

18.1.1 September 2020

TASMANIA PYENGANA DAIRY COMPANY
PHOTO: TOURISM TASMANIA & NICK OSBORNE

Quarterly Progress Report

APRIL TO JUNE 2020



A few words from the CEO

The April-June quarter was a period of disruption and adaptation as businesses and councils came to terms with COVID-19 implications on their day to day activities.

Northern Tasmanian businesses in tourism and hospitality were obviously hit hardest but many were able to quickly adapt to digital revenue streams or tweaked business models to make it through an uncertain period. There was also great collaboration and support between businesses and industries.

What was heartening was the level of support locals gave, going out of their way to buy local where possible. Maintaining this goodwill and collaboration will be key to our recovery.

There was also industries and employers that thrived during the peak disruption with health, aged and disability care jobs increasing and businesses providing digital services and advice in high demand.

NTDC was able to work from home without much disruption to its routine and work and by the end of the quarter, a “new normal” in Northern Tasmania was reached as councils and businesses returned to offices in similar but different circumstances.

Unfortunately this meant some events around hydrogen energy that were going to involve the Premier, Energy Minister and Chief Scientist Alan Finkel and ARENA CEO Darren Miller had to be postponed but we are very keen to rearrange them when able to do so.

During this period, NTDC’s focus has been compiling a recovery package that is place-based and informed by Members and our regional stakeholders. A draft was discussed with Members and sent to the Premier’s Economic and Social Recovery Advisory Committee. This work will be vital in making sure any recommendations come from the region, for the region and not be a cookie cutter approach from the top down.

Key focuses will be circular economy initiatives, resilience and workplace productivity and maximising the opportunities for economic growth around projects like hydrogen production at Bell Bay and the proposed Northern Prison at Westbury. Launceston Airport must also be recognised for its important role in Northern Tasmania as a major employer but also gateway for tourism, trade and business travel. Ensuring its long-term viability will be vital for our region.

NTDC continued to roll out its work in population growth, the ASPIRE circular economy membership and workplace productivity improvements. We held our second Mayors’ Quarterly Meeting and a bi-annual Members’ Meeting.

As the level of government closest to our communities, it was great to be able to help our Members articulate what they have been doing to support their people via the opinion piece from Mayors published in The Examiner in June.

We know this work is continuing and look forward to supporting it and adding value across the region.

We remain confident that Tasmania and Northern Tasmania will be well placed to weather the economic impacts of COVID and rebuild a stronger, more sustainable economy that makes the most of our competitive advantages and plays to our strengths in goodwill, collaboration and connectivity.

And we look forward to working with you all on achieving this.



Mark Baker
Chief Executive Officer

Regional Recovery

We continue to work on the draft of NTDC's proposed regional recovery plan (Recovery.Now) which has been distributed for feedback. Once complete, NTDC will be lobbying the ideas included at state and federal government levels and with the Premier's Recovery Council.

CEO has made contact with council members Professor Rufus Blank and Paul Ransom to inform them of NTDC's work and offered our regional assistance and received positive acknowledgement that the Council will be working closely with regional economic development agencies. I further had contact with the Council's secretariat on May 6 who advised: "the Council and the Secretariat are in the 'discovery' phase, trying to map the landscape in the context of there being a whole host of activity already 'in play' inside and outside of Government in Tasmania, and on the national stage, with the view of avoiding duplication and going over ground already covered by others."

One thing is readily apparent, while the response and immediate effects have been rapid, and the future is highly uncertain, the task of recovery has not been left unattended - many minds are being applied to the task, so it will be key to lever from all of that work.

CEO/Chair are seeking a meeting with Premier to discuss its contents in the coming weeks.

Population Strategy Assisting Skilled Migrants

Population Program Manager Edward Obi has continued to work well in attracting and supporting new people to the region. Edward assists these migrants to revise their CVs and connect them to potential employers. During the COVID-19 pandemic Edward is keeping our [Facebook Jobs](#) page updated with available jobs as there are industries still looking to employ.

Case Study – Cecilia Yuen

The COVID-19 pandemic has hit the world in unprecedented ways, shutting down whole industries and disrupting lives. However, the story of Northern Tasmania during the epidemic is one of strength, resilience and community. These values are best highlighted in the actions of Craig and Susan Richman, owners of the Bluestone Bar & Kitchen and The Sebel Launceston Hotel.

Upon evaluating the immediate impact of the pandemic on their business, Craig and Susan prioritised saving the jobs of their staff by reorganising their operations model to suit the almost 80% drop in patronage. They also took advantage of the available government support packages to sustain their operations. On their efforts to keep their team of skilled international staff on the job despite harsh economic conditions, Craig said: "I just felt that it is the right thing to do because we know how important it is retain our staff during the pandemic and how the retention of skilled workers will aid recovery afterwards."

One of the said staff is Cecilia Yuen, a qualified chef from Hong Kong who moved to Launceston to switch careers from being a flight attendant. She attended the required Tafe course, and through the work placement programme, she landed a job with Bluestone bar & Kitchen. On what she likes about Northern Tasmania, Cecilia says she "...likes that the people are always happy to help and the environment is quiet with natural surrounds". Cecilia's advice to newly arrived residents is to "Be proactive and embrace the Tasmanian way of life" because according to her Northern Tasmania showcases the real beauty of regional Tasmania.





Jingchen Fan

After four years in Sydney, Jingchen Fan decided to move to Launceston to study for his Masters Degree and has not looked back.

Jingchen arrived Launceston in 2018 to study Information and Communication Technology at the University of Tasmania.

He chose Launceston because the regional lifestyle allowed him to interact with locals and improve his English skills.

“I think Launceston is a beautiful city to study and find work,” thirty year old Jingchen said. “I will advise people to come to Northern Tasmania if they want an improved lifestyle.”

Taking advantage of an industry placement program at UTAS, Jingchen was able to get an interview with Definium Technologies in Launceston. He commenced an internship program, which culminated in a job as an IT solutions specialist for the company.

NTDC has set the ambitious regional target of growing the working age population to 10,000 by 2031. In the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic, the region is still recording job availability and welcoming skilled workers to explore their potential in Northern Tasmania.

NTDC has captured case studies of skilled workers who have landed jobs in the region and made Northern Tasmania their home. The case studies include skilled workers and entrepreneurs from varying industries and skillsets.

Mauricio Aguirre

Originally from El Salvador, engineer Mauricio Aguirre lives and works in Northern Tasmania.

He moved to Tasmania as a student to learn more about maritime logistics and policy at the prestigious Australian Maritime College in Launceston.

Mauricio said at the time of moving, social problems were increasing in El Salvador, including crime rates.

“So, with my wife, we thought it would be a good idea to move as a family to a more peaceful place, where our daughter could walk freely on the streets, and I could specialise in maritime study areas that I like so much.”

Mauricio has since finished his studies and with the help of the university, now works with a shipping company.

On settling into the region, he said: “Of course, it has not been easy, the challenges have been there, but at the same time, overcoming them little by little has been gratifying. For example, as Latinos we like music, at first, our daughter missed her dance school, so we researched local schools and enrolled her in one, which she has felt very good at, and enjoys dancing tap and jazz with her new friends to such an extent that her group won first places at last year’s Launceston competitions, which has made her very happy.”

Mauricio and his family are examples of how Northern Tasmania is the region of choice for young families to thrive.

“We still have a long way to go, but we consider Tasmania to be an excellent place to establish ourselves fully, and pursue our dreams with the support of our new friends in Australia,” he said.



Visa Holder Support

After lobbying by various parties including NTDC, the state government provided \$3 million in support for temporary visa holders by:

- » Extending the eligibility for Pandemic Isolation Assistance Grants to provide \$250 per individual or up to \$1000 per family
- » Providing funding to non-government organisations to provide additional emergency relief and assistance where required
- » Assist with travel advice, and if necessary due to genuine financial hardship, assist with financial support to do so
- » Work with industry sectors or employers who want to retain their employees because of their specialist skills for when their business is able to start up again and provide additional support in partnership with them so that we don't lose skilled workers that we need.

Seedlab Tasmania - Noya

NTDC provided \$15,000 to Seedlab Tasmania, a unique incubator created specifically for Tasmanian start-up and early stage food, drink, agri-food and agri-tourism businesses with global potential, who need advice, assistance and introductions. The money has gone towards a scholarship for Noya Spirits.

Noya is making the first (if not first overall then the first of its type) spirit outside its original country with no imported materials. Making the spirit is unlike any other alcohol as the entire process is undertaken with solid grain rather than liquids so the learning process has taken more than 1 year. Noya is through the majority of the test phase and are now working on our scaled up process, aiming to make 1000 - 1500 L this year with the first product in a bottle around Oct-Nov 2020 (as it requires min 6 months ageing).

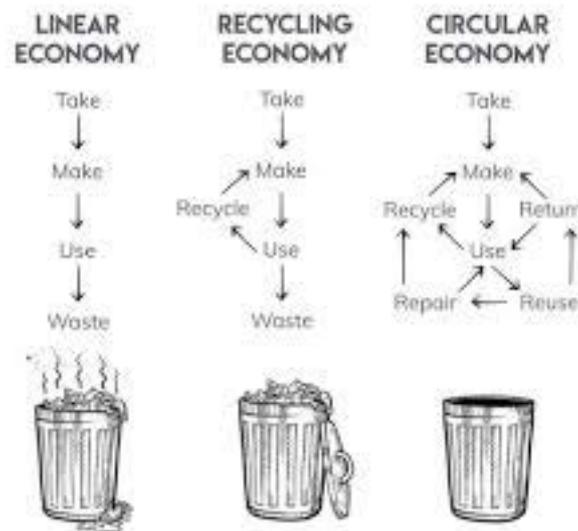
With help from the team at Seedlab and NTDC, Noya hopes to build a compelling brand and work on how we access international markets.



ASPIRE

ASPIRE (Advisory System for Processing, Innovation & Resource Exchange) is described cleverly by their CEO as "Tinder for waste". It is an online marketplace putting waste producers in touch with potential customers, reusers or recyclers for that waste product. Essentially, the website connects businesses and councils that have waste products with people who want to reuse it.

The rollout for ASPIRE is ongoing. ASPIRE is working with setting up Member Councils for a July start. This involves onboarding/induction with tech and waste staff and communication staff. Expect to see some media on it in the coming weeks as we seek to promote it to more businesses, particularly in construction, agriculture and food production.



Mental Health and Resilience

NTDC arranged a first meeting with stakeholders interested in exploring the business benefits from a productivity outcome of a mental health and resilience focus. Healthy Tasmania has supported NTDC to develop a paper regarding mental health and productivity. NTDC is eager to better understand the impacts of mental health on productivity in the region, and explore opportunities for supporting improved mental health outcomes for Northern Tasmania. The July 22 meeting is an initial conversation to discuss the merits and potential opportunities of the project. We have identified a variety of stakeholders with a specific knowledge base and expertise across a wide range of areas from industry, to service supports, to economic development, regional development and the health and mental health sector. It is hoped organisations can contribute some seed funding to map out a full plan that would include some research for base level data. RSVPs are promising and there is enthusiasm for the concept from stakeholders and Mental Health Minister Jeremy Rockliff.

Launceston City Deal

The Launceston City Deal (The Deal), signed in April 2017, is a ten-year agreement between the Australian and Tasmanian Governments, and the City of Launceston Council, that will shape our city's future, create jobs and generate economic growth for the region by building on our natural advantages. The City Deal aims to position Launceston as one of Australia's most liveable and innovative regional cities, with growing incomes and falling levels of disadvantage. NTDC is engaged under the Launceston City Deal to deliver the Regional Economic Development Strategy for Northern Tasmania, and as a key partner to the Deal, we have contributed to two upcoming reporting milestones;

1. The Third Annual Progress Report which is due for release in July 2020 - this will capture the key achievements over the past 12 months and highlights the key milestones for the coming 12 months, and;
2. The Three Year Review is a formal check-point, with its primary purpose to assess progress against the Deal's initial vision and objectives, to review the impact of The Deal and to identify new opportunities for enhancement.

NTDC Members Meeting

We held the second of our Member Mayors' Meeting via Zoom on June 10. It was a successful meeting, and discussion topics included:

- » Selection Panel for new Independent Chair
- » CEO/Chair report
- » Membership Agreement
- » Priority projects
- » COVID-19 Recovery package



Mayors' Quarterly Catch-up

CEO held the second quarterly catch up with the Mayors in June via zoom, which was attended by Christina Holmdahl, Wayne Johnston, Greg Kieser, Mary Knowles, Mick Tucker and Albert Van Zetten. Annie Revie was an apology.

The Mayors provided an “around the grounds”:

Christina Holmdahl

- » Christina has been proud of the Council management team over the last three months
- » She emphasised that local government is the closest level to the community and expressed disappointment that the local government sector hasn't been considered by the Premier's Council
- » Council are signing an MOU with Ferment Tasmania which will be a great addition to the community
- » Working with State Government on the school at Legana. Unclear on the timeline
- » Wayne expressed his appreciation for WTC's tip facilities which had been upgraded
- » Christina finished up by saying how enthused the Council is with NTDC's work
- » Christina also commended all Councils for their cooperation during this time.

Wayne Johnston

- » In general Meander Valley Council is going along well. Since COVID-19 council staff are working harder, meeting on a weekly basis
- » Council has tip issues – WTC good example of what can be done
- » Wayne explained that it has been interesting having a new GM start just before COVID-19 hit. He was very happy with way John Jordan has fit in and appreciated his good communication with the public, in particular, with the prison
- » Council having a current issue with the Prison. TCCI have backflipped on decision and Council will wait to see if Westbury will be used as the site for the prison
- » Wayne is excited to have Neil Grose join the team shortly.

Greg Kieser

- » Everything running smoothly with George Town Council
- » GT, WTC, CoL - Funding approved for north west development officers (just under \$500k). Greg said that this will be good for employment across the region and he is excited for what that will create
- » Greg and Shane Power have spent time walking around the community, meeting with businesses. Greg's impression is that it will be a much softer landing than anticipated. He sensed optimism. Council will be focusing on when JobKeeper subsidies end
- » Hospitality sector has been hit the hardest
- » Greg updated the group on some of Council's projects: they awarded a mountain bike tender, they are executing Region Square project, and have started scoping Main Street project. Council put in four projects that will be seeking assistance. Council are also seeing wave of new projects.
- » Greg said that there will be a shortfall of contractor supply with a lot of infrastructure projects starting at the same time. He suggested that this is something that the Councils could work on together?

Mayors' Quarterly Catch-up

Mick Tucker

- » Mick mentioned that Break O'Day Council are travelling pretty well. They are trying to stay positive. There have been no job losses. Businesses are getting by
- » Tourism is one of the biggest drivers for BOD and it has been hit hard
- » Mick emphasised that Councils need to work together as a team, rather than compete against each other
- » Mick shared his concern in the Visitor Info Centre remaining closed
- » There are a couple of mountain bike trials opening up
- » Mick reiterated that local government is the closest to the community.

Mary Knowles

- » Mary was impressed with her staff. Jobs that were at risk have been seconded into other roles
- » A lot of businesses in Northern Midlands are reliant on tourism, for example in Campbell Town. Chris Griffin predicts that 1000 of the 3000 tourism businesses will recover. Support is required for these businesses.
- » Supermarkets have done well
- » Communities managed well on a whole
- » There have been some noticeable issues:
 - Mental health issues – hoping for funding for pop-up neighbourhood centers. Mark suggested a BOD staffer Jodie Cooper could help with mental health issues.
 - Some parents are not feeling qualified teaching from home, even though they have had support from schools
 - Dealing with a developer that is bullying the Council, there may be something in the media. Mark offered assistance with the media
- » Council had projects shovel ready which is good:
 - Perth childcare center is really important
 - Sporting grounds

Albert Van Zetten

- » Albert spoke positively of City of Launceston Council and has been happy with his staff during this period
- » Albert also said that it has been good working together with Mark
- » Empty hotels will be an issue for hotel owners and the community
- » Albert was happy with the positivity in Launceston and was encouraged by people doing the right thing. Coffee shops doing extremely well
- » Big announcements over weekend - CBD proposal with bus interchange
- » This is exciting for the city and boosts confidence of businesses
- » Federal funding for Building Better Regions program for \$10M. Working on creative industries.



LAUNCESTON CBD AT SUNSET
PHOTO: TOURISM TASMANIA & BRIAN DULLAGHAN



NTDC Board Chair Recruitment

Members agreed to form a selection panel for a new independent chair. The panel will consist of Mayor Albert van Zetten, Mayor Mick Tucker, General Manager Des Jennings and NTDC director Karina Damberg. The panel will work with the company secretary on advertising, shortlisting and recruiting a new independent chair.

Office Update

We are still working from home, continue our daily team meetings over Zoom. Our COVID safety plan is in place for the return to the office, which will be in stages over the next month.



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THE BIG WICKETS, WESTBURY
PHOTO: CHRIS CRERAR



Appendix A

**MEDIA HIGHLIGHTS &
MEDIA RELEASES**

OPINION

SUE KILPATRICK

What should we do for a prosperous future?

MANY of us have been out exercising, exploring local neighbourhoods and enjoying our natural environment during COVID restrictions.

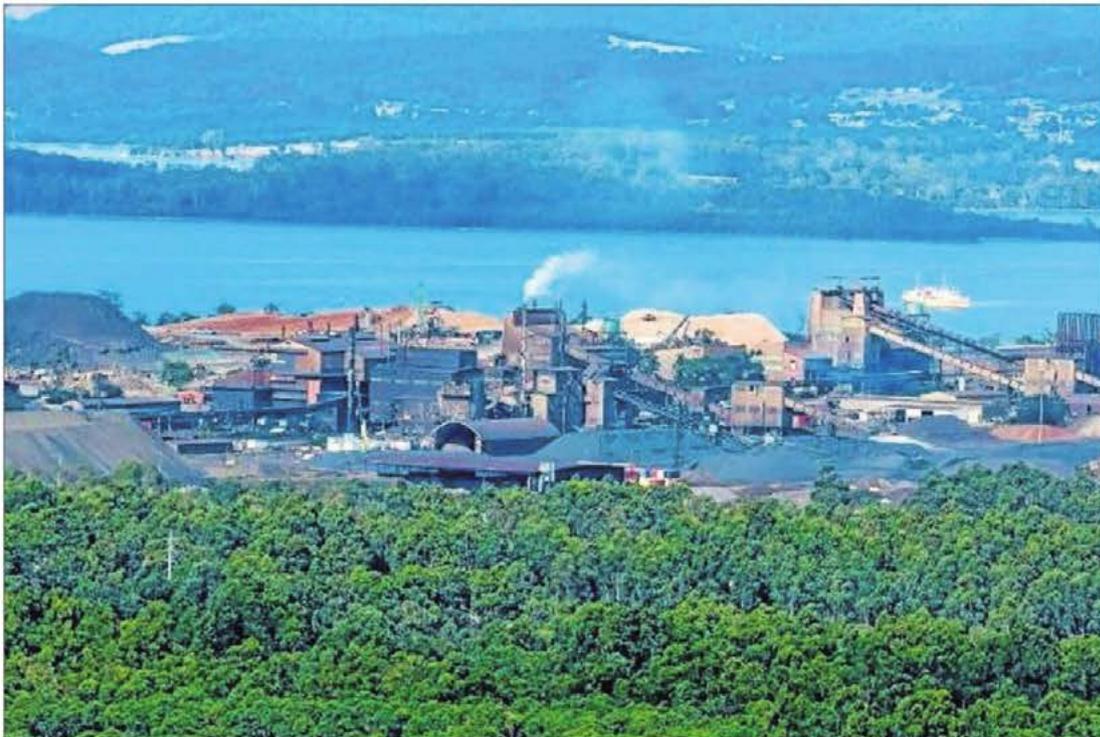
We have appreciated the efforts of our cafe and restaurant industry to swiftly develop innovative models to provide delicious takeaway menus, often using our high-quality local food and beverages.

Behind the scenes, the transport sector has been moving our produce out and freight has been arriving by sea and air. Some businesses such as construction and manufacturing have continued much as usual, while others have people working from home, quickly adapting to a new environment. We have new skills in socialising, working, and learning online. But we have missed the opportunities for social interaction that we once took for granted; meeting up with family and friends, playing sport or watching live music, films, performances and sport together. Business and workers who rely on our inbuilt need for social contact have suffered the most.

Local governments, business groups and the not-for-profit sector swiftly came together to respond to the crisis, collaboratively developing various packages including supports such as small grants and rate relief. Local agencies have tasked the Northern Tasmania Development Corporation with consulting widely, gathering ideas for recovery projects and coming up with agreed priorities. Modelling previous commissioning by NTDC and the Regional Economic Development Strategy is a starting point.

Our recent experience also tells us some things about where we should invest our effort as COVID restrictions are eased. It highlights some of our region's strengths and current vulnerabilities. We produce internationally recognised quality food and beverages; are innovative and adaptable; have a strong manufacturing base at Bell Bay and elsewhere in our region; are digitally well-connected to the world; and have a liveable region that is the envy of many. Our recovery must build on these place-based advantages. Renewable energy projects build on our strengths. While the future of TEMCO is uncertain, Bell Bay has plentiful access to green hydropower and is well-placed for future hydrogen generation.

We must build on our reputation for food and beverages, our innovative farmers, and food and beverage manufacturers and research capacity through the joint



Defence-UTAS Centre for Food Innovation, and exciting food processing testing facilities such as Testlab 4.0 hosted by UTAS, which will include an electronic tongue.

For our region to prosper, businesses must be supported by a vast range of services to support them, things such as construction and trades to build infrastructure, and technical, ICT, and businesses services.

A shift to a circular economy, which provides a longer lifecycle through a "reduce, reuse, repurpose, repair, maintain and recycle" focus has many advantages over our existing linear economy that takes, makes, breaks and wastes. Our recent experience points out areas that need attention.

We need to ensure that those working in industries which have suffered from COVID social isolation have every opportunity to recover. This means more people in our region, either as visitors, students or new residents. World standard mountain bike trails, national parks, walking trails, famous beaches, golf courses, food, beverages, and events will once again attract tourists initial-

ly from Australia and later from around the globe.

Our population is ageing, we need more working-age people for our industries and services. Many Australians have discovered that they can work at home and enjoy more time relaxing and with family. Our region is equipped for the digital economy. Launceston is Australia's first and only Gigabit city and one of a very few Australian cities with fibre to the premises. Now is the time to showcase our region as a place to live and work with innovative businesses and a world-class university. We must welcome new residents to our region.

There is some work to be done for our region to remain liveable and attractive, so that working-age people continue to be willing to move here, bringing the skills we need for our innovative industries. During recovery, we need to address housing demands, ensure our education system produces young people who finish school and invest in health and social services.

For everyone to have the opportunity to

participate in a brighter future, we must encourage young people onto education and training pathways that give them a good chance at one of the many technical and professional jobs our industries of the future will offer. Health services will continue to be one of our biggest employers.

Engineers, tradespeople of all sorts, food technicians, teachers and trainers, business and ICT professionals are just some of the jobs with good future prospects. And now is a good time to retrain or upskill to take advantage of the opportunities.

Crucially, attracting new residents, tourists and exporting our fresh produce interstate and overseas all rely on connectivity. Launceston airport puts our region just one hour from Melbourne. Regular air services are critical to our future. COVID restrictions have placed Launceston airport at risk. We must advocate for continued reliable, affordable and regular passenger and freight services.

■ Professor Sue Kilpatrick, NTDC interim chair

KATE JACKSON

A view from Mallocoota, six months on

DRIVING home, it hit me yet again. After nearly six months, the bush is still black. Hundreds of kilometres of burnt vegetation with nowhere for a living creature to survive.

Conditions were some of the driest we've ever seen and there was so much fuel for the fires. There are so many lessons we can take with us as we face worsening climate change. We are busy burning-off and mulching some of those excessive fuel loads now in the shortening winter season.

Recovery means listening to our indigenous people, and learning the proper ways of caring for the land. After all, Aboriginal people have managed the land sustainably

for 120,000 years - but in only two centuries so much has been undone.

Burnt houses are getting cleared away, with mixed feelings from owners who re-traumatise whenever they see their destroyed property. We are only just beginning to come to terms with the grief and the loss.

Our new Mallocoota and District Recovery Association has just been elected. Twelve members who will speak for this community, to say what we want, rather than what has been imposed on us in the past.

My partner Phil and I are getting on with our self-sufficiency plans. We all need to contribute what we can, bracing ourselves for further climate catastrophes. Even

during the fires here we were anxious about what DIDN'T burn; it means that next year there is still more left to potentially burn. We need a secure water supply and off-the-grid power now in preparation.

Because we are a small community, our recovery is supported by each other; possibly more effectively than all the professional services on offer. Left alone now, ironically thanks to COVID-19 isolation, we have a chance for private grief, for recovery and connection to what we have.

My wish is for the government to pay attention to the land. We need to learn Indigenous ways of land management. The fires have shown clearly that we need more

funding for national parks, which currently survive on a wing and a prayer.

When we had our power cut off by the fires, we became acutely aware that we need more funding for solar and wind off-grid systems for all homes. The cost of fitting every home with water tanks and solar is affordable and would save our governments in future crisis management.

I call on governments to future proof our communities now. Climate change is here. When the state plans for the pandemic recovery, it must address the climate and ecological crisis we are in right now.

Kate Jackson is a retired teacher living in Mallocoota

OPINION

NORTHERN MAYORS

Regions starting to recover post COVID-19

AS THE level of government closest to communities, Northern Tasmanian councils reacted quickly to COVID-19 impacts and are now ready to rebuild. Northern Tasmania Development Corporation asked its member councils how they had dealt with the crisis and planned to bounce back.

West Tamar Council mayor Christina Holmdahl said local government had always been the closest level of government to the community and this hadn't been more evident than during the pandemic.

"I'm impressed that our staff and councillors have continued to assist the community in every way possible throughout these restrictive times. As a council, we are fortunate to have a healthy financial position and we have fast-tracked our capital works program that will inject money into the community and stimulate the economy. As well we have several options to financially assist our ratepayers," she said.

Cr Holmdahl said regional councils would be looked to by the government to implement many recovery initiatives.

Break O'Day mayor Mick Tucker said local governments were best placed to understand the needs of their community, particularly in small regional areas, but would need state and federal support.

"We are the touchstone and advocates for our community and at the end of the day, we are also part of the community," he said.

"While our community quickly banded together and embraced the challenges of the pandemic, we also know many are quietly hurting. Our region is dependent on tourism and is about to enter the slow winter period.

He said several shovel-ready infrastructure projects would employ locals and use local goods but council could not fund them all without support. **Northern Midlands mayor Mary Knowles** was in awe of the amazing work being undertaken by council staff to get the organisation and residents through the pandemic.

Council officers have applied for funding to set up 'Time Out' spaces to give residents periods of respite from their family home; and also for funding to enable the development of 'pop-up' neighbourhood houses at Longford and Campbell Town. Cr Knowles said the recovery process had been made considerably easier by Regional Development Australia - Tasmania developing 'COVID-19 Principles for Economic Recovery'. These are proving to be critical to our place-based approach to recovery for



our communities." **Flinders Island mayor Annie Revie** praised the work of the island's emergency management committee made up of council, police, health and Aboriginal associations.

Cr Revie said it was important to keep the island's residents safe because they are a high-risk population with more older residents, people with chronic disease and Aboriginal population than mainland Tasmania. "I'm proud of how we've protected the island and that has meant we have kept our island COVID-free." As a small island with a small rate base, the ability to stimulate the local economy was limited but council was working sensibly and responsibly on stimulus measures, she said.

City of Launceston mayor Albert van Zetten said private and public investment was going to play an important role in economic recovery. "Our city is well-placed thanks to the Launceston City Deal to continue to leverage opportunities from that arrangement," he said.

"It is pleasing that investors are still pro-

posing significant projects for Launceston, which is going to create business for service providers and suppliers and provide jobs in the years ahead." He said the council's priority throughout the pandemic had been the safety of its community and staff.

"In the space of a few weeks, the City of Launceston developed and rolled out the most comprehensive local government-led Community Care and Recovery Package in Tasmania, designed to help small businesses weather the storm and protect local jobs."

Meander Valley mayor Wayne Johnston said the municipality reacted in a glass-half-full manner, not a glass-half-empty.

"Overall, the response by the community is positive in that we're dealing with something we've never dealt with before," he said.

The council's \$1.7m community support package provided both immediate financial relief and longer-term measures to assist the municipality to recover, he said.

Cr Johnston said local government was best placed to support the economic and social recovery in Northern Tasmania.

"We are the grassroots. Everyone who sits around that council table has been a teacher, a business owner, a part of the community, and you can't get closer than that."

George Town mayor Greg Kieser (pictured) said leading during times of calm was easy but in a crisis, it was vital to be "resourced, informed and enabled".

"More so than ever before, when things get tough, you really need to be coordinated and demonstrate that leadership," he said.

Cr Kieser said George Town's Future Impact Leadership Team had been able to provide very good community engagement and feedback. "We were very well armed with a good amount of data on what is important. We've done a number of things like walking the streets and meeting with small, medium and large businesses as well as social groups to give us a holistic approach."

In recovery, Cr Kieser said focus was on making sure opportunities were taken, such as the renewable energy potential at Bell Bay and infrastructure that creates pathways to employment, skills and training.

MARIE LOW

Newspaper memories scattered in the wind

MY FACEBOOK feed these days is choked with reminiscences of a dying breed. Journalists, now largely the redundant whale-boat captains of ships that have already sailed, are tossing into the air a million memories of times past.

These memories - of fires and floods, births and deaths, country shows and scandals - are mostly not their own memories, but those they recorded for their communities, sometimes their country. There are streams of laughter about the mistakes, tales of careers fractured by massive changes in technology, memories of inspirational colleagues.

All of these valuable stories are scattering on the cold wind of the thing that is killing them - social media.

Now we have more stories than ever before, more images than we could ever have dreamt of. But are they stories well told? How much is genuine? How much is real? How much is balanced, unbiased, researched and responsible?

Having been kicking around in media and communications for about 30 years, I am loving the tales of the prehistoric era spilling over in Facebook. They were truly the best of times and the worst of times: having to wear covered shoes in case an upset compositor dropped a scalpel while pasting up the pag-

es; sleeping under your desk when there was not enough time to go home and come back again; the bellowing across the newsroom; the satisfaction of a page one byline.

Technology constantly changed. The compositors were here one decade, redundant the next. There was the great expansion of the '90s when newsrooms couldn't contain the numbers, and the great shrinking of the 2000s. In the past five years, the sub-editors have disappeared, and now, many of the newspapers themselves have ended their print run of well over 100 years.

Time moves on. People now consume their news online, head bowed over their phone, finding most of their leads from

Facebook. I feel so sad for the word, the printed word.

There is nothing to stop amazing stories from being told in any way, but this irreversible shift is the end of an era. Cheers to all the colleagues who battled unwieldy subbing systems, who suffered skin cancers from their days at outdoor events, who covered house fires, danced attendance on second-rate celebrities, listened to the horrors of murder trials, took social photos, sat at council meetings, and slapped up a great pun for a headline. You were part of history.

Marie Low is a freelance journalist based in Gunnedah, New South Wales.

World Cup fever

PLAYERS HOPEFUL FOR MORE PROFESSIONAL OPPORTUNITIES



NEWS - PAGE 3

Best winter in years

DERBY WELCOMES SURGE IN VISITORS

RELAX - PAGES 30-31

Vaping debate reignites

INDUSTRY AND HEALTH BODIES CLASH OVER NICOTINE IMPORT BAN

NEWS - PAGE 6



THE SUNDAY

EXAMINER

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Will McLoughlin, Craig Richman, Bede Clifton and Phil Cooper make up Live Launceston. Picture: Paul Scambler

Looking up

Northern Tasmania's ageing population presents an economic and social development challenge. But four mates who have lived and worked across the world and now call Launceston home have plans to attract more working age families to the region. **REPORT, PAGES 8-9**

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Live Launceston: four mates hatch a plan for greater community connection

An ageing population presents economic and social challenges for Northern Tasmania. But four mates have plans to attract more working age families to the region.

A BOND over a love for their newfound home has compelled four Launceston friends to try and attract more families to relocate to the region.

Bede Clifton, Phil Cooper, Craig Richman and Will McLoughlin have lived across Australia and across the world in locations such as Sydney, Melbourne, Singapore, London, Shanghai and Hong Kong.

But it was on the tennis court and school-ground in Launceston that the group formed to use their skills, creativity and stories to start Live Launceston, a platform and plan to capture families tired of big city living.

The Live Launceston team identified a communication gap with people actively looking to relocate and, more importantly, people not looking but open to relocating based on the pain points in their life.

These pain points include quality family time, house prices, commute times, job opportunities, access to recreation, clean environment and connection to community.

It was, after all, these opportunities that attracted the four friends to Northern Tasmania.

Bede, who worked in various global marketing roles, grew up in Sydney where he met his future wife Hayley who was born and raised at Westbury but moved to complete her Masters in osteopathy. The couple have three boys, Hugo, Charlie and Jasper and as if Hayley wasn't outnumbered by boys enough, added TomTom the family dog this year.

"We moved to Launceston seven years ago to escape the rat race of Sydney. With one child already we thought moving to a city with space and access to Hayley's family would be important for our family's future," Bede says.

"We wanted a place we had some roots but also we wanted to create a new network of friends yet remain a quick plane ride away to maintain our Sydney connections. For us Launceston was the obvious spot."

Launceston ticked all the boxes for Will and his wife Mel when they were looking for a treechange from Melbourne with their children Flynn, 9, and Gwen, 7.

"We had been to Tassie many times over the years and I had done numerous hiking trips down here. We have always loved getting out into nature of which Northern Tassie has an abundance. We run a small chiropractic clinic and enjoy the laid back lifestyle and wonderful community in Launceston," Will says.

"Coming from Melbourne we wanted to find a town that was a quick flight back, had affordable housing, little traffic, easy access to natural areas, good schooling and promising job opportunities in healthcare. Launceston ticked all the boxes."

Phil moved to Launceston just over four years ago with his wife Isabel and sons Hamish and Jesse. Isabel, who grew up on a farm at Beaconsfield, and Phil met in Melbourne where the boys were born.

The couple were able to bring their Melbourne jobs to Tassie where Isabel works from home for a global recruitment company and Phil runs his technology businesses from a shared office in Launceston.

"We were living in Melbourne, the cost of living was high and despite being fairly close to the office, the commute was an unpredictable 30 to 45 minutes with frantic childcare drop off and pick ups to coordinate along the way," Phil says.

Ultimately the lure of being closer to Isabel's family, good schooling, affordable housing, and a quality airport with regular flights was more than enough for Phil.

"I travel a lot for work as our customers are nationwide. I arrive in different cities and love it. But I also love landing in Launceston. The clean air and the feeling of space is priceless. The sense of community and outdoor sports were the unexpected win."

Craig is the only member of the group born in Tasmania but lived and worked in London, Hong Kong and Singapore before deciding to return home with his wife Susan.

"Susan and I have three girls, Chloe, 16, Zara, 14, and Cassie, 10," Craig says. "Susan and I are both Tasmanian born and understand the value that growing up here can offer for children. Large metro cities suck time away from you - time in your car, time in a taxi, time on the train, time queuing, time worrying about the cost of living."

"People in regional areas also have more time to give you - time to chat, time to help a friend or neighbour, time to be. There is also a greater sense of community in a regional area, more like life was a few decades ago. Life in large cities has become increasingly hectic, increasingly polluted and increasingly impersonal. Launceston is big enough to have pretty much all of the services and suppliers you need, with none of the things that make bigger cities a drag."

The group came together through their children's school and soon found they shared an interest in sport, outdoor recreation and a love for talking up greater Launceston.

Ultimately the group would like to use Live Launceston to provide data and leads for a "Concierge", a person part salesperson, part dealmaker, who would work with potential families to get them to relocate to Northern Tasmania and established within the community.

The position has been proposed to fit under Northern Tasmania Development Corporation, a regional economic development agency charged with increasing population and improving economic outputs. NTDC chief executive Mark Baker said the Live Launceston and Concierge concept was a great example of merging a technological solution with a people-focused role.

"Now more than ever before, families in large metropolitan cities will be thinking whether the increased cost of living and poorer lifestyle options are really worth it," Mr Baker said.

"Many will have a proof of concept that working from home or running their businesses remotely is possible and the time is right to try and attract those families to Northern Tasmania."

Mr Baker said the Concierge would be able to use the data captured by Live Launceston to understand the reasons why someone wants to move to a regional area,



TOP LEFT: Will McLoughlin, Craig Richman, Bede Clifton and Phil Cooper have formed Live Launceston, a platform and plan to capture families tired of big city living. LEFT: Bede Clifton with wife Hayley and sons Hugo, Charlie and Jasper. TOP RIGHT: Susan and Craig Richman with daughters Zara, 14, Cassie, 10, and Zara 14.

then match those wants and needs to opportunities in Northern Tasmania.

"Think about that young family a big city that is trying to get into the property market or pay an exorbitant mortgage; they are commuting a few hours a day, the cost of living is high, there is no real sense of community and those cities are only growing and getting more crowded and COVID-19

has only amplified those pain points. If you can say to them, 'Come down to Northern Tasmania, have the house you love, the lifestyle you dream of, with a good job, supportive community and milder climate', it really is a strong argument."

For the Live Launceston group, the sales pitch is very simple.

"In the four years we have been here we

have been to some mind blowing places. So many times we've said ... 'I can't believe this is so close to home', Phil says. "There's the well known places like Cradle Mountain, Coles Bay, Derby, Boat Harbour, et cetera, but then there are the little hidden places that people rarely talk about, most times you are the only person there. In other parts of the world they would be the showpiece."

Will agrees: "The natural beauty of the area continues to amaze us. We are always finding new beaches, mountains or forests to explore and generally without the crowds! The food and wine in the Tamar valley is also outstanding and we have found the community to be wonderful both socially and from a business perspective."

The marketer in Bede comes out when selling the region. "Launceston has the key elements to live a nourished and fulfilling life that you actually get time to enjoy," he says. "Importantly it is the people and the community that make an effort to connect, to share and to enjoy."

If Craig, who owns and operates the Sebel Hotel in Launceston, had to convince someone to live and work in Northern Tasmania he would cite the better life balance between work and play. "Leisure activities are just easier and more accessible than in a bigger city and you'll get more time with your family."

Bede concurs: "The first thing I noticed about moving here is I had time to take up hobbies again, I was no longer sitting in traffic spending hours per week commuting, getting car parks and running from place to place. Now I get to have a life during the working week - I can mountain bike, play tennis, go out for dinners and spend time in the garden."

Will believes Tasmania's climate will become a point of attraction as mainlanders escape the extreme events.

Phil says he read someone describe the feeling of living in Tasmania as "Hygge", a Danish and Norwegian word for "a mood of coziness and comfortable conviviality with feelings of wellness and contentment" and couldn't agree more.

Tasmanians have an authenticity about them which is endearing and comforting," Bede adds. "Safety, affordability and time are the key factors that make Launceston and Northern Tasmania so liveable. Essentially

quality of life for a middle income earner is far superior than a major metro city. Northern Tasmania also is well placed for accessing the fabulous attributes of nature: mountains, forests, beaches, rivers and lakes are all close by and seldom busy - the place allows you to unhinge from the stresses of metro life."

So, where are some of their favourite places to spend time?

WMC: The Cataract Gorge here in Launceston in my view is the best natural area in any town in Australia. Also Cradle Mountain, only two hours away, is spectacular any time of the year and has truly exhilarating areas to explore by foot.

PC: Derby. If you dreamt of a perfect mountain biking scenario it wouldn't be as good as Derby. We also enjoy the east coast, Coles Bay for a swim, Bicheo for a surf and looking forward to St Helens for a ride. In Launceston, we spend a lot of time at the Gorge. You can spend hours there with the kids and press repeat.

CR: In Launceston, the Cataract Gorge - within the region, Bridport

BC: At Home with family and friends. The old saying "love where you live and live where you love" could not be any more relevant to me.

And, why do they think population growth, particularly attracting young professional families to the region is so vital?

BC: I believe the city is short 20,000 people. It is on the cusp of greatness and the cities attributes and infrastructure lends itself attracting working families that can contribute to the community. It is critical we get young professional families that can bring new ideas, capital and energy to revitalise our economy and improve the social fabric of Northern Tasmania. Innovative thinking with a focus on quality over quantity should be our mantra when thinking of a community our children can thrive in.

CR: With an ageing population and propensity for our younger demographic to leave for job opportunities in larger cities, attracting professional families is critical to maintain and grow our economy as well as drive up the availability of a skilled workforce to encourage companies to setup or expand their businesses in Northern Tasmania.

PC: We love living in Launceston and have watched the city evolve over the last four years - new restaurants and cafes, new parks, new mountain biking trails. A growth in population will prompt further growth in amenity and prosperity of the city. We seek this for ourselves and for our kids.

WMC: Being in healthcare we know that Tasmania has an older population and as such we need younger people either remaining in the state or young families moving here so that the population doesn't run the risk of not being able to support the older generation. Young professional families can bring a passion and vibrancy to the community and whilst it is important to get the right balance I feel another 20-30 thousand people in the Tamar Valley would be sustainable and bring better prosperity to the region.

People interested in the concept can visit liveLaunceston.com.au or @liveLaunceston on Facebook and are encouraged to share it with friends and family looking to move to Northern Tasmania.



NTDC Media Release

Date 1 May 2020

Response to Premier's Economic and Social Recovery Advisory Council

The Northern Tasmania Development Corporation has welcomed the formation of the Premier's Economic and Social Recovery Advisory Council announced yesterday.

The Recovery Council has the important task of devising a plan to restart the Tasmanian economy as it emerges from the COVID-19 pandemic and will be well served by the highly skilled members.

NTDC looks forward to understanding how the Recovery Council will operate and how we will engage on ways in which we know Northern Tasmania can play its part in the state's economic and social reformation.

Chief executive Mark Baker said NTDC is working closely with regional stakeholders to examine what can be done now to mitigate economic decline and what we must plan to do once it is safe to restart our economy.

"Our resilience will be measured by the strength and speed of how we respond to adversity and we hope this regional collaboration will be of benefit to Northern Tasmania," Mr Baker said.

ENDS

For more comment, please contact Mark Baker on 0409 356 183



NTDC Media Release

Date 13 May 2020

Draft Tasmanian Renewable Energy Action Plan

Northern Tasmania Development Corporation has welcomed the government's draft plan to make the state a global renewable energy powerhouse.

The state government's Draft Tasmanian Renewable Energy Action Plan aims for 100 per cent renewable energy in two years, double that capacity in 20 years, and be producing and exporting renewable hydrogen in the next decade.

NTDC chief executive Mark Baker said the production of green hydrogen energy at Bell Bay was a high priority for the region and one of the most exciting potential developments in recent years.

"The production and export of hydrogen made from 100 per cent renewable energy fits Tasmania's narrative as a leader in clean, green energy and innovative industries," Mr Baker said.

"Hydrogen energy production, coupled with the Marinus Project and Battery of the Nation, will see Tasmania be a leader in renewable energy."

Mr Baker said Tasmania has a competitive advantage from its hydro and wind power and emerging renewables like ocean, geothermal and biomass resources.

"With the impact of COVID-19 on economies around the world, now is the perfect time to push ahead and solidify that competitive advantage.

"The potential of attracting major industries wanting to locate their business in environmentally sustainable locations can also not be underestimated."

Mr Baker said it was pleasing to also note the potential social impacts of the draft plan, with projected jobs and skills and training initiatives.

"Economic development is the process by which communities become wealthier, healthier and smarter, with falling levels of disadvantage," Mr Baker said.

"Plans that contribute to all those areas should be welcomed."

ENDS

For more comment, please contact Mark Baker on 0409 356 183



NTDC Media Release

Date 19 May 2020

Renewable Hydrogen Action Plan

Northern Tasmania Development Corporation encourages those with a business interest in hydrogen energy to lodge an expression of interest for their proposal.

Tasmania has set an ambitious but achievable goal of producing renewable hydrogen for local market by 2022-2024, building to exports by 2025-2027 and becoming a global producer and exporter by 2030.

The state government has called for applications to its renewable hydrogen action plan, which details a 10-year, \$50 million investment package to get the industry off the ground.

The package includes a \$20 million Renewable Hydrogen Fund, up to \$20 million in concessional loans and up to \$10 million in support services such as competitive electricity supply arrangements and payroll tax relief.

NTDC is aware of several opportunities from emerging businesses interested in the state's hydrogen production future at Bell Bay.

Chief executive Mark Baker said producing green hydrogen at Bell Bay was one of the major next steps in the state's renewable energy story.

"Now more than ever we need new investments that match Tasmania's competitive advantages and the production of hydrogen from Tasmania's clean and green energy supply will put the state at the forefront of an industry forecast to grow exponentially over the coming decade," Mr Baker said.

"Hydrogen energy production complements the Battery of the Nation and Marinus projects in using Tasmania's abundant renewable energy to grow and diversify our export revenues."

Mr Baker said the Bell Bay Advanced Manufacturing Zone was perfectly placed to become the hub of hydrogen energy production with its access to deep-water ports, transmission infrastructure and road networks.

"The potential for a Bell Bay pilot production plant to create up to 150 jobs and for the full-scale operation to create up to 1200 jobs is tremendous news for Northern Tasmania," he said.

Applications open today and close on 18 August 2020.

ENDS

For more comment, please contact Mark Baker on 0409 356 183



NTDC Media Release

Date 18 June 2020

Northern Regional Prison

Northern Tasmania Development Corporation has reiterated its support of a Northern Regional Prison and welcomed the compromise on location at Westbury.

NTDC chief executive Mark Baker said the jobs in construction and ongoing operation of the prison were needed now more than ever.

“The independent Social and Economic Impact Study shows the \$270 million development will create 739 additional full-time equivalent jobs during construction and 372 ongoing jobs during operation,” Mr Baker said.

“As well as a \$280 million economic output during construction, a further \$268 million output will come from prison operations.”

Mr Baker added it was the multiplier effect of that investment where Meander Valley and greater Northern Tasmania can really benefit.

“These jobs and the income generated in Northern Tasmania will be an ongoing source of sustained economic growth over the next decade.”

Mr Baker noted the future construction of the prison made planning for an appropriate skills pipeline more pressing and also presented an opportunity during operation to apply leading economic principles such as the circular economy.

NTDC recognised the community feedback on the initial site and was pleased the study showed many people would be more supportive of the prison if it was located further from the town.

“The state government has selected a site that is 5.2 kilometres from the town centre, which we hope will allay many of the objections raised by some in the community.”

Mr Baker said with almost half of Tasmania’s prison population in the state’s north and north-west, a Northern Regional Prison would also help improve inmate support and rehabilitation.

“Creating that support network leads to better rehabilitation outcomes and lower rates of recidivism,” Mr Baker said.

ENDS

For more comment, please contact Mark Baker on 0409 356 183



NTDC Media Release

Date 26 June 2020

2023 FIFA Women's World Cup

The possibility for Launceston to host three group games of the 2023 FIFA Women's World Cup is a massive opportunity, Northern Tasmania Development Corporation says.

Australia and New Zealand were awarded the next Women's World Cup this morning and Launceston's UTas Stadium is on the list of potential venues, which would put Northern Tasmania on the international stage.

NTDC chief executive Mark Baker said the world game was Tasmania's number one sport and the exposure and excitement generated by playing on the best pitch in Australia would be a tremendous economic and social win for the region.

"Having experienced first-hand the excitement of a World Cup, I can say there is nothing like the first kick-off in a World Cup or the first time the host side finds the back of the net," he said.

"Launceston is perfectly placed to take advantage of this opportunity with UTas Stadium regarded as the best playing surface in the nation."

Mr Baker said the venue also had World Cup credentials, hosting Namibia and Romania at the Rugby World Cup in front of a capacity crowd in 2003.

"And that was a game most Tasmanians knew nothing about. With soccer the number one sport in the state and participation increasing rapidly, particularly with females, this is an opportunity that will inspire generations to come."

Mr Baker also noted the potential exposure Northern Tasmania could benefit from by hosting group games and the flow-on economic returns.

"The 2019 Women's World Cup in France was a watershed moment for the sport, with more than 1.12 billion viewers tuning into the broadcast. Just imagine what Tasmania can do with that size audience."

"The timing is also promising as our economy seeks to rebuild from the impacts of COVID-19."

ENDS

For more comment, please contact Mark Baker on 0409 356 183