

PRESIDENT'S REPORT – 15th APRIL 2026

We are all suffering from the effects of the war in the Middle East – despite a cease fire being declared I feel we are a long way from getting back to normality. The high cost of fuels (especially diesel) will have a huge impact on end prices as everything needs to be delivered; and this has a double impact on fresh food as it needs diesel to be planted and harvested, so standby for inflation rises and subsequent Reserve Bank interest rate increases over the remainder of 2026.

We have state and federal budgets being brought down in May, and I expect a very tight state budget as we struggle to control our burgeoning debt.



Our next breakfast is on **Thursday** April 16th and features Philip Reid from Cradle Coast Authority. Phil is the new CEO, and he will be talking about what the Cradle Coast Authority is undertaking at the moment and what they have planned for the future. He has settled in well and is quite excited at the potential of the region and amazed at the diversity of our economy.

Phil's topic is *Regional Priorities on the Cradle Coast – Economic Enablers and Drivers*.

Phil is an environmental scientist – he worked as Environmental Advisor at the coal export terminal in Newcastle for 10 years and then went to Norfolk Island for seven years and worked for a similar organisation to the Cradle Coast Authority in regional development and critical natural resource management, so he has good background for this role.



We have another breakfast on Thursday May 21st. We have Matthew Brownlie from Barrington Treasury Services speaking on "*What Is Treasury and Risk Management?*". Matthew is from Sydney, although he is Tasmanian by birth. It may sound like a complex high finance subject, but it is very relevant to small and medium sized businesses especially those who export and especially in these turbulent times as exchange rates are spinning around with great volatility. I'll have more on that next month.

I attended the Tasmanian Tourism Update yesterday. Tourism has done well in the last twelve months albeit slowing down a bit lately due to the fuel issue. For the summer season, visitor numbers were up by 4.3% and the \$1.B spend was up by 2.3% - for the year Tasmania had 1.4m visitors for \$3.725B.



Future focus is on the Asian market albeit the largest number of visitors are from N America. The China market has not recovered well after COVID, running at around 50% of pre-COVID numbers.

The new strategy focuses on the use of AI, promoting breadth of experience, major events and “distinctive luxury” and will be further developed by the regional tourism conference in May. The Australian Tourism Export Conference is in Hobart in May and that will bring high level media and industry players together and is a great forum to promote Tasmania.

We have Council elections in October this year and Business Northwest will be conducting a candidates’ forum at Burnie Arts just prior to the commencement of voting. We have done this for the last two council elections and will provide more details when the TEC announces the election dates.











In the current turbulent times, please remember that we are here to provide help and assistance to our members and have a range of support services we can call on to assist you.

I hope to see you at one of our events very soon.

Best regards



Ian Jones – President

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