

Labor-Green Cabinet sworn in



Tasmanian Greens leader Nick McKim was sworn in as a Cabinet minister in April and his Deputy Leader, Cassidy O'Connor, was appointed Cabinet Secretary after an historic power-sharing deal brokered with Labor

Premier, David Bartlett.

With seats in the House of Assembly split 10-10-5 following the 20 March election, Mr Bartlett had offered to resign his commission, but was asked by the Governor, Peter Underwood, to accept the responsibility of forming a government. After four weeks of negotiations involving his Labor colleagues, as well as Mr McKim, Mr Bartlett announced the power-sharing arrangement which puts Green politicians into a State Cabinet for the first time in Australia. The new Cabinet, sworn in on 21 April, is:

- David Bartlett (Premier) - Innovation, Science and Technology
- Lara Giddings (Deputy Premier) - Attorney-General, Justice, Economic Development, Infrastructure
- Michael Aird (MLC) - Treasurer, Industry
- Bryan Green - Primary Industries and Water, Energy and Resources, Local Government, Planning, Racing, Veterans Affairs
- Nick McKim (Tasmanian Greens) - Human Services, Corrections and Community Services, Community Development, Climate Change, Sustainable Transport and Alternative Energy
- David O'Byrne - Environment, Parks and Heritage, Workplace Relations, the Arts, Hospitality, Sport and Recreation

- Michelle O'Byrne - Health, Tourism
- Lin Thorpe (MLC) - Education and Skills, Children, Police and Emergency Management
- Cassidy O'Connor (Tasmanian Greens) - Secretary to Cabinet

Reportedly, Mr McKim will lighten his ministerial load by handing Ms O'Connor responsibility for Housing, Disability Services, Women and Multi-cultural Affairs.

Doug Parkinson will be the Leader of the Government in the Legislative Council.

Grainger takes Brand Chair

The Managing Director of Liferaft Systems Australia, Michael Grainger, was elected Chair of the Brand Tasmania Council on 23 April, following the resignation of Lyndon Adams. Mr Adams, a member of the council since 2002 and its Chair since 2004, has accepted a senior appointment with the Federal Group.



Kim Seagram, the co-owner and Marketing Manager of Launceston's Stillwater River Café and founder of the Black Cow Bistro, was re-elected as the council's Deputy Chair. Ms Seagram has been a member of the council since 2002 and was elected Deputy Chair in 2006.

Mr Grainger has dedicated more than 18 years to the manufacture and international marketing of Marine Evacuation Systems and large-capacity liferafts for commercial and military use. His company is a world leader in its field.

He is a member of Tasmania's Manufacturing Industry Council, a founding member of the Tasmania Maritime Network and a member of several Boards, including the Tasmanian Development Board, TT-Line, international shipping organization Interferry and the Det Norske Veritas International Ferry Committee.

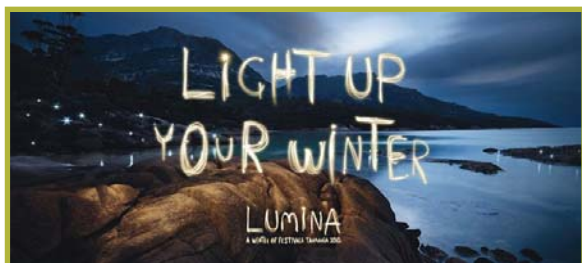
Mr Grainger is the third Chair of the independent Brand Tasmania Council, which was established in 1999 to formulate and promote a place-of-origin branding initiative for Tasmania. Its members include leaders of the private sector and representatives of Tourism Tasmania, the Department of Primary Industry and Water and the Department of Economic Development, Tourism and the Arts.

Mr Grainger thanked Mr Adams for his contribution. "Lyndon was Director, Sales and Marketing of J. Boag and Son when he came to the council in 2002," Mr Grainger said. "He had been responsible during his career in the brewing industry for the launch of two award-winning premium Tasmanian beers, Cascade Premium and Boags Premium. In 2007 he managed an advertising campaign for Boags Premium that was a template for businesses seeking leverage in the marketplace through clever use of the Tasmanian brand."

Mr Grainger said Mr Adams' term had seen the recruitment of super-chef Tetsuya Wakuda in 2004 as Tasmania's Brand Ambassador and the launch in 2008 of the Tasmanian brand identity.

"It's imperative now that we build on these achievements and do all we can to elevate the Tasmanian brand in all our target markets," Mr Grainger said.

100 events will light up this winter



Tasmania's first *Lumina - A Winter of Festivals* began in late April and will feature more than 100 festivals and events staged in locations all over the State through to August.

"No matter what your passion, there will be something for you in Tasmania this winter," Tourism Tasmania's CEO, Felicia Mariani promised. "*Lumina* will feature popular current and new events including the exhilarating tarmac rally, Targa Tasmania; epicurean festivals, Savour Tasmania and Tastings at the Top; musical extravaganzas Festival of Broadway and Festival of Voices; AFL football at Aurora Stadium; and two events making their debuts in 2010, the Australian Shakespeare Festival and the edgy Junction 2010 arts festival."

The inaugural Australian Shakespeare Festival in Hobart will offer six streams of Shakespeare-infused arts to total audiences of up to 10,000 over three weeks. The program encompasses plays, opera, revue, film and music, as well as fringe events and performances. Visitors are being promised world-class productions in rotating repertory of *A Comedy of Errors*, the first all-professional production in Australia of Ralph Vaughan Williams' comic opera, *Sir John in Love* (based on *The Merry Wives of Windsor*) and Christopher Luscombe and Malcolm McKee's irreverently funny paean to the Bard: *The Shakespeare Revue*, transformed into a magical piece of theatre for all ages.

Ms Mariani said *Lumina* would also include a wide range of smaller community festivals and events, with some organisers rescheduling into the winter period to capitalise on the excitement and buzz around the first Winter of Festivals.

"Tourism Tasmania has created an exciting and innovative marketing campaign to ensure the Winter of Festivals captures the attention and imagination of event lovers and potential visitors across the country and right here at home," Ms Mariani said. "By proudly showcasing this exciting range of events during the traditionally quiet visitor period, we are creating real drivers for visitation to Tasmania during winter - a time when we know we have the capacity to support more visitors to our island."

Hundreds of thousands of potential visitors across the country will see a new aspect of Tasmania through a national advertising campaign using TV, print and online media. "More than 800,000 readers in Sydney and Melbourne received a copy of a 20-page, full-colour Lumina calendar, packed with event details and dates, when it was distributed with Fairfax's *Good Weekend* magazine on Saturday 17 April," Ms Mariani said.

The Lumina calendar was also included in the 17 April edition of *The Examiner* newspaper and is available at participating Australia Post outlets.

The first major event of the festival, Targa Tasmania, ended in local glory on 2 May, with Tasmanian driver Nathan White steering his Lamborghini to the winner's podium.

Tourism Tasmania has created a dedicated microsite - LuminaTasmania.com - which allows potential visitors to browse the line-up of events by date, region and genre. The site also provides visitors with the tools to plan and book accommodation and travel.

"Of course a campaign like this one is only possible through the support and active participation of the tourism industry, and I would like to extend my sincere congratulations and thanks to all the businesses, events and groups that have got on board the *Lumina* campaign to give our consumers real incentives to travel here.

"I also want to acknowledge our major sponsors - *The Examiner* newspaper, Southern Cross Television and Australia Post - who have had the confidence to join us in supporting this inaugural promotion of *Lumina*."

Tourism Tasmania has invested \$1.6 million towards a \$3 million campaign to encourage visitors and locals to accept the invitation: "Light up your winter."

Tassie shares stage in Tetsuya TV special



A Tasmanian-produced documentary on the life of super-chef and Brand Tasmania Ambassador, Tetsuya Wakuda,

will be screened on SBS 1 in prime time next month.

The 52-minute program, *Tetsuya's Pursuit of Excellence*, focuses on the Australian story of the world-renowned restaurateur, who grew up near Lake Hamana, south-west of Tokyo. From the age of 10, Tetsuya dreamed of travel and he arrived in Australia in the early 1980s as a 22-year-old with little money, no professional skills and no English.

Fate dictated that his first job would be as a kitchen hand in a popular inner Sydney restaurant, Fishwives. The then chef at Fishwives, Danny White, recalls the shy young man being introduced to him by a mutual friend who asked if he could be given work.

Tetsuya started the following morning and according to White: "He picked it up very quickly ... You didn't have to tell him anything twice."

The new recruit washed pots and dishes at Fishwives and progressively became involved in food preparation, particularly the daily chore of filleting whiting. It was unplanned but fateful. Food and hospitality would dominate the rest of his life.

White recognised something special about the new employee and he was welcomed into the family social circle and introduced to the Australian lifestyle.

Well-known Sydney restaurateur Tony Bilson was his next employer. The innovative Bilson was keen to introduce a Japanese approach to the handling of fish during delivery and in the kitchen in his fashionable Kinsella's Bistro. Bilson was also interested in integrating some aspects of Japanese cuisine into his menus.

He asked Tetsuya if he would become his sushi chef. Despite his complete lack of experience, the young man said 'yes'.

"Tony gave me a passion for food," Tetsuya says simply.

In 1987, Tetsuya entered a partnership with Irishman Sean Dwyer and opened a restaurant in substantially industrial Ultimo. "Almost a joke when you think of it now," he chuckles. Not surprisingly they struggled. There were evenings when no customers turned up and Tetsuya would experiment, cooking ingredients from the kitchen into inventive meals for the staff. "I really enjoyed that," he said.

Times were tight and one of the restaurant's key suppliers held back invoices for almost a year to enable the partnership to establish itself.

A turning point came when two positive newspaper reviews, one by Leo Schofield, made the little eatery a must-try for Sydney's informed foodies.

The city's fine food scene was dominated at that time by French provincial cooking and Schofield found a welcome freshness in Tetsuya's approach. The food critic became a regular patron and a friend.

All at once, the premises were too small to meet demand and the business was sold to enable Dwyer to return to Ireland. Tetsuya, now a sole operator, opened the first restaurant called Tetsuya's at nearby Rozelle. This was still dubious socio-economic territory and it wasn't long before Tetsuya's was relocated to a swanky Japanese-style 'compound' in Kent Street, near China Town. The classical Japanese buildings and glassy, open dining spaces were complemented by a traditionally tranquil garden and pond.

It was ideal: the realization of a dream. Australians flew in from all over the country to sample a degustation menu that delicately fused the culinary traditions of Asia and Europe. International visitors made their restaurant reservations first and then bought their air tickets to fit in with the availability of a table. Tetsuya's was consistently rated among the world's top 10 and its signature dish, Confit of Ocean Trout, became the most-photographed in the world.

Many restaurateurs would have rested on their laurels. Not Tetsuya.

In his constant drive for perfection, he travelled the world talking to the best people in the business and absorbing their ideas. Recently he has flown to Japan 12 times in 10 months. He has always been tireless in seeking out the best ingredients, with Tasmania becoming his favourite tasting ground. The 52-minute documentary explains his constructive interactions with Tasmanian suppliers of ocean trout, wagyu and black Angus beef, grain-fed lamb, leatherwood honey and wasabi.



Produced and substantially filmed by Brand Tasmania's Executive Director, Robert Heazlewood, the documentary includes footage shot in Tokyo, Milan Venice, Barcelona and London. Heazlewood, with his video-camera, and Huon Valley-based freelance writer Mal Maloney ranged far and wide to interview some of Tetsuya's colleagues and friends at the very top of the culinary food chain.

In Barcelona, Ferran Adria of El Bulli - regularly rated the best restaurant in the world - made some interesting observations (translated here from Spanish): "First we are friends and then may come some competition, right? ... We are [both] persons who try to be good people ... We are people who when we meet, we are good friends, but we are not talking all the time about problems ... we meet once in a year and it seems that we are friends, as if we were everyday together, right?"

"We have cooked together and after we have been together many days. If there is a word to define Tetsuya it is *sensibility* ... Sometimes, we forget that Tetsuya is Japanese because he is in Australia ... Tetsuya has a Japanese sensibility ... transferred to the occidental world, through Australia. And it makes him quite unique."

"He is a panda; those ones that you could take to home, right?"

David Levin, of London's five-star Capital Hotel, Heston Blumenthal from Fat Duck in Berkshire and Richard Geoffroy, Chef du Cave at Dom Perignon, also help the Tasmanian team tell the story of a proudly Australian citizen who has an OAM, loves a barbecue and is the only Sake Samurai (a revered honorary position) living outside Japan.

Finally, the documentary shares Tetsuya's latest adventures: the development of a new restaurant at the Marina Bay Sands in Singapore, said to be the most expensive resort ever built; and construction of a substantially Huon pine fishing boat at the Wooden Boat School in southern Tasmania.

Tetsuya's *sensibility* makes it quite impossible for him to boast, but he confesses on camera to being "beyond satisfied."

"I have a very fortunate life from Australia," he says.

Tetsuya's Pursuit of Excellence will be telecast on SBS 1 at 7.30pm on Thursday, 17 June.

Five days to celebrate innovation

Northern Tasmania's entrepreneurial spirit will be in the spotlight this month at an inaugural 5 Days of Innovation



Festival beginning on 18 May. The program of events includes business open days, seminars, a great debate, a food trail tour and a 5 Plates of Innovation degustation dinner, cooked by chef Fiona Hoskin from the celebrated Launceston restaurant Fee and Me that closed its doors last year.

Products and services developed by the local community and regional success stories will be featured in the program. The activities will highlight the benefits of integrating innovation into businesses, with organisers hoping to stimulate wider awareness of northern Tasmania's rich culture of innovation.

The festival is a collaboration involving the Department of Economic Development, Tourism and the Arts; the Launceston City Council; Launceston Chamber of Commerce; and the University of Tasmania. It is the brainchild of entrepreneur and innovation activist, Darren Alexander, who sees it as an annual event that will grow over the years.

Mr Alexander, the founder and CEO of Autech Software & Design, said: "As a Launceston-based Tasmanian small businessman and active participant in a number of small business committees, I am passionate about the achievements of Tasmanian companies and their further potential. My vision is for this festival to become a signature event of the national Innovation Festival."

Autech's well-documented international successes underscore Mr Alexander's credibility on his favourite subject. Autech is a producer of innovative colour-visualisation applications and e-tools designed to assist their clients to provide better services to customers in the areas of colour and design. Client industries include paint, building, home furnishings and fashion. Autech has created world-first website designs and CMS (content management systems). The company has won many innovation awards and was judged Australia's Most Innovative Company at G'Day USA in 2007.

It exports to over 50 clients in 20 countries and produces software in four languages.

Mr Alexander organised a business-over-breakfast launch of The 5 Days of Innovation Festival at Launceston's Hotel Grand Chancellor in May. The concept was received enthusiastically by 110 guests. Mr Alexander quoted Steve Forbes of *Forbes Business Magazine* saying: "The real source of wealth and capital in this new era is not material things. It is the human mind, the human spirit, the human imagination, and our faith in the future."

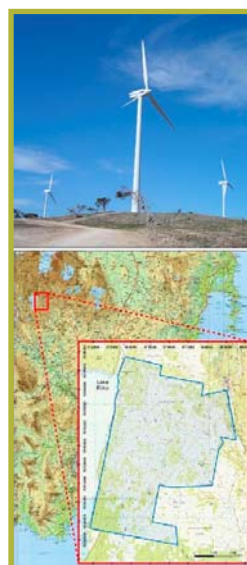
"Do we have those qualities in Tasmania?" Mr Alexander asked his guests. Perhaps his answer will come in the festival's Great Debate when Mr Alexander will square off against Professor David Adams and Dr Polly McGee of UTAS, the CEO of the Tamar Region Natural Resource Management Strategy Reference Group Inc (NRM North), James McKee, and representatives from IBM and Deloitte.

Participants in the open business program will include UTAS' schools of Architecture, Nursing and the Arts, as well as its Hit Lab; Forestry Tasmania's operations at Perth in the northern midlands; Heathcote Furniture; Boags brewery; Josef Chromy and Tamar Ridge vineyards; Veolia; Pivot Maritime; and Launceston Airport.

Further information:

www.5daysofinnovation.com.au

Biggest wind farm proposed near Bothwell



NP Power Pty Ltd, part of the California-based National Power group, has applied for approval for Tasmania's first privately owned wind farm at Cattle Hill, a grazing property north-west of Bothwell. The proposed 4,000ha operation would be almost twice the size of Woolnorth, the biggest project of its kind in the State.

With up to 100 turbines, Cattle Hill would generate enough power for more than 60,000 homes.

NP Power held a series of public meetings in Bothwell before lodging a development application with a supporting development proposal and environmental management plan for the \$500 million project with the Central Highlands Council.

The company had previously lodged a submission to the State Environmental Protection Authority.

NP Power has built wind farms in Western Australia, South Australia and New Zealand, and is confident of winning local, State and federal approval to build at Cattle Hill.

The main objections raised against wind farms around the world relate to visual impact and danger to birdlife.

Although the proposed turbines would tower 125 metres - almost twice the height of the Wrest Point tower - only two residents of the lightly populated area would be able to see them from their properties.

NP Power has consulted Birds Tasmania, whose Chairman, Eric Woehler, told *The Mercury* the proposed site included the territories of three of Tasmania's estimated 350 breeding pairs of wedge-tailed eagles. "Given the past history of wind farms killing eagles in Tasmania, the land-owner, the proponent and Birds Tasmania see eagles as the main issue and it is reasonable to expect some mortalities," Dr Woehler said. "To their credit, the proponents are looking at how they can minimise those deaths. This is not a case of green-washing."

Project Manager Shane Bartel said the project would be designed around two existing eagles' nests and the flying habits of the resident birds that have been determined by a two-year survey. "Unlike at Woolnorth, we are defining the areas of high eagle mortality risk before finalising our turbine layout," he said. "Our mitigation strategy for this is simple - don't put turbines in high-risk areas."

Seventeen eagles have been killed by turbines at the Woolnorth wind farm operated by Roaring 40s Renewable Energy since it was commissioned in 2001. Operating permits for both Woolnorth and nearby Studland Bay allow for eight wedge-tailed eagle deaths a year.

Studies have indicated that there is less conflict between wedge-tailed eagles and white-bellied sea eagles at Cattle Hill than at Woolnorth, where fights between the two territorial species have been blamed for driving eagles into turbine blades.

Mr Bartels said eagle mortality at Cattle Hill was expected to average less than one a year.

Castle Hill is immediately adjacent to high-voltage transmission lines, eliminating the need to build new lines that cost hundreds of thousands of dollars a kilometre. The power would be fed into Transend's Waddamana substation. The Waddamana to Bridgewater transmission line is being upgraded and would cope with any extra load.

Construction of the wind farm is expected to take up to two years, with power to be sold under contract to Aurora or sent across Basslink for sale on the spot market.

Mr Bartel said the project would contribute to Tasmania's energy security, increase traffic on Basslink and potentially strengthen the case for a second undersea cable.

Earlier, Hydro Tasmania welcomed a Federal Government plan to alter the Mandatory Renewable Energy Target by separating small-scale technology (such as solar panels on homes) from large-scale renewable energy projects (such as wind farms). Energy investors expect the move, if it is approved by the Federal Parliament, to add market value to Renewable Energy Certificates which can be traded to off-set the cost of new projects.

A Hydro Tasmania spokesman said a higher certificate price would "remove a significant barrier" to the proposed \$400 million Musselroe wind farm in the north-east, which is being developed by Roaring 40s Renewable Energy, a 50-50 joint venture between Hydro Tasmania and China Light and Power.

NP Power said the RET price wasn't critical to its Cattle Hill project.

Old and new enjoy gourmet glory

By Graeme Phillips



One hundred and fifteen years ago, Jon Healey's great grandfather made his first cheese on his dairy at Pyengana, inland from St Helens in the far north-east of Tasmania.

Three years ago, Rodney Dunn moved from Sydney, leaving the position as Food Editor at *Australian Gourmet Traveller* magazine, to set up The Agrarian Kitchen, a cooking school in a 19th century schoolhouse at Lachlan in the hills of the Derwent Valley.

Last month, both were included in *Australian Traveller* magazine's Top 100 Gourmet Experiences, Pyengana at No. 9 and the Agrarian Kitchen at No. 1.

Four generations of Healeys have produced one of Tasmania's most famous cheeses, Pyengana cheddar. Today, Jon Healey milks 200 Friesians at Pyengana to produce about 35 tonnes annually of his traditional and justly famed cloth-bound cheddar, made by the stirred curd method, the only such cheddar in Tasmania.

Mr Healey says that by hand-tearing and stirring the curd gently in the warm whey he achieves a stronger, more evenly acidic and more open-textured cheese. He still uses his grandfather's cheese vat and the cheeses are matured for up to two years when they best show their distinctive grassy aromas and intense, deeply developed nut and honey flavours. To witness the hand churning, draining and stirring of the curd; and then experience the cutting of a 40kg wheel of his aged cheddar is a truly memorable event.

Set on two hectares, 45 minutes west of Hobart, the Agrarian Kitchen incorporates an extensive vegetable garden, an orchard of 30 different heirloom fruit varieties, a berry patch and herb garden as well as two Jersey cows, Wessex saddleback pigs, Barnevelder chickens and a flock of geese.

When asked 'why Tasmania?' Mr Dunn says simply that nowhere else could he sustainably grow the sorts of things he wanted for the cooking classes or source such a variety of produce from local farmers, fishermen and artisanal producers.

Having the local mayor, who produces a "kick-ass cider" as a neighbour is a bonus.

Since its opening, the kitchen has attracted hundreds of local and interstate participants from around Australia for the opportunity to don gum boots, forage in the garden and surrounding areas for fruit, vegetables, salad greens and seasonal things like wild mushrooms, which they then prepare and cook for lunch.

One recent class involved the picking, processing and cooking of 60 different varieties of heritage tomatoes. Perhaps the most popular days are the Whole Hog classes, two days involving the butchering of a pig and processing the meat into 15 different dishes. Other feature ingredients might include wagyu beef, black truffles, rock lobster, abalone, lamb or wild trout.

As Mr Dunn says, the Agrarian Kitchen is a celebration of sustainable farming and Tasmania's seasonal abundance. More than that, he hopes the experience changes the way people think, cook and eat. "I want people to leave here and think about where their food is coming from. I want them to realise that this is how good it can be," he said.

Other Tasmanian gourmet experiences to make the magazine's top 100 list were the Bruny Island Cheese Company; Hobart's summer Taste of Tasmania; the Tamar Valley's highly acclaimed Daniel Alps at Strathlynn restaurant; and Giles Fisher's Freycinet Marine Farm at Coles Bay.

FOOTNOTE: Sydney columnist Amy Cooper, who writes for the *Sun-Herald* under the title Party Animal, reported: "This week, Tasmania was on the march again. On Tuesday night, at the *Australian Traveller's* 100 Greatest Australian Gourmet Experiences, the nation's most edible gathered to hear who had scored first place. Victoria was quietly confident and Sydney had Quay Restaurant. But they didn't win. The gong went to Tasmania's Agrarian Kitchen, a bucolic cooking school in the Derwent Valley with a kitchen garden, a Tomato Gluttony class and happy animals so free-range they carry their own suitcases.

"Not a joke in earshot as owner Rodney Dunn accepted his ceremonial plate. This was just the start. The next evening, I followed mysterious directions into the bowels of [Sydney's] State Library, where I found the folks from Tourism Tasmania (TT).

They'd colonised the Shakespeare Room at the heart of this venerable old NSW government building for the launch of Lumina - A Winter of Festivals. And out came their artillery. First, the most delicious food I've eaten at a party; succulent lamb chops, salmon and plump scallops. 'It's all from Tasmania,' said the chief executive of TT, Felicia Mariani, without a trace of smugness. Away to the south, you could hear the foodies of Victoria scuttle back into their lunchboxes.

"The next announcement was the launch of Australia's first Shakespeare Festival - the sort of multi-arts extravaganza to which Melbournians always stake automatic claim by virtue of being grey and earnest and having nothing else to do.

"But Hobart is hosting it as part of Lumina, a parade of 2010 festivals covering everything from Broadway to choral music to food and wine to football."

"The Tasmanians completed their assault with a choir and a superlative pinot noir and then they were gone, leaving us all rather humbled. 'Perhaps two heads really are better than one,' one wag muttered as we left. But this time, no one laughed."

- Capitalise on - rather than resist - advances in knowledge, such as GM technologies; and
- See the Tasmanian diaspora as an asset, not a loss, by making better use of expatriate talent.

In a thought-provoking address titled *Tasmania - Quo Vadis?* Mr Eslake focused on the link between education and productivity. He noted that Tasmanians were lagging 20 per cent behind the Australian average in gross product per head. He said more than half of the gap between Tasmania's per capita income and the national average was attributable to lower productivity.

Mr Eslake quoted one of his favourite economic writers, Michael E. Porter, on productivity's importance: "Productivity is the prime determinant in the long run of a nation's standard of living, for it is the root cause of per capita national income. High productivity not only supports high levels of income but allows citizens the option of choosing more leisure instead of working longer hours. It also creates the national income that is taxed to pay for public services which again boosts the standard of living. The capacity to be highly productive also allows a nation's firms to meet stringent social standards which improve the standard of living, such as in health and safety, equal opportunity and environmental impact."

Schools a key challenge, says Eslake



Education reform tops an agenda for Tasmania outlined by respected economic commentator Saul Eslake to Hobart's University of the Third Age in April. Mr Eslake, Program Director - Productivity Growth at

The Grattan Institute in Melbourne made the following recommendations to the in-coming State Government:

- Make a sustained effort to improve the quantity and quality of education;
- Extend and upgrade infrastructure;
- See structural change as an opportunity, not a threat;

After noting that workers' education and skill levels were one of three main determinants of productivity, Mr Eslake said: "Only 55 per cent of Tasmanians aged 25-64 have post-secondary qualifications, compared with 61 per cent of all Australians in that age group. He said comparative lack of formal education showed up in various ways in the economy and could be attributed to far too few Tasmanians completing school - in the form of 12 full years of primary and secondary education.

"Tasmanian retention rates to year 12 [are] the lowest of any part of Australia except the Northern Territory," he said. "It's hard to get past the fact that State high schools finish at Year 10, have 'leavers dinners' etc at that point, suggesting that Year 10 is an exit point from the education system. I know David Bartlett tried very hard to change this - and encountered a good deal of resistance.

I'm not in a position to judge whether Tasmania Tomorrow reforms were the right ones and note that Will Hodgman pledged to reverse them."

The Liberals and Greens both promised during the election campaign to unravel the Tasmania Together reforms and will have the numbers in the new House of Assembly to do so. The battle was entered on 4 May, the first day of the new Parliament.

Mr Eslake cautioned that any new education strategy should not be formulated at the expense of the core objective of keeping more Tasmanian children in school for longer. "Of course it's not only the quantity of education that students receive, but also and arguably more importantly the quality of it. And there is some evidence - I don't want to overstate it, but it is certainly suggestive - that the quality of education in Tasmania isn't as good as it could be.

"NAPLAN results - the basis for the 'MySchool' website - suggest that Year 3 kids in Tasmania are no more or less able than kids in most other parts of the country - the proportion of them at or below the minimum standard on each of the five 'domains' of learning was slightly higher than the national average, but only marginally so. However the NAPLAN results also suggest that the longer Tasmanian kids remain in the education system, the higher the proportion of them who are at or below the minimum standard for at least three of the five 'domains' of learning. Below-average educational attainment is surely one reason why only 26.9 per cent of Tasmanians - 2 per cent below the national average - are employed in highskill occupations," he said.

Mr Eslake urged sustained effort to improve the quantity and quality of Tasmanian education, including:

- Lifting year 12 retention rates to inter-state levels
- Curriculum reform
- Closing the school performance gap with other States
- Challenging entrenched beliefs that higher levels of education aren't necessary

In conclusion, Mr Eslake said: "I don't pretend [to have presented] a comprehensive or complete agenda.

There are no 'magic bullets' or simple solutions to Tasmania's long-standing or complex challenges. Nor is the agenda I've laid out here likely to produce its intended results quickly. Nor do I pretend that it would be easy to implement.

"It calls for many widely-held and long-standing beliefs, assumptions and prejudices on the part of many Tasmanians to be questioned, challenged and ultimately changed. That's a tough call for politicians, whose success often depends on their ability to identify, empathise with and reflect long-standing and widely-held beliefs, assumptions and prejudices on the part of voters. Nevertheless, if not now, when?"

Footnote: Tasmania's moratorium on GMO food production has a marketing imperative. In some important markets, particularly in Europe, if you can't supply a GMO-free certificate, you cannot sell vegetables and fruit.

The Pulp is dead; long live the site

The Burnie community is to lose "the Pulp" - once its heart and soul - but has gained a 170ha waterfront development site the



like of which few cities ever see. PaperlinX, the owner of the 72-year-old pulp-and-paper complex, announced in April that it had failed to attract an acceptable offer for its last Tasmanian paper mill and would close it down by June, putting 145 surviving workers out of their jobs.

Burnie City Council's General Manager, Paul Arnold, said in April that the site should be remediated back to its original condition. He said a greenfields site, possibly with a few buildings, would allow for possible retail and residential uses, depending on rezoning.

PaperlinX's Tasmanian spokesman, Jon Ryder, said Burnie needed a visionary team to work out the best use for the property. He said site rehabilitation was an Environment Protection Authority matter and the company would do what was required by the authority. Mr Ryder said there was no industrial contamination inland from the railway line which cuts through the site.

Paperlinx closed its Wesley Vale mill in March, but had delayed closure of the Burnie facility while negotiating with potential buyers from Asia. A \$40 million employee entitlement liability made a sale difficult.

The pulp and paper mill was established in Burnie in 1938 to take advantage of a breakthrough in the production of paper from eucalypt pulp. Known locally as "the Pulp", the industrial complex drove the town's growth to city status and was a social institution as well as a centre of employment. Gradual decline through lack of investment reached a head in a bitter industrial confrontation in 1992, after which the pulping operation was closed down and paper made from imported pulp.

Arts conference to animate city

A thousand delegates from across Australia are expected in Launceston in August for Regional Arts Australia's seventh national conference - Junction 2010. In keeping with an approach that is "part conference, part festival, all art", the event from August 26 to 29 will include six plenary sessions, 57 break-outs and hands-on activities, including weaving, knitting and walking tours. Delegates will be encouraged to interact in informal *PechaKucha* twilight sessions and an open space forum on the future of regional arts practice.

"Moving through the conference themes of footprints, threads, resilience and momentum, Junction 2010 will explore the impact and importance of the arts to the one in three Australians who live regionally," the organisation's Vice President, Lee Cole, told a launch audience in Launceston in April.

In parallel with the conference, the Junction Arts Festival will stage 44 events; with 38 of them free and many participatory. Artistic Director Ian Pidd promises: "If you take a walk in the city during the event you will certainly come across things to intrigue, stimulate and delight you - up trees, in parks, on street corners."

Registrations are now open with special early-bird offers until June 18. More information: www.junction2010.com.au

Dating confirms 40k of history

Stone tools, bone fragments and other food scraps unearthed in the Jordan Valley in southern Tasmania have been confirmed by interstate testing to be 40,000 years old, making them the earliest evidence of human habitation at such a southerly location. The results add at least 8,000 years to estimates of human occupation of Tasmania and will cause a re-estimation of both the human history of the Australian continent and the dating of the earliest human migrations out of Africa. South American prehistory at a similar latitude extends back only 15,000 years, although the remains of a human settlement at Monte Verde, Chile, have an unconfirmed dating of 33,000 years BP (before present).

The tested materials from Tasmania were dug up by archaeologists checking for possible Aboriginal heritage along the proposed route of a \$176 million highway bypass near Brighton, north of Hobart. To date the findings have been released to the media, but not published in peer-reviewed scientific journals.

The Department of Infrastructure, Energy and Resources has redrawn plans for the project to include a 70m elevated bridge span over the dig site, costing an extra \$10 million to \$15 million. However, the Tasmanian Aboriginal Centre is demanding that the bypass be re-routed.

Survey finds businesses optimistic

Business operators believe the State will achieve positive economic growth over the next 12 months, according to a Survey of Business Expectations released in April by the Tasmanian Chamber of Commerce and Industry. Confidence within the business sector remained in positive territory for a second consecutive quarter - the first time this has been achieved in six years.

An index of general business conditions trended upwards over 12 months, from 44.8 points in March 2009 to 55.0 points in March 2010. Businesses surveyed expected conditions to improve further in the June quarter.

The Treasurer, Michael Aird, welcomed the results, but said: "The recent shut-down of major business operations in the manufacturing and forestry industries and subsequent job losses show that we must continue to be vigilant and work hard to ensure growth in the Tasmanian economy."

Gunns to quit native forests

Gunns Ltd is to sell its 28,000ha native forest estate in Tasmania to reduce debt and ease environmental pressure. It will also hive off its Bell Bay pulp mill project to a new company, Southern Star Corporation. Chairman John Gay will retire from the Gunns Board to head up the new business, which will also assume ownership of Gunns' Tasmanian eucalypt plantations.

Major institutional investors had demanded a change at the top of the forest products company after it announced a 98 per cent half-yearly profit slump in February. Former Liberal Premier, Robin Gray, will also retire from the Gunns Board.

Gunns foreshadowed sales of its non-forestry assets and disclosed that it had received expressions of interest for its Gunns Mitre-10 hardware chain.

\$3m reassessment for Avebury

Chinese-owned MMG will spend about \$3 million on a review of its Avebury nickel mine near Zeehan, which has been on care and maintenance since December 2008 because of depressed global nickel prices. "While the operation is on care and maintenance, we have a great opportunity to re-evaluate it and improve the business plan," MMG Rosebery and Avebury General Manager, John Lamb, said. A reassessment of resources will include drilling 17 holes to an average depth of 500m over eight months.

Arnold wins Gallipoli Art Prize

Queenstown artist Ray Arnold has won the \$20,000 Gallipoli Art Prize - the first Tasmanian to succeed in the annual competition which is open to artists who are citizens of Australia, New Zealand or Turkey. His painting of the cenotaph on Devonport's foreshore is titled *The Dead March Here Today*.

"I was in Devonport for an exhibition and saw the cenotaph in a certain light. It captured my attention with its sharp, precise outlines," Mr Arnold told *The Mercury*. "I drove down early one day and did a study and then spent a month working on the acrylic-on-canvas work back in Queenstown."

UTAS starts work on observatory

The University of Tasmania launched the construction in April of a \$2 million observatory at Bisdee Tier, near Spring Hill. The world-class facility is built around a new one-metre telescope donated by an anonymous American living in Britain. The instrument will replace a much smaller telescope at Mount Canopus that is more than 30 years old. "The telescope is being assembled in Canada, outside Vancouver, and will be shipped to Tasmania and be ready for testing in September," School of Physics lecturer, Dr Andrew Cole said. The observatory is expected to be operational in October.

Grange rules out Port Latta expansion

A \$900 million iron ore pellet plant considered for Port Latta will be built on a greenfields site in Malaysia instead. Grange Resources, owner of the Savage River mine and existing Port Latta pellet plant, said in April that a feasibility study had ruled out a local expansion. "As much as we wanted to, we could not make the numbers stack up," the company's Chief Operating Officer for Tasmania, Wayne Bould, said. The short-term outlook for Grange's Tasmanian operations, which employ 600 people, is "very good".

Hot rocks explorer quits

KUTh Energy, which holds a huge mining exploration lease in Tasmania, has shelved an ambitious geothermal energy project after missing out on Commonwealth funding. Tasmania has received only \$1.8 million of \$185 million distributed nationally for geothermal projects and KUTh wasn't among the beneficiaries. The company has drilled 36 pilot holes to locate "hot rocks" in an exploration tenement that stretches from the mouth of the Tamar River to Hobart. Proving up the apparent geothermal potential of hot granite identified by KUTh would involve drilling 5km-deep holes at a cost of \$35 million, the company said.

Bailey called to national cricket side

Tasmania's cricket captain, George Bailey, was called to New Zealand in March to replace the Australian vice-captain Michael Clarke in the national one-day team. Bailey did not play in the series, but his recognition followed as outstanding season as a batsman, including captaining Tasmania to the national one-day championship.

Adair takes over at the Hydro

Roy Adair, the former CEO of Singapore's largest integrated electricity company, has been appointed CEO of Hydro Tasmania and will begin work on 21 June. Mr Adair, an Economics graduate and qualified accountant, began his career in Britain and had extensive experience in the Australian energy sector before his stint in Singapore. He is a member of the Board of the Centre for Energy and Greenhouse Technologies. Mr Adair replaces Vince Hawksworth, who resigned in March.

Forest scheme business goes down

Launceston-based managed investment scheme operator, Forest Enterprises Australia Ltd, was placed in voluntary administration in April. The company runs a \$72 million timber mill at Bell Bay and owns 72,000ha of plantations in Tasmania, northern NSW and south-east Queensland. It had applied to the Tasmanian Development Board for assistance, but the board declined because of assessed risk and general uncertainty about the future of managed investment schemes.

Global gold for Tassie vodka

The Pure Distillery Company's 666 Pure Tasmanian Vodka has beaten 115 other vodkas from around the world to take a gold medal at the annual World Spirits Competition in San Francisco. The winning tippie is distilled in Burnie using locally grown barley and water from Cape Grim.

Access is feeling uncertain

Access Economics Business Outlook, published in April, shows Tasmanian consumers' confidence is rising, the outlook for employment is positive, population growth solid and building and construction activity strong. But author Chris Richardson adds a caution: "Tasmania did better than many [during the global downturn] thought it felt the downturn anyway and whereas uncertainty is easing in much of the world, it is back on the rise in Tasmania where a hung Parliament means a minority State Government."

New management at Geeveston centre

Forestry Tasmania has taken over the running of the Forest and Heritage Centre in Geeveston which has been staffed for 15 years by local volunteers. "FT is now in the process of finalising the lease with the Huon Valley Council to ensure the long-term future of the centre as a bright and re-invigorated interpretive experience," General Manager Corporate Relations and Tourism, Ken Jeffreys, said.

Award for 'community creation'

Tasmanian developer Brett Torossi has won a national Planning Institute of Australia award for The Green, a proposed large-scale urban development in Launceston's northern suburbs. Ms Torossi and planner Irene Duckett were credited with "a comprehensive rezoning proposal that has community creation at its core, creating a safe, walkable, sustainable community, exceeding normal expectations for a rezoning document."

Population reaches 504,441

Tasmanian's population grew by 1,100 people in the September quarter 2009 to reach a record level of 504,441, according to the Australian Bureau of Statistics.

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