for a rare development within the Wellington Range National Park. The council's Development and Environmental Services Chair, Darlene Haigh, said: "We have been waiting for this for so many years. I'm looking forward to seeing it. The design is so sensitive. We have about 300,000 visitors a year up the mountain. It's a big destination. There were some traffic concerns, but it was felt by the majority that the good far outweighed any negative."

Earlier, developer Ali Sultan told *The Mercury* he didn't expect a "cable car reaction" to the proposal. "The cable car and this development, you can't compare them," he said. "This one is hidden. You'll hardly notice it." Only 15 people bothered to comment when the development application was made public.

Mr Sultan expressed surprise that it had taken more than 40 years to replace the Springs Hotel which burned down in the 1967 bushfires. "It's a million-dollar view," he said. "Where else would you get a view like that? But for visitors, there has been nowhere to sit down and have a cup of tea."

The 64-seat restaurant has been positioned to take in the view of the Organ Pipes. Walls will be finished to resemble "craggy boulders" and the undulating sod roof will be planted with native grasses. "As these grass tussocks are part of the staple diet of local wildlife, steps will be constructed to allow local animals to easily get up on to the roof to freely graze," the development application said. "Every aspect of the design reflects a philosophy to achieve the lowest impact possible."

The carpark will not be visible from the road to the pinnacle. There will be no external flood-lighting of the building and the sod roof will obscure the visitor centre from those enjoying the view from the top of the mountain.

The building will incorporate large timber beams salvaged from a building in Argyle Street. Construction is scheduled to start before June and will take between six and 12 months to complete.

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### Boat festival to be bigger, better ... and free



Visitors to Hobart's world-famous wooden boat festival will enjoy free entry in 2011 and be able to wander a site freed from a dominating,

cyclone wire perimeter fence. The event will expand across Sullivans Cove and is expected to attract more than 70,000 people, as well as tall ships never seen before in Tasmanian waters.

Announcing that Government funding would be more than doubled to \$650,000, the Premier, David Bartlett, said: "This funding will transform the Australian Wooden Boat Festival from one of the best in the world to *the* best in the world ... you will get to see a larger festival and for free, with no ugly perimeter fence."

The increased allocation means the \$20 entry fee can be axed and businesses like Mure's Fish Centre, located inside the perimeter, will not again face a situation where their customers are obliged to talk their way past gate-keepers. Nor will the festival organisers lose revenue as visitors claiming to be Mure's customers cheat their way into the precinct. The festival's estimated loss in gate takings in 2007 was \$80,000.

Festival Chairman, Steve Knight, described the increased funding as an "enormous vote of confidence in the festival." He said the festival site would almost double in size, extending the length of Sullivans Cove to include the revamped Princes Wharf No. 1 and Macquarie No. 1 sheds. "We had 540 vessels at the last festival and we had to turn about 100 away because we did not have room," Mr Knight said. "We will have room for them now."

It is hoped that tall ships from Japan, Indonesia, New Zealand and elsewhere will include two vessels that have not previously visited Tasmania.

The festival was first held over three days in 1994 and has grown to attract 50,000 people, 40 per cent of them from interstate or overseas. Surveys show that 90 per cent of non-Tasmanian attendees have come to the State especially for the event.

"The authenticity of Tasmania's maritime and wooden boat culture provides us with a competitive advantage," Mr Bartlett said. "I am sure the expansion of this festival will further strengthen our tourism branding and enhance Tasmania's reputation on the international festival calendar."

The next festival will run for five days from February 11-14, 2011.

For further information:  
[www.australianwoodenboatfestival.com.au](http://www.australianwoodenboatfestival.com.au)

## Cricket glory for Tassie Tigers

Tasmania won its fourth 50-overs cricket title in February, producing an almost flawless display to beat Victoria



comfortably in the final at the Melbourne Cricket Ground. The Tasmanian Tigers smashed 103 in the final 10 overs of their innings to reach 6-304. Wicket-keeper and opening batsman Tim Payne won man-of-the-match honours for his innings of 100, but veteran pace bowler Gerard Denton was equally impressive, taking five Victorian wickets for 45. The Tigers have now won three of the past six Ford Ranger Cup finals.

Tigers captain, George Bailey, said Paine and Michael Dighton's 132-run opening stand had set the tone for an outstanding team performance. "We certainly had a good day today, no doubt about it," he said. "That's as close to the perfect game as we've played all year ... I can't ask for any more from my boys, to play our best game of the season in a final."

The Tigers secured their title without batsmen Ricky Ponting and Travis Birt, who were with the Australian squad in New Zealand, and without pace bowlers Ben Hilfenhaus and Brett Geeves who are injured.

## North-west devils in fine fettle



The discovery of a thriving, disease-free population of Tasmanian devils at Woolnorth, in the State's far north-west, has buoyed the spirits of Save the Tasmanian Devil Program biologists. A seven-day trapping expedition on the property caught 107 devils, 64 of which

had not been captured before.

Expedition head, Dr Samantha Fox, said she had been surprised by the age, health and vitality of the devils, compared with the remnant populations in disease-affected areas. "Some of the animals observed were nearly seven years old, compared to the average life expectancy of five to six years in the wild," she said.

Dr Fox said the program was now identifying and surveying areas where fences could be built to protect the Woolnorth devils from the risk of contact with animals carrying the deadly facial tumour disease. The protected population would then add significantly to the numbers caught in the wild and bred in captivity over the past four years in efforts to set up an "insurance population" in zoos and wildlife parks. The Woolnorth group could bolster the insurance population by more than 40 per cent.

Intensive monitoring by the program's six wildlife biologists during September and October 2009 had found pockets of the facial tumour disease as far west as the Murchison Highway, while some devil territories east of the highway remained unaffected. Disease-free populations, particularly north of Savage River, continued to thrive. "It's important to see that it is not all doom and gloom for this species," Dr Fox said.

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### The Source recruits Leban

Philippe Jacques Leban, 45, has been appointed Executive Chef at Moorilla Estate's The Source Restaurant. Born in Paris and raised in Sydney, Leban has worked in some of the best-regarded kitchens in Paris and Sydney and was Head Chef at the award-winning Hamilton House, on the Bund in Shanghai, from 2007 to 2009. He said in February: "David Walsh's vision for MONA [the Museum of New and Old Art that will open in 2011] is what drew me here ... I want to be able to offer a food experience that matches his cultural challenge. I want not only to create new dishes with our local produce but to look at the traditional French dishes, to give them my touch with a MONA twist."

During his time at Hamilton House, the restaurant won a place on *Conde Nast Traveler's* 100 Hot List Tables and was judged best new restaurant in Shanghai in 2009. Leban won an American Academy of Hospitality Sciences Five Star Diamond Award for being one of Asia's best chefs in 2009.

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### Sales to China almost double

China has become the single largest importer of Tasmanian goods, even without the inclusion of trade through its Hong Kong gateway. China bought 17.7 per cent of all the State's exports in the year to December 2009, data released in February shows. When Hong Kong is included the share of Tasmania's trade rises to 26.7 per cent of all exports. China's growing economic power was reflected in a near-doubling of exports from \$276 million to \$540 million in a year. Elsewhere in Asia, the global financial crisis severely curtailed business. Trade with the Republic of Korea was down 58 per cent, Japan, once our biggest trading partner, was down 46 per cent and Taiwan was down 26.3 per cent. Overall, the value of overseas exports from Tasmania was \$3.05 billion in the year to December 2009, a decline of 16 per cent.

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### The Wall in the Wilderness turns five

The Wall in the Wilderness at Derwent Bridge turned five on 1 March and celebrated by offering members of the public an opportunity to carve their names on a section of the huge Huon pine panels that make up the extraordinary gallery of Greg Duncan's work. The sculptor set out in 2005 to carve a tribute to Tasmania in 100 massive and amazingly realistic Huon pine panels. Aside from Duncan's grand, carved images depicting the Australian bush, its wildlife and its pioneers, the gallery at the unpretentious highland road-stop between Hobart and Queenstown, also features carvings of everyday subjects, such as gloves and coats, that are so realistic it's difficult to resist touching them to satisfy oneself they are actually wood. Duncan has an international reputation and his sculptures in timber, bronze and stone are in many private collections around the world.

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### Gehl takes on Hobart CBD challenge

Noted Danish architect Jan Gehl has been hired by the Hobart City Council to draw up a sweeping new vision for the city. Professor Gehl is credited with the transformation of Melbourne's CBD into a social hub and has also had significant input into urban planning in New York, London, Copenhagen and Sydney.

The council unanimously chose Jan Gehl Architects after a tender process and has given the firm a December deadline for the development of a strategy to make the CBD a magnet for the people of greater Hobart and the city's 600,000-plus visitors a year.

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### Renewable energy urged for islands

A \$21.2 million plan to boost renewable energy on the Bass Strait islands has been recommended to the State Government by the Renewable Energy Industry Development Board. Funding over four years would support solar, wind and biodiesel energy generation and world-leading solutions for energy storage and demand management. In November 2009, the Federal Government provided a \$15.28 million grant to Hydro Tasmania to undertake a renewable-energy demonstration project on King Island. Under the recommendations King and Flinders islands could halve diesel fuel use, while King Islanders could operate on 100 per cent renewable energy when wind and solar conditions are suitable.

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### Building activity powers on

The number of dwelling approvals in Tasmania increased by 2.3 per cent in December 2009 (in trend terms) to be 28 per cent higher than a year earlier, according to Australian Bureau of Statistics data. The Nation Building - Economic Stimulus Plan pushed public sector dwelling approvals up by 165.6 per cent in the 12 months to December 2009. The value of residential approvals increased 3.9 per cent (or \$29.2 million) in 2009, while the value of non-residential building approvals increased by 43.6 per cent (or \$223.2 million).

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### Car sales jump 17.8pc

New motor vehicle sales increased 17.8 per cent in Tasmania in December 2009, the biggest rise in any State or territory. The 1,777 new vehicle sales were 31.9 per cent above the number sold in December 2008 and the highest monthly total since the global recession began. The surge coincided with the last month of an Australian Government stimulus package that allowed eligible businesses to claim an increased tax deduction on new motor vehicles. Nationally, there was a 3.3 per cent increase in sales.

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### Access shows optimism

Access Economics reported in its latest Business Outlook that it expects Tasmania to continue economic expansion in 2010 and to benefit from a significant rise in exports. The reports said: "Tasmania has slowed, but it has not stalled. In part that is because the State hit this downturn when it was running. Indeed, by the standards of past Tasmanian growth, it was downright sprinting. That momentum helped bear the brunt of the downturn, leaving Tasmania's economy currently weak, but still growing."

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### Hydro appoints new Director

Chloe Munro, the independent non-executive chairman of AquaSure, a consortium building Victoria's desalination plant, has been appointed to the Hydro Tasmania board. Ms Munro, who is also a member of the National Water Commission, has both public policy and corporate finance experience, drawing on public and private sector roles in Britain, Australia and New Zealand. She will serve as a Director for three years replacing Michael Cavell who retired from the Board in November 2009.

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### Chickenfeed flies coop

Tasmanian retail chain Chickenfeed will close its office and warehouse at Cambridge in mid-2010 and move its headquarters operations interstate. Entrepreneur Jan Cameron, who distributes all the group's profit to charity, offered employees alternative work in Chickenfeed stores or interstate where the group plans to establish 400 new stores. Ms Cameron has given Foodbank, a charity that distributes donated food, a free 10-year lease of the warehouse building.

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### Gunns plans major restructure

Forestry business Gunns Ltd announced plans for a major restructure in February after posting a half-yearly profit of \$400,000 - down from \$33.6 million at the same time last year. Gunns' earnings in the first half of the year fell 88 per cent because of a downturn in Asian woodchip markets, a rising Australian dollar and a decline in managed investment scheme sales. The company plans to create a separate investment vehicle to facilitate direct investment into its plantation estate and proposed Bell Bay pulp mill.

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### Cellist's career takes off

Tasmanian cellist William Hewer, 20, is the youngest of nine young Australian musicians chosen to join the elite Sydney Symphony Fellowship in 2010. Hewer, who attended the Hutchins School and the UTAS Conservatorium of Music, has been playing the cello since he was seven. He will be mentored and tutored by the Sydney Symphony Orchestra and international guest artists. He performed with the other new fellows in the first of many concerts in Sydney in early March.

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### Telstra adds 120 jobs

Telstra is to expand its Hobart contact centre, creating an extra 120 permanent jobs and bringing permanent employment up to 200. More than 5,000 people are now employed in the State's call centre industry.

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### Big year for retailers

Tasmanians spent at record levels in 2009, boosting retail trade 6.5 per cent to \$5.3 billion. Australian Bureau of Statistics data showed that retail trade increased by 0.1 per cent (in trend terms) and was valued at \$444.7 billion for the month.

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