

October 14th, 2022

PRESIDENT'S REPORT – October 2022

Another quarter hurtled by!

A highlight of the last few weeks was the Council Election Candidates Forum we held on October 5th at the Burnie Arts & Function Centre. We had over 140 people attend and 11 of the 14 candidates were in attendance plus two sent in videos of their campaign statements. We did a livestream of the event and so far, we have had over 3000 views - anyone who wants to see the broadcast it is on the Business Northwest Facebook page. Overall, it was the best attended forum in the region which shows there is a high level of interest in our election.

I thought all the candidates presented well and was impressed with the new candidates as I know it's a lot of pressure for them to step up to address such a big crowd. Our mayoral candidates presented their vision for the next four years and all mentioned the Coastal Pathway as being vital to the city, albeit there is no funding at this time for the eastern end of it.

The Waratah Wynyard forum was well also attended and well done to Nick Higgins and his team for organising it. Voting closes on October 25th at 2pm. As it is compulsory to vote for the first time in a council election expect some surprises!

Our Breakfast Networking Sessions recommenced albeit with a false start for the first one due to some unforeseen issues at the venue which got fixed and we hosted Lauren Kerrison from TCCI speaking on the WHS services that she can provide to help members through the safety issues in the workplace. On the 26th we have Jarred Ranson from *Enterprise* speaking on the business incubator planned for the new Makers centre at West Park.

After my 7BU broadcast last week, I was asked about other boards/committees on which I represent BNW.

One is on the Board Committee of *West North West Working* which is the regional jobs hub (state government funded via *Burnie Works*). Each month we meet in a different area of the region and last week we convened on King Island to discuss the relevant workforce issues over there. It was a great trip; we visited the Group 6 Metals scheelite mine and heard of the progress there. It's an exciting project that should see tungsten production early next year. The mine will providing long term permanent employment opportunities for locals and others prepared to relocate to the island. Overall, they need about 60 employees and are busy renovating housing to accommodate the workforce. Go to www.g6m.com.au for more info.

We visited several entrepreneurial small businesses and saw them making the absolute best of products the island has to offer. That was my first trip to KI and I was very impressed with the business community which has a real can-do attitude and is very resourceful as most remote communities need to be.

Small businesses on KI find it difficult to recruit workers as the cost of living is a lot higher than on mainland Tasmania and as many go off island for education they tend not to return until later in life. It is not dissimilar to our region but is harder to address there.

Additionally, I am our representative on the *Cradle Coast Authority's* Regional Economic Development Steering Group, *BIG* committee, *TasNetwork's* North West Transmission Development Stakeholder Liaison Group, *Burnie Works'* Youth Pathway Advisory Group and the recently formed *Burnie City Council's* Burnie City Rejuvenation Reference Group. So, we are well represented!

The recent Burnie Show was a tremendous success and I congratulate The Burnie Agricultural & Pastoral Society on a great event and look forward to it becoming a true regional event in coming years. Like in 2019 they were fortunate to have great weather – thank goodness it wasn't two weeks later!

Our heart goes out to those people and businesses affected by floodwaters in the region – Burnie/Wynyard seems to have not suffered severe damage despite massive rainfall in Ridgely (186ml) and other areas south of Burnie.

Our friends at Emu Valley Rhododendron Gardens are having their Spring Festival opening at 10am this Saturday so get along and support this iconic attraction.

I hope you can join us at the meeting this Wednesday October 19th and possibly stay on for a meal with other members.

Best regards



Ian Jones – President

