



- **Employment in Tasmania increased marginally to 234,000**
- **The unemployment rate increased slightly to 5.8 per cent**
- **The participation rate increased to 60.8 per cent**

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

Employment

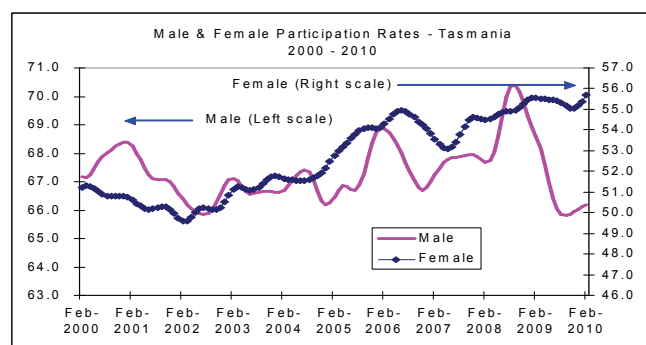
Total employment in Tasmania grew slightly in February, and has now increased for three consecutive months. It is however, 1.7 per cent below what it was at the same time last year. Full-time employment has continued to decline, and is now 4.7 per cent lower than last February. This has been off-set by annual growth in part-time work of 4.8 per cent. Total male employment fell over the year by 3.9 per cent, with full-time employment falling by 4.5 per cent, and male part-time employment falling by 0.8 per cent. The picture is quite different for the female labour force, where total female employment has increased by 1.0 per cent over the year. Again though, female full-time employment fell by 5.1 per cent, but the impact of this on the figures is masked by a 7.2 per cent growth in female part-time employment.

Unemployment

The total number of unemployed people in Tasmania increased from 12,100 in February last year, to 14,400 this year. Male unemployment increased by approximately 1,800 over the year, while female unemployment grew by around 600. The unemployment rate

for Tasmania was estimated to be 5.8 per cent in February, compared to 4.9 per cent in February last year. This is the highest rate recorded since November 2006. The current national unemployment rate is 5.3 per cent, while in other States and Territories, NSW recorded 5.6 per cent, Vic 5.2 per cent, Qld 5.7 per cent, SA 4.7 per cent, WA 5.0 per cent, NT 3.2 per cent, and ACT 3.9 per cent.

Labour Force & Participation Rates



The number of people in the Tasmanian labour force has increased for five consecutive months now to stand at 248,400, but this is still 0.6 per cent below what it was last February. The male labour force contracted by 2.3 per cent over the year, while the female labour force grew by 1.4 per cent. The total participation rate in Tasmania increased to 60.8 per cent last month, which is 1.8 percentage points below what it was in February last year, and well below the current national rate of 65.2 per cent. It has however increased now for four consecutive months, with both male and female participation rates improving in recent months.

Feature Article

UNDEREMPLOYED WORKERS

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Labour Force Estimates - Tasmania

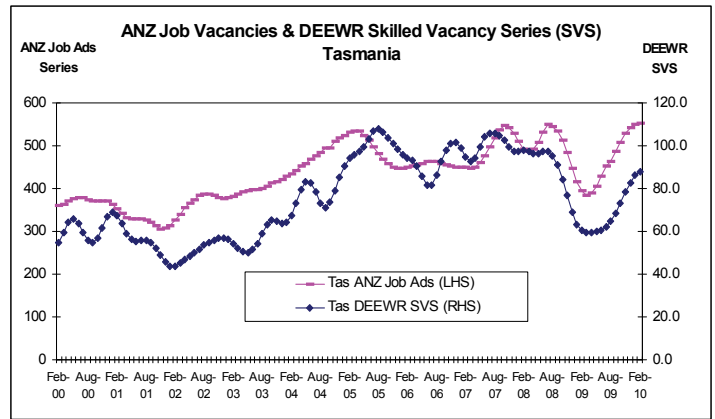
(Trend data)

	Feb-2009	Jan-2010	Feb-2010
	000's	000's	000's
Employment			
Male	129.0	123.8	124.0
Female	108.9	109.5	110.0
Full-time	161.5	154.2	153.9
Part-time	76.4	79.1	80.1
Persons	237.9	233.3	234.0
Unemployment			
Male	6.2	8.0	8.0
Female	5.9	6.2	6.4
Persons	12.1	14.2	14.4
Labour Force			
Male	135.2	131.8	132.1
Female	114.8	115.6	116.4
Persons	250.0	247.5	248.4
Unemployment Rate %			
Male	4.6	6.1	6.1
Female	5.2	5.3	5.5
Persons	4.9	5.7	5.8
Full-time Teenage*	20.4	19.7	17.4
Participation Rate %			
Male	68.6	66.1	66.2
Female	55.5	55.4	55.7
Persons	61.9	60.6	60.8
*unadjusted data			

Job Vacancies

The ANZ Bank Job Advertisement series (trend) increased by 0.5 per cent over the month of February, but was 40.4 per cent higher than it was in February last year. Nationally, the series grew by 1.1 per cent over the month, and by 7.7 per cent over the year.

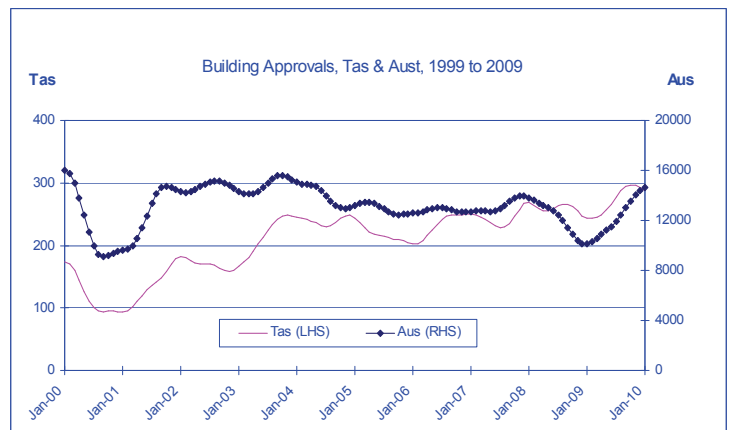
DEEWR's Skilled Vacancy Survey Index (trend) in Tasmania has increased for 11 consecutive months now, and is 45.6 per cent higher than it was in February last year. Nationally, the index increased by 1.6 per cent over the month, but was 2.6 per cent lower than it was in February last year.



Other Indicators

Building approvals in Tasmania fell by 1.7 per cent in January, but were 18.1 per cent higher than last January. Nationally, building approvals increased by 1.9 per cent over the month and were 45.0 per cent higher than in January 2009.

Average Weekly Earnings (average weekly ordinary time earnings) in Tasmania in the November 2009 quarter increased by 2.1 per cent. They also increased by 7.4 per cent over the year. This compares to a national quarterly



increase of 1.6 per cent and an annual increase of 4.9 per cent. Average weekly ordinary time earnings in Tasmania are currently 15.8 per cent below the national average.

Newstart Recipients & Youth Allowees

Benefit recipients (Newstart & Youth Allowances) Tasmania				
	<12 months	>12 months	Total	% > 12 months
Jan-2009	5,129	6,380	11,509	55.4%
Jan-2010	5,429	6,700	12,129	55.2%
Number difference	300	320	620	
% difference	5.8%	5.0%	5.4%	

UNDEREMPLOYED WORKERS

Introduction

The Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) publishes a report each year on underemployed workers. Most of the data presented is national data, however it is possible to extract some State data and to look at changes over time. For the purposes of this article, trends over the last five years, 2004 to 2008 inclusive, will be looked at. The ABS defines an underemployed worker as a part-time worker, that is someone who works less than 35 hours a week, who wants and is available for more hours of work than they currently have. In addition, they include full-time workers who have had their hours reduced for economic reasons. This group has been excluded from the discussion in this article due to its small size (approximately five per cent nationally), and also due to the fact that such reductions in hours are generally short-term.

Part-time workers who would prefer more hours

The following table shows the percentage of part-time workers who would prefer to work more hours. For example, in 2004, 29.6 per cent of males who worked part-time, wanted more hours. By 2009, 26.8 per cent of males who worked part-time wanted more hours.

	Males	Females	Persons
2004	29.6%	20.7%	23.1%
2005	32.5%	20.5%	24.1%
2006	29.0%	18.5%	21.5%
2007	21.9%	15.6%	17.2%
2008	23.6%	17.3%	19.2%
2009	26.8%	17.2%	19.7%

Between September 2004 and September 2009, total part-time employment in Tasmania grew by 15.8 per cent. However, during the same period the percentage of workers who wanted more hours fell from 23.1 per cent to 19.7 per cent. It is an interesting phenomenon that during a period of significant employment growth, the numbers of part-time workers who wanted more hours actually fell, given that there were seemingly more opportunities to work more hours than ever before.

Some of the possible reasons for this could be Tasmania's older age profile, which may mean a greater proportion of people are preferring to work part-time in their later years. It is also possible that when the labour market is buoyant, it provides part-time opportunities for those who are perhaps returning to the work force after an absence. Such opportunities may not be available when employment growth is not as high, causing these people to withdraw from the labour market altogether. It is also the case that 20 years ago in September 1988, part-time employment made up 21.9 per cent of total employment. By September 2009, this proportion had increased to 32.9 per cent. Again there are a number of factors contributing to the increased prevalence of part-time work. These include the desire on the part of employers to have a more flexible work force better able to respond to fluctuating demands, lifestyle factors on the part of employees who choose to spend more time with their families or indeed other pursuits, and the growth in the size

of the female labour market.

In September 1988 for example, females made up 38.9 per cent of the total labour market, but by 2008, this had increased to 47.0 per cent. In addition, female part-time workers in September 2009 made up 51.0 per cent of the total female work force. By contrast, in the same month, only 16.8 per cent of male workers were part-time. These figures strongly suggest that females with family responsibilities are a significant group in those part-time workers who do not want more hours.

Other characteristics of underemployed workers

The following data is only available at the national level, but should be regarded as a reasonable guide to the Tasmanian situation. Historically, Tasmania has a slightly higher level of part-time work than the national average, so the figures may be slightly understated.

Age profile of part-time workers who would prefer more hours

15-19	16.8%
20-24	15.8%
25-34	18.3%
35-44	20.1%
45-54	17.0%
55+	12.0%

It seems clear from the above table that workers over 55 have a lower preference for additional hours, possibly related to phased retirement, while the desire to work additional hours peaks between the ages of 35 and 44.

Education profile of part-time workers who would prefer more hours

Bachelor degree or higher	19.0%
Advanced diploma/diploma	8.9%
Certificate	15.7%
year 12	23.6%
year 11	8.0%
year 10	24.8%

There seems to be a slight correlation between levels of education and the desire to work more hours, in that the percentages decline between those whose highest level of education was year 12 to those who had completed an advanced diploma. Generally, the higher the level of education the lower the preference to work more hours, although the exceptions in the above table are those who have only completed year 11, and those with a bachelor degree or higher.

Preferred number of hours of part-time workers who would prefer more hours

Less than 30 hrs	31.8%
30-34	13.7%
35-39	28.5%
40+	26.0%

Bearing in mind that the ABS defines part-time work as 35 hours or less, it appears from the above table that just over 50 per cent of underemployed part-time workers would prefer to work full-time. The largest group in the above table at 34.1 per cent are those part-time workers who would like to increase their hours but still work less than 30 hours a week.

Summary

- The percentage of part-time workers who wanted additional hours has ranged between 17.2 per cent and 24.1 per cent of all part-time workers over the last five years. Consequently, between 75 and 80 per cent of part-time workers did not want to work additional hours.
- The percentage of male part-time workers who wanted to work more hours was significantly higher than the percentage of female part-time workers.
- The desire of part-time workers to work additional hours seems to decline in the older age groups.
- Of those part-time workers who wanted additional hours, just over half would prefer to work full-time.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENTS IN FEBRUARY 2010

- Feb 2nd Tasmanian median house prices reached a record \$300,000 in the December quarter, the Real Estate Institute of Tasmania's report revealed. Institute president Peter Bushby said house sales fell 3.2 per cent for the quarter, but rose 17.1 per cent for the year. Sales in Hobart rose 25.3 per cent, but fell 7.9 per cent in Launceston and 17.8 per cent in the North-West. Nationally, economists said the housing market is set to cool in 2010. (*The Examiner*)
- Feb 2nd The North-West Regional Hospital sale will not be delayed following the death of its owner Herman Rockefeller. Mr Rockefeller's extensive list of houses, apartments, hotels and shopping centres in Tasmania will also remain in the hands of the company he ran with his brother Robert. The State Government agreed to buy the hospital from Mr Rockefeller and his company Nikon Pty Ltd just weeks before the property investor disappeared. (*The Mercury*)
- Feb 2nd The Tasmanian Forest Contractors Association has called for the government to help contractors leave the industry. The call comes after a five-week shutdown of Gunns Ltd's Tamar woodchip plant in the State's north. Association chairman Rodney Bishop said the shutdown, on top of many closures last year, would lead to the demise of businesses and

free service providing financial assessment, information and support to primary producers, fishers and small rural business people in rural areas who are experiencing the pressures of financial hardship. It can be contacted on 1300883276. (*The Mercury*)

- Feb 4th West Australian-based contracting group Macmahon Holdings Ltd has won a two-year \$65 million contract for work at Bluestone Mines' Renison underground tin mine in Tasmania's west. Bluestone Mines Tasmania, a wholly owned subsidiary of Metals X, Australia's largest producer of tin, has provided the company with a letter of intent for the contract. Macmahon will undertake underground production and development works, as well as the overall management and maintenance of the mine owner's mobile plant assets. The company said it expected to begin work on-site mid March. (*The West Australian*)
- Feb 4th Hobart shipbuilder Incat has laid off 20 workers as it nears completion of its latest vessel. Australian Manufacturing Workers Union state president Darren Clark said 10 full-time employees and 10 casuals employed by a labour hire firm were going. Incat managing director Craig Clifford said the changes were cyclical: "As a boat nears the end not as many people are required." Mr Clifford said Incat was pursuing some promising inquiries about its latest vessel. "The European market normally heats up around this time as they emerge from winter and plan for the summer." he said. Incat currently has about 320 employees. (*The Mercury*)
- Feb 4th The Tasmanian State Government's Tasracing assistance package was unveiled yesterday with the announcement of a \$40 million loan to support the Tasmanian racing industry. Tasmanian Premier David Bartlett said the announcement was not an election promise and that the loan servicing costs of \$400,000 per year were already accounted for in the budget forward estimates starting in 2010-11. (*The Advocate*)
- Feb 4th The Tasmanian Minister for Environment, Parks and Heritage, Michelle O'Byrne, today officially opened the new Cradle Valley Centralised Sewage Treatment Plant at Cradle Mountain in the north of the state. Ms O'Byrne said the system was a milestone in improved environmental protection for one of Tasmania's key tourist destinations. "The completion of the new \$16 million centralised sewage treatment system at Cradle Mountain will provide significant environmental and socio-economic benefits to the Cradle Mountain area," she said. (www.media.gov.au)
- Feb 4th Members of Australia's dairy industry gathered yesterday in Melbourne to celebrate the 'best of the best' at the 2010 Australian Grand Dairy Awards (AGDA). Victoria and Tasmania were home to the most award winners, with both states receiving seven Champion Awards and a Grand Champion award each. Specialty cheese producer Tasmanian Heritage won the 2010 Grand Champion Cheese for its washed rind cheese Tasmanian Heritage Red Square. (www.ausfoodnews.com.au)
- Feb 5th Mining company Metals X made a \$3.62 million operating surplus from its Tasmanian tin operations in the December quarter. The company owns the Renison and Mt Bischoff mines, the Renison tin concentrator plant and the Rentails retreatment project all in the State's west. Metals X is moving towards a joint venture with Chinese firm YT Parksong Australia Holding Pty Ltd (connected to the world's biggest tin producer,

- Yunnan Tin). Renison Mine's owners are currently looking at moving 81 underground workers to a contract firm. (*The Advocate*)
- Feb 6th A Tasmanian company that owes the State Government \$2 million is to be wound up with the loss of 16 jobs. Etech Tasmania director Geoffrey Elwood said yesterday the Hobart company would not exist into the future. "We have been a victim of our rapid growth and extremely tough market conditions as a result of the global financial crisis," he said. Mr Elwood said he was working with secured creditors and the State Government to try to sell the assets. (*The Mercury*)
- Feb 6th The Tasmanian Minister for Environment, Parks and Heritage, Michelle O'Byrne, today said the Parks and Wildlife Service had begun one of its largest ever recruiting drives, with up to 30 positions available around Tasmania. Ms O'Byrne said the positions on offer included jobs for rangers, field officers and building supervisors. (www.media.tas.gov.au)
- Feb 8th Tasmanian Premier David Bartlett has assured workers on the state's Musselroe Wind Farm project that their jobs are safe. Work has stalled indefinitely on the north east coast site, but Mr Bartlett says the Government is committed to renewable energy investment in the state. About \$35-million has been spent on pre-construction work but next week the \$400-million development will grind to a halt. The State Government said there will be delays until the investment climate improves. (www.abc.net.au)
- Feb 9th The Tasmanian State Government has compulsorily acquired land on the East Tamar in the State's north which was earmarked for the Gunns Ltd pulp mill pipeline. Recently DIER spokesman Simon Hiscock told the Mercury the Dilston acquisitions were solely for the purpose of constructing the Dilston Bypass. "They are entirely unrelated to the construction of the Gunns pipeline, which is a separate matter for negotiation by Gunns," Mr Hiscock said. (*The Mercury*)
- Feb 10th The first sod was turned yesterday on a new 10-unit housing development for Latrobe's elderly residents in the State's north west. The \$10.2 million development will be built behind Latrobe's Uniting Aged Care Strathdevon centre and will be funded by the state and federal governments as part of the Federal Government's economic stimulus package. The Latrobe site is one of five statewide to receive the funding with a total of 50 units to be built. (*The Advocate*)
- Feb 10th Bendigo Mining Ltd the latest owners of the Henty mine on Tasmania's west coast report that the gold mine paid for itself in the first six months of ownership. Bendigo Mining's chief executive Rod Hanson says the company now plans to spend \$3.8 million on new mining equipment to improve underground productivity and cut maintenance costs. (*The Advocate*)
- Feb 10th The Tasmanian Minister for Economic Development, Michael Aird, today announced funding totalling \$119,500 for six projects through Screen Tasmania's latest funding round. Mr Aird said that awarding a mix of investment and grant funding across development projects as well as in the area of industry and cultural development was important to build a strong, sustainable screen industry in the state. Screen Tasmania funding round dates for 2010 are available at www.screen.tas.gov.au (*The Advocate*)

- Feb 10th The State Government yesterday announced \$1million in funding for maintenance and upgrading work of Neighbourhood Houses in Tasmania. Building improvements are expected to be completed by the end of June this year. *(The Examiner)*
- Feb 11th The Tasmanian Infrastructure Strategy was launched by the Tasmanian Premier David Bartlett at the Brighton Transport Hub construction site yesterday. The long-awaited document outlines priorities for transport, water, energy and digital infrastructure delivery over the next decade. *(The Mercury)*
- Feb 11th Tasmanian Premier David Bartlett has described an announcement by Moody's Investor Service that Tasmania had maintained its AAA credit rating as an endorsement of the Government's financial management. Tasmanian Chamber of Commerce and Industry chief economist Richard Dowling said that there were still risks that needed to be managed, with current projections indicating that the budget would come within \$93 million of falling into net debt in 2012-13. *(The Examiner)*
- Feb 11th Korea has lifted its ban on the import of Australian cherries, giving Tasmania an economic boost that will grow to around \$15 million by next year. Fruit Growers Tasmania president Jos Driessen said that the level of exports from Tasmania to Korea would grow to more than 1000 tonnes by next season - making it a \$15 million market. By 2013-14, production levels will grow to up to 8000 tonnes. *(The Examiner)*
- Feb 11th More than \$1 million will be spent on upgrading facilities in disability services, child protection and residential care. Tasmanian Human Services Minister Lin Thorp said work would be done at child respite centres at Lutana in the State's south and Latrobe in the north, at child protection centres in the south and at 14 residential care facilities. *(The Mercury)*
- Feb 12th The State Government will spend \$300,000 providing disability access to toilet facilities at St Peters Pass on the Midland Hwy and at Parramatta Creek on the Bass Hwy in the north – both will be modified to comply with national disability guidelines. Tasmania Infrastructure Minister Graeme Sturges said Parramatta Creek would be upgraded this financial year and it was planned that the St Peters Pass toilets would be modified by the end of this calendar year. Both projects are being fully funded by the State Government. *(The Advocate)*
- Feb 12th Australian Treasury Secretary Ken Henry has told a Senate estimates committee that the so-called global financial crisis was over. However, Dr Henry warned that further "financial shocks" could be around the corner. Treasury also did not want to declare yesterday that Australia's unemployment rate had peaked. Around 52,700 positions were added to the national economy last month, confounding expectations of a 15,000 gain and pushing the national jobless rate from 5.5 per cent in December to an 11-month low of 5.3 per cent It was the fourth month in a row that the jobless rate fell, surprising many forecasters who had expected unemployment to creep up to 5.6 per cent. *(The Mercury)*
- Feb 12th The State Government yesterday announced an agreement to sell 800,000 tonnes of woodchips into Asian markets. Tasmanian Energy and Resources Minister David Llewellyn made the announcement, which is expected to save about 150 forestry contractor jobs, at a meeting of

- industry representatives at Campbell Town in the State's midland. (*The Examiner*)
- Feb 13th The Tasmanian Polytechnic has announced that enrolments have increased this year by 20 per cent, in the 16 to 19 year age group. (*The Mercury*)
- Feb 15th Etech Tasmania, the software company that announced it had ceased trading on February 6th has been taken over in a management buyout. Former Etech director said that a new company, Studywiz had been formed, which would retain Etech's customer base and intellectual property. He stated that at least 6 jobs could be created in the Hobart office. (*The Mercury*)
- Feb 17th Another Tasmanian irrigation scheme is set to start now that farmers have bought the rights to 70 per cent of the water. The 5500 megalitre Whitemore scheme in northern Tasmania will cost about \$10 million to build. Work is set to start this autumn to pipe water 40kms from the Poatina tailrace to farmland stretching from the foot of the Great Western Tiers to just south of Carrick. It's the third project the Tasmanian Irrigation Development Board is starting to build as part of a \$400 million federal and state funded Tasmanian irrigation development agenda. (www.abc.net.au)
- Feb 17th Forty-five public housing units will be built in two Launceston suburbs this year under the Federal Government's economic stimulus plan – 25 units at St Leonards and 20 in Newnham. Health and Human Services Minister, Lin Thorp, said that the two developments had been proposed by Centacare and Unity Aged Care and that more than half of the units would be used for aged-care accommodation. (*The Examiner*)
- Feb 17th Discount retail chain Chickenfeed is set to close its office and warehouse at Cambridge with the loss of up to 60 jobs. Insiders say they expect the company's operations to be moved to Sydney. Staff will be offered the opportunity to transfer to Sydney or to work in the chain's 29 retail stores in Tasmania. (*The Mercury*)
- Feb 17th The Devonport Maritime Museum has secured \$600 000 to help it become a significant tourist attraction. Braddon Labor MHA Brenton Best yesterday announced the State Government grant under the Urban Renewal and Heritage Fund, to provide interpretive displays, a new entrance, more exhibition and retail space and what he called "an expansion of the visitor experience". Mr Best said he expected work to begin soon and to be completed within 12 months. (*The Advocate*)
- Feb 17th Bass Metals announced yesterday decline site works at the Fossey underground mine, near Tullah, were underway. It also said upgrading and refurbishment of its nearby Hellyer Mill was underway. The zinc-lead-copper-precious metals operation is expected to employ up to 60 people, with the mill expected to treat Fossey ore from the second half of the year. (*The Advocate*)
- Feb 17th Premier David Bartlett today opened a new Materials Recovery (recycling) Facility at Spreyton. The Veolia facility offers state-of-the-art infrastructure for receiving and sorting materials collected for recycling from households, businesses and industries in the north-west region. Premier Bartlett said the investment by Veolia was another show of confidence in Tasmania's economic direction. (www.media.tas.gov.au)

- Feb 17th Tourism and Arts Minister Michelle O'Byrne officially unveiled the Ali Sultan-built \$22 million Hotel Collins yesterday although it has been operating since December. The opening of Hobart's newest hotel offers little relief for a worsening accommodation crisis, tourism chiefs say. Hundreds of extra rooms were needed to alleviate the long-term shortage, Tourism Industry Council Tasmania chief executive officer Daniel Hanna said. *(The Mercury)*
- Feb 17th Work has begun on the GP Super Clinic and Integrated Care Centre on Hobart's eastern shore. The \$5.5 million Super Clinic will be the first of four promised for Tasmania by the Federal Government and is expected to be finished this year. The State Government is funding a \$13 million Integrated Care Centre on the same site. The combined development will employ more than 100 doctors, nurses and other health staff. GP Super Clinics are also planned for Sorell, Burnie and Devonport. *(The Mercury)*
- Feb 18th An extra 20 000ha of old-growth forest will be set aside for the production of Tasmania's native rainforest species used in fine furniture and feature timber products. Forestry Tasmania's new Special Timbers strategy, released yesterday, recommends changing the management of 100 000ha of native forests to 200-year harvesting rotations. It was also important for all furniture-makers and craftsmen to know that the native woods they relied on for their business and artistry would be available for a long time to come, an industry spokesman said. *(The Mercury)*
- Feb 18th Tasmania's multimillion-dollar natural gas roll-out has stalled because of the lack of State Government funding to build the infrastructure for the next stage. Both the state's peak business group and the company behind natural gas connection yesterday called on the major political parties to commit to pushing the giant infrastructure project through to the next phase of roll-out to 100 000 homes and businesses. TCCI chief executive Rob Wallace said that the roll-out has come to a complete standstill having been taken past only about 47 000 homes and businesses. Tas Gas retail general manager Russell Reid said that his company had met both State Infrastructure Minister Graeme Sturges and Economic Development Minister Michael Aird in recent weeks to try to confirm funding for the next stage of the roll-out. He said that the cost of the project to the initial 40 000 homes and businesses had been about \$140 million but the cost of taking it on to 100 000 homes and businesses statewide would not be that great because the "backbone" infrastructure was already in place. *(The Examiner)*
- Feb 18th So many north and north-west businesses applied for a piece of a \$17 million stimulus package that a planned second funding round will not go ahead. The North-West and Northern Tasmania Investment and Innovation Fund was announced late last year after several major factory closures, including McCain's at Smithton and Tas Paper's mills at Wesley Vale and Burnie. Federal Innovation and Industry Minister Senator Kim Carr yesterday said the response had been overwhelming. He said 126 applications for funding had been received and his department, through AusIndustry, was working hard to assess them as soon as possible with the aim to announce the first recipients before Easter. *(The Examiner)*

- Feb 18th An Environmentally friendly community health centre has been opened on Tasmania's Bruny Island, with predictions it will become the Tasmanian Government's first zero-energy building. The building, which was opened in early February, features a solar photovoltaic system, a 10 kW wind turbine and a solar hot water system, as well as energy efficiency features such as double glazing and high insulation levels. (*www.ecogeneration.com.au*)
- Feb 18th The Launceston City Council has officially unveiled works on City Park's John Hart conservatory. The council recently completed the first stage of works, which involved the replacement of the roof, standardising the glass to restore the original patterns, repairing drainage systems and replacing the floor. It's understood that the council is seeking funding to carry out stage two of the refurbishment, which will involve installing new central units in the conservatory to display flowers and other plants. Launceston Mayor Albert van Zetten said the council had also completed major infrastructure works at the Lilydale Recreation Ground, Cataract Gorge and public reserves at Punchbowl and Myrtle Park. (*The Examiner*)
- Feb 19th Tasmanian educational software company, Etech has been placed in liquidation, according to it's director. Initially 16 staff had been made redundant, however following a management buyout and the formation of a new company Studywiz, six to eight staff may be re-employed. The company reputedly owes the State Government \$2m but the National Australia Bank has priority over Etech's assets. (*The Mercury*)
- Feb 19th A \$1.7m cycle path was launched in Devonport yesterday, and is expected to create 20 jobs. The project was funded by a combination of State local and Federal government money, and is expected to be completed in six months. (*The Advocate*)
- Feb 19th Hobart shipbuilder Incat has again offered voluntary redundancies to its employees. No figure has been placed on the number of workers to go as yet. (*The Mercury*)
- Feb 20th Melbourne firm Rodgers Reidy have been announced as the liquidators of Tasmanian company Etech. A spokesperson for the liquidators said that he would look at the transfer of intellectual property to Studywiz, the company formed by the management buyout of Etech. (*The Mercury*)
- Feb 21st Employment Participation Minister Mark Arbib announced a \$10m scheme to assist workers who lose their jobs as a result of the shut down of the Federal Governments home insulation scheme. (*Sunday Examiner*)
- Feb 22nd Work began yesterday ion the \$41.5m Kingston Bypass project. The project will employ around 50 people and is expected to be completed in two years. (*The Mercury*)
- Feb 23rd The proponent of a pulp mill in northern Tasmania, Gunns Limited, has announced to the Australian Stock Exchange that it hopes to name its co-investors by the end of June this year. (*The Mercury*)