



This Budget is a pivotal opportunity to set Tasmania on a bold, strategic path. The Launceston Chamber of Commerce urges government at all levels to provide the vision, planning, and partnerships that allow business to do what it does best: generate jobs, investment, and lasting economic prosperity. When business thrives, Tasmania thrives.

While Tasmania’s economy continues to show resilience—retail turnover is up 4.8%, and wage growth leads the nation—the cost base for business is rising unsustainably. Insurance, energy, and especially freight costs are climbing. These aren’t cyclical pressures. They’re structural issues requiring deliberate, long-term responses.

Private investment remains below 20% of Tasmania’s Gross State Product. To build a sustainable economy, we must shift that to at least 25%. High-productivity sectors like advanced manufacturing—already contributing \$2.2 billion annually and employing 15,000 Tasmanians—deserve targeted support.

Government has a critical role: to create the right investment environment, to reduce red tape, and to back strategic enablers of long-term demand generation.

**Freight:** Tasmania’s ability to compete depends on how well we move goods, people, and data. As an island economy, every delay or inefficiency has compounding effects. The Chamber strongly supports:

- A comprehensive review and reform of the Tasmanian Freight Equalisation Scheme (TFES). Current settings are too complex and out of step with modern logistics needs. We need a fairer, simpler, and more inclusive scheme—with flat-rate subsidies, streamlined digital claims, and expanded eligibility for small exporters and time-sensitive goods.
- We also seek investment in freight consolidation hubs, digital logistics infrastructure, and low-emissions transport incentives.
- Finally, we need accelerated support for projects like the Launceston Airport Freight & Logistics Hub.

Every dollar invested in freight productivity returns dividends for our exporters, our supply chains, and our economic sovereignty.

**Conferencing:** Conferencing is one of Northern Tasmania’s most compelling demand and revenue generation opportunities. The Launceston Conference Centre Demand Study—funded by the state government—confirmed the untapped potential which is:

- \$199 million in direct conference expenditure in Tasmania each year
- Delegates spending \$1,200–\$1,400 per day—three times more than leisure tourists
- 89% of business event delegates returning for leisure travel
- 20% travelling beyond the host city, spreading economic benefit regionally

The Chamber’s priority is to progress a flexible, 1,000-delegate, multi-purpose venue—capable of doubling Launceston’s business events capacity.

### **We are calling for:**

Immediate funding and delivery for a full feasibility study to determine optimal site location, commercial model, infrastructure needs, and ROI

- A tripartite commitment from State, Federal and Local Government to work with private investors and co-develop the project
- Recognition of conferencing as essential economic infrastructure, not a cultural extra
- A conference center will position Launceston as a national destination for major events.

Digital capability is core business infrastructure. Too many regional areas still operate with inadequate broadband and patchy mobile coverage. The Chamber supports strategic investment in digital infrastructure, including backing for Marinus Link and subsea data cable development to boost capacity and ensure reliability.

Attracting and retaining talent depends on how liveable we are. Tasmania’s population growth is slowing. Investments in housing, health, education and cultural assets are critical to workforce attraction and business confidence. Liveability isn’t a side issue—it’s central to economic development.

Now is the time for leadership that is strategic, courageous, and collaborative. The Chamber acknowledges the government’s willingness to engage, and we stand ready to continue working together—alongside our regional councils, federal colleagues, and industry partners.

Tasmania needs decisions today that prepare us for the next 10–20 years—not just the next political cycle.

**A Call to Action** – Northern Tasmania is ready to lead. But we need the right tools: reformed freight systems, modern conferencing infrastructure, digital readiness, and the foundations of liveability. We ask the Tasmanian Government to match the energy and ambition of our business community. Let’s move from studies to shovels. From vision to execution.

With shared purpose and smart investment, we can unlock the next chapter of growth for Launceston and Tasmania.