



LAUNCESTON
CHAMBER of COMMERCE
The Voice of Business

President's Report

Annual General Meeting – Wednesday 12 October 2016

Collaboration and Growth was the theme of the 2015 Business Excellence Awards and an appropriate summary of the Chamber's work over the last 12 months.

2015-2016 was a year in which the Chamber worked closely with its members and key stakeholders in the region to strengthen our focus on working together in order to bring about sustainable economic development. While our region is small with a population of only 120,000, the region is well known for its achievements in agri-business, advanced manufacturing and tourism. The challenge was and continues to be to build on these pillars of economic strength.

To this end, the Chamber focussed on several key projects including securing support and funding for the University of Tasmania's Northern Transformation Project, reforming Northern Tasmania Development, pursuing the legislative reforms to achieve the outcomes envisaged by the inner city living case study and continuing the partnership with the Beacon Foundation. These projects exemplify the Chamber's approach to its work. First, work with members to identify issues and respond to opportunities. Second, work with stakeholders such as government and the university to achieve outcomes that strengthen the region; and third, participate in and support activities that enhance the region's capacity and capability to be a strong, vibrant economy.

While much of the Chamber's work may not have been visible to members, the Chamber advocated for member's interests through regular representation to all levels of government, neighbouring chambers of commerce and businesses on a diverse range of issues including energy security, Launceston CBD and legislative reforms to enable inner city living developments. More visible activities included our regular member networking events such as the annual Premier's cocktail party and other occasions in which businesses showcased their achievements and winning ideas. Our members confirmed that they value these opportunities to catch up with their colleagues in a social setting and hear the latest information. The Chamber is grateful for the support of our platinum and gold members and event sponsors that enable these functions to take place.

During the year, the Chamber was also able to recognise the contribution of two important members of our business community. John Pitt was inducted into the Hall of Fame at the Business Excellence Awards. John Pitt retired in September 2015 as the long-serving Managing Director for Pitt & Sherry, a company started by his late father Brian, and business partner Clive Sherry 50 years ago in Devonport. Over more than 30 years John's drive and leadership took Pitt & Sherry from a small northern Tasmanian civil engineering consultancy to a multi-faceted group operating across the Eastern States of Australia, and internationally. As well as the business leadership, John has contributed significantly to many industry forums and has been a trusted point of reference to government and industry associations. John is a passionate advocate for sustainable thinking, and has been instrumental in developing Pitt & Sherry in this direction. Prior to John's retirement Pitt & Sherry won the 2015 Financial Review Client Choice Award for Best Professional Services Firm under \$50 million revenue. John has been a major contributor to our region.

The Chamber also awarded a rare Life membership award to Gordon Humphreys. The criteria to be eligible as a Life Member is not only being a significant business contributor to Launceston and the Region but also providing outstanding service to the Chamber and its vision and purposes. Gordon Humphreys has been involved in business in this community since 1967 including membership of the Chamber Board and President for a two year term during 1986 and 1987. Gordon has been a constant source of support and feedback to the Chamber Executive and Executive Officer over all those years. He continues to put the interests of our business community to the fore and ensures that Chamber knows where it should focus.

Gordon has served on an extensive range of Boards across a range of sectors including Chairman of the Motor Accident Insurance Board (MAIB) from 1982 to 2010, Chairman of the Metropolitan Transport Trust – now Metro Tasmania from 1992 to 1998 and Member of the Tasmanian State Council of the Taxation Institute of Australia.

During the year, the Chamber farewelled Maree Tetlow, who served as the Chamber' Executive Officer for almost three years. Maree's calm professionalism and excellent communication skills were valuable assets to the Chamber and instrumental in the Chamber's successes. Maree's departure triggered an extensive and exhaustive recruitment process with the resulting appointment of Jan Davis to the role in June. While Jan is well known in the north for her advocacy in the agricultural sector, we look forward to the application of those skills to achieve outcomes for other sectors represented by the Chamber.

The capacity of the Chamber to get things done is only possible because of the commitment of its staff and the volunteer effort of the directors. I extend my thanks to the staff: Maree Tetlow, Ciska Hermann, Ellen French, Jo Archer and Jan Davis and to my fellow directors: Richard Ireland, John Kirwan, Honni Pitt, Janine Healey, Steve Bishop, Bede Clifton, Tim Gardner, Tim Holder, Tim Lack and Andrew Pitt for their efforts.

Finally, I would like to thank the Chamber's members for your continued support. Your membership strengthens the capacity of the Chamber to be a strong, articulate voice for the region that is focussed on getting things done and continuing to build a region in which people choose to live, work and invest. I know you share a passion for northern Tasmania. You see its potential, imagine a better future and work hard to make things happen for your businesses and organisations, your community, our region and our island State. Thank you.

Donna Bain