



LAUNCESTON
CHAMBER of COMMERCE
The Voice of Business

Launceston Chamber of Commerce **Annual Report Financial Year 2019**

Once again, it's my privilege to report on behalf of my board the activity of the Launceston Chamber of Commerce for financial year 2019 both to our members and broader stakeholders. It is pleasing to report an operating surplus for 2019 of \$42,000, representing a turnaround of \$67,000 over the past financial year. After several challenging years, we are now well and truly back on track financially.

This financial result is thanks to the strong ongoing support from our members, but also the success of our various events including the Business Excellence Awards. The 2018 BEA achieved a record level of participation, attendance and profit. Several grants, some not yet brought to account, assisted operations as well as providing valuable practical outcomes.

In addition to a strong financial result, the Chamber has been busy working on and responding to important economic issues impacting Launceston and Northern Tasmania. As Australia's oldest and Tasmania's most vocal Chamber of Commerce, we have significantly contributed to advancing community debate. Highlights include:

- **Building Heights** – reoriented the debate from building height to design excellence.
- **Regional Collaboration** – The business understands the power of collaboration. Accordingly, the Chamber instigated through NTDC and RDA a process that will deliver a framework where the city and region work together effectively for the common good.
- **Population Strategy** – advocated for and participated in a first draft population strategy. Whilst more work is needed, the Chamber is pleased work has commenced as there will be a predicted skills shortage throughout Tasmania which will become more acute in 2028.
- **Tamar River** – Commenced a baseline analysis on the management arrangements of the Tamar Estuary and catchment.

- **The Chamber has participated in:**
 - Launceston Branding, initiated by the City of Launceston
 - Second Road economic activation, initiated by the State Government
 - City Deal governance and arrangements, initiated by the Federal Government
 - Federal Election lobbying
 - CBD retail audit, initiated by the City of Launceston

- **Health Industry** – under the leadership of Chamber Director, John Kierwan and in cooperation with NTDC, the Chamber has secured government funding to undertake a supply chain analysis into the local health system, which we believe to be an Australian first.

- **Reorientation of the civic economic narrative** – The Chamber understands the importance of economic development and also, the complexity of economic development theory. We look forward to continuing to support the development of an appropriately ambitious Regional Economic Plan.

The Chamber again conducted the 2018 Business Excellence awards in October of that year. We enjoyed a record number of entries with over 100 businesses entering. The highlight of the evening was welcoming Mr Ray Mostogl into our Hall of Fame in recognition of his many years of service to the Chamber and our business community more generally. Kolmark was also judged to be the business of the year, demonstrating their commitment to business excellence and the entrepreneurial spirit.

The Chamber recently celebrated 170 years of continuous operation. The Chamber, far from slowing, has run an ambitious external agenda.

Internally, we have further reformed our internal processes that underpin efficient operations. Our committees have worked hard to assist the board and I'd like to recognise and record my thanks to the committee Chairs.

The board, as part of our governance deliberations determined to update our strategic plan. With thanks to SRA, the Chamber formally embraced an important aspiration for the city, that is, to see Launceston *"become one of the great regional cities of the world"*. It's acknowledged we have much to do, but equally, the Chamber acknowledges we are starting from a high base. For Launceston and Launcestonians to be at our collective best, we simply could not settle for anything less than world class aspirations.

One of the most important relationships the Chamber has is with the City of Launceston. We thank General Manager Michael Stretton for his support and willingness to work closely with the Chamber. We wish Council well as they undertake their important restructuring, currently underway.

The Chamber has also worked closely with NTDC, the region's principle economic development agency. The Chamber recognises the importance of a strong and ambitious economic plan and acknowledges the hard work of NTDC over the past three years. Our city and region has some significant economic challenges that require radical, not incremental attention. This includes our lower rate of employment participation, lower than average household income, population challenges, improving educational outcomes, business investment and the growing awareness that Launceston must act competitively and urgently in our place-making and other capital attraction and population growth programs.

At the last Chamber elections, we welcomed Bianca Walsh and Craig Perkins onto the board, replacing long serving directors Tim Lack and Richard Ireland. Bianca, as a young entrepreneur, brings energy, youthfulness and tourism sector insights. Craig has mostly worked in the public sector and recently served as Mayor of Meander Valley. After the 2019 AGM we will farewell two directors, Donna Bain who has served six years on the board, including a term as president, and Paul Hodgen, who has served on the board since 2016. Both Donna and Paul will be missed from the Chamber board as they both made invaluable contributions to the affairs and policy positions of the Chamber.

I thank all directors, past and present for their tireless contribution to the Chamber. We have been a purposeful, progressive and cohesive board.

The Launceston Chamber of Commerce is clearly making an impact and is seen as an organisation of choice in which members wish to serve on our board. At this most recent election, a strong number of nominees have sought election to the board. With four vacancies, we have attracted seven members seeking to fill those four positions. The board and Chamber is stronger with such an engaged membership.

I want to personally thank Andrew Pitt and Kate Daly as Vice Presidents for their support. They have been diligent and immensely helpful in supporting Neil and myself exercising our respective duties. Equally important has been the support, professionalism and tireless work of Neil Grose, our Executive Officer. The Chamber is indeed fortunate to have someone of Neil's calibre leading our day to day activities. I extend our sincere thanks to Neil and look forward to working with him in the years ahead.

Finally, it's been a pleasure to lead and represent the Chamber over the past three years. As I conclude my tenure as President, I'd like to thank the board for their confidence, support

and active engagement. I feel confident the Chamber today is even more active, stronger and influential in our civic discourse.

Once again, without the support of our members, the Chamber could not exist. I extend my sincere and unbridled thanks for your support and interest. As we sign off on 2019, your board looks forward to working even harder to be the voice of business and to see Launceston become one of the great regional cities of the world in 2020. I wish the Chamber every success in the years ahead.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Tim Holder", followed by a period. The signature is stylized and cursive.

Tim Holder
President