



SALON/SOUTH 2011

Twenty-First Century Ideas for Tasmania

//CULTURE

//COMMUNITY

//CAPITAL

About SALON/SOUTH

In 2011 the Inglis Clark Centre for Civil Society at the University of Tasmania ran the second SALON/SOUTH series – discussion salons exploring ideas and practical strategies for enhancing the economic, cultural and social vibrancy of Tasmania as we proceed through the twenty-first century. The first series was delivered in 2010. The subsequent report became a useful resource for Tasmanians, and others, working broadly in the space of thought leadership.

In 2011, again almost one hundred Tasmanian agenda setters across industry, government, academia and the community and philanthropic sectors participated in SALON/SOUTH. Some had been involved in the 2010 series, but most 2011 participants were new to these events, to expand the range of contributing viewpoints. SALON/SOUTH 2011 was delivered across Tasmania – CULTURE in Launceston, COMMUNITY in Burnie, and CAPITAL in Hobart. Core funding for this project came from the Inglis Clark Centre, with generous partnership support from New Ground, Clockwork Beehive, Moorilla and Chartley Estate. Salon participants all donated their time on a pro bono basis.

Each salon ran for around three hours in the evening. The sessions featured expert speakers from outside Tasmania, whose role was to lead discussion and stretch local thinking on the issues addressed. In 2011 these guest participants were Professor Marcia Langton, Foundation Chair of Australian Indigenous Studies at the University of Melbourne, and member of the Prime Minister's Expert Panel for Constitutional Recognition of Indigenous Australians (CULTURE); Associate Professor Cheryl Kernot, Director of Social Business at the Centre for Social Impact at the University of New South Wales and former Federal parliamentarian (COMMUNITY); and Ms Narelle Hooper, finance journalist and Editor of *AFR BOSS* magazine (CAPITAL). Each salon was curated and facilitated by the Director of the Inglis Clark Centre.

Sessions were run according to the Chatham House Rule, to encourage more frank and open debate. This ensured the participation of key political operatives, industry and community leaders and senior bureaucrats – and the expression of opinion and disagreement that would not necessarily occur constructively in more public and exposed contexts.

This report is my summary of the discussion and recommendations of each salon. It also includes commissioned 'think/do' pieces from a selection of salon participants.

I welcome feedback and enquiries about *SALON/SOUTH 2011 – Twenty-First Century Ideas for Tasmania*, which is available online from the Inglis Clark Centre.

Associate Professor Natasha Cica

Director

Inglis Clark Centre for Civil Society

Division of the Provost

University of Tasmania

e: natasha.cica@utas.edu.au | m: 0416 005820 or +61 416 005820

About the Inglis Clark Centre for Civil Society

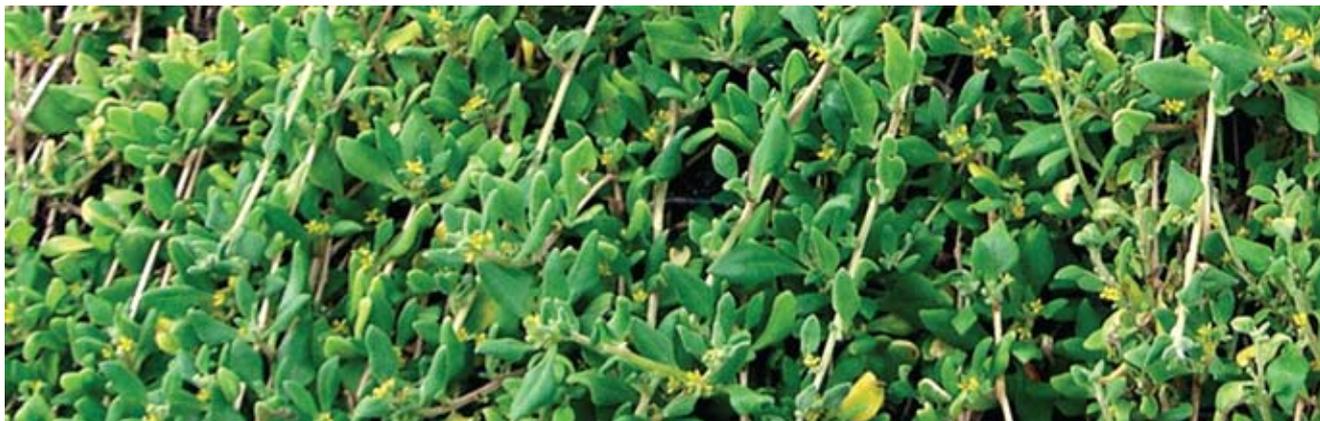
In 1946, Italian émigré and textile industrialist Claudio Alcorso – newly released from wartime internment as an ‘enemy alien’, imprisoned here despite his strong opposition to fascism – became inspired and excited by the idea of an Australian *naissance*. By this he meant the expression in Australian culture, politics, business and disposition of an authentic identity freed from traditional bonds, and grounded in this place, the passions and perspectives of its people. In 1947, Alcorso relocated his business to Tasmania, and in the 1950s established a home and vineyard at Moorilla (a Tasmanian Aboriginal word meaning ‘rock by the water’) at the northern edge of Hobart. Today, that is the site of David Walsh’s internationally renowned Museum of Old and New Art (MONA).

These connections point to a big question – long characterized as a backward, mendicant or even failed State, can Tasmanians enjoy our own contemporary *naissance*? If so (and I do believe we can), how do we define and realize that vision? Does our viability through the twenty-first century depend on the evolution of a boutique brand, fulfilling the potential of Tasmania as a kind of special, southern ‘laboratory’? How can a commitment to equity and to equality of opportunity sit successfully with respect for the contribution made by more established elites as well as entrepreneurs? What is the role of education in this mix – and of the University of Tasmania?

Advancing the distinctive legacy of nineteenth century Tasmanian democrat Andrew Inglis Clark, an early Vice-Chancellor of the University of Tasmania and a founding father and drafter of the Australian Constitution, the Inglis Clark Centre for Civil Society has already begun exploring applied answers to these questions. In January 2012 the Inglis Clark Centre relocated to the Division of the Provost, to play a leading strategic and practical role in the University of Tasmania’s thought leadership and community initiatives.

The *SALON/SOUTH 2011 – Twenty-First Century Ideas for Tasmania* report relaunches the Inglis Clark Centre, and points to a promising future.

Professor David Rich
Provost
University of Tasmania



SALON/SOUTH//CULTURE

– Launceston

The CULTURE salon was led by Marcia Langton, one of Australia's most challenging commentators and outspoken actors on questions of culture.

The selection of a leading Indigenous Australian was deliberate. How else to open a meaningful conversation about culture (multi-, mono-, high, low, elitist, egalitarian, White, Black, whatever we care to call it) in a part of Australia still arguably struggling more than many to come to honest terms with the legacies of colonialism? As Hobart-based Bill Lawson, Principal of Sinclair Knight Mertz and Chairman of the Beacon Foundation, wrote to me later in 2011 – 'all Aussies are lucky, except the First Ones whose situation is helpless and often hopeless, a national disgrace made all the more pointed by our otherwise plenty.' The selection of a mainland Australian, rather than a Tasmanian, was also deliberate.

Also later in 2011, the Australian Human Rights Commission's Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Social Justice Commissioner, Mick Gooda, travelled to Tasmania to give a public lecture at the University of Tasmania. His 2011 James Martineau Memorial Lecture, *The Power of Identity: Naming Oneself, Reclaiming Community*, addressed difficult questions of 'lateral violence' within Indigenous communities, of the harm people do by running each other down. That message should resonate with all Tasmanians – not just Indigenous Tasmanians.

Marcia Langton opened this SALON/SOUTH discussion by returning to first principles from her original training as an anthropologist. Language, communication and material culture form a deep, evolutionary part of human nature. We inherit culture. It's deep knowledge, deeply ingrained behaviour that develops as we are socialized in our families, our social network, our group – whether that's a tiny group inhabiting a valley in Papua New Guinea, or a larger group vastly spread across the Mongolian steppes. 'Tell me about your culture' is in a sense an impossible question. Culture just *is*. For the people who

live and practise it, culture is often inexpressible. It's about where we place the fork, how we hold the wine glass. It's also a pretty big idea, which anthropologists squabble over all the time. Then there are the squabbles of academics and others working in 'the arts' ... but culture is much bigger than that, too.

Everyone has a sense of aesthetics. Today's proof, at the start of the highway from Hobart to Launceston, is the Museum of Old and New Art. David Walsh made it happen, and he grew up there. It's one of the most spectacular art collections in the world, and it's *there*, in Glenorchy, fully accessible to everyone. There used to be an idea that aesthetics were just for the upper or finer classes, not for the rabble, the poor. For anthropologists, especially in my tradition, that's not so. Even animals – chimpanzees, elephants – have some sense of aesthetics, preference and taste. What *people* do with their culture is draw on aesthetics as a reservoir, and that's what's interesting. We each end up with a kind of tapestry of culture, and you'd have to be a complete hermit, or perhaps an isolated prisoner, to be detached from it. When I was a child, I had access to the radio. I remember Jimmy Little singing on the radio, and Darby McCarthy, a jockey and a distant relation – everyone would run over and say *Turn it up, Kath!* That was our connection to the wider world, that, and of course gossip.

Today, how can anyone hide from anyone else? So it's a new phase of culture, perhaps with new questions. What do we hold dear? How do we protect it? Material objects, artefacts, are a link to our past, conveying meaning that goes to our ideas of ourselves as a people, our connections to our ancestors. Especially important, special and precious objects can be connected to nationalism, the idea of one blood, one people. Everyone has some version of that. For each of us there is a set of objects, sounds, and so on, that do it for us - other things just don't do it for us. Strauss waltzes don't do it for me, but they do it for many Austrians. And some people have really big audiences, because what they're about does it for lots of people. So our language, our



musical traditions, our culture – in the twenty-first century, where we're fortunate to have global communications that give us access to so much – it's all become like a big soup, and human beings can move around in that.

I know you want me to say something about Aboriginal culture. For Aboriginal people in Australia, for whom survival can be a challenge, what do we hang onto today, and how? I've lived most of my life in the north, but here I am in Tasmania, and here I am as an Aboriginal person. And Henry Reynolds is whispering in our hearts. There's a big elephant in the room. I was creeped out driving up that highway today, why are there sculptures of gun-toting bushrangers, where's the Aboriginal history? It's a bit like this in other parts of Australia, parts of Queensland and Western Australia and the Northern Territory, because the frontier's much closer in those places. Why can't people deal with that? You can be cheeky at the frontier. But there is a silence down here in Tasmania about what happened to Aboriginal people. Am I right, or am I wrong about that?

One participant answered that Tasmanians don't have a problem locating Aboriginal people in the past – our problem is having them in our present.

Another, a recent arrival in Tasmania, pointed to an 'incredible, palpable guilt' here about our past, specifically our Aboriginal and convict

history. There are no words, no articulation of much of this. You cannot be amnesiac if you never knew and don't know the stories. It's not just that we don't know where the elephant is, she claimed, it's that we don't know where the room is. We need the dark stories, we need the light stories, we need *more* stories. Another spoke of the 'concreting over' of Launceston's historical role as a centre of the international movement to end convict transportation. A third spoke of difficulties gaining access to the collections and stories of old colonial farming properties in the Midlands, including Bothwell. He identified a sense of rawness, where stories of family prosperity are still connected very directly with convict labour, a link that's largely been broken in other parts of Australia.

Sixteen thousand Tasmanians identify as Aboriginal, according to another participant, but only 1200 of these are accepted as Aboriginal by the Tasmanian Aboriginal Centre (TAC). Also, there's a lot out there now about Aboriginal culture, on the record. To what extent does the TAC (legitimately, or not?) circumscribe contemporary debate about Aboriginal history, culture and its implications in Tasmania? Do contemporary Aboriginal leaders open up the possibility for telling richer stories – or are some set on perpetrating a kind of civil war, with their/our own people? Where is the shared conversation? Why do we assume there is 'the' or

'one' Aboriginal community in Tasmania? Why is it so difficult to ask *these* questions?

An educator expressed frustration, on one hand, at the bookend difficulties of being criticised by non-Indigenous Tasmanians for flying the Aboriginal flag at school, and of locating local Aboriginal Tasmanians to tell *their* stories at his school. On the other hand, Indigenous communities in Cape York and other parts of mainland Australia had engaged readily with his school community, which gave his students a sense of community (and culture) far beyond Tasmania, and connection to it through digital technology. Others gave examples of small public schools, networks and projects across northern Tasmania with strong or developing connections with local Aboriginal elders and community members. They spoke of dancing in the Cataract Gorge in Launceston, quiet conversations in Bridport about she-oaks and bull-oaks, of 'walking the talk' to piece things together. Are these 'jackhammers into the concrete that's been layered over history', or 'little inroads' that work best when we're 'not trying too hard'?

If practice makes culture go on, what's the role of language? Are there underexplored commonalities between the experiences of migrants and refugees from non-English speaking backgrounds and contemporary Aboriginal Tasmanians? What is 'our' Tasmanian language – what do or should we speak at home, including with our children?

How do culture, politics and policy connect? On one view, we don't have an 'Aboriginal problem' in Tasmania, we have a human problem – connected with a failure of imagination. Another participant pointed to needs, wants and desires at the heart of debates about culture and its practice; if there is no need, want or desire for a (cultural) product, a (cultural) process, a (cultural) exchange, what actually happens? His most successful experiences as a designer, and as a teacher, have been 'totally devoid of politics.' Another participant suggested too much effort is elevated or directed to politics – rather, what we need is a critical mass of socially progressive people in Tasmania, connected through a real passion for better public policy, and who can better engage with Tasmania's wider population, the huge group



of people in Tasmania who are more socially conservative.

And what's the role of Tasmania's persistent north/south divide? 'As a sportsman, I've loved it, but beyond that I don't get it.'

When invited to recommend specific changes in Tasmania relating to culture, participants suggested the following:

- We need better understanding of the most meaningful reference points for telling stories about Tasmanian Aboriginal culture, that reach a wider audience, including tourists. Anyone who wants to move into that space right now feels it's a poisoned chalice – they don't know who to speak to, how to start telling the stories.
- Contemporary art should better connect with something 'other', not what we're already connected to. The contemporary art sector has a responsibility to make that difference apparent. We need more art that's not 'nice', not 'traditional.'
- As White Tasmanians we need to learn to stop being Western inquirers and analysts, and learn better how to *be* with one another, within a space where we can grow together. We need to respect and accept difference in all its forms and cultural variations.
- I've heard a lot about humanity and Aboriginality, but one word I haven't heard much about tonight is 'island', which in some ways does define Tasmania. Tasmania is not really a 'soup' like Melbourne, it's more meat and three veg. The most precious thing in Tasmania is a secret – as well, people are shit scared to speak out and offend people. The best thing I've seen here so far is Ten Days on the Island – we need to see and hear more of that.
- In an island community like Tasmania, we need to recognize that there's not *one* Tasmanian community. Do we all identify as Tasmanians?
- One word I haven't really heard is 'creativity'. How do we embed that in everyday life, so it's sustainable? We've still got a long way to go.
- I wish that we knew more of the traditional language names around the State. Why aren't they on the Midlands Highway?
- There is a strong sense of White ownership in this State. (It also matters whether you were born here or not, in a way that it doesn't matter in other parts of Australia). Every visitor to Tasmania who encounters a tourist operator should expect and demand that they have the ability to share the full history of this place, not deny it.
- Although I agree that a large percentage of Tasmanians are socially conservative, I've experienced and observed real (not abstract) connections between Aboriginal and other Tasmanians, that move beyond mutual fear and suspicion. We must not forget the power of stories to connect people across those divides – almost subversively.
- Let the culture come out. Speaking of Aboriginal culture, it can't come out if it is not supported by government and by Aboriginal people themselves. Then we can learn about it.
- We need acceptance of any culture that comes to Tasmania.
- All Tasmanians who haven't lived outside this island should go away – and come back.
- We need to relearn *engagement* (solutions lie with real people – including young people, homeless and dispossessed people) and *ethics* (linked up with politics and each other, the role we have, and the human side we can choose).

- Engagement is key. In 2005 the Queen Victoria Museum and Art Gallery (QVMAG) in Launceston put on an exhibition about the art of football. It was hugely successful, and engaged a completely different segment of the Tasmanian community. How do we engage others?
- Engagement with others' *needs* is also key. There should be less self-oriented behaviour in the political and personal realms. Considering the needs of other people is also a key to better design.
- More of us should say what we really feel, not what people think we should say and feel. We must let go of the notion that it's too dangerous.
- There is a lot of pomposity surrounding ideas about culture. But culture is about *us*. It's embodied. We should have more democratic distribution of cultural goods – whatever that means.
- All of us, as residents of this island, should find out better how to respect Aboriginal Tasmanians' understanding of and connection to this place. Every Tasmanian child should be taught this.
- We should *all* work out a new relationship with nature.
- Tasmania is like a young adolescent man. It's in a liminal development space. We want it to grow up.
- I am an artist. What I want is too complicated to express in a single sentence.
- I have a utopian vision for Tasmania, where people do connect – through the arts – in ways they otherwise would not.
- As an eighth generation Tasmania with thirty convicts in my family tree, I would love to go back in time and ask them all what actually happened.
- I wish we could tell stories in a more mature fashion, and also accept that the arts are not the answer to everything. We need a more democratic conversation.
- I wish we could have a regular block booking at an Italian restaurant to continue this discussion. We've touched on only about a tenth of the conversation I want to continue.
- We should engage with beauty and truth.
- Every Tasmanian should have the opportunity to access a truly rich and participatory arts experience. I do think the arts are the answer to everything.
- I am not sure we can all resolve our past, but we should all work to resolve our future. If we care to know who we are – as a people, as a State – we will know who we are in the world. Then we will truly understand how special this place is, and how special are lots of its people and institutions. We need to understand that better, and take it to the world.
- We should include arts, football and more in our conversations about culture. Instead of asking government for more money for all of that, we should work out how to be more productive with the money we do have and get.
- There are two potent symbols in Tasmania today – MONA, and the new Pontville immigration detention centre. There's a white wall in Glenorchy that's stayed pretty clear of graffiti – the only tag there comes from kids across the river, the local kids say MONA's so cool we don't want to wreck it. Pontville points to a need for more diversity and plurality in this society.
- If Tasmania wants people's attention, we should start thinking a little more about what gets their attention. And start thinking more about what the 'new economy' means. It must be built on cultural capital.

- I spent a lot of time on Vancouver Island, where there is better acknowledgement of atrocities against First Nations people. It's more out there. Their museum tells the stories, acknowledges that mistakes were made. We could learn a lot from that.
- Let's talk about why David Walsh has only one Aboriginal artwork in his displayed collection – and it doesn't look like an Aboriginal artwork.
- More Tasmanian Aboriginal people should hook up with mainland Indigenous people, cross and stop that big divide.
- I have a dilemma with culture. Most of us are in many ways quite privileged. We define our experience by narrative. I'm a migrant

to Australia, and I've lived in St Kilda where there are many cultures, and in Queensland where half my class was black. But I go to an exhibition in the Academy Gallery in Launceston, and there are maybe 7.5 people. I wonder if we've got it totally wrong? I have a real keenness for the other, for leaving, for different cultures – Aboriginal, migrant, gay, whatever. How do we make that keenness contagious?

- I am optimistic about the young. I wish there were more young people participating in this conversation. We need to engage their potential, optimistically and democratically.
- How about some guerilla art, maybe at Bothwell?



A NEW FUTURE FOR TASMANIA'S CULTURAL SECTOR

– **Ross Honeywill, Chairman, Festival of Voices**

The global economic disease has been painful and punishing, and no more so than here in Tasmania where an already burdened economy is facing continued and concentrated State budgetary contraction. However, all the current fiscal challenge is doing is bringing forward the inevitable day of reckoning for publicly funded enterprises.

With the one exception of the exceptional MONA, all cultural events and arts organizations rely heavily on government support. Four per cent of the Tasmanian government's budget is spent on tourism, arts, environment, parks and recreation.

The timing has therefore never been more apposite for a major initiative to enhance Tasmania's cultural capital. What is needed is a new and robust infrastructure initiative to develop the collective worth of the sector and realize the current and future creative potential of Tasmania.

Greater collaboration is the first step in illustrating how we can invigorate the present and in doing so, future-proof Tasmanian jobs.

In the short to medium term, enterprises in the cultural sector can expect reductions in funding. And as the State moves beyond this immediate budgetary contraction, government will – or should – trade-off continued funding against productivity gains.

However, the public sector, including the myriad cultural enterprises that exist only at the patronage of government, is notoriously wasteful. In the cultural sector alone duplication of services is endemic. With this funding crisis threatening the survival of many organizations, and with an expectation that productivity gains will be required in the near term, Tasmania needs a new business model in the arts and broader cultural sector.

It's time for a shared services model to both reduce the reliance of the Tasmanian cultural sector on government funding, and deliver productivity gains and increase the State's economic return on cultural investment (ROCI).

A shared services framework needs to consider the following factors:

- In an era of financial stringency we need to save in order to reduce reliance on State government funding, reduce the total pool of government money spent (even beyond Treasury's goal), and reduce expensive duplication of management and governance activities.
- In an era of financial stringency we need to increase the proportion of non-government funding by coordinating and increasing corporate sponsorship and personal philanthropy, and deliver productivity gains by lifting event revenue.
- In an era of financial stringency we need better ROCI on funds invested by government to increase the cultural capital of the State; increased visitation to the State by consumers in the top quartile of discretionary spending; increased spend-per-head at events of both visitors and Tasmanians; and we need to lift the economic impact of the cultural sector (arts and recreation) to beyond 3% of GDP (ahead of forestry, mining, manufacturing, public administration, property services and utilities).

The cultural sector – particularly the arts – operates on an outdated business model characterized by duplication of administrative activities, replication of sub-optimal corporate governance and a mistaken belief that creativity is beyond economic accountability.

A New Business Model

Tasmania has separate arts organizations across all disciplines – of varying budget size, staffing and fundraising capacity. Each of these organizations shares a similar organizational hierarchy – including a general manager, finance person, development

Second, is the issue of 'trust' – working together for mutual benefit has been a foreign concept. And while organizations in the cultural sector are willing to share some things, to consider some kinds of collaboration, by and large they have not been ready to work together.

The current budget contraction creates a climate in which the alternative to productive collaboration is potential oblivion.

Leadership is required right now – a non-government initiative predicated on the principle that the *Shared Experience* services hub will be a self-funding enterprise with its own management and governance.

Private sector leaders critical of the so-called culture of welfare dependence in Tasmania now have the opportunity to collaborate with cultural leaders in a private initiative delivering public benefits.

Now is the time for leaders to stand up and show the way. There will never be a better time.



SALON/SOUTH// COMMUNITY

– Burnie

Cheryl Kernot opened discussion at the COMMUNITY salon with two questions: *Do you think strong individuals create strong communities, or vice versa?* and *Is the social dysfunction displayed in the London riots of 2011, a symptom of a decline in community that's been accelerating across the last two decades?*

For some a community is simply a geographic area. For others, enough shared agreement around values, around ethics, gives a sense of community – and this is not necessarily geographically based, although it can be part of it. This leads to more questions. Have places like Tasmania's north-west coast retained a sense of community that other places have lost? I do feel a sense of vibrancy here. Is it easier to maintain a sense of community in regional places? Is our response to the complexity of big global questions, like climate change, a desire to respond locally? How does online interaction (including shopping) fit into ideas of community – are we increasingly conditioned to replace human contact, and connection with nature, with virtual, frenetic and non-reflective contact and connection? Has the rise of individualism and the growth of personal rights – of the 'me' generation, cross-generationally – undermined our sense that we're all in the same boat, together? Do we blame Paul Keating and John Dawkins? Dawkins said he wanted to demystify economics, but presumably he didn't intend to see economics become central to, or a substitute for, politics; today we are in the grip of a reverence for economics, but free markets do fail. How have changes in our sense of family, including its growing fragmentation and geographical dislocation, connected with the rise of divorce, played into this mix? Is it a good thing that more mothers working means we eat out more – have we reinvented the communal dining room? Can we blame the car for reducing the social cohesion that used to happen walking to school, and is Neighbourhood Watch an attempt to recreate part of this? Have we lost the notion

of shared communal space, and forgotten how to behave respectfully towards each other within it? What has happened to our sense of the tribal – of shared values, conventions, ethics?

Where are we headed next? Is the primacy of 'me' now giving way to a rediscovery of 'us'? What is the role of social entrepreneurship, of business whose core purpose is social, generating profit for a social purpose, for reinvestment in people and society? Especially as government balks at intractable social problems like youth recidivism and others parked in its too-hard basket, should we shift from a mindset of reliance on government interventions and grants – towards ideas of social finance, where the kind of people we used to call venture capitalists become social philanthropists, investing upfront in organizations and programmes within a contractual framework of agreed outcomes, and where their returns correlate with the savings government makes? How do we develop new tools to measure social return on investment, and how do we measure the success of our community? Can't we learn a little from developments in places like France and the United Kingdom, from a shift from limited conversations about Gross Domestic Product (GDP) or Gross National Product (GNP) to include considerations of well-being – even happiness – in our national accounts. Perhaps along the lines of WARM (The Young Foundation's Wellbeing and Resilience Measure - www.youngfoundation.org/our-work/advising-public-service-innovation/warm/wellbeing-and-resilience-measure-warm)? Can't we all become social investors, deploying models like www.kiva.org – a microcredit portal where anyone can invest from \$25 in a project of their choice, recycling that investment over and over, lending rather than giving?

Participants wondered if a sense of community might be connected with size. Circular Head, for example, only has a population of around 5,000 people, but 'we close ranks when disasters happen, we embrace each other in a unique way; you wouldn't see that in Burnie.' Does size, or scale, mean that small communities tend to be more resilient because it's easier for people to build informal institutions rather than relying on formal or established ones? 'It's a real KPI

– people want you to belong to this community, size matters enormously. As a Chinese person, with a real sense of collectivism as a social norm, I think individualism can be a very harmful thing, and I think that sense of the collective is still very strong in places like Burnie.’ Isn’t this connected with the opening question of whether strong communities make strong individuals, or vice versa? What kind of opportunities and role models are accessible to children and younger adults in small communities? What are the differences *between* smaller communities? Is a sense of community cohesion connected to relative geographical isolation, does progress (as a basic example, being able to access a town by road rather than train) act to the detriment of community spirit and resilience? ‘I hate parochialism, but is it the case that the further away you are from the seat of power, the more resilient you have to be?’

This generated a lively discussion about the different qualities of various north-west Tasmanian communities. Burnie – ‘spud farmers’, ‘industrial base and history of manual labour’, ‘makers’, ‘more egalitarian’, ‘pride in adversity’, ‘Burnie says yes!’, ‘it makes an effort to generate opportunities that emanate from here, rather than competing with others’, ‘better than Launceston’, ‘they’ll spend \$30 on a ticket to an arts event even if they don’t have much money’, ‘a needy place and a marginal seat’, ‘benefiting from State and Federal government and media bias towards it as the centre of the region’ Devonport – ‘lingering squattocracy’, ‘less exciting.’ Ulverstone – ‘I’d contend it should be front and centre.’ Circular Head – ‘very resilient.’ Queenstown – ‘a more itinerant, mining community.’ Beyond Smithton – ‘I can get access to people you’d never really meet in other places, compared to when I lived on the mainland, and it’s not difficult to form those relationships.’

More long-standing Burnie residents pointed to the importance of the ongoing Making Burnie 2030 initiative, enabling the town’s reinvention through education, tourism, the arts and so on. One recalled the 1990s, when people were moving out ‘like rats leaving a sinking ship’, and the general

manager of Lactos said something needed to be done. Fabian Dattner from Melbourne and others (not politicians) were engaged, and the question was posed – ‘What makes your heart bleed about Burnie?’ Around thirty people sat in a room and decided that it would be Burnie people building Burnie. Qualitative and quantitative work was done, and after initial negativity the council came on board, and things blossomed – ‘I still say, if you have a great idea in Burnie, you can pull it off in two weeks.’

Another participant with long-standing connections to the north-west expressed dismay at the way the conversation went ‘straight to the language of winners and losers, and to a sense of geographical community – I have a sense of Tasmania as my community, and I think strong individuals make strong communities.’ A newer regional resident said, ‘I consider myself a “coaster.” When I moved down here, a friend said, “What do you want to go and live in that shithole for?” But there are pockets of thought leadership and acceptance here that are remarkable. One of the real measures of community is people’s capacity to make a difference. We need to broaden that, but I think this region punches above its weight – socially, and in terms of thought leadership.’ Another newish arrival said ‘the thing I find incredibly special about the north-west is its “grit”, which comes out of tough times, and which is about people, and which generates a can-do attitude – and which here comes with a pride in the resources we do have, for example at the university, there’s no real anti-intellectualism here. You don’t necessarily find that in other parts of Australia, and I think it’s characteristic of Tasmania.’

Back to older Tasmania, and older coasters. ‘For me the Tasmanian condition is a love/hate thing. Our grit does generate leadership, but we can diverge so quickly on issues, if we don’t confirm to the monoculture. We have very stable social structures here, very connected families. Issues of gender and diversity can be a very difficult thing here, and this cuts across generations. Chronic unemployment cuts across many generations too.’ Another raised the (stereotypical?) spectre



of homophobia in north-west Tasmania. 'We've come a long way. I was almost fired in 1981 for being a gay man. Now I have red hair, I'm clearly gay, it's changed enormously.' Isn't that a feature of a strong community – it defends its values, but it can also learn new values? 'I feel like a person who was somehow run out of town. I felt I'd outgrown this place. There were few employment opportunities, I was ambitious, upwardly mobile and well-educated. I was in a same sex relationship. That wasn't a good fit in the 1990s. I like the idea of "exit interviews" in terms of community development in Burnie – think of the potential leaders we lost during that period. I do think some of the improvements here have come through greater ethnic diversity. Wouldn't it be great if Tasmania grew by 100,000 people?'

When invited to recommend specific changes in Tasmania relating to community, participants suggested the following:

- Get rid of the bureaucratic mindset, petty rules and regulations.
- More acceptance, as a starting point, of the fact that we can have different points of view – it's pathological to believe you're either with us or against us.
- More opportunities to bounce our views off each other.
- Greater respect for people and place.
- Bring more migrants and refugees to the north-west coast, so we can create more cultural diversity.
- More of this kind of gathering – of a diverse group of thought leaders – with the University of Tasmania leading this, and going to places to engage people whose views we might not be hearing.
- I want to establish a geopark in Queenstown – grounded in a space/time theology, there are fifty-eight geoparks in the world – to expand our sense of how we might live in this utilitarian space and landscape. There's a

prosaic lure, which is tourism, but the issue is how people see themselves in that landscape.

- Build aspiration in this community, including by engaging youth, especially by capturing the passion and vision of people in their early twenties.
- We must do more for children whose parents have no concept of proper parenting. We're into (at least) second generation dysfunctional families. This is a community responsibility.
- We need more social spaces where the community owns the education of children – which is not the same as 'taking over' parenting. Recently I had to talk to my primary school age children about the recent gay bashings in Smithton. The dominant paradigm in their school is still that gays are bad. We need more social spaces for sharing knowledge, to help children understand community and how they fit.
- We seem to tolerate a lot of obscene language, inappropriately intolerant opinion and other inappropriate behaviour in our public places and discussions. We should set a higher level of appropriate behaviour.
- At first I was disappointed in this forum, at the way people expressed pride in their particular place. I was annoyed. I see myself as a north-west coaster, not as someone who lives in Latrobe. An issue here is that councils are providers (and motivators) of many opportunities that make small communities strong. I worry about the potential loss of community if our councils amalgamate, get larger, cut services like Christmas carols because of 'efficiencies'. It would be ok to amalgamate Hobart and Glenorchy councils, perhaps, but twenty-nine councils is a plus in smaller towns in regional Tasmania. So we should seriously consider the role that councils play in our community.
- This place should identify itself as a genuine learning community – including through participation in formal education, and also through community debate.
- Is there scope for creating a MONA equivalent in this region? Not an art gallery, maybe a Tarkine national park, with similar spinoffs.
- Landscape Round Hill quarry. A little bit of landscaping will go a long way to improving local amenity, and changing the lingering perception of Burnie as an industrial town, with nowhere to stay and nowhere to eat.
- Demand a higher level of debate at council level, and secure better candidates for public office.
- Respect and recognize what has gone before.
- Recognize how far Burnie has come, and how well it does. I love being here, because of the people and their attitudes.
- I would like Burnie and its neighbours to become such attractive places that the population increases enough to ensure we have access to better services, and more industry. We need the right kind of growth.
- I want to live in a society where people are more careful – about how their actions affect each other, the community, the environment.
- We need a better metric to measure the full costs, and benefits, to the community of the proposed closure of small Tasmanian schools.
- Strong, equitable and just communities provide opportunities for individuals to grow and give back. We should identify socially entrepreneurial leaders within this community, and foster places for like minds and spirits to meet. This is the new glue of social regeneration.

COMMUNITY + CAREFULNESS

– Jamie Hanson

Communities and Flourishing

We live within communities, are shaped by them, and only come to be who we truly are within their context. Communities are essential to our wellbeing – they've been linked to good health, to low crime, to affluence, to happiness.

It is easy to forget these things. Caught in the spotlight of our own private dramas, we forget the supporting cast, the ways in which the communities within which we're embedded come together to provide the essential elements of these dramas. For few indeed are the people who achieve their dreams without the help of their families, or partners, or friends, without appeal to things they learned at school, who never need the help of a doctor or dentist or psychologist, who remain uninfluenced by radio shows or television, or the people they see every day on the street. Communities constitute an often-unnoticed backdrop to our lives. Perhaps they only become apparent when they are absent, when (for instance) we note the empty and hopeless look in the eyes of the old man isolated through his declining years, or when we note the aimless and unfocused rage of the homeless young man, huddled, begging outside a supermarket. We might ask ourselves at such times what went wrong. An answer: people failed to care, to embed in each other's lives, to nourish and support each other. Community failed.

Strong communities are necessary for human flourishing. We need them if we are to be happy and healthy. For, whilst communities are often very resilient, they can be broken. And once broken they can be very hard to fix.

I will discuss one type of threat to community, one prevalent in modern societies, one of which I think we should be more aware, which we can call carelessness – the failure to think through and take responsibility for the consequences of actions. In doing so, I will lean on an analysis of a type that has come to popularity recently in British politics,

across party lines. This analysis has been developed within the 'Blue Labour' movement of Maurice Glasman, Jon Cruddas, and others – a movement that reputedly has captured the attention of Ed Milliband, leader of the British Labour Party. On the other side of politics, an analogous 'Red Toryism' has been popularized in recent times by Phillip Blond. The Red Tory analysis possesses many similarities to some of the ideas of the centre-right Centre for Social Justice think-tank, founded by Conservative government minister Iain Duncan Smith.

Carelessness and Liberalism

Consider first the behavior of irresponsible bankers of the City of London, of Martin Place, or of Wall Street, and in particular their unrepentant claims of entitlement to (what seems to most to be) excessive remuneration.

Consider then the strangely numbing nihilism exhibited by the recent rioters of London, Birmingham and Manchester, smashing in the windows of small businesses in their own suburbs and high streets.

Each case is of a type – a case of people utterly failing at the task of taking care, failing to think through and accept responsibility for the likely consequences of their actions. People *should* think through the likely consequences of their actions, and they *should* accept responsibility for the consequences of their actions. When those consequences are harmful, then these people should be held to account. Wilful blindness must not be accepted as an excuse, and nor should mere compliance with laws and regulations. Taking advantage of unjust inequality or bargaining position is blameworthy, as is taking advantage of institutional biases. Needlessly introducing financial distress or instability is blameworthy, and so is destroying natural beauty. People should be sanctioned for doing these things, because they are wrong.

Of course, such a rule sounds unexceptional. I'm simply saying that more people should take some care about what they do, and when they don't that they should be disciplined. But we're failing to

that each of us sticks to a restrictive quota, if that is what it takes to render a fishery sustainable.

Traditionally we have had a mechanism with which to deal with such problems: morality. As a community, we have used moral tools such as shame, exclusion, and indeed legal sanction, to enforce generally accepted behavioural norms. But liberalism, in emphasising freedom of conscience and the right to self-determination, has undermined morality. Indeed, by self-consciously leaving it to each individual to determine for herself what she values without regard to communal standards, liberalism effectively de-moralises debate.

The Case Against Economic Liberalism

Economic liberalism potentially fares no better. Strong arguments for economic liberalism can slide quickly towards a problematic and careless form of capitalism – prominent examples include, for instance, arguments from 'the hidden hand' or from 'trickles down'.

Adam Smith famously noted that, 'it is not from the benevolence of the butcher, the brewer, or the baker that we expect our dinner, but from their regard to their own interest.' Smith's point is not that it is *good* or *desirable* that the baker moves from her own self-interest, but rather that it is a *fact* that she does. Capitalism provides the goods, certainly – but that doesn't mean that we should celebrate or encourage all self-interested action. We should

allow it insofar as it provides the goods, but there is no reason to go further than that. If we do make that additional move, we effectively condone amoral (and potentially immoral) behavior – careless behavior of a type that might reasonably be expected to reduce the overall or greater good, even as it enriches a few.

Some Last Thoughts

Tasmania is in a period of rapid transition. We have a small, open economy, which renders us unusually vulnerable to economic shock, changes in international patterns of consumption, and to the emergence of competitors capable of producing products with lower cost structures. A combination of such factors has, particularly since 2008, placed some sectors of the Tasmanian economy (especially in regional areas) under great strain. Jobs in forestry and light manufacturing are disappearing, probably never to return.

We can't close our eyes, shovel government money at dying industries, and make like everything is going to be ok. But what we can do is try to manage the change carefully, in ways that protect the close social and cultural bonds that define life in Tasmania's towns and cities. And we can aspire to a future filled with vibrant, healthy communities. That is most likely to happen if we Tasmanians better value living with compassion and sensitivity, in a culture richer with responsibility, and more full of care.



SALON/SOUTH//CAPITAL

– Hobart

Narelle Hooper opened this salon by interrogating the meaning of CAPITAL. Did we mean capital punishment? *Das Kapital*? Building wealth? This brings us to capitalism, which does lift people out of poverty, but can also be incredibly destructive. Where do players like Macquarie Bank sit and fit in this story? What of the 'We are the 99%' Occupy Wall Street (and beyond) protests – part movement, part internet meme? Do we want to be part of the 99%, or the 1%? The Western world seems inspired by the Arab Spring – are we witnessing the decline of the American Dream, because (paraphrasing Joseph Stiglitz) its capitalist practice delivers world class disadvantage, with fifty million Americans living below the poverty line? Pulling this back to Australia – is social unrest a new risk factor for business? We think we're better off, more egalitarian. How fortunate are we?

Have we become hung up on financial capital – at the expense of human, social, natural, and intellectual capital? Don't we need better integration of these 'capitals', and why is it still basically anathema to say this in the world of business and politics? Is growth necessarily good? What about waste? If we don't keep growing in ways we value and recognize, how do we find a way to encourage, value and recognize different kinds of growth?

Corporations already struggle with this. How do you tell the market that you can't grow any more? So much is bound up in the notion of keeping the wheels rolling, and the hamsters running within those wheels. Our superannuation savings are supposed to be invested for our long-term benefit, but investment decisions about that money are made with a short-term focus, the average length of holding a traded share is just eleven minutes. Can there be a more harmonious dance between the short- and long-term, can we build better links between capital and people (back to Stiglitz, who argues successful economies require collective action)?

Can we really keep going as we are? This is becoming a bigger issue at board level in the corporate world. Here's one approach: both BHP Billiton and the National Australia Bank dedicate around 1 per cent of their profits to community activities. Here's another: the property group Stockland has reduced the size of the apartments in its residential developments to make them more affordable, and to include more community space for multigenerational use, and if the price of these smaller homes has to stay static, so be it.

This points to the need for ways of measuring the health of *communities* – connected to crime rates, mental health, maybe even a happiness index. The Prince of Wales has become one vocal, global advocate of integrated reporting, claiming we are 'battling to meet twenty-first century challenges with, at best, twentieth century decisionmaking and reporting systems', and advancing a framework which instead brings together financial, environmental, social and governance information. But why should Australia care about all this? We're well positioned globally, staring north at ... potentially, more middle class consumers. We also face potential scarcity of the assets of natural capital. And, we are wasteful. Are we heading down the heavy road of the nine billion tonne hamster sketched by Viki Johnson earlier this year in her essay 'Growth Can't Go On' – <http://www.chinadialogue.net/article/show/single/en/4120>?

Let's reflect on this thing called *growth*.

One economist in the room responded that, firstly, growth of an economy, meaning growth in GDP or GNP, is not an evil thing in and of itself. The issue is really resource allocation, who gets what, and how, and what incentives are in place for distribution of resources. That's where finance comes in. We also need to talk about long-term capital. Second, who are the 99%? The percentage of Americans on a medium income hasn't really changed for thirty years, so aren't the people protesting mainly 'people like us'? Third, the current economic crisis in the United States has its origins in policies to lend money to disenfranchised sections of the community, to



purchase homes. Sometimes well-intentioned programmes backfire, because we don't get the incentive or governance structures right. Many issues relating to financial crises, growth and so on come back to individual decisions about investment. And it's important to interrogate wealth transfer – not so much in relation to the super wealthy, who pretty much opt out of the taxation system; but in relation to the rest of us. If we make a decision to transfer wealth to poorer people, is it so they can buy more things? Isn't that farcical?

A sociologist in the room responded with an entirely different reading of the United States' financial crisis, arguing its connection to a basic failure to provide public housing, and to a hijacking by interest groups of strategies relating to home ownership, rather than a benevolent effort to improve housing access for poor people. How have we arrived at such a comprehensive lack of faith in government and governance, and in collective solutions to problems? This lack of

faith precipitates political crises, which cannot be resolved without restoring the notion of collectivity.

A philosopher in the room asked – we're speaking about growth, but growth of what? That's *the* question. We all need a light on a hill, a goal. Growing GDP and GNP is a goal that all nations seem to have signed up to. The number one problem for capitalism is how do we slow this monster down, without it falling over? Perhaps we can break down that bigger question into smaller ones – what *don't* we want to grow, what *do* we want to grow (lifespans, happiness?)?

How does all this apply to Tasmania?

Many things are special in Tasmania, ventured another participant. Some good, some worrying. On the latter front, the question of educational attainment is fundamental. Without a public policy and community endeavour to address this, many other things in Tasmania won't change for

the better. This intervention set the tone for much of the subsequent discussion. The intersection of Tasmania's relatively poor educational outcomes with challenges posed by our ageing population next received attention. What are the implications for our taxation base and wealth transfer?

Tasmanians are obsessed with jobs, stated another, but we should be talking more about starting businesses, about moving out of that comfort zone and away from dependence on jobs, or welfare, provided by someone else. One participant claimed it's probably easier to get microfinance in Botswana than in Tasmania; and that we've frittered away our GST gains in the last decade, due to a lack of proper political leadership, and the absence of anything resembling a sovereign fund. There was criticism of the level of financial illiteracy of Tasmanians, including at relatively senior levels on boards and in State government – and agreement that this creates an opening for strategic interventions to improve financial literacy in schools. There was also criticism of the 'weights and measures police' at all levels of government in Tasmania, of an overly bureaucratic regulatory culture inhibiting entrepreneurs – 'if you didn't have

money from other sources, you would despair', said one small business owner. There was also agreement that Tasmania is full of amazing opportunities, waiting to be fully realized – 'I was just in the north-west of the State, it's the best dairy country in the world, but what's the iconic product we make there? Powdered milk!'

If we're talking about lifting up the less well off in Tasmania, education is fundamental, another participant reiterated. (Is it necessarily? challenged another, 'I'm addicted to degrees, but my partner isn't, he's more entrepreneurial. I think sometimes education stifles entrepreneurialism.'). But growth is fundamental too. Try getting the less well off into this room and tell them we need to pare back growth – run the next SALON/SOUTH in Gagebrook, and get people there to talk about growth and the redistribution of wealth. But isn't 'growth' vs 'no growth' the wrong question? Doesn't it come down to the question of risk, more accurately how we perceive risk? To even get to a conversation about risk, we need a deeper understanding of all the forms of capital we have in Tasmania, and there are different views about that. Once you move beyond those



differences – ‘a grown up thing to do’, despite the difficulties of building consensus – we can work out how we access all that capital. Then comes the really big question: *what* do we want to grow, and *how*. Do we transfer environmental capital into financial capital, and can we do that sustainably? Can we also translate creative capital sustainably into financial capital? What is our process of due diligence? What is our real appetite for risk? Doesn't this come back to who we are, and what we value? Is it flat screen tvs and SUVs? Growth in Tasmania could mean growth in what we already do extraordinarily well – wine-making, food, clean air, artistic and other creative endeavours. Who are we now, where and what do we want to be? Do we want to dig up the Tarkine with D9s, or don't we? How do we want to educate our kids, and in what?

When we express concern about school retention rates in Tasmania, we seem to view post-Year 10 qualifications as an end in themselves. Again, the better question is how and what do we want to teach our young people? Our focus should not be limited to qualifications, but rather on attainment relevant to individual and whole-of-community needs – across the primary, secondary, VET and tertiary education sectors. We tend to downgrade VET qualifications. We also need to look at how the welfare system interacts with and influences people's expectations and aspirations, including (especially?) for their children. We have at least three generations of Tasmanian families without real appreciation of education – for a long time leaving school at Grade 8 didn't mean you couldn't be gainfully employed, but today it does, it's a barrier now too to developing a skilled workforce on the land, to moving our agricultural sector forwards. Gender is a factor too. The percentage of women in Tasmania whose highest formal educational qualification is Year 10 is 36 % – that's precisely double the percentage in South Australia – and Tasmania's very high teenage pregnancy rates contribute to that.

For this overall situation to improve, we need a shift in public policy. Public policy about education, including re-entry, can transform places and people. For this to happen, we need

a shift in our leadership paradigm, in relation to making and implementing policy – arguably, few ideas or initiatives in Tasmania get a chance to realize their full potential. For that to change, political leadership is critical, but it is not enough by itself; the attitudinal shift needs to be community-wide. A conventional economist would ask questions about individuals recognizing a return on investment in education – so that coming from a background of lower median income and educational attainment, there is more of a tendency to be put off by the cost of that investment, compared to coming from a background of higher educational attainment. We need to enculture and inspire more of a curiosity about change, and development.

Here we might learn from examples outside Australia. In Malaysia, for example, and other source countries for many international students at the University of Tasmania, a university degree is the ambition of more people. We might also learn from Launceston, a city that grew rich in the late nineteenth century, but which according to one participant (from Launceston) had ‘ceased to have a purpose’ by the 1980s. ‘Growing up there was not fun. We had high unemployment. Coats Patons had closed, for example. I grew up with the sons of middle class lawyers and the sons of forestry workers, it was Cressy vs Prospect. For people who were employed, they were in the same jobs as their fathers and grandfathers, they'd never had to do anything different. But the world has changed. Tasmania has changed.’ We should also learn from another Tasmanian example, from the Cradle Coast campus at the University of Tasmania – ‘One of the most exciting initiatives there has been a Graduate Certificate in Business, oriented to mid-career people. They come in without entry requirements, except enthusiasm. We've seen 150 enrolments from people without previous experience in tertiary education, and a third of them then enrolled in Masters courses. They've invested their life savings, their redundancy payments, their one bit of capital, in education. To me this is an exciting story, because it is a true story and a real story. It has ripples. It affects others.’

Another participant suggested it was 'vital' that the University of Tasmania 'gets better at telling your inspirational stories, at wheeling out your heroes.' That's not just about telling the story, it's about *how* you tell the story. And that builds capacity, and political power.

'I agree education is fantastic,' concluded another. 'If the Tasmanian government said, "%#&@ it, we're doubling tax in this area to double spending on education" – what would the response be in *The Mercury*?'

When invited to recommend specific changes in Tasmania relating to capital, participants suggested the following:

- Engender an attitude of confidence – through stories, discussion, events like this – to restore faith in the collective.
- No-one in Tasmania should leave school before the end of Year 12. That's a more legitimate policy response to the problem than changing the dates of the school holidays – three or four terms, who cares? Young people should be provided with scholarships to support that completion goal.
- Thirty years ago, a few friends sat in my kitchen thinking about how to give our kids a better life. We started a childcare centre that was a real success. We made something out of nothing, made things better for our little people. We were just a group of individuals with enthusiasm and confidence in ourselves. We believed we could do it. Government should listen to and learn from that kind of spontaneity within the community, from confidence that we can change the world.
- Tasmania should let go of its cringe, which inhibits spark and zest.
- We should value emotional capital.
- We need an honest political debate, across political parties, about the value and contribution that taxation can make to society. Tax is not poison. Remember the 1920s and the 1930s.
- There are all sorts of things we can do with children to boost aspirations, so that they believe that education can change their lives in a positive way. You can do it through drama at school, by linking them with mentors in business, by taking poor kids to art galleries.
- The have-nots don't get it, that they have a choice. They are enslaved by welfare dependence. But with each and every child, you can help them understand they have choices, and that education can help them realize their choices. In Tasmania, we don't do that. I blame the bureaucracy, it's wiped out aspiration. I also blame academia, for saying you must all go for the peak. But there's space for everyone – we need nurses, manual labourers, everyone. Everybody is good at something. Education should align more fully with that kind of approach.
- Maths is *the* subject. Build on it.
- We need education with purpose. It's not just about literacy and numeracy skills.
- I have a naive optimism that we may see a suspension of political hostilities so that Tasmania can build a Statewide strategy for education, within the next twelve months.
- Financial literacy should be compulsory in primary and secondary school, across the curriculum.
- The curriculum should give students ending Year 12 a breadth of opportunity.
- As a group of people in Tasmania – *this* group of people in Tasmania – we should do something practical on these questions. Everyone in this room should go out and do something.
- I like the idea of community heroes – people in Burnie, teenage mums.

- There is an alternative to growth, which is connected with organizing society differently. The word 'capital' is part of our problem, connected with the idea of 'capitalising' on things. We should start talking about virtue, in a neo-Aristotelian way. We should develop a model of the good life and base our society on that.
- Everybody should be taught that success comes from falling and picking yourself up, again and again.
- Content and form always need to come together to work. So all policy solutions need a connection to this time and this place.
- We need a collective vision, more inspiration and better leadership to achieve the Tasmania we want in the future.
- Inspirational stories are transformative. This State government has completely failed to deliver a narrative. We need an effort to educate people about civil society, and about political literacy – so that more people can understand that they can make a difference.
- We need leadership in the community, not just in politics. Leadership that's about aspiring to have a place where you can have ideas and grow them. That's the great thing about a university, we can make space to do that here.
- More people should see how good things are here, in this nation and this State. More people should see the possibilities that already exist, appreciate the capital that is already here.
- Tasmania should be more ambitious about ourselves. Tasmania should embrace the Vice-Chancellor's idea about opening up a better dialogue about education. What can we do next?
- Individuals and businesses should give more and take less. For example, BHP Billiton should increase its giving from 1% of profits to 10%. Overnight.
- I'm interested in the idea of Budgets of Care – <http://budgetsofcare.com/>. It looks to me to be code for sound governance.
- I once met an Auschwitz survivor who said, 'We let the guards turn us into non-persons. But the one thing they couldn't take away was my education.' Education is about developing capacity as a person. The appalling state of education in Tasmania should become a scandal.
- My hope for Tasmanians is that we develop stronger self-respect, become better dreamers and doers. We have a wealth of all kinds of capital compared to many other societies around the world.
- The United States recently has seen the rise of the Tea Party movement, which has filled a vacuum created by a crisis in political leadership. There is a danger of something similar happening here too. Business needs to step up and help build a future. We need a less complacent and more entrepreneurial attitude. The contagion effect of that – enthusiasm – changes things, one person at a time. Paraphrasing Amartya Sen, and in turn Noel Pearson, true freedom is having the capacity to choose a life of value.



CREATIVE CAPITAL + ELWICK BAY = GASP!

– **Pippa Dickson, Project Manager, Glenorchy Art & Sculpture Park**

It's Easter Sunday, 5 April 2015. Down at the Glenorchy Art & Sculpture Park (GASP!) – <http://gasp.org.au/> – on the shores of Elwick Bay there is a buzz, with news that another art work is just about to be launched. Tasmanian locals and art world aficionados have arrived at The Point on foot, by bike, car and ferry. They are musing about the latest exhibition at MONA, some are planning to catch an afternoon ferry to check it out. One mentions a rare sighting of the Caspian Tern at the bird architecture near The Grove site. Another mentions the huge turnout for the new film awards in the sand pit at the Montrose Art Shack last Tuesday night, despite the wind. The principal of Montrose Bay High School reckons that's because of the great coffee and food served at the shack, plus the social networking the students are doing with their GASP! handheld devices.

It's not cold today, but there was no expectation it would be warm. A breeze makes the long grasses bow and shimmer, desire lines cut through them meet the water's edge. An elderly man sits in quiet

solitude, a short distance away a group of kids skim rocks. The water, reflecting the sky, is silver blue and those who visit the site three or four times a week for a coffee, to walk their dogs or bring grandchildren to learn to ride bikes, comment on the magnificence of The Bay from The Point. 'It's like standing on an island,' 'I love the way it looks like a vast lake,' 'Mount Direction reminds me of that picnic with my first girlfriend.' The boardwalk has just celebrated its fourth birthday with a new international sound work added to its collection – today a temporary, tactile, olfactory, kinetic artwork has been announced – thanks to one of the founding business sponsors. More people are gathering now, some who were just going for a walk, all attracted by the passion in the presentation by the philanthropist and the artist who made this creation a reality.

*

Just a decade earlier, in the mid-2000s, the Elwick Bay site was neglected and degraded, and dislocated from the city of Glenorchy by a highway. Back then no-one saw exactly how a sculpture garden could transform the whole bay into a site for internationally resonant art projects, building community cohesion. No-one fully expected that it would include a string of vibrant social enterprises

EDUCATION IN TASMANIA: WHAT IS TO BE DONE?

– Eleanor Ramsay and Michael Rowan

Our background is in post-compulsory education, across all sectors, especially secondary and higher education. The following observations and questions arise after a couple of years of trying to better understand what is happening educationally in our new home State.

Let's start with current agreements about what education in Tasmania is to achieve.

Like all other States, in 2009 Tasmania signed on to the Council of Australian Governments' National Education Agreement that, by 2015, 90% of 20-24 year olds will have achieved Year 12 or a Certificate 2, rising to a Certificate 3 by 2020.

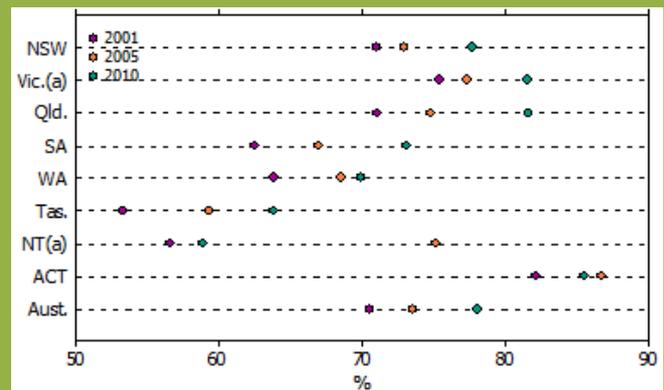
Following the recent national review of higher education, the Commonwealth Government announced that 40 per cent of Australians aged 25 to 34 years will hold degree-level credentials by 2025 – and we are not aware that this has been rejected by the Tasmanian government or its educational leaders. (Note that since 25 to 34 year olds in 2025 are 11 to 20 year olds now, whether Tasmania can achieve this goal by 2025 will be determined by the educational outcomes of those who are about to commence Year 7 or are already further into their schooling or tertiary study.)

The Tasmanian Economic Development Plan notes that that '[I]ncreasing educational outcomes and Year 12 retention rates are key to ensuring a skilled workforce and Tasmania's long-term future' and underpins the Plan's first goal of 'making Tasmania a great place to do business and making sure our businesses have the skills and information to take advantage of market opportunities'.

If these commitments indicate where we plan to go, what chance have we of getting there?

Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) data indicates that less than 65% of Tasmanians aged 20-24 have

attained Year 12, while for Australia as a whole the figure is closer to 80%, as the following table shows.



Proportion of 20-24 Year Olds with Year 12 by States and Territories - 2001, 2005 and 2010

But we are catching up. As reported in Tasmania's 2010 Education Performance Report on Government Schools recently released by Education Minister Nick McKim, Tasmania's apparent retention rate to Year 12 jumped from 62.2% in 2009 to 73% in 2010, with the national rate of 78.5% looking like an achievable target.

We are hopeful that this improvement is an early benefit from work brought together in the Education Department's Retention and Attainment Strategy for Years 10-12, but much remains to be done. While the whole of State retention rate has improved significantly, it is particularly troubling that the Education Performance Report's tracking of Year 10 students in government schools by region shows that only 49.4% of Year 10 students in the north-west continued to Year 12, while for the north the figure was 50.2%, for the south 55.5%, and 45.5% for the south-east.

Should we infer from this disparity between the much improved retention rates for all schools and the concerning rates for government schools alone that the improvement overall is due to strong retention rates in non-government schools, perhaps underpinned by a drift from government to private schools at the senior years? Another particularly Tasmanian trend deserving of attention is the large proportion of students in government schools undertaking their senior secondary studies on a part-time basis, at 14% the largest in the country accounting for some 2,000 actual students. While not necessarily a bad thing, perhaps reflecting

supportive responses by schools to the realities of their students' lives, it deserves policy and practitioner attention to support schools to ensure that arrangements for such students achieve positive educational outcomes.

Like other observers, we have been puzzled and somewhat worried by the structural arrangements and accompanying cultural assumptions that communicate that Year 10, not Year 12, marks the end of schooling, with progression beyond typically requiring transition to another institution, and perhaps in another community. Even more dismaying was the 2011 issue of *School Life*, which says on the cover that it provides information for parents and carers about Tasmanian government schools, but deals with schooling only up to Year 10, with just three brief references to anything beyond. It is very surprising that this official publication welcoming students and parents to Tasmanian government schools presents schooling as K-10 rather than culminating with the achievement of the Year 12 Tasmanian Certificate of Education. Indeed, the name of the Year 12 certificate is not even mentioned.

Attaining a certain year-level of schooling is one thing. How the depth and range of your learning compares to others who have reached the same year-level is another, as important for States and

countries as a whole as it is for individuals. The Program for International Student Assessment (PISA) of the OECD was established to allow comparisons of student attainment between countries and between States within countries. PISA assesses students' level of attainment in literacy, numeracy and scientific literacy, looking at young people's ability to apply their knowledge and skills to real-life problems and situations rather than how well they have learned a specific curriculum.

So how did Tasmania fare in the latest round of PISA assessments?

Comparing the learning of 15 year olds, Tasmania was below the OECD average in each of literacy, maths and science, and below all but the Northern Territory and Thailand in our region – Shanghai, South Korea, Hong Kong, Singapore, New Zealand, Japan, Taipei and Macau, as well as all States of Australia. How much below? More than a year behind the top performing State of Australia in each of the three areas, and from 1.5 to almost 3 years behind Shanghai.

What this data tells us is that a young person leaving school in Tasmania with same level of learning as the average of all Tasmanian 15 year olds, is going into their post-school lives armed with learning which is only marginally above that of primary school



students in the top performing schooling systems in our region.

What of TAFE? We have found it harder to get a picture of what is happening in this sector, and note the recently announced review. According to the National Agreement for Skills and Workforce Development, Performance Report for 2009, more Tasmanian 20-24 year olds have no qualifications at or above Certificate 3 level than their counterparts in other States, at 71.5% per cent compared with 62% per cent nationally. Yet in the same year, the participation rate in VET for Tasmania was 8.2% compared with 7.8% nationally. Is there a pattern here of enrolment in lower level qualifications and/or higher non-completion rates compared to the rest of Australia?

We accept that we still have much to learn about our new home, and look forward to finding out more

and better understanding how things work. We also recognize that some significant strategies are being put into place aimed at greatly improving retention, transition, engagement and achievement across Tasmania's education and training system, some in collaboration with the University of Tasmania. But what we have discovered about how things stand right now leaves us asking –

Have we a schooling system that:

- *expects* every young person to complete Year 12?
- *understands* that if almost all remain to Year 12, many students will be living complex adult lives involving work, carers' responsibilities and even parenthood in addition to their senior secondary studies?



COLLABORATIVE + CREATIVE INVESTMENT = THE NEXT GENERATION OF TASMANIAN BUSINESS PRACTICE

**– Peta Heffernan, Director,
Liminal Studio**

Tasmania is intimate, boutique and emotive. Its natural environment, the built scale of its urban centres and its liveability has always attracted artists. Along with the period of economic growth prior to the recent downturn, this has opened the door to a new influx of creative professionals and entrepreneurs who want to invest in and be inspired by the uniqueness of Tasmania. We have also seen a critical mass of expatriate Tasmanian creatives returning home, bringing with them the benefits of interstate and international experience.

Liminal Studio – www.liminalstudio.com.au – is part of this next generation of Tasmanian creative practice. Its formation is the direct result of architectural and graphic design practitioners drawing on experience and networks we have established across Australia, Asia, Europe and the Middle East and integrating our formal disciplines with art, objects, writing, performance and strategy. Trans-disciplinary, cross-boundary exchange is central to our approach. We have invested in establishing a practice that operates as a kind of in-house 'think tank', which means our clients are the end beneficiaries of ideas-based design, resulting from a fresh pooling of distinctive perspectives.

Flagship projects have included the new Ogilvie High School Learning Centre, which received the highest honours for Public Architecture in the 2011 Australian Institute of Architects Awards (Tasmanian Chapter), a socially, economically and environmentally sustainable facility resulting from our consultative and collaborative engagement with the school community and heritage authorities. Another key commission was the Hobart CBD office fitout of new Tasmanian Labor Senator Lisa Singh, a brief that was infused with translating her party's

'Light on the Hill' legacy into the interior design, graphics, furniture and finishes of this contemporary working space. A more recent Liminal project has been the collaboration with Tasmanian composer Constantine Koukias of IHOS Music Theatre & Opera to develop *The Barbarians*. This remarkable and immersive opera was commissioned for the 2012 MONA FOMA (MOFO) season. MOFO's biggest commission to date, it was recently profiled in *The Weekend Australian*.

We choose to operate out of Tasmania and employ Tasmanians. For Tasmania to maintain social buoyance and attain longterm economic stability, it needs to attract and offer basic encouragement to those who make this kind of investment and commitment. It is a frustration and a disincentive to that investment and commitment, to witness Tasmanian government departments and agencies favour offshore architects, urban designers, event managers, strategic planners, graphic designers, advertising agencies, lawyers and others to deliver publicly funded professional services. Government has an obligation to spend taxpayers' dollars responsibly, including to maximise longer-term as well as short-term returns on that investment. At a time of economic downturn in Tasmania, each of those dollars counts even more – and the priority should be on spending that builds capacity within Tasmania.

It makes sense to source expertise from outside Tasmania where there is a lack of local and competitive talent. In today's Tasmania, however, that is more rarely the case than ever before. To assume otherwise reveals a timelag in mindset – a cultural (even colonialist) cringe that should have seen its day. It also overlooks that necessity is the parent of invention, which means practitioners embedded in the commercial realities of the small Tasmanian market develop a honed ability to make a little go a long way. Government gatekeepers may respond that every contract with an offshore firm or practice involves a Tasmanian partnership. But in our view 'partnerships' are being defined too loosely, to include simply using a local firm's office space for fly in/fly out visits by offshore practitioners, which amounts to partnership in name only.



The creative talent that chooses Tasmania as its home punches well above its weight – deploying innovative and context-specific process and delivering outcomes that bring a clear multiple-bottom-line benefit to this State. Given more recognition, encouragement and opportunity within the boundaries of our island, this segment of our population will expand and thrive.

Beyond SALON/SOUTH 2011

Respecting the Chatham House Rule, lists of salon participants have not been published. As with the 2010 series, however, many participants in SALON/SOUTH 2011 have requested and pursued individual contact with other session participants. Again, this has led to more conversations and new project-based collaborations. There is clear potential for more.

Participant feedback from SALON/SOUTH 2011 included the following:

I found it very stimulating and thought provoking and very much outside my normal public service role of 'informing' decision-making rather than actually contributing to the discussion itself. I really enjoyed it and felt like I was back at Uni again with my thinking hat on! [I hope that back at work] I might be able to influence some of the discussion around informed decision-making.

– Participant, CAPITAL

I am very happy to be involved in whatever way I can to continue this sort of discussion or others that can be of benefit to this community – please let me know of events or other opportunities that exist, or can be initiated, to achieve this.

– Participant, COMMUNITY

I feel very powerfully affected by and grateful for the experience at Cafe Atrium. God, what to say? The process last Thursday has constellated all manner of feelings and thoughts in me. This is ongoing.

– Participant, CULTURE

I really wanted to talk about and listen to thoughts around capital in a financial sense but really felt that others wanted to do anything but talk about money. Maybe money is not a subject for polite society in Hobart? I strayed off topic too as I can easily be led when anyone starts talking about education.

– Participant, CAPITAL

I have already passed on some of the discussion ideas to my class!! Of particular note, I was encouraged by the way in which DESIGN is noticeably able to break down many if not all of the problems that were being raised. It has actually changed the way in which I've been thinking about my own design practice.

– Participant, CULTURE

Does your official brief allow you to be involved in controversial topics, such as the rights and wrongs of voluntary euthanasia? If 'we' are to have a civil society, then there should be an official vehicle to facilitate such discussions.

– Participant, COMMUNITY

My mind was stretched!

– Participant, CAPITAL

We do need to do more of this.

– Participant, CULTURE

© 2012 Inglis Clark Centre for Civil Society

Images are subject to copyright and are reproduced here with the kind permission of:
Kim Murray, Victoria Bull, Lola Greeno, Nick Osborne, Pippa Dickson, Peter Whyte,
Justin Bernhaut, Peta Heffernan and Natasha Cica

Printed on 100% recycled paper

The Inglis Clark Centre thanks New Ground, Clockwork Beehive, Moorilla, Chartley Estate, the Institute for Regional Development and the Office of the Provost at the University of Tasmania for sponsoring SALON/SOUTH 2011. Individual thanks to Marcia Langton, Cheryl Kernot, Narelle Hooper, Brett Torossi, Dianna Graf, Mark Wilsdon, Pippa Dickson, Jamie Hanson, Peta Heffernan, Ross Honeywill, Eleanor Ramsay, Michael Rowan, Bill and Lea Lawson, Brian Jones, David Rich, Janelle Allison, Jo Archer, Nikki Fletcher, Lucy Tatman, James Chase, Sally Laing, Bronwyn Peters, Bianca Curtis, the John Elliott Classics Museum in Hobart, The Atrium Café in Launceston, Merchant Café in Burnie, and all participants in SALON/SOUTH 2011.

