



LAUNCESTON
CHAMBER of COMMERCE

The Voice of Business

Launceston Chamber of Commerce **Annual Report 2017**

It's my pleasure to present the 168th annual report of the Launceston Chamber of Commerce. This board, from the outset has sought to approach 2017 with a focus on action and outcomes.

The Launceston Chamber of Commerce this year determined to join the Chamber Alliance facilitated by the TCCI. This provides members access to additional services including free industrial advice and discounts to TCCI initiated activity, negating the need to be a TCCI member. Before entering into the alliance, The Launceston Chamber of Commerce and TCCI developed clear boundaries on how the relationship will deliver greater member value and generally strengthen the business chamber movement in Tasmania.

Throughout 2016, the Chamber lobbied to ensure a revitalised regional economic development agency was relaunched from the defunct NTD. NTDC's principle objective is to develop and implement a dynamic future focused regional economic plan and to coordinate the broader government sector for the economic good of the region. Business understands the region will only reach its full potential with a unifying vision. It was gratifying in late 2016 to see NTDC form, thanks to the support of seven of the eight local municipal councils. The formation of a skills based board and lead by the Launceston Chamber of Commerce Hall of Fame member, Mr John Pitt, was equally pleasing. NTDC and the Chamber work closely together.

The Chamber has been keenly involved in the Launceston City Deal process. This is a magnificent collaboration between the City of Launceston, the Tasmanian State Government, the Federal Government and the University of Tasmania. The Chamber is pleased to be a party to the City Deal agreement which features a \$260M investment in the Inveresk Campus, the City Heart Project, the Northern Suburbs redevelopment and other projects. City Deal will reorientate the economic trajectory of Launceston and the greater north. The power of coordination and collaboration cannot be over emphasised. The Chamber is interested in every element of City Deal as it unfolds over the next five years.

Education is pivotal to our future and is a priority focus at the Chamber. Our Education Committee lead by Adam Mostogal and our Utas Committee, lead by John Kirwan have helped inform our views. We urge the government to continue to act boldly in this area of policy reform. Better education outcomes are essential to our long run prosperity and competitiveness. Looking ahead, the Chamber hopes to collaborate even more with Utas, assisting them strengthen their research capability and deepening their economic and educational engagement in Launceston.

The Chamber has initiated a partnership with the State Government to ensure the large UTas Inveresk construction project remains accessible to as many local businesses as possible. The State has provided the Chamber a grant to employ an Industry Participation Officer. The Utas Inveresk build is the biggest capital project in the history of the city. The economic flow on will exceed \$1.1b. The Chamber expects to see much of that investment retained within the Northern economy.

In 2015, the Chamber proposed that the State Government consider relocating the Southern Ship Lift business to Bell Bay. Minister Rene Hidding announced earlier this year that a comprehensive study will be undertaken to examine the business case for a potential relocation and to explore the opportunity for growth.



The Chamber understands the importance of our magnificent City being presented in the best possible light. To this end, the Chamber has lobbied the State to ensure our key arterial roads be maintained to a standard befitting the beauty and pride of our city. We are pleased the government has agreed to our request and is now maintaining our key access routes to a significantly higher standard, especially given our burgeoning visitor economy.

The Chamber, with the Coordinator General has successfully lobbied for Council to participate in a very innovative project with Telstra and the State Government. This will modernise planning for the Council by using big data and state of the art 3D modelling. Launceston will be the first city in Australia to use this advanced data and modelling approach to planning.

Chamber members continue to highly value our networking events. The Chamber once again has run a large number and variety of events including business briefings and invitation events including meetings with Andy Penn, CEO of Telstra and Shane Elliot, CEO ANZ Bank. The Chamber is grateful to the Premier, Treasurer and Ministers in making themselves available on a regular basis, along with all members of the Tasmanian Parliament. We have clearly enjoyed a productive and deepening relationship with the University of Tasmania and have valued our regular engagements with the Vice Chancellor. We wish Professor Rathjen well as he returns to South Australia and we sincerely thank him for his belief and vision for Utas in Launceston.

The Business Excellence Awards were once again an outstanding success. Past President, Donna Bain welcomed Mr Lloyd Whish-Wilson into the Hall of Fame. Lloyd was the Chamber President between 2000-2002 and a former Examiner CEO. This Hall of Fame accolade recognises members of the Launceston business community, who through their activities personally and via the Chamber have made a long term positive impact on Launceston and the greater north. The Chamber owes Jo Archer a huge debt of thanks for her outstanding and ongoing leadership in organising Launceston's most iconic business event. We also acknowledge the involvement of all entrants and the work of judges and suppliers, all whom so valuably assist.

We farewelled two directors from our board. We are grateful to Honni Pitt from B&E, who acted very diligently as our Treasurer. We are also grateful to Steve Bishop from Bishop Solicitors, for his many years of service to the Chamber Board. We were pleased to welcome onto the Chamber board Steve Brown from City Mission and Paul Hodgen from Launceston Airport.

Financially, we made a small operating loss of just under \$19,000. The Chamber has adequate reserves to offset this loss. Our budget for 2017/18 sees the Chamber once again return to surplus.

Australia's oldest business Chamber remains energetic, vibrant and engaged in the issues affecting Launceston businesses today. We remain strong advocates for less public sector spending, lower business taxes and a reduction in, often, wasteful business compliance costs. We support market principles and the free flow of capital. We do so without political bias, fear or favour.

Business is not just the heart of our economy, it is the economy. The Chamber's work is more vital than ever in our changing political and digitally disrupted world. We will always be the voice of CEO's, executives, owners and entrepreneurs and never back away from our responsibility to represent the commercial "for profit" interest. Over the past year, we have intentionally increased our media engagement and sought to publically speak on more issues within shorter timeframes, ensuring business is clearly influencing important decisions and helping sway public opinion. We value our local media relationships.



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Looking ahead, the Chamber appreciates the importance of visionary and incisive leadership. The Chamber believes we must focus our civic efforts in becoming *one of the great regional cities of the world*. This exciting aspiration directs us to consolidate our place in a borderless world and to be a city that is connected, liveable, educated, competitive, entrepreneurial, healthy and inclusive. We must understand and build upon our competitive strengths, utilise our natural and inherited advantage and build our social capital, fully maximising the potential of our thoroughly magnificent city and people.

In conclusion, I must thank immediate Past President Donna Bain for her tireless work last year. Also, to acknowledge the contribution of Jan Davis through her tenure with the Chamber and Genevieve Cooley for her support. We also welcome Neil Grose as our new EO.

I also acknowledge the excellent work and from our board over the past year and thank them for their support. Janine Healey, our Treasurer and former President, is the other Director I'd like to especially recognise for her undoubted loyalty and commitment to the work of the Launceston Chamber of Commerce and thank her for it.

Finally, to our members, I thank you for your support of this, Australia's oldest business Chamber of Commerce.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Tim Holder', with a small flourish at the end.

Tim Holder
President.