



LAUNCESTON
CHAMBER of COMMERCE
The Voice of Business

Launceston Chamber of Commerce

Annual Report 2018

It is my pleasure to again deliver to members the annual report for the Launceston Chamber of Commerce for 2018.

Australia's oldest and Tasmania's most influential business Chamber, the Launceston Chamber of Commerce has successfully navigated through what has been a challenging year. 2018 has been accentuated by transition and change.

In September 2017, we appointed Neil Grose as Executive Officer. Neil has a background in small business, publishing and local government. Neil's impact has been immediate. The board is pleased with and appreciative of the significant and positive contribution Neil has made in his first year.

As outlined in the Treasurer's Report, the operating performance of the Chamber has been below budget. This is mostly due to abnormal restructuring costs and lower than expected renewals in July to October 2017. The Chamber anticipates a solid surplus for the 2019 financial year.

In the best tradition of the Chamber, each and every board member has been generous in providing time and expertise to Chamber business. Board committee activity has been split effectively two ways. Firstly, the board focuses on the day to day efficient running of the Chamber, focusing on sustainability, risk, operations and good governance. The second and external focus, is best described as the economic competitiveness and productivity of Launceston.

The Infrastructure and Economic Development Committee was replaced with the Committee for City and Regional Competitiveness, chaired by the Chamber's President and open for all directors to participate. As the name suggests the Committee for City and Regional Competitiveness focuses attention on topics such as competitive economic conditions ranging from place making, education challenges, exports, productivity, population growth and infrastructure. This committee has addressed important matters ranging from local government amalgamation, TasWater, the Office of the Coordinator General, City Deal, the state election, the UTas Launceston transformation and the Qantas Pilot Training Academy bid and much more. The Chamber is currently leading critical civic discussions with respect to the Davies Report which provides recommendations on future building heights.

The Community and Health Industry Committee (CHIC) was formed to consider the 'business of health'. The CHIC is chaired by John Kirwan. This committee recognises and seeks to amplify the significant commercial opportunities that exist from the growing health industry. In addition to several Chamber board members, the CHIC has co-opted 12 senior industry executives from across the state. This Committee is a collaboration with NTDC. NTDC has identified health as a critical economic pillar or cluster that has significant wealth generation potential for the region, in addition to delivering health outcomes.



The CHIC agenda has included matters such as:

- Maximising the opportunities presented by the construction of a new private hospital adjacent to the Launceston General Hospital
- Sustainable private and public community and health services and associated infrastructure
- Encouraging partnerships and cooperation to achieve efficiencies, economies of scale and cooperation in developing new business and social enterprise opportunities, including clusters or collaborative business models
- Attracting and retaining a skilled workforce, with an emphasis on the needs of local employers and current and prospective staff
- Maximising the benefits of the UTas northern transformation and the City Deal projects including attracting students and priority research projects

The work of the Membership Committee and Finance, Audit and Risk Committees is vital to the effective operation of the Chamber. We acknowledge and thank Bede Clifton and Janine Healey, respectively, for their leadership and commitment to this essential work.

Over recent years, the Chamber identified the need and lobbied local government to form the regional planning body, NTDC. The Chamber remains a fervent supporter in the importance of an effective economic development organisation. NTDC's work is critical to the future prosperity of the city and region. The Chamber is eager to see NTDC finalise the Regional Economic Development Plan (REDP) in December 2018, two years after the organisation was formed. Of even greater interest to the Chamber will be the funding and programmatic response from government (including via City Deal) necessary to support the economic plan.

There are few relationships more important to the Chamber than our relationship with the City of Launceston. The Chamber wishes to recognise, that by any measure, this Council has taken positive steps forward. Impressive outcomes include City Deal, City Heart, assistance with the UTas transformation, being a key enabler in the CH Smith development, the North Bank transformation and much more. Central to this success, the Chamber acknowledges the collegiate approach taken by all Alderman and the General Manager (current and former). We note for the record, our desire to see further internal reform and greater efficiency.

The iconic Tasmanian Perpetual Trustee's Business Excellence Awards 2017 was a fully subscribed event once again. It was heartening to see such a strong field of high-quality business compete to win in the various 20 categories, with the overall 2017 Business of the Year winner awarded to Moores Hill Vineyard.

The Chamber's renowned budget Lunch and Premier's Cocktail Party events were again well attended in 2018. The Chamber is grateful for the support and excellent relationship with the Government and Opposition. I'm delighted to say we have a first-class relationship with both major parties and their leaders.



LAUNCESTON
CHAMBER of COMMERCE

The Voice of Business

The Chamber in 2018 has been pleased to work with CBD retailers. As CBDs and retail evolve the world over, the Chamber wishes to ensure we maintain a vibrant, attractive and eclectic city centre. The Chamber agrees that much more work is needed to ensure our CBD meets contemporary standards. We urge the City of Launceston to accelerate long overdue streetscape transformations.

In 2017, board member Adam Mostogl stepped down from the board, due to growing work commitments. Adam was appointed by the board for his education sector experience. We are grateful to Adam for his tireless work. Replacing Adam, the Chamber invited Lynda McKay to take up the 13th seat. Lynda has impressive pedigree in education which includes being a teacher, playing a leadership role at the Beacon foundation and now as Business Development Manager with the University College at UTas.

Two long serving directors, Richard Ireland and Tim Lack have indicated they will not be seeking re-election to the Chamber. Richard has served on the board for 12 years, including for three years as Vice President and as Chair of the Infrastructure Committee. Richard played a key role in driving the inner city living project undertaken several years ago. We are grateful for Richard's hard work. Tim has served on the board for six years. Throughout the time, Tim served on the Infrastructure Committee, the Economic Development Committee and Audit and Risk. Tim's pragmatic approach to complex issues and his unique perspective will not easily be replaced. The Chamber is grateful for the contribution of these two seasoned business people.

I would like to thank the whole board and membership for the honour of serving as your President. Being a part of civic discourse representing business is a tremendous privilege. I have thoroughly enjoyed working with every member of the board and pursuing a strong business agenda.

Launceston is a remarkable place. We have much on which to build including enviable liveability, environment, infrastructure, heritage and the significant future investment in education. Equally, we have some major challenges to overcome. Our population challenges are fundamental, as is lifting educational outcomes, regional productivity and trade. The next ten years are critical. Where we are successful, business will thrive in Launceston. To our core, the Chamber believes that Launceston can become *one of the great regional cities of the world*.

Tim Holder
President