

April 18<sup>th</sup>, 2022

## **PRESIDENT'S REPORT – March 2022**

The last few weeks have been "full on"! A new premier, federal election campaign, courthouse decision, new art exhibitions and so on and three "short weeks" in a row.

We have a new Premier leading the way. Our sincere thanks to Peter Gutwein for a the great work he did during 20 years of parliament and since 2014 as Treasurer and more recently as Premier in one of the most difficult times in our history. We extend our best wishes to incoming Premier Jeremy Rockliff and trust he will govern with the style and dignity he has exhibited as Deputy Premier since 2014.

We will be hosting a dinner for the *2022 State Budget Roadshow* in Burnie on Friday May 27<sup>th</sup> featuring the new Treasurer Michael Ferguson and hopefully he will be joined by Premier Rockliff. Tickets on sale soon - put it in your diary now!

The Federal election is underway and is expected to be very close. We haven't heard a lot from any party on major business incentives so far; but the portable entitlement scheme proposed by the ALP needs further explanation as it has caused major concern with large employer groups that it could drive up costs for businesses and customers. This needs to be fully explained prior to the election.

*intersection art space* has been an outstanding success with over 1500 people viewing the National Portrait Gallery *Living Memory* exhibition. I congratulate Michael Muruste on his outstanding exhibition *Steel & Water* which concludes on April 24<sup>th</sup>. Our final exhibition *NatureNurture* by Launceston artists Anna Van Stralen and Lex Palmer Bull runs from April 29<sup>th</sup> to May 15<sup>th</sup>.

We were successful in getting a halt in proceedings for the courthouse relocation. Premier Gutwein listened to our proposal plus met with Council and the residents' group before announcing a short, targeted EOI for other locations in the CBD. Last week the Treasury department held a briefing session for the EOI which was attended by several owners of CBD land parcels. A major concern is that the government is merely "paying lip service" to the community and going through a process to satisfy community concern over lack of consultation. In fact, the first question asked was regarding who exerts probity over the evaluation process and the answer was not very assuring. We shall be monitoring this situation very closely.

Alternate courthouse locations in the CBD will be tendered within the next 5-6 weeks. One other opportunity presents itself for consideration in this once in a generation build - the chance to incorporate a remand centre in the same complex. Currently prisoners on remand need to be driven to and from Launceston which places extra demands on police and/or prisons staff – essentially two officers are consumed for half a shift for a single transfer; this occurs 2-3 times per week from Devonport and Burnie.

We have recently completed another training course in our *Helping Burnie Work* program and have another in May. Last week we met with senior management from the Department of Education, Skills and Employment who were very impressed with our methods and the results we are achieving. This week we are working on a tender for more training for 2022/23 – there will be changes to employment services from

July 1 with the launch of Workforce Australia by the government. This sees new providers being introduced and more online services for what was previously termed Tier 1 unemployed thereby freeing up the providers to work with longer term unemployed.

Our breakfast networking sessions continue to attract good numbers, with almost 40 attending last week's presentation on *Advance West North West* by Craig Brakey and Alex Simpson. Alex spoke passionately of the constant delays to the massive \$6B Whaleback Ridge energy park which will create thousands of jobs in construction and have long term benefits for Tasmania. The project comprises over 400 wind turbines creating energy to manufacture hydrogen. I cannot understand why this project faces so many bureaucratic roadblocks.

Next week we have Gavin Pearce MP speaking on "Looking at local business through a domestic and international lens" and on May 11 Bel Lynch from Burnie City Council joins us to discuss shaping of the forthcoming Council budget; this is your chance to have input to the process – I can't recall this happening before so welcome this positive step of community consultation.

COVID continues to prevail in the state and is impacting workforce in most industries as the close contact rule has been keeping workers from their jobs. China is being severely impacted by COVID restrictions including city wide lockdowns and this will continue to impact supply chains as factories are hit by worker shortages.

I will be holding our April General Meeting at the RSL Club at 6pm this Wednesday 20/4 and hope you are able to join us.

Best regards



**Ian Jones** – President

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