

## PRESIDENT'S REPORT – 17<sup>th</sup> January 2023

Happy New Year!

The festive season is disappearing in the rear-view mirror as we venture forth into 2023. More interest rate rises are on the near horizon, and we will battle inflation for the next six months at least so I do not expect the year to be easy for many of our members. If you experience financial difficulties contact us to see if we can help.

Driving down Mount St to the office early today I was disappointed to see the stern of the *Noordam* disappearing into the mist of Bass Strait. I believe this is the fourth ship that has not berthed in the current season. Weather is the primary reason and there isn't much we can do about that! I hope the rest of the season has better conditions. Usually we get 2-3 cancellations in a season which represents around 8% - so far this season we are running close to 30% which means that 6700 passengers didn't arrive.

This has a big impact on some of our tourism operators. Burnie Council has created a welcoming space at Civic Plaza, and this seems to be working well. Well done to the councillors that give their time to greet our visitors. Speaking with US visitors last week they had a great time at the EVRG and the Penguin Observation Centre.

Our Breakfast Networking Sessions will commence again February 1<sup>st</sup> and I am busy organising speakers for the next six months. If you have suggestions or a visitor coming that would be an interesting speaker, please let me know.

Yesterday, Minister for Veteran's Affairs Matt Keogh visited Burnie and announced \$2.2m funding for the establishment of a Veteran Wellness Centre for the region. This is great news for our veteran community and was helped along by the Veterans Board setting up *The Veteran Hub* in City Square arcade behind Wilkinson's Pharmacy. The hub is part of our Renew Burnie program supported by Burnie Council and shows the power of the program.

Our General Meeting is at the Burnie RSL Club tomorrow evening Jan 18<sup>th</sup> at 6pm.

Best regards



**Ian Jones** – President

