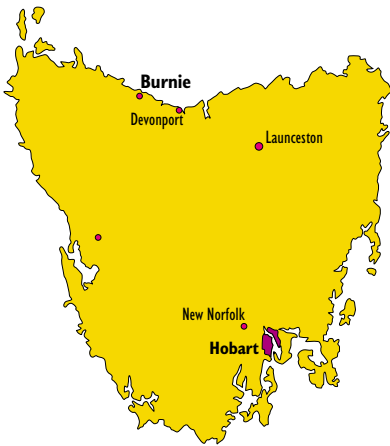


Burnie: a community supporter



Centrally located on Tasmania's north-west coast, Burnie is a city in transition.

In the past the city relied on heavy industry, but today Burnie is becoming a vibrant and prosperous regional centre, encouraging the development of small to medium businesses such as information technology and telecommunications.

In recent years with community backing, the Burnie City Council has transformed the city through a number of key initiatives, the most prominent being a major refurbishment of the entire CBD, which includes a modern multi-storey car park and a state-of-the-art cinema complex. The CBD contains over 300 small businesses, including a recently developed private sector call centre providing over 200 jobs.

The council's Economic Development Unit focuses on business and employment development for the city. An example of the council's commitment is its assuming the coordinator/convenor role for the ACCC's Competing Fairly Forum's broadcast into Burnie. All three were well attended and appreciated by local businesses.

Speaking after the May unconscionable conduct forum, Lionel Young, the council's Economic Development Manager, said the introductory video was brilliant and set the scene for an excellent program that delivered a clear message. It was a pity, he said, that the forums were not telecast nationally by the ABC.

As a Community Supporter in the ACCC's Regional Network, the council will assist in informing and educating the community about trade practices rights and responsibilities, and the role and functions of the ACCC. The council will also display ACCC information, convene future Competing Fairly Forums and

inform the ACCC Regional Outreach Officer of trade practices issues and concerns raised within the community.

With Federal and State Government assistance the council set up a Regional Small Business Incubator at Burnie, to help new small businesses develop and establish themselves. The facility includes the Business Enterprise Centre and the Community On Line Access Centre.

Recently the council was awarded \$1.7 million from the Federal *Networking the Nation* funding to undertake two innovative projects.

The first will establish an integrated community network (ICN) to deliver broadband access and the full range of telecommunication services to all sectors of the Burnie community. A fibre optic loop network around the city will be available to all CBD businesses, educational and health institutions, industries, emergency services, and residents located close to the loop. Apart from increasing the range and cost effectiveness of services, the ICN will give fast global Internet access to all users.

Up to 13 Tasmanian councils will benefit from the second project which will connect them with the Burnie City Council's computer services hub to give them a resource sharing capability. The aim is efficiency and cost effective delivery of local government accounting and associated services.

Both projects are key strategies in the council's vision to develop Burnie as an 'On Line City of the Future'.

The council actively supports the Burnie Chamber of Commerce and Industry and the CBD promotional group, Citylink.