



- **Employment increased slightly to 233,900**
- **Unemployment rate remained steady at 5.0%**
- **Participation rate also was static at 60.6%**

**Note:** All Labour Force estimates are from the Australian Bureau of Statistics' *Labour Force Survey* and are *Trend estimates* unless otherwise stated.

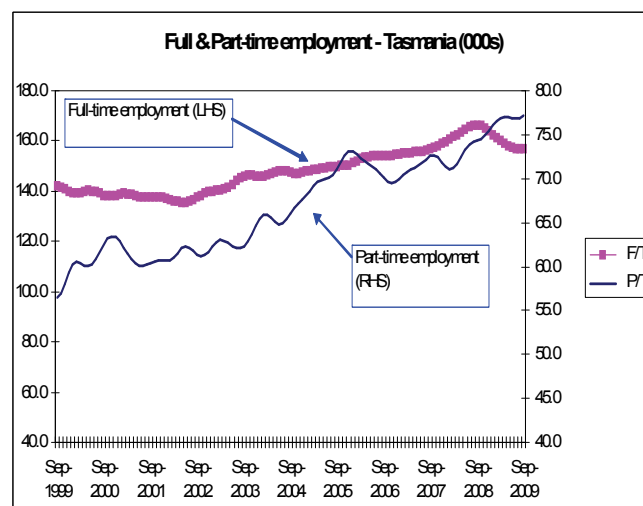
### Employment

Although total employment in Tasmania rose marginally in September compared to August, it was still 2.8 per cent lower than in September last year. Full-time employment fell by 5.8 per cent over the year, while growth of 3.8 per cent in part-time employment partially offset the falls in full-time employment. Total male employment fell by 7.4 per cent over the year. Full-time male employment fell by 7.6 per cent while part-time employment fell by 6.3 per cent. Total female employment increased by 2.8 per cent over the year. All of the increases in female employment were in part-time jobs, which increased by 8.0 per cent on last September. Female full-time employment fell by 2.2 per cent over the year.

### Unemployment

Total unemployment in Tasmania has been fairly stable for the last 6 months, but was still 20.1 per cent higher than it was in September last year. Male unemployment increased from 4,400 last September to 6,800 this month. Female unemployment has actually fallen over the year from 5,700 to 5,500. The unemployment rate for Tasmania has remained

unchanged at 5.0 per cent for the last 5 months. The national unemployment rate is currently 5.8 per cent, while in NSW it is 5.8 per cent, in Vic 5.9, in Qld 6.0, in SA 5.7, and in WA 5.7 per cent.



### Labour Force & Participation Rates

There were 4,800 fewer Tasmanians either in work or looking for work in September. The total number of people in the labour force was estimated to be 246,100, which was 1.9 per cent lower than last September. The male labour force fell by 5.5 per cent over the year while the female labour force increased by 2.4 per cent. The participation rate in September was recorded at 60.6 per cent, which was down on the 62.5 per cent recorded last September. However it is worth noting that the 62.5 per cent recorded last September was the highest figure recorded since the current series began in 1978.

### Feature Article

### Schools in Tasmania

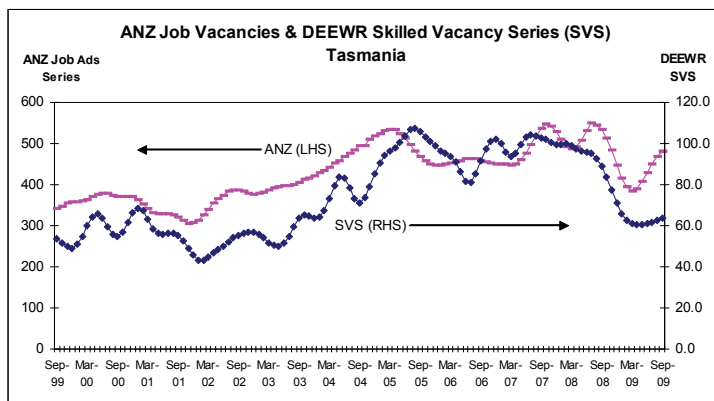
## Labour Force Estimates - Tasmania (Trend data)

	Sep-2008	Aug-2009	Sep-2009
	000's	000's	000's
Employment			
Male	133.5	123.8	123.7
Female	107.3	109.9	110.2
Full-time	166.4	156.8	156.8
Part-time	74.3	76.9	77.1
Persons	240.7	233.7	233.9
Unemployment			
Male	4.5	6.7	6.8
Female	5.7	5.5	5.5
Persons	10.2	12.2	12.2
Labour Force			
Male	138.0	130.5	130.4
Female	113.0	115.4	115.7
Persons	250.9	245.9	246.1
Unemployment Rate %			
Male	3.3	5.1	5.2
Female	5.1	4.8	4.7
Persons	4.1	5.0	5.0
Full-time Teenage*	18.1	19.8	22.7
Participation Rate %			
Male	70.4	65.8	65.8
Female	54.9	55.5	55.6
Persons	62.5	60.6	60.6
*unadjusted data			

### Job Vacancies

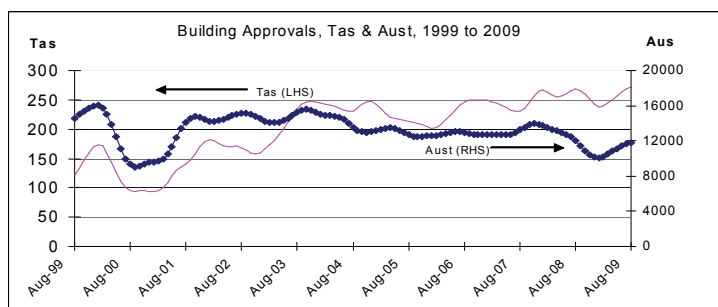
**The ANZ Bank Job Advertisement series** (trend) increased in September in Tasmania for the seventh consecutive month, but was 9.9% below what it was in September last year. Nationally, the series increased by 1.9% over the month, but was 39.3% below what it was in September 2008.

**DEEWR's Skilled Vacancy Survey Index** (trend) increased in the month of September, but was 28.2% lower than for the same time last year. Nationally, the series declined by 1.2% over the month and by 50.4% over the year.



### Other Indicators

**Building approvals** in Tasmania increased in August by 1.5% over the previous month. They also increased over the year and were 1.9% higher than for the same time in August 2008. Nationally, building approvals increased by 1.6% over the month, and fell marginally by 1.8% over the year.



**Average Weekly (Total) Earnings** for adults working full-time in Tasmania were \$1,110.90 for the quarter ending May 2009. This was 10.7% less than the national average of \$1,243.50 for the same period.

**Retail quarterly turnover** (chain volume measure) increased by 1.0% in Tasmania in the June 2009 quarter, and by 4.6% over the year. This compares to a national quarterly increase of 1.4% for the June 2009 quarter and an annual increase of 3.5%.

### Newstart Recipients & Youth Allowees

Benefit recipients (Newstart & Youth Allowances) Tasmania				
	<12 months	>12 months	Total	% > 12 months
Aug-2008	4,024	5,942	9,966	59.6%
Aug-2009	6,095	6,367	12,462	51.1%
Number difference	2,071	425	2,496	
% difference	51.5%	7.2%	25.0%	

## SCHOOLS IN TASMANIA

### Introduction

The Tasmanian education system has been the subject of considerable public debate in recent times, following the introduction of significant changes to post-year 10 education. This article does not engage with that debate at all, and no attempt has been made to express any views on the subject at all. The article is primarily an attempt to look at the current size and composition of the school system in Tasmania and the way it has changed over time. Most of the data is from the Australian Bureau of Statistics' annual publication *Schools Australia*, catalogue number 4221.0. The latest publication in this series covers data as of August 2008.

### Tasmanian Schools

There were a total of 277 schools in Tasmania in 2008, compared to 286 in 1998. In 2008, 24.2 per cent of all schools were non-government, compared to 23.0 per cent in 1998. Of the total number of schools in the State, 62.4 per cent were primary schools, 17.0 per cent were secondary, and 20.7 per cent were primary and secondary combined. This has changed slightly over time, as in 1998 61.5 per cent of Tasmanian schools were primary, 16.4 per cent were secondary, 18.2 per cent were combined primary and secondary, and 3.8 per cent were in the category of "special schools" which is no longer used.

In 2008, there were an estimated 81,591 full-time students in Tasmania. The following table shows a break up of these students by level (i.e. primary or secondary) and by sector. There is also a comparison with data from 10 years earlier.

	1998				2008			
	Numbers		%		Numbers		%	
	govern- ment	non- govern- ment	govern- ment	non- govern- ment	govern- ment	non- govern- ment	govern- ment	non- govern- ment
Primary	35,661	10,660	77.0%	23.0%	33475	11295	74.8%	25.2%
Secun- dary	27,317	10,478	72.3%	27.7%	24805	12016	67.4%	32.6%
Total	62,978	21,138	74.9%	25.1%	58280	23311	71.4%	28.6%

Over the last 10 years, there has been a drop in the total number of students of 3.1 per cent. The total number of primary school students has fallen by 3.3 per cent between 1998 and 2008, while the total number of secondary students fell by 2.6 per cent over the same period.

In addition to the drop in overall numbers there has also been a move of students from the government to the non-government sector. In 1998, 25.1 per cent of all students were attending non-government schools, but by 2008 this had risen to 28.6 per cent. The shift in sectors has been most notable at the secondary level, where in 1998, 27.7 per cent of students were in the non-government sector, and

by 2008 the proportion had increased to 32.6 per cent.

The following table shows the total number of students by year of schooling, and how those numbers have changed between 1998 and 2008.

	1998	2008	% change
<i>Primary</i>			
pre-year 1	6,950	6145	-11.6%
Year 1	6754	6115	-9.5%
Year 2	6936	6414	-7.5%
Year 3	6716	6554	-2.4%
Year 4	6760	6451	-4.6%
Year 5	6288	6330	0.7%
Year 6	5780	6754	16.9%
<i>Seco- ndary</i>			
Year 7	6706	6711	0.1%
Year 8	7084	6949	-1.9%
Year 9	7065	6767	-4.2%
Year 10	6930	6939	0.1%
Year 11	5431	5006	-7.8%
Year 12	4488	4443	-1.0%

One of the most notable features of this table is how significant the decline in population numbers at the younger age groups has been. This suggests that in the four to five years prior to 2008 birth rates were much lower than they were in the four to five years prior to 1998. This has major implications for the education system as the falling populations of children progress through their school years. These numbers are no doubt a factor in recent debates about the number of schools Tasmania will require in the future.

### **Indigenous Students**

In 2008 there were an estimated 5,017 Indigenous students in Tasmania. This was an increase of 22.1 per cent on the 4,108 counted in 1998. This level of growth is clearly quite different to the levels of decline in the numbers of non-Indigenous students over the same period. The increase is likely to be a combination of increased birth rates in the Indigenous population and an increase in the number of families identifying as Indigenous. This is also backed up by Census data which shows that between 1991 and 1996 the Indigenous population in Tasmania increased by 56.1 per cent, and by 13.9 per cent between 1996 and 2001. Between 2001 and 2006 the State's Indigenous population increased by a more modest 5.8 per cent.

### **Teaching staff**

According to the ABS *Schools Australia* publication, there were an estimated

5,816 full-time equivalent teachers in Tasmania in 2008. In 1998 there were 5,681 teachers recorded, which is an increase of 2.4 per cent over the previous 10 years. The difference is fairly consistent across levels, with primary teachers increasing by 2.3 per cent and secondary teachers increasing by 2.4 per cent.

The number of male teachers in Tasmania fell by 5.7 per cent between 1998 and 2008, with male primary school teachers falling by 3.4 per cent and secondary teachers falling by 6.7 per cent. Overall males made up 34.8 per cent of the teaching population in 1998, but by 2008 this had fallen to 32.1 per cent. The number of female teachers grew by 6.7 per cent between 1998 and 2008, with a 3.9 per cent rise in primary teachers and a 10.7 per cent rise in secondary teachers.

The overall increase in the number of teachers, while student populations have been declining can be explained by an apparent reduction in class sizes, expressed as teaching staff to student ratios. In 1998 there were 15 students for each teaching staff member at the primary level, and 11.4 at the secondary level. By 2008 this had reduced to 12.8 at the primary level. The number of students to teachers at the secondary level was 13.4 in 1998, but by 2008 this had reduced to 12.7.

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#### ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENTS IN SEPTEMBER 2009

- Sept 1<sup>st</sup> Ten workers from the Beaconsfield Gold Mine in Tasmania's north have been made redundant. The decision comes after the company announced a net profit after tax of \$9.1 million. General Manager Richard Holder said that when the mine operations restarted following the fatal Anzac Day rock fall in 2006, the mine increased the number of positions on site to implement a new mining method. With the changes implemented and changes to the areas being mined, Mr Holder said a reduction in activities resulted in a number of positions becoming redundant. (The Examiner)
- Sept 1<sup>st</sup> The Tasmanian Government Resource Planning and Development Commission has rejected a \$25 million shopping centre at Lauderdale south-east of Hobart which was to have included almost 30 speciality shops, a Woolworths supermarket, a medical centre and dental clinic and a plant nursery. City of Clarence Mayor Jock Campbell said the ruling was a major blow for the community because its doctors' surgery was far too small. The existing doctors' practice had hoped to double its four consulting rooms. Local practitioner Dr John Saul said that the expansion would attract additional suitable doctors. "Tasmania is 50 GPs short and you have to do something special to get a doctor to join you" he said. (The Mercury)

- Sept 1<sup>st</sup> Reece high School at Devonport in the states north west has begun works on its National Pride in Schools project which involves the construction of two classrooms and a garage for sports equipment. The school hopes to finish its \$250,000 project in November 2009. All up Tasmanian schools received \$14.7 million for 124 projects across the state. The National School Pride program is one element of the federal Governments Building the Education Revolution (BER) program. (The Advocate)
- Sept 1<sup>st</sup> Federal Housing Minister Tanya Plibersek and state Housing Minister Lin Thorp unveiled a \$109 million housing package which makes up the second instalment of the Commonwealth's Nation Building Economic Stimulus Plan targeting social housing. Part of the spending injection will include a \$16 million homelessness facility in Campbell St, Hobart, and will lead to 445 new homes being constructed. "This work is not just about jobs for builders and tradies but also associated industries such as building manufacturers and suppliers, who help keep the economy ticking over," said Ms Plibersek. (The Mercury)
- Sept 1<sup>st</sup> Tasmania's peak business body the Tasmanian Chamber of Commerce and Industry (TCCI) recorded a \$700,000 loss for the past financial year. TCCI chairman Martin Rees said that the key factors contributing to the deficit were an investment in research and policy advocacy of \$180,000, a \$222,000 reduction in gross profit from trading operations and business restructuring costs of \$340,000. (The Examiner)
- Sept 2<sup>nd</sup> Data released today by the Australian Bureau of Statistics shows that Tasmania's economy remained resilient in the face of the global recession. The Tasmanian Treasurer, Michael Aird, said the data showed the Tasmanian economy was stable in the June quarter 2009 (in trend terms). There was also an upwards revision to growth in the previous quarter. Tasmania's economy grew by 1.2 per cent compared to the same quarter last year (in trend terms), the third highest growth rate of all states and territories behind only South Australia and Western Australia. Nationally, Australia's economy grew by 0.2 per cent over this same period. ([www.media.tas.gov.au](http://www.media.tas.gov.au))
- Sept 2<sup>nd</sup> Heavy rain has further delayed the opening of the Federal Group's new \$32million resort at Coles Bay on Tasmania's north east coast until after the peak tourist season. The \$3000-a-night Saffire resort was scheduled to be completed by the end of this year but is now likely to be delayed until April 2010. (The Mercury)
- Sept 4<sup>th</sup> A new state-of-the-art laboratory in north-west Tasmania has been opened to help farmers and irrigators maximise productivity. The \$2 million AgVita Analytical lab in LaTrobe near Devonport in the states north west is a purpose-built agricultural testing facility for analysing nutrients in plants, water and soil. According to Federal Agriculture Minister Tony Burke, it will be staffed by a team of scientists and technicians. The lab will help provide information to producers so they can make decisions about the best type of farming for their land, as well as to resource management groups and water authorities. "This is the sort of cutting-edge laboratory which will help to attract the next generation of agricultural science graduates," Mr Burke said. ([www.sl.farmonline.com.au](http://www.sl.farmonline.com.au))
- Sept 4<sup>th</sup> Expressions of interest have been called for the redevelopment of Macquarie Wharf No. 1 on Hobart's waterfront in the south of the state. The planned rejuvenation follows the State Government's release of design plans for Princes Wharf No. 1 and the announcement of the preferred developer for Parliament Square. Expressions of interest must be made to TasPorts by October 28<sup>th</sup>. (The Mercury)

- Sept 7<sup>th</sup> Work is progressing on Hotel on Collins, in Hobart, an 80-room, 4.5 star development by Sultan Holdings that is expected to be open by the first week in December 2009. Another planned project of Sultan Holdings, the redevelopment of the Montpelier St car-park at Battery Point in Hobart has secured all planning approvals. The company expects to make some announcements on this development soon, but says it remains committed to its construction. Sultan Holdings also plans to start work soon on its \$45 million Wellington Centre, which would incorporate a Woolworths supermarket and ground-floor shops linking Argyle and Liverpool streets and the Bank Arcade in Hobart's CBD. The development is to have 545 short-term car spaces and four levels of offices. Other development work in Hobart also progressing includes the \$30 million Grand Mecure Hadleys in Collins St which will provide 128 luxury suites and convention facilities for up to 600 people. Riverlea Australia Pty Ltd has finalised conditions on its planning permit for the development of a 13-storey setback tower on the corner of Liverpool and Murray streets in Hobart and the Myer site in the centre of Hobart is being offered for sale with expressions of interest closing with Knight Frank on October 8. (The Mercury)
- Sept 7<sup>th</sup> The State Government and Pacific National have concluded a Business Sale Agreement for the purchase of Pacific National's Tasmanian rail business. Subject to approval from State Parliament, from 1 December 2009 all rail infrastructure and railway operations in Tasmania will be maintained, managed and owned by a new State-owned rail company. The Tasmanian Minister for Infrastructure, Mr Graeme Sturges said the Government had committed to offering all Pacific National's employees jobs on the equivalent terms and conditions as those under which they are currently employed. The agreed purchase price for the business remained at \$32 million, as previously announced. ([www.media.tas.gov.au](http://www.media.tas.gov.au))
- Sept 8<sup>th</sup> Tasmania Parks Minister Michelle O'Byrne has announced a \$285,000 funding upgrade for the Nut at Stanley in the state's north west. As part of the funding boost, four look-outs and the walking track will be upgraded, with a potential six casual employees engaged to complete the work over the next few months. Work is expected to be completed by mid 2010. (The Advocate)
- Sept 8<sup>th</sup> The poppy industry could be worth up to \$100 million at the farm gate this season. Tasmanian Poppy Grower's Association president Glynn Williams said poppy farmers had secured higher prices and greater area for the 2009-10 season than those received in recent years. Tasmania supplies about 40 per cent of the world's legal opiates through GlaxoSmithKline and Tasmanian Alkaloids and involves up to 1100 growers. (The Examiner)
- Sept 8<sup>th</sup> Tasmanian printing and mail company Print Mail Logistics Ltd based solely in Tasmania but with private and government customers interstate launched a public share offer this month to raise funds which will help the company expand its customer base overseas. Managing Director Nigel Elias said potential expansion into Britain would require increasing the existing Hobart workforce in Southern Tasmania to 40, an increase of 25 per cent. (The Mercury)
- Sept 9<sup>th</sup> Tasmanian convention industry defied the global economic crisis with a performance that comprehensively beat its targets in the last financial year. The Tasmanian Convention Bureau won 61 bids, which equated to 18,268 delegates and nearly \$28 million in direct income to the state's economy. The bureau said it had achieved 183 per cent of its target market for the 12 month period and the corporate meeting and incentive market reached 97 per cent of its target in the international market most impacted by the global financial crisis. (The Mercury)

- Sept 9<sup>th</sup> United States food giant Kraft has launched a \$19.6 billion bid for the Cadbury confectionery firm, which employs 2,300 Australians, including about 600 in Hobart in the state's south. Cadbury's Australian spokesman Roger Sharp said the Claremont plant near Hobart was part of the global company and would be included in any takeover deal. "However, talking about what may or may not occur under a takeover scenario is idle speculation," he said. "The company has received an unsolicited offer, which has been rejected outright. The business is not offering itself up for sale but it is no surprise others are interested. We are performing well." Shares in Cadbury, the world's second biggest confectionery company behind Mars, shot up 40.76 per cent on the takeover news. Last December, Cadbury sacked 160 workers from its Hobart plant. While Cadbury rejected Kraft's initial bid industry analysts now expect a bidding war between Kraft, Nestle and US chocolate company Hershey. (The Mercury)
- Sept 10<sup>th</sup> Mining company Greatland Gold PLC said it has received formal approval from the Tasmanian government for drilling activities at the Firetower gold project located 65 kilometres west of Launceston in the north of the state. Drilling is expected to commence within the next month. ([www.proactiveinvestors.com.au](http://www.proactiveinvestors.com.au))
- Sept 15<sup>th</sup> Devonport in the state's north west will get a \$1.3 million streetscape upgrade set to widen footpaths and shine a spotlight on Stewart Street. Stage one of the Devonport City Council's long-awaited Stewart Street refurbishment - from Formby Road to Fenton Street - is due to begin in March next year. Both sides of the street get new coloured pavers, which extend the footpaths and add more room for outdoor cafe space. Deciduous trees planted in Stewart Street will be uplit with coloured lights at night, adding a seasonal ambience to the riverside cityscape. (The Advocate)
- Sept 15<sup>th</sup> Tasmania will share in the benefits of a \$75 million contract won by Australian ship-building company Austal Ltd. Austal yesterday told the Australian Stock Exchange it had been chosen to build four 41-metre high-speed passenger ferries for the Government of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago. The ferries will be built at Austal's Hobart and West Australian yards, with delivery scheduled for late next year. (The Examiner)
- Sept 15<sup>th</sup> The Northern Midlands council has allocated \$125,000 for development works at the Longford Recreation Ground in the state's north. It is expected that the project will start in the next few months and will include reconstruction of the car park, upgrading of the existing toilet facilities, landscaping works and upgrading the irrigation system. (The Examiner)
- Sept 16<sup>th</sup> Timber company Forest Enterprises Australia (FEA) is selling off assets and shares in an effort to cover its debts. FEA posted a \$14 million loss for the year to June, blaming a drop of nearly \$90 million in sales of Managed Investment Forestry Schemes. The Tasmanian-based forestry company has revealed it has \$240 million in bank borrowings that will need to be re-financed in two years. FEA plans to raise \$39 million through an offer to shareholders. The company is also selling off \$74 million worth of land in Queensland, New South Wales and possibly Tasmania. ([www.abc.net.au/news](http://www.abc.net.au/news))
- Sept 17<sup>th</sup> Aboriginal artefacts estimated to be more than 10,000 years old have been discovered on the proposed \$164 million Brighton Bypass route north of Hobart. The Tasmanian Aboriginal Centre (TAC) has called a meeting of the Aboriginal community to consider the revelations. The centre last month threatened action to block construction of the bypass. TAC legal director Michael Mansell said the area would be more valuable as a centre of learning and a tourist attraction than a highway. Infrastructure Minister Graeme Sturges said his department would exercise its permit to continue Aboriginal survey and mapping work. He said major earthworks would not start until assessments had been completed and approvals given. (The Mercury)

- Sept 17<sup>th</sup> Tasmania is bucking a national trend of declining domestic travel, with the state recording its fourth consecutive period of visitor growth. Results from the Tasmanian Visitor Survey for the year to June, show visitor numbers had increased by 7 per cent compared to the same period last year, with more than 900,000 tourists arriving in Tasmania. ([www.abc.net.au/news](http://www.abc.net.au/news))
- Sept 21<sup>st</sup> The Vodafone call centre at Kingston south of Hobart will benefit from up to 450 workers being made redundant at a Melbourne call centre. Vodafone Hutchison Australia (VHA) has scrapped its Melbourne call centre contract and will transfer jobs to Kingston and India. The Australian Services Union said it had been told that work performed by the Melbourne company, Service Stream, would be moved to Vodafone in Tasmania and Mumbai in India. Last month the jobs of 400 Tasmanian Vodafone workers at Kingston were secured in a deal in which the State Government committed \$3.5 million over seven years. Vodafone, which merged with Hutchison Australia in June, was considering closing the Kingston call centre and moving its operations to Brisbane. However, on August 20 VHA announced it would base its customer service operations at Kingston, with an extra 100 jobs available. It is understood the job expansion at Kingston was to happen over the next 12 to 18 months. (The Mercury)
- Sept 23<sup>rd</sup> A new plan has been launched by the State Government and the University of Tasmania to guide the strategic growth of Tasmania's agricultural sector over the next three years. The Tasmanian Minister for Primary Industries and Water, David Llewellyn, said the Tasmanian Institute of Agricultural Research (TIAR) Strategic Plan 2009-2011 ensures the organisation can continue to deliver appropriate research, development and extension services that best fit industry's needs. "TIAR currently manages more than 200 projects with funding of \$8 million provided from a diverse range of bodies including the Commonwealth and State governments, the CSIRO, the Australian Research Council, Research and Development corporations and industry bodies," he said. TIAR employs 180 staff and has 85 PhD students undertaking a variety of projects. ([www.media.tas.gov.au](http://www.media.tas.gov.au))
- Sept 24<sup>th</sup> A mudslide at the Mt Lyell mine in Queenstown north west Tasmania has forced hundreds of mine workers to live off holiday pay or have no income at all. The Australian Workers Union was to meet with the State Government in an urgent bid to get emergency funding for workers. It has been a month since the mine closed after tonnes of mud gushed from old open cut workings into underground production areas. The mine employs 280 people made up of Copper Mines of Tasmania (CMT) staff and Barmingo Mining contractors. Contractors had been hardest hit. Some had been deployed to clean up operations but hundreds had been off work on paid or unpaid leave for almost four weeks. The Australian Workers Union assistant secretary Robert Flanagan said the union was briefed by CMT management yesterday but was given no indication when the mine would reopen. (The Mercury)
- Sept 24<sup>th</sup> Thirty-five jobs will go at timber company Gunns as the company continues to battle a downturn in demand for timber products. A Gunns spokesman confirmed that voluntary redundancies were being offered but would not comment further. Construction, Forestry, Mining and Energy Union secretary Scott McLean said 14 jobs would be slashed in the wood-fibre section of the business with 21 lost in administration and plantations. Mr McLean said he suspected that enough workers would volunteer for redundancies by the October 2nd deadline and he doubted that Gunns would have to force anyone out. (The Examiner)
- Sept 24<sup>th</sup> Australia's two major supermarket chains could be forced to review their contracts with dairy giant National Foods after a Senate Committee agreed to investigate the deals. The Senate Economics Committee looking at dairy industry pricing will add a new term of

reference allowing it to investigate deals between supermarkets and suppliers. Committee member Tasmanian Senator Richard Colbeck says deals struck three years ago making National Foods the major supplier to Coles and Woolworths will be scrutinised. The committee agreed to investigate prices after both of Tasmania's major milk suppliers cut about 20 cents a litre off farmers' milk prices. While dairy farmers in New South Wales are reaping about 48 cents a litre, National Foods is paying its Tasmanian suppliers less than half that price. ([www.abc.net.au/news](http://www.abc.net.au/news))

- Sept 24<sup>th</sup> The start of the \$43 billion National Broadband Network (NBN) has commenced with seven kilometres of fibre optic cable being laid in southern Tasmania between Aurora Energy's Cambridge Data Centre and Midway Point. The next phase from George Town to Scottsdale in the north will be under way before Christmas and a third section from Smithton in the north west of the state will begin early in the new year. Aurora is responsible for building the network in Tasmania using its infrastructure to connect domestic and business customers to the high-speed communication network. The project is being undertaken by local contractor Nu Energy, national contractor John Holland and international technology provider Marais Lucas. Senator Conroy confirmed the first high-speed broadband services over the National Broadband Network in Tasmania are expected to be available by July next year. (The Examiner)
- Sept 25<sup>th</sup> Macquarie Telecom has announced it will invest in a new data network in Tasmania as a result of the federal government's decision to reform the telecommunications sector. Macquarie Telecom has not disclosed the size of its investment, which involves building a data centre in Tasmania that will act as an interconnect for the National Broadband Network (NBN) but says the investment will allow the company to provide dedicated services to business customers in Tasmania. The Federal Communications Minister Stephen Conroy welcomed the announcement, saying it would result in lower prices for businesses. ([www.tradingroom.com.au](http://www.tradingroom.com.au))
- Sept 25<sup>th</sup> Accountancy firm Grant Thornton which is the receiver and manager of collapsed car parts maker ACL Bearings based at Launceston in the state's north has finalised the number of employees to be kept in the business. Matt Byrnes of Grant Thornton announced 70 redundancies yesterday and said a further 35 redundancies would be announced on Monday. When the firm went into receivership on August 26, 2009 it had 271 employees at its Launceston sites. Last week receivers suggested that up to 120 workers could go. Mr Byrnes said yesterday the company would seek to go forward with 166 employees. (The Mercury)
- Sept 25<sup>th</sup> The proposed \$300 million Lauderdale Quay luxury development project for Ralphs Bay south of Hobart has been declared by the Clarence City Council as an "unacceptable risk". The Council expressed concern at the level of risk which Clarence ratepayers could be exposed to in regard to maintaining the canal infrastructure as a result of late (recent) changes to the proposal. Clarence Council previously declared itself neither a supporter nor an opponent of the plan to build nine islands and a marina on the mudflats. The developer Walker Corporation said it had not introduced last-minute changes to the project as the council claimed, or failed to address key governance and liability issues. (The Mercury)
- Sept 25<sup>th</sup> The Tasmanian Health Department yesterday submitted a \$100 million, five-year plan to the Joint Standing Committee on Public Works to upgrade the Royal Hobart Hospital (RHH) campus in Southern Tasmania. The submission includes plans to: Double the intensive care unit capacity (\$14 million); Upgrade the day procedure unit by establishing a new endoscopy suite, creating a six-bed, 23-hour recovery unit as well as a third day surgery room (\$18 million); Redevelop the radiology department and install a Federal Government-funded PET scanner (\$12 million); Relocate the catheter laboratory

from Hobart Private Hospital to the RHH (\$5 million); and develop a new women's and children's service, which includes upgrading the maternity ward and its bed numbers (\$10 million). A 10-bed, adolescent unit will also be developed as part of the women's and children's services upgrade. A date for the committee to hand down its decision on whether to approve the \$100 million redevelopment was not set. (The Examiner)

Sept 29<sup>th</sup> Telstra yesterday switched on its 100th ADSL2+ exchange in Tasmania and announced a state-of-the-art retail store in Hobart's CBD. The installation of the ADSL2+ exchange at Richmond in the state's south extended Telstra's coverage for broadband speeds of up to 20 megabits a second to 88 per cent of the state. Telstra said it would replace the Sanity shop in Elizabeth Mall with a flagship T [Life] store in November - where customers will be able to test the latest telecommunications devices in a live and fully interactive environment - creating 25 new jobs. (The Mercury)

Sept 29<sup>th</sup> Business confidence appears to be recovering after record lows of pessimism, according to the Tasmanian Chamber of Commerce and Industry's December-quarter survey. The shortage of skilled workers has returned to the top of the list of business constraints, with concern about the economy dropping to fourth. Tasmanian businesses' confidence that the national economy will grow over the next 12 months rose sharply from 40.7 index points to 53.5. (The Mercury)