



Dorset Business District Newsletter

Proudly brought to you by the **North East Tasmania Chamber of Commerce Inc**

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Message from Chamber

Rising Fuel Prices: A Growing Pressure on North East Tasmania Businesses

Businesses across North East Tasmania are once again facing mounting cost pressures, with fuel prices climbing in response to ongoing global unrest and instability. While international events can often feel distant, their impact is being felt acutely across our region—particularly in agriculture, transport, and small business operations.

Fuel is not just another expense in the North East—it is a critical input that underpins almost every part of our local economy.

Agriculture Feeling the Strain

For our farming and logging community, rising fuel costs directly increase the cost of production. From running machines and irrigation systems to transporting livestock and produce, fuel is essential at every stage of the agricultural process.

Many farmers and contractors are now facing difficult decisions: absorb the additional costs, pass them on through higher prices, or reduce output. In a sector already exposed to seasonal variability and tight margins, sustained fuel increases add

another layer of uncertainty and financial pressure.

Trucking and Freight

The Backbone Under Pressure: The transport sector is among the hardest hit. Trucking operators—who form the backbone of supply chains across the North East—are experiencing significant increases in operating costs almost overnight.

Fuel represents one of the largest expenses for freight businesses, and rapid price fluctuations make it difficult to plan, quote, and remain competitive. For smaller operators in particular, there is limited capacity to absorb these increases without passing them on, which ultimately flows through to the broader economy.

Small Business Impact: The Ripple Effect

For small businesses, including retailers, cafés, trades, and service providers, rising fuel costs are being felt in multiple ways.

Higher freight charges increase the cost of goods on shelves. Increased travel costs affect mobile services and regional deliveries. At the same time, customers facing their own cost-of-living pressures may begin to tighten spending.

This combination places

small businesses in a challenging position—balancing rising expenses while trying to remain affordable and competitive.

A Regional Challenge Requiring Awareness and Advocacy

North East Tasmania is particularly vulnerable to fuel price volatility due to our reliance on road transport and the distances required to move goods and services. Unlike metropolitan areas, there are fewer alternatives and limited economies of scale.

This is why it is critical that the voice of regional business is heard. The North East Tasmania Chamber of Commerce continues to advocate for policies and support mechanisms that recognise the unique challenges faced by rural and regional communities.

Looking Ahead

While global conditions remain uncertain, what is clear is the need for resilience, collaboration, and strong local networks. Supporting local businesses, strengthening supply chains, and continuing to advocate for fair and



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sustainable outcomes will be key to navigating this period.

The Chamber encourages members to stay connected, share their experiences, and work collectively to ensure the North East remains a strong and vibrant place to do business—even in the face of external pressures.

• If your business is being impacted by rising fuel costs, we encourage you to reach out and share your story. Your voice strengthens our advocacy and helps ensure that regional Tasmania is represented where it matters most.

Fiona Auton
Chair
NETCC

This newsletter is proudly printed by

Janie Finlay MP

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Tasmanian Labor

Dorset Council – high visitation numbers boost local economy



Mayor Rhys Beattie with 2026 Citizen of the Year Ally Mercer and Australia Day Ambassador Vicki Purnell. Photo: Dorset Council.

The summer period has delivered exceptionally high visitation across the North East, providing a welcome boost for local businesses and the broader regional economy. This sustained activity highlights the value of our tourism sector and the ongoing efforts of our business community.

Our Australia Day events were very well attended, and it was a privilege to recognise this year's outstanding award recipients. Their contributions reflect the strength and generosity of our community.

Council is now preparing the 2026–27 Budget, and the current economic environment means there will be some

difficult decisions ahead. Our priority remains responsible financial management—protecting essential services, supporting key infrastructure and ensuring long-term sustainability.

We appreciate the continued partnership of the Chamber and look forward to working together to support a resilient and prosperous North East.

Rhys Beattie
Mayor
Dorset Council

• A full list of the Australia Day recipients can be found on Council's website at:
dorset.tas.gov.au/australia-day-awards

Small Business Growth Strategy 2026 Implementation Plan

TCCI organised a statewide forum for Chambers of Commerce, providing an opportunity to engage with the Deputy Premier and Minister for Small Business, the Hon. Guy Barnett MP. The event included a structured consultation session for the Department of State Growth's Small Business Growth Strategy (beginning in 2027), which capped in the development of a proposal for the Small Business Growth Strategy 2037.

The Small Business Growth Strategy 2037 Project Consultation webpage can be accessed by visiting: engage.stategrowth.tas.gov.au/SBGS-2037

From this webpage you can:

- Download a copy of the Consultation Discussion Paper: engage.stategrowth.tas.gov.au/download_file/2157/919 (underscore after download)
- Download a copy of the current strategy: engage.stategrowth.tas.gov.au/download_file/2151/919 (underscore after download)
- Share your thoughts via the online survey or online submission form

buttons at the bottom of the page.

You can also:

- Send a written submission via email to: ask@business.tas.gov.au
- Mail a written submission to:
Small Business Growth Strategy 2037
GPO Box 536
Hobart Tas 7001

– Consultation closes on:
Friday 15th of May 2026 at 2.00pm.

This is a great opportunity for small businesses to have their say and be part of future growth in Tasmania's economy.



Elevate Your Venue with a Hospitality Tasmania Awareness Session

Delivering unforgettable guest experiences is the key to success in Dorset's vibrant hospitality and tourism industry. A Venue Awareness Session with Darren Martello, Regional Manager at Hospitality Tasmania, is designed to help your business master the art of exceptional customer service while strengthening every part of your operation.

Each session focuses on understanding what makes a customer's experience memorable – from the first point of contact to the moment they leave your venue. Darren offers practical strategies for training teams in service excellence, refining communication skills, and implementing customer-focused systems that inspire loyalty and positive reviews.

Beyond service skills, the session explores how your venue can adapt to shifting visitor expectations, create authentic Tasmanian experiences, and ensure every guest walks away with a lasting impression. By aligning your business with industry best practice and local insights, you'll not only enhance customer satisfaction but



• A recent session held with Scott and Fiona Auton and their team at The House Paddock.

also increase repeat visitation and profitability.

Booking a session with Darren Martello is an investment in your staff, your culture, and your reputation. To learn more or schedule your personalised session, contact Darren

today and start transforming great service into unforgettable guest experiences.

Darren Martello, Regional Manager at Hospitality Tasmania
darren@tha.asn.au 0428020179

Cybersecurity: New and trending scams to watch out for

• The Fake HotDoc Refund

There's a new scam making the rounds, and it's targeting Australians through a service many of us trust: HotDoc, the online medical appointment platform. Scammers are pretending to offer refunds or rebates, deceiving people into handing over personal and banking information.

Victims receive a text or email that looks like it's from HotDoc, often claiming they're owed a refund or that urgent action is required on a Medicare rebate. The message

includes a link to a fake website designed to look legitimate, where people are asked to enter personal details or banking information. Scammers create a sense of urgency, claiming the refund will expire or action is required immediately to pressure people into acting quickly.

Our Tips: Check the sender and links carefully. Genuine HotDoc communications come from official addresses such as hotdoc.com.au. Never click on unexpected links, instead, type the HotDoc website into your browser directly. Look

for personal details in messages, generic greetings can be a red flag. If you're unsure, contact HotDoc or your clinic directly.

• Fake Bunnings Tool Pack Scam

Since the beginning of January, IDCARE has supported multiple clients impacted by scams impersonating Bunnings. Scammers are using fake Facebook surveys to deceive people into giving away personal and banking information.

Victims see Facebook posts claiming they can purchase heavily discounted tool packs for a small delivery fee after completing a short questionnaire. Clicking the link takes them to a fraudulent Bunnings branded website, where they're asked to provide personal information including their full name, address, phone number, email address, and bank card details.

Our Tips: Be cautious of 'too-good-to-be-true' deals on social media. Never click links in unexpected posts or messages—go directly to the official website. If you notice unusual activity or think your banking details may have been shared, contact your bank immediately and monitor your accounts closely.

Sourced from: IDCare – Cyber Sushi 6/3/26



Health & Wellbeing – The health benefits of indoor plants

Hi everyone! This issue I thought it would be nice to discuss houseplants and their impacts on our mental and physical health. Houseplants look great and are an accessible way to have some greenery when we don't have much outdoor space, but I was surprised to find there are benefits beyond just being aesthetically pleasing.

Mental Health Benefits – People have grown plants inside for thousands of years. Evidence suggests Egyptians brought plants indoors in the 3rd century BC, the remains of the former city of Pompeii show use of indoor plants over 2000 years ago, and they were used in medicine and cooking in medieval England.

Exposure to nature has been linked to a host of benefits, including improved attention, lower stress, better mood, reduced risk of psychiatric disorders, and even increases in empathy and cooperation. There have been several studies delving into the benefits of having some nature brought inside in the form of houseplants.

Improved Mood – Spending time around plants, indoors or outdoors, can help reduce stress, anxiety and low mood. Research has shown that interaction with indoor plants may reduce psychological and physiological stress by suppressing autonomic nervous system activity in young adults. In a study focusing on young adults, subjects were randomly distributed into two groups; the first group carried out transplanting of an indoor plant, whereas the second group worked on a computer task. Then, each subject switched activities. The subjects felt more comfortable, soothed, and natural after the transplanting task than after the computer task.

The University of Technology, Sydney study titled "Greening the Great Indoors for Human Health and Wellbeing" provided measurable evidence of the effects of indoor plants on occupants' mood states and feelings of well-being. Some notable results include: A 37% reduction in tension and anxiety; a 58% reduction in depression; and a 44% reduction in anger and hostility.

Adding greenery to your home is a simple, low-cost way to feel more connected and calmer. Even looking at pictures of plants has shown to have a positive impact on stress levels. When patients in a hospital waiting room were exposed to either a real plant, a poster of a plant, or no nature, researchers found that both the real plants and the posters were linked with lower levels of stress.

Happiness and Comfort – There is growing evidence to support the idea that plants can play an important role in providing a higher quality living environment. Environments with green, slightly scented and small plants were reported as the most favourite conditions in the study: "The effect of indoor plants on human comfort". Plants "give us a little bit of predictability when things are uncertain," says Gary L. Altman, associate director of the horticultural therapy program at Rutgers. "There's an evolutionary response when you see green – it's almost like you created yourself a sanctuary. It reduces feelings of fear and anxiety, and even if you're angry, it'll calm you down." Research shows that exposure to greenery may be a valuable resource during social isolation in the home. Houseplants encourage the feeling of being away while at home, providing relief during prolonged periods in the same place.

Mindfulness Practice – Caring for indoor plants has been linked to improved mental wellbeing and emotional balance. Plants can be a part of a mindfulness practice, as keeping a plant alive creates positive emotions and brings you into the present moment while fully engaging your senses. It is beneficial to have a routine of watering and plant care that allows you to focus on what you are doing. It is also an opportunity to disengage from screens and do something with your hands.

So next time you're watering your plants, slow down, take a few deep breaths, and really focus on what you're doing, slowing down and coming into the present moment.

Physical Health Benefit – Caring for plants has several physical health benefits.

Watering, fertilising, repotting and moving plants around your space gives you an opportunity and reason for gentle exercise, similar to the benefits of gardening.

There is scientific evidence that being around plants can reduce blood pressure and heart rate.

Plants can increase humidity in a dry environment, which can be beneficial for respiratory health. To get the most out of plants, you can group them together to create a micro-climate, which increases humidity in the home.

Many houseplants absorb toxic substances such as formaldehyde, benzene, and trichloroethylene. NASA has done extensive studies of the role of houseplants in cleansing the air. Their studies have shown that certain houseplants are exceptionally good at cleansing the air. NASA recommends having 15-18 houseplants for a 1,800-square-foot house. While most of us probably don't have space for that many plants, just a few can be effective. Experts suggest that filling as little as 2% of the room with plants will make an impact.

While there are a lot of benefits, it is important to be aware of any allergies you may have and do research before having a plant in your house. It is also important to note that some houseplants can have adverse health effects for our animals, so it is important to consider pet-safe houseplants or placing houseplants high up to ensure our furry friends don't accidentally eat what they shouldn't.

I hope you found this topic interesting and are encouraged to either get a houseplant or maybe be aware of the benefits of the plants you already have. I liked researching this as it helped me understand why I'm drawn to having houseplants and made me more aware of ways to be mindful when caring for them.

Supplied courtesy of Ellen Well Being Committee



Dorset People & Business Awards

This initiative is proudly presented by:

Dorset Employment Connect, North East Dorset Council, Bridestowe Estate Woolnorth Renewables, Dorset Council, Harcourts, iTime, McPhersons Chaisnaws, TaxTAFE

References: www.pmc.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/articles/PMC4419447/, www.liebertpub.com/doi/abs/10.1089/acm.2011.0488, www.researchgate.net/publication/274476416



2 Birdz Liquor Co | Darby-Norris Distillery

I am proud to introduce 2Birdz Liquor Co by Darby-Norris Distillery – a family partnership built on passion, hard work, and strong community values.

Owned and operated by Jeff and Liane Darby, alongside their daughter Paige Darby and son-in-law Phillip Norris, 2Birdz is truly a family-run venture. Outside the distillery, we each have our own careers: Liane works at Mayshaw Aminya, Jeff manufactures copper products, Paige works at Lords Hotel, and Phillip is a FIFO mine worker. Liane and Jeff have also recently launched the Dorset Community Markets, while Jeff serves as President of the Scottsdale Shooters Club – so life is certainly busy.

Our journey began in 2017 in a modest 10m x 10m shed on our property in Kelso, Tasmania. In

2020, during COVID-19, we chose to expand rather than slow down, relocating to a larger premises in Scottsdale, North East Tasmania. After months of renovations, we transformed a former haberdashery, mechanic workshop, and vegetable shed into the bar and cellar door we proudly call home.

In the summer of 2023/2024, Liane and Paige decided to branch into handcrafted liqueurs – and 2Birdz Liquor Co was born. This new chapter allowed us to expand our creativity and offer something vibrant and approachable, while maintaining the quality and care we are known for. Every bottle we produce reflects who we are: hardworking, family-driven, and community-focused.

HAND. MADE. EVERY. DAY.

– Liane Darby



2 Birdz Liquor Co by Darby Norris
25 George Street, Scottsdale 7260
Phone 0413 468 300
darbynorris.com.au



Free tailored advice on managing employees and employment obligations

Businesses seeking assistance on managing employees and meeting employment obligations can access the Employer of Choice Assist (EOCA) program for support. EOCA is a free service offering tailored assistance to small businesses with 19 or fewer full-time employees.

The service can assist with:

- attracting new employees
 - keeping great employees for longer
 - developing workforce policies and procedures
 - building a positive workplace culture
- advice and assistance on being recognised as an Employer of Choice
- The service is supported by the Tasmanian Government through



assist

Jobs Tasmania and is delivered by the Tasmanian Chamber of Commerce and Industry (TCCI).

For more information, visit the TCCI website tcci.com.au, phone Business Tasmania on 1800 440 026 or email ask@business.tas.gov.au

Useful Contacts

All Emergency Services

Fire 000
Police 000
Ambulance 000

NESM Hospital 6778 8522

Ochre Medical 6352 2522

Tas Police (Non-urgent)
131 444

Parks & Wildlife Scottsdale
Field Centre 6352 6421

Service Tas 1300 135 513

TasNetworks
Power Outage 132 004

TCCI 1300 559 112

North-Eastern
Advertiser 6352 2642

To find a Justice of the Peace in your area, go to:
<https://www.justice.tas.gov.au/commissioners-for-declarations-and-justices-of-the-peace/justice-of-the-peace/find>

Join Us – become a NETCC member!

Annual memberships are still available for anyone wishing to join our Chamber. Benefits include: access to TCCI resources and training; free workshops and events hosted by Chamber; NETCC directory listing; and monthly meetings and events

with invited special guests.

All are great opportunities to network and be involved in your local business community.

Contact secretary@netcc.org.au for a member form or apply/renew online at: netcc.org.au/become-a-member

Is Your Business ready for the unexpected?

In regional Tasmania, disruptions can happen quickly – severe weather, power outages, network issues or cyber incidents. The real question is: would your business keep operating if they did?

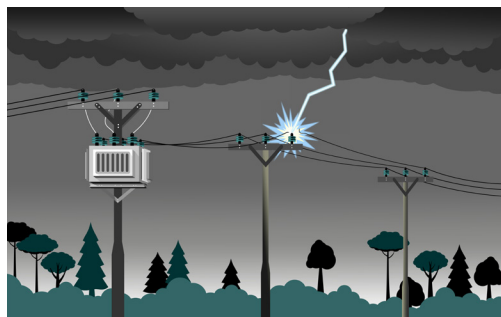
Business resilience is your ability to adapt and continue trading when unexpected events occur. Yet many small businesses still don't have a clear continuity plan in place.

Even a short outage can interrupt EFTPOS, online bookings, email access and customer communication. That impacts revenue and customer confidence.

Telstra has released a practical guide outlining how businesses can strengthen their resilience through better planning and connectivity back-up options.

It suggests reviewing:

- Whether you have a backup internet solution
- Options that automatically switch to mobile if your fixed network drops out
- Cloud data storage and regular backups
- Power continuity measures such as surge protection or generators



- A clear disaster or continuity plan for your team

Resilience doesn't need to be complex – but it does need to be planned.

We encourage members to read Telstra's full article here:

telstra.com.au/smarter-business/planning-and-strategy/how-to-boost-business-resilience-with-planning

Taking proactive steps now can help protect your operations, your customers and your reputation when disruptions occur.

Extracted from Kentish Latrobe Business Association -16/3/2026

Chamber Meetings

NETCC Meetings are held the first Monday of the month (except long weekends).

Next General Meetings:

April 13th, May 4th

See netcc.org.au for more details




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