

PRESIDENT'S REPORT – February 2023

Finally, business activity has resumed - it seems like the country slows down from Melbourne Cup Day to Australia Day! A casualty of this phenomenon was our January meeting which failed to attract a quorum - the Executive has decided to not hold January meetings in future (much like the Reserve Bank!).

The streets of Burnie have been busy with a lot of cruise ship activity in the last week – fortunately the easterly winds have not been blowing as much lately so we have had no cancellations.

Whilst the cruise ship visitors are good for some retailers and hospitality operators others are feeling the pinch of less money in the local economy and the recent interest rate hike and others forecast for coming months will mean a tightening up like we haven't seen for a long time.

Our first breakfast featured Justin McErlain speaking on the cruise ship season and the success of the *DiscoverBurnie* app (currently around 40,000 downloads). He was supported by Gerald Heathcote who gave us an overview of the proposed Wilson St site for the new courthouse. Our Facebook polling was 89% in favour of that site and we indicated that in our submission to the Justice Department. Let's hope the government gets on with the site selection and makes a decision very soon.

This week's breakfast features Martin Poole from Ark Energy talking to us about the two windfarms Ark is building up behind Burnie at Hellyer and Guilford. It is developing 750MW capacity from over 120 turbines in the two locations – I reckon they must be investing close to a billion dollars overall so well worth listening to.

On March 1st we will be having an overview (including a Virtual Reality [VR] tour) of the Table Cape lightshow project as Justin and Cyndia show us some of the great work they have done to create an iconic presentation to showcase one of the prominent locations in the region.

At breakfast on March 15th Janie Finlay, Anita Dow and Shane Broad from the ALP will be meeting with us and on the 29th BCC GM Simon Overland will be discussing the upcoming strategic plan for Burnie and how you can be involved in shaping the future of our city.

Two weeks ago, members of our Executive met with the Federal Minister for Small Business Julie Collins and had the opportunity to speak to the Minister regarding small business in the region. She was very keen to know how small businesses were faring and what the government could do to better support them. Energy prices and workforce issues seem to be the main things that get raised on her visits to the regions and we were no different. Inflation and supply chain issues

are also affecting our businesses. Minister Collins is also the Minister for Housing so we discussed the paucity of housing options for the workers we will need for our large infrastructure projects.

She did say the federal government will be building 30,000 affordable houses and is working with the state government to assist it in its goal of 10,000 houses in the next ten years. If they can do it, then that will be a good start. I participated in a discussion last week regarding housing and presented some disruptive technologies we could use to address the problem.

One was 3D printing of house walls using concrete based products - it reduces labour by 80% and production time by 70%. You only need a few workers and a 3D printing boom connected to a fleet of cement trucks - it's amazing tech and its being [used in Melbourne already](#).

We need to change our mindset about how we live in housing and how we build faster, smarter and more sustainably.

I hope to see you at a meeting or breakfast soon!

Best regards



Ian Jones – President

