Ladies and gentlemen, thank you for coming along this afternoon. We realise that you have sacrificed going to the hairdresser, the beauty parlour and all those other things that one does before the Conference Dinner, so we truly appreciate your time this afternoon. What you guys have realised, and everybody else has not realised, is that this is a really important Symposium Session because there is a process which has been undertaken in Tasmania which is really important in terms of Community Voice. And, of course, that is a theme of our Conference.

My name is Judy Walker. I am Deputy Chair of the Tasmania Together Progress Board. Before I introduce the panel I would like to acknowledge the palawa people on whose land we meet. Let me introduce the panel for the Symposium on Tasmania Together. On my immediate left is Mr James McAlpine, who is the Chair of the Tasmania Together Progress Board. Next to James is Lee Prince, who is the Director of the Progress Board. Next to Lee is Jane Bennett, who is a Board Member.

Tasmania Together is a long term social, environmental and economic plan for Tasmania’s development over the next 20 years. It is also an over-arching framework for planning for budgeting and policy priorities for the government, and also for the non-government sectors. What is really important about it is that it is what thousands of Tasmanians, who participated in a very extensive consultation process, said that they wanted for the future of the State and for their children. This is the Tasmania Together document and there are some copies if anybody would like to take one after this session.

Before I go into just a very brief description about the document, I would like to just outline how we plan to proceed with this Symposium. Since we are such a small group, I think it will make it even better for inter-activity. Can I just get a bit of a feel for who is here? How many people from Tasmania? Let us just have a look at the Tasmanian contingent. Great. Now, by a process of elimination that presumably means that you are from interstate. Victoria? Yes, two Victorians. Let us guess, Queensland? I cannot see from here. No. South Australia? New South Wales? Both of you? Yes? Have I missed anybody out? Yes? Canberra. Is that Christie? Yes, it is. Canberra—most important. Okay, so we have got a geographical spread with a strong Tasmanian flavour.

The document here and by the way, who is familiar with it? Is anybody? Excellent. There are 24 goals and there are 212 benchmarks, and those benchmarks and goals tell us where we are going to be in the year 2020 and they will also tell us how we will know if we are actually getting there.

I will give you an example: Goal 7 is to foster and value vibrance and diverse rural, regional and remote communities that are connected to each other and the rest of the world. Now, there are a number of benchmarks that relate to health. For instance,
Goal 5 is about developing an approach to health and well-being that focuses on preventing poor health and encouraging healthy lifestyles. Goal 6 is about improving the health and well-being of the Tasmanian community through the delivery of co-ordinated services.

There was a very strong emphasis in the consultations from the community, from a health point of view, on prevention of illness and about promoting healthy lifestyles.

So I guess from the point of view of our Conference here, the National Rural Health Conference, it is Goals 5, 6 and 7 which are central to the discussion—in other words, the social determinants of health, but the social determinants as they are recognised by the community. And what we want to do is demonstrate to you, through our three presentations, how the Community Voice underpins the whole Tasmania Together process.

So what I would like to do first of all, is call upon Jane, Jane Bennett, who is going to talk about the community input process. Most people, I think, would have heard of Jane, but in case you have not she is actually the Business Manager of Ashgrove Cheese, which is one of Tasmania’s great success stories. It is a very important rural industry. She was a member of the Community Leaders Group, which was the backbone in the development of the whole Tasmania Together process, and Jane sort of represents that continuity through from the Community Leaders Group to the Tasmania Together Progress Board. So, Jane, over to you.

Jane Bennett

Thanks, Judy. I sort of feel like I have been involved in Tasmania Together since its very—not even just since its birth, but since its conception, because I was part of the consultation the Premier had around the State with various groups and organisations about whether to develop the initial stages of Tasmania Together. So since March 1999. I’m one who has got the capacity to best explain what we actually went through in those early phases. As Judy has already said, Tasmania Together has had an extensive amount of community involvement in its development through the make up of the Community Leaders Group for the consultation process that we went through and the ongoing involvement of the community in achieving the benchmarks.

The Community Leaders Group was established as the initial part of Tasmania Together, and the Community Leaders Group was made up of 24 individuals who were selected from a broad range of backgrounds from across the State and this group of people were put together to develop the document for Tasmania Together; so to establish what the aspirations of Tasmania were for the Tasmania Together document. There was a belief in the early stages that this process would take about three months. So we members of the Community Leaders Group signed on for this three month stint developing the document, and what became really loud and clear very, very early on was that if we were actually going to consult with the community and get input and really get a feel for what people in Tasmania were after, it was going to take a whole lot longer than three months.

It actually took us nearly two years—actually, over two years now that I think about it. And it was a very long and involved process. The consultation with the community was really central to the development of Tasmania Together. And, Judy, if we can
have a look at the process? So what we are looking at up there is a basic outline of the process that we went through. So we had the Community Leaders Group, a very diverse group of people, who had contacts in very, very different sectors of the community. So that was a key starting point; to actually have an inroad into a whole cross-section of the community before we actually began.

So the Community Leaders Group and 60 other people started the process by having a Search Conference here in Hobart for three days. And from that Search Conference came a thing called the Goals and Vision document. And they were the goals and visions, so the aspirations, that Tasmanians had. We then went out and began the consultation process and had public consultations input from the community about the goals and visions and what people thought about them. This was all fed into a database. And from there we established just what the vision and the goals that we were going to use were. So the original document contained lots of things that were not necessarily kept at the end of that consultation process.

We then moved into a benchmarking process, and from the benchmarking process established the targets that are in the final Tasmania Together document. So this document was then produced. And the Board has taken over since then. So it was a very long and involved process that went on for two years. So the start of that whole thing was the Search Conference, and the Search Conference was a very integral part of it all. Not only did we have the 24 members of the Community Leaders Group at the Search Conference, but we also had a broad cross-section of the community and, importantly, we included a number of the heads of agencies for the State Government here in Tasmania and the Leader of the Opposition, so the Leader of the Liberal Party in Tasmania participated, as did the Leader of the Greens.

So it came on board with tripartite support. Everybody believed that what we wanted to achieve was a positive future for Tasmania. So the result that came out of that was “Our Vision Our Future”, and that was the document that we took out to the community to consult with everybody in the process. There were a whole range of ways in which the Community Leaders Group went about the consultation process and, obviously, one of the key ones was public meetings. There were over 60 public meetings held in communities right around the State, including the Bass Strait Islands and every sector of the Tasmanian mainland.

Those meetings were very important in the process, but they obviously were not going to be the be all and end all of community consultation, because the one thing that came through very loud and clear was that we were not getting a really broad cross-section of the community at those community meetings. We were generally getting people who had some specific issue that they wanted to raise and they wanted to consult with the group over. So they had a particular issue that they wanted to push. So we needed to have more than simply the community meetings around the countryside, and so there were a range of other activities that we undertook and each of the Community Leaders Group members had a different network of organisations and groups that they could tap into.

So each of us went back and we consulted with industry organisations that were relevant to us and community groups that were relevant to us and other groups and organisations. So, for example, I consulted with organisations like the Tasmanian Farmers and Graziers Association, the Women in Agriculture, Rural Youth and a range of other groups particularly around the Deloraine area where I come from. It
was a really good example of getting people out of their comfort zone and out of what they normally look at when I went and consulted with the Tas Farmers and Graziers Association, and they actually embraced the concept wholeheartedly and decided that they would have a four hour facilitated session on “Our Vision Our Future” and assessing what particular aspects the Tas Farmers and Graziers Association believed were really important for the rural communities around Tasmania.

Each of the 35 members of the General Council of TFGA that turned up to that session found it invaluable because for the first time in the history of the TFGA, and it had been around for 20 years at that point, they were actually looking at issues and thinking about things that were not just about farming. So they started to think about the issues that affected their rural communities and the key issues that they recognised were important for the future of Tasmania for their rural communities were issues around employment in their local communities and agriculture, obviously. But the two main things that were coming through were the health issues and the education issues for their kids.

So they started to think about broader concepts than simply agriculture. That was a really, really invaluable thing for them to do. Another great consultation that I did was with a Year 10 Prefects Conference with all the northern high schools in Tasmania and that was run out at Exeter that particular year. We had 120 year 10 students. We ran them through the concept of the document and what the visions and goals were. We broke them into 10 different groups and they went out and they had particular and specific issues that each group looked at. And they came back and they had looked at the document and they had said these are the things out of the document that we want to have. But they had also spent some time saying this is what we, as the young children of 2000, want to see in Tasmania by the time 2020 comes along; the sorts of things that we want to get involved in.

One of the really important ones for them was an Australian Rules football team, which was an interesting thing. It was not so much about the fact that they needed a football team, but they wanted a sporting team that they could get behind and be proud of; something to stand up and say, “We are proud of being Tasmanian”. They also wanted a theme park. The main principle behind the theme park was that they did not all want to have to go to Queensland for their holidays, and they wanted people coming down here to Tasmania. It was really great. We had whole cross-sections of the community involved in the consultation process and there were over 100 community organisations that were involved and more than 160 submissions that came into the process.

Now, all the information that came in to the Community Leaders Group was put into a database, and the database kept every single bit of information that we received in. One of the other exciting things that we did was Australia Post came on board and we sent out postcards to households all around Tasmania and we invited people to write their thoughts and their comments on the back. We had a list of the goals and visions there and we asked people to have input and to personalise their own aspirations on the back of these postcards. And two and a half thousand people actually responded. Which was a lot more than we ever expected, and they sent the cards back to us. As well as the forums and the postcards and the meetings we also had a website and people could make their contributions on the website.
Some of the probably longest and most complex contributions to the document came via the website. It was also really important, the website, for people who didn’t have the capacity to go along to any of the meetings or were not part of the organisations that we were consulting with, but who wanted to have input. So it opened it up to a much broader cross-section of the people, and people who were in more rural and remote areas that couldn’t actually access some of the other areas. And not one word was wasted. Everything went into the database and it took two months, with a very powerful software program, to sort through all the information in the database and establish what were the themes that were coming through that the people were most strongly concerned about.

Once we had established the themes we then went into a benchmarking phase. The benchmarking phase was to establish six benchmarking committees and they were made up of experts in the relevant areas; government people, academics, business people, members of the community with a background in the issues. They were very specific, the people that were involved in the benchmarking areas. There were six. They were community well-being, employment and economy, sustainable development, natural environment, arts, culture and heritage—open and inclusive governments, which was a really key theme that came through—that people wanted open and inclusive government in Tasmania. So these groups of people with relevant experience in the particular sector set about developing the targets that we were trying to achieve in the benchmarking process.

The other group that was really important in this stage of the process was the Australian Bureau of Statistics because they were able to provide a lot of the information that we needed to be able to use as a measurable benchmark, or a measurable target, that we could continue to evaluate over years and as time went by. Once the targets and the indicators were established, that we were trying to achieve, that was when this document was produced which outlines the 212 benchmarks that we have established for Tasmania Together. That was the end of the role of the Community Leaders Group and we then moved into the phase with the Tasmania Together Progress Board. So I think I will leave it off there and pass back to you, Judy.

**Judith Walker**

Thanks, Jane. The importance of the State Government’s acceptance of this extensive example of community input into public policy cannot be overstated. Tas Together really is a milestone in Australian public policy making. A strong State Government commitment to its implementation continues through the budget process and a systematic approach to public sector involvement and implementation. So those of you who may be involved in the government bureaucracies will know that the whole State Budget is now pegged to the Tasmania Together goals and targets.

The Progress Board was appointed in October 2001, and we have continued to have contact with and involve members of the Community Leaders Group in our ongoing work. The very fact Jane, as we mentioned before, is a member of the Progress Board and so is Michael Lynch, who is also a member of the Community Leaders Group. I would now like to introduce Jim McAlpine, who is the Chair of the Tasmania Together Progress Board, because Jim needs to explain about its legislated responsibilities and how we approach, or how Tasmania Together approaches its roles.
I need to tell you a little bit about Jim. Not all the gory details, but just a bit. He is also Chairman, at the moment, of Impact Fertiliser and he is a Board Member of Greening Australia, Tasmania. He also runs a company J.P. McAlpine and Associates. But above all, he is a business leader. He has extensive experience, both in Australia and overseas, and a lot of people in Tasmania would remember Jim when he was General Manager of Pasminco, the Hobart smelter, and he took an historically poor performing operation and he made it world competitive through a series of improved operations and management processes. Jim was also the Chairman of the Workplace Safety Board of Tasmania, and during that time the Workers Compensation burden was significantly reduced for Tasmanian businesses.

There will not be any prizes as to where Jim comes from in the first place, but I will let you guess. But, anyhow, Jim, would you like to lead us through now some of the aspects of the Progress Board?

**James McAlpine**

Okay. Good afternoon everybody. We were really lucky to get this place, were not we? At least there is plenty of room for your shoulders. What I would like to do is just go through a few aspects of how we function. As Judy said in that paid advertisement for me, that I have got a reasonable experience across the board, particularly here in Tassie. So the Board—the Board, as Judy also mentioned, was appointed in October 2001. We had our first meeting in November of that year, basically just to get our act together, I think.

However, a couple of the responsibilities we have; promotion of Tas Together and obviously this is part of it for giving information to people, and development of what we are referring to as coalitions of interest. They are groups of people, or people who are interested in progressing the various goals of Tas Together and achieving the benchmarks. Another aspect is our monitoring and reporting role, and in fact to manage the benchmarks through. We realised, when we got this document that Jane was speaking about, that there is a huge amount to do with information and data and we really partnered ourselves with the Australian Bureau of Statistics and, indeed, with the university really, to work our way through, to really get into the bottom of the importance of some of the statistics. Indeed, in some cases actually changing them to be much more meaningful.

Now, the first big project we had was in fact to produce our first annual report, which is here. That is the last time you will see it from me. But it is on our website and people are interested. It is interestingly laid out in that I think it was designed for engineers because it is just little diagrams and arrows going up and down, so it works quite well. Who are the Board? Those who are not from Tasmania, there was as much rivalry between the north, the north west and the south of Tasmania as there is between Melbourne and Sydney. Our Board is actually quite balanced. It is balanced geographically. It is balanced, I think, from people’s expertise, and it is also balanced in gender.

Now, you have met Judy and Jane, but we have some other Board members: Bob Campbell, who comes from Launceston in the north; he is General Manager of the local council (I will talk a bit about local councils a bit later, but it is quite important), Lyn Friends from the north west, and she is a Trainer, Chris Fitzpatrick, who comes
from the south here, she actually works and lives in Bridgewater, which is what I think one would consider a disadvantaged area, and works very hard with the disadvantaged, Linda Hornsey, who works for the State Government, Michael Kent, who is a very eminent business leader, and who used to be the General Manager of Woolworths here in the State, and Michael Lynch, who is the Director of the Tasmanian Conservation Trust and obviously represents the environment.

With a disparate group like this we obviously had to decide how we were going to work together, and we set down a number of principles that we were going to work through. Obviously, we are going to “vigorously promote the adoption of the Tas Together goals and benchmarks state wide”, which means an awful lot of travelling. “Honestly and independently and accurately report on the progress of the goals and benchmarks.” That is a major part of our work is to make sure that people are actually aware of what is going on. “Champion for and further develop the Tasmanian Together process.”

Now, that is interesting. About two weeks ago, I think, Judy and I had a meeting with the GPs and basically what they wanted to do was to look at the provision of health, but rather than have it from a government-down, I actually asked the people what they wanted, asked their patients and the likes. So they asked for our support on the process of how one goes about that. Now, from our point of view, that is a great tie-in with Tas Together. “To encourage a consultative and collaborative cross-sectional process for dealing with issues.” Of course, for those who live in Tasmania, the old growth forest issue over the last few months was a very big element there.

“To be inclusive, consultative and be transparent.” Again, the old growth forest thing, it was very important. “To provide regular publicity and community updates.” I will talk a little bit about communications a bit later. Obviously, “to be accountable to the community through Parliament.” So how do we achieve these benchmarks—these 212 benchmarks? Well, I think the first thing we have got to say is the Tas Together Board is not set up to go out there and do all of this—certainly not on its own. We see that the people who are going to do this are the people of Tasmania, are the businesses, are the governments, are the various associations, all of those. Everything that makes up Tasmania has got to put in for this.

However, obviously, we are here to assist. We do not dish out grants. We do not dish out money. So those who are hoping for a handout it is about time to leave now, because there is no more money. However, we do have, obviously, access to a lot of the processes of government where we can put people in touch with the right people to discuss issues with. The other issue we had to really look at was the promotion and the goals, and using the Tas Together process as a planning tool. And to this end we have actually had a lot to do with local councils where we have been involved with their two and five year planning cycles where they started to align what councils want in line with the Tas Together process and the document.

This has been good in a number of ways. It means that the people have now got a sort of common language that they can talk about how they are progressing towards ends. I think it also means that they are pretty well aligned with the State Government. But like any business the expertise actually lies with the people. It does not lie with the Board. A little example of that is, as Judy mentioned, I am Chairman of Impact Fertiliser which is a Tasmanian owned and run fertiliser company, and one of the goals is to double the output of farm produce by, well, within eight or nine years.
So we got together and thought, well, how are we going to do this? And, of course, the first time you mention to people they say, “We need more water. If we are going to double the output we need more water”. In fact, when we got down to it the whole issue was, “What is the point of making, or producing, extra vegetables and whatever else if you cannot sell them or you cannot process them?”. So we had to look at the processors. The processors are there, but they are finite size. So how do we get the processors to grow and take this extra produce? Well, they have got to increase their markets. And in fact I meet reasonably regularly with the Premier and I was speaking to him about this the other day, and he was quite interested. He has just come back from an overseas trip where they were trying to induce people to invest in Tasmania, and it was an aspect that they had not looked at.

So he is getting a few of these people to start looking at how can we help the processors increase their markets elsewhere, and again that will eventually, in however many years, get back to the producers producing more. It is very interesting. But I cannot really emphasise enough the importance of the collaboration between business, government and the community. Nothing is going to get done if we cannot pull that off. Already we are seeing it. For example, our main retailer of power, Aurora Energy, they are already embracing quite a number of the Tas Together goals which involve the community as well as business and obviously, being a government entity, involves government.

Communications. I think in line with the essence of this Conference we, as a group, decided that we were going to try and steer clear of the major population centres. So we do not intend to hold meetings in Hobart. Occasionally we have been into Launceston. But over the last 18 months we have tended to have each of our monthly Board Meetings in rural areas and meeting rural communities. Just as a little aside; it is interesting the change, and for those Tasmanians, the change in people’s attitudes over this last 18 months and how progressively people are becoming much, much more positive about the State and about the future of the State. And hopefully Tas Together has got a little bit to do with that. But certainly it is a very positive thing.

The first report that we have, we basically reported on two dot points from our initial review, which is the book that we have seen earlier, and after only nine months we did another review of the statistics. Unfortunately, two dot points are not particularly significant statistically. But what it did show was that as a considerable number of the benchmarks had moved on, a few had not really moved on, and one or two had gone backwards. But I think the interesting thing about this is that there is 212 benchmarks and a lot of them most of us would not be interested in as individuals, but collectively we were interested in them all. The Tas Together process has actually put these 212 issues front of mind continually.

I draw your attention to one of them which had gone backwards, which was the incidence of reporting on domestic violence had actually risen over the last year. Some people are saying, “Well, it is a good thing that people are coming forward and saying it”. But I think the important thing from me, and others, is that there are elements that you say, “Well, that does not interest me so I am not going to look at it”, and put it away, put it behind you. That is only one aspect. But what the Tas Together process has done is it has actually put that on the table. So that is going to be reviewed and looked at.
So it is not something that is done behind closed doors. It is not something that the disadvantaged people, it happens there or it happens somewhere else. What we are saying is everything in this document is what the Tasmanian people wanted in total and it is continually kept front of mind by the process and that is very valuable.

Government relations obviously is very important and I think as was uncomfortably illustrated just before Christmas where with the old growth forest issues the Board made a recommendation which was actually contrary to what Government wanted. I think from our point of view we drew some strength in our independence. But what it showed is that the Board does stand apart from Government. However, I should say that on that particular topic we are still working towards some form of solution. As was mentioned earlier, the State budgetary process is also tied together with Tas Together, and if any of you are working for Government you will notice that how the budgets are framed are in fact leading to the Tas Together goals.

It is interesting that last year Anglicare used the Tas Together format to approach Government for funding and in fact comfortably won some funding for helping disadvantaged people with school fees, or school expenses. They put it down to the fact that they had actually aligned what they were asking for with the Tas Together process, so that is very valuable for them and for us. I mentioned the Board’s independence. The Board is actually an independent statutory authority, so I actually do not report to Government.

I, as Chair of the Board, actually report to Parliament and should we want to change any of the goals or benchmarks, then we can only do that by recommending it to Parliament, and not to Government. The Tas Together process, whilst the benchmarks are all written down, it is not cast in stone. It is a 20 year program and obviously things are going to change. I mean, just ask yourself 10 years ago how many people had mobile phones? And many today have remembered to turn them off. But things have moved forward. For example, the document was pulled together before the 11th of September, it was before the Bali bombings; it was before HIH fell over. It was before many, many things. So we accept that the document is dynamic. It was how people at the time saw what they wanted Tasmania to be, and obviously it will change.

We spent some time developing a process, a transparent process, that we can actually recommend changes throughout the next 20 years. So the document and the process is living. It is certainly here to stay. The Government are incredibly supportive of it, and basically what we see as being the foundation for the next 20 years here in Tasmania and, hopefully, as Judy mentioned earlier, it will enhance our goal of developing and improving rural communities and, hopefully, rural health while we are at it.

Judith Walker

Thanks, Jim. It really does take a lot of action to change things, and it cannot be just with a State Government, it cannot just be Local Government, it cannot just be the business sector. It needs to be all those sectors. But, most importantly, we need action through and with communities. There is change happening and what the Progress Board has to do is monitor, measure, and report that change.
So I think it is appropriate that we ask Lee Prince, as the Director of the Tasmania Together Progress Board Secretariat, to just walk us through how that takes place. Lee is probably known to a number of you because she has worked in a variety of industries. She has worked in the private sector, she has worked in Arts Tasmania and she was Deputy Secretary responsible for community and cultural development in the Department of Education. She was also the person who, as Director of the E-Services Group, managed the establishment of Service Tasmania, which is the one stop shop for Government Services, over the counter, on the phone, and through the internet. So, Lee, over to you.

Lee Prince

Thanks, Judy. I do want to focus what I have got to say on this book. I want to tell you that whilst the engineer amongst us found the numbers, there are also some really good stories about what people have been doing in pursuit of the Tasmania Together goals and benchmarks. The first progress report says right up front inside the front cover:

This is a report on what the people of Tasmania have achieved in pursuit of their vision in the nine months to June 2002.

I think that is a really important and comforting thing, both as a limiting statement in relation to the Board’s role and responsibilities, but also because it highlights the very essence of Tasmania Together.

The first progress report tells us what Tasmanians, wearing their many, many hats, have done. Sometimes as individuals in their own homes, sometimes as public servants working for the State, Commonwealth or Local Government, sometimes in their small businesses, sometimes as managers in larger corporations and many, many as volunteers and workers in community organisations.

As you have heard from other Speakers, Tasmania Together is about planning collaboratively and working together to achieve the changes, which will impact on the benchmarks. Those thousands of actions Judy referred to which need to be taken to change a number. The Board’s first progress report is reflective of all this. It reports on both the actions people have taken and the movements in the numbers. It is very much a first step in a 20-year process. But it sets the framework for the future and establishes the planning and reporting cycle that affects all Tasmanians.

The first progress report needs to be read with some caution, as Jim said. It does only contain numbers, which reflect point-to-point change. It does relate only to a very short period, and it does not give us any trend information. But it does tell us where we seem to be heading in the right direction and where the problems might lie. If I give you a few examples and just say in the generality of the 54 of the 212 benchmarks for which new data was available when we did this report, 34 showed progress, 15 showed deterioration, 5 showed no change. Now, if I talk to you just a little bit about the ones that went forward and the ones that did not it will also give you a little bit of a feel for the detail that sits behind the very broad goals that are at the base of Tasmania Together.

So the sorts of things that are going well, there has been a huge growth in the amount of volunteering in this community. The number of volunteers working in this
community has exceeded our wildest dreams when we looked at the measurements. We have also seen an improvement in our credit rating as a State and that has hit our 2005 benchmark ahead of time. And I guess the challenge there is to maintain it at that level. We have also seen increase in our population, which has been going in the opposite direction for quite some time. Importantly, for Tasmanians an increase in the population located outside the major urban centres. One of the really important things to emerge from the Tasmania Together consultations, I think, was the value, which we place on our rural communities and our dispersed population.

There were also improvements in participation in education and training and in the amount of land under certified management processes. The number of performance based audits and a reduction in the number of new entries to the methadone program. Tourism expenditures increased, participation in local government elections has increased, breaches of air standards have gone down and business internet connections has increased dramatically, and that is very important obviously in the State that is dispersed and relatively isolated.

Some of the negatives: Jim has referred to the increase in reported family violence. But also concerningly our retention rates are not improving for years 7 to 12. The percentage of the population in the workforce is not improving. Quarantine confiscations have increased. The list of threatened species has grown and the amount of protected land without approved management plans has increased. Now for each of those negatives there is some kind of explanation of sorts. The amount of protected land actually increased dramatically and the management plans related to that obviously need to catch up. With reference to the methadone program that is what we would call a disputed benchmark, in that some people think it measures the opposite to what you want it to.

The number of new entries into the methadone program is seen by some people as a positive because it is indicative of a kind of reduction in risk taking behaviour in that people have entered formal programs. That is a benchmark that we will put under review. So there are explanations, qualifications in relation to all the benchmarks. But I think the really important thing is that the measurement process that we are involved in is giving us a unique collection of data about how the State is going. Never before has this amount of publicly available information been collected together.

I think one of the important things for the Board is how the report will be used. For us, the report provides the feedback that we need. It tells the community, the business and government sectors where Tasmania is doing well, and where it is doing badly; where, if we keep going the way we are, we will hit the target that we have set ourselves and where, if we do not make some really fundamental changes, we are going to fall well short of the mark.

So, from there, it provides a basis for planning by community, business and government sectors – planning in a long term sense, which stretches well beyond the timeframe of the next election for government. The report also reveals important areas of priority for the Progress Board. It indicates to the Board where it needs to place its focus and where it needs to emphasise and encourage other activity; where, for example, we might take the initiative in developing coalitions of interest, and in that area we are looking very closely at the cluster of benchmarks that relate to employment and we have a fair amount of support for a coalition in that area.
The report is also important to the State government planning and the government has developed a list of priority clusters of benchmarks around which it expects to frame a budget and take forward agency planning in the future.

In terms of where we are going next, I think that the Board’s planning for the future reflects its twin roles of promoting Tasmania Together in the community and the monitoring, reporting and managing of the development of the benchmarks. To achieve these ends, the Board is working hard to build effective, long-term partnerships with the community and some of these partnerships have been referred to already.

The importance of the ABS goes without saying in this, and I think that one of the things that has been really important to us has been the fact that they have been interested and enthusiastic in working with us, both to provide us with data and to provide the kind of guidance that we have needed in identifying benchmarks and targets. We are also working with the university, which is undertaking some important work in relation to social capital with us, and there are a host of other research-related activities that I am sure we will be involved together on, over time.

Local government, as Jim said, is a crucial partner to us, and the partnerships that they have with the State government reflect Tas Together goals and benchmarks. The importance of the State government cannot be over-estimated and the business and community sector peak bodies are other people that we are working closely with, but we are also now working to build, more directly, partnerships with individual community groups and corporations and small businesses by encouraging them to take on a benchmark and build a plan for a series of actions around that benchmark into their business activity cycle.

Just as individuals can contribute to Tasmania Together simply by eating more vegetables, or walking to work, so can governments, the community sector organisations and the corporates, with their triple bottom line approach to business planning. There is a huge amount to be done as far as Tasmania Together goes.

The amount of work the Board members do, the amount of work that secretariat staff do, never seems to satisfy the demand for more information and for assistance in getting on with it. And I think that we comfort ourselves by referring to the fact that this is a 20-year plan and there is something really special in such a long-term view being taken by the community in terms of its future.

The important thing to remember at the end of it, I think, is that the community sits in the driver’s seat as far as change goes, as far as the action to achieve that change goes. Thanks, Judy.

**Judith Walker**

Thank you, Lee. So we have taken you on a journey. We have taken you on a journey. Jane started off and explained the quite phenomenal process and input by Tasmanians to develop their plan and to determine their benchmarks, their targets. And Jim has explained how the Progress Board has the job to monitor, to review, to report, and Lee has taken us through that process and highlighted some of the aspects from the first Progress Report, which went to parliament in August of this year.
I am just wondering, are there any aspects you would like to ask the members of the panel about, or any of your own experiences? Have there been in your State, if you are from interstate, examples of community input into public policy making? The whole issue of trying to plan in a more practical way, so that we actually have plans that lead to tangible outcomes, and the whole aspect of cross-sectoral collaborations. Would anybody like to take the challenge or have you all gone to sleep?

**Question**

[inaudible]

**James McAlpine**

I think the thing is, first of all, we are not predicting barriers. I think we accept there are going to be barriers and, as I mentioned, the whole environment is changing so dramatically and dynamically. We accept there is going to be barriers in us achieving some of the goals, and we feel that we will approach it basically as the barriers are identified. I suppose that is an easy way of getting out of the question, but it is reality. We are not trying to predict what is going to hold us up.

In fact, most of our role really has been encouraging people to find ways around what they perceive in barriers today, and I think it is really important, when you are dealing with disparate groups and community groups that they often only see the problems of how they cannot do things. And once they get empowered to go beyond that, very little stops them. That has been our experience to date, and we certainly hope that that is how it will continue.

**Jane Bennett**

I think also the sort of fundamental notion of people working collaboratively is one of the key factors in overcoming barriers, that we are not talking about a community group trying to do everything on its own. We are not talking about sitting back and leaving everything to the government to solve, and we are not talking about leaving everything to business. We are talking about trying to bring together people in networks in coalitions that will allow them to take a more collective view of what needs to be done—not to pass the buck, if you like, but to apply a far greater range of expertise and knowledge to the issues—the barriers, if you like, that we need to overcome. Yes.

**Question**

[inaudible—but notes taken by facilitator indicate the question related to political party support for Tasmania Together and whether it will survive the next election].

**James McAlpine**

Well, initially it was tripartite. Obviously, when it came to things like elections and things, people polarised. The Tas Together Board and the process, as I said earlier, we are an independent statutory authority. We are not elected. It is not an elected government. So the elected government do really have the last say. However, I think
with the success of Tas Together over this very short period, and the expectation of that success will continue. Our expectation is that even if there was a change of government, that a new government would actually see the benefits in continuing.

I should say that the process that Jane spoke about, we have had many inquiries from all over the world, and all over Australia, as to the process that we use. We understand that it has been the most extensive community consultation undertaken. So we believe we have got a pretty good process and a pretty good feel for what people want.

**Question**

... when good goal setting is carried out by all the people. How informed were the community in the initial consultation with them, does a community often mirror ... [inaudible but notes taken by facilitator suggest that the question was based on the assumption that good consultation only comes from informed groups]

**Jane Bennett**

I will take that one, Mark. I think one of the key things, if you go back to the very initial stages, one of the very dangerous things is to go out to the community and say, “What do you want?”

**Speaker**

The wish list.

**Jane Bennett**

Because the wish list comes back, and so the process that we undertook was through the Search Conference to come up with “Our Vision, Our Future”. It was a list of goals and aspirations that we wanted to achieve, not down to the detail of the benchmarks, like the finished document ended up with, but it was taking to the people and saying, “Okay, here’s what’s on the list at the moment. Tell us what you like. Tell us what you don’t like. And tell us what you think needs to be there, as well”. And there were plenty of people that came to the community meetings.

I personally find public meetings in a community can be some of the truly terrifying experiences anyone could ever have to go through, and I speak from the experience of someone who has undertaken two Federal Government inquiries into telecommunications. I know every Telstra war story that there is. And so often people come along to a public meeting, not to tell you about—if were on the telephones, for example—often the issues that we were hearing about were not actually about the things that Telstra had done. It was about the fact that they did not have adequate health services in their community, and the banks had all moved out of town, and telecommunications was becoming a way of—the fall guy for things that lots of other people were doing to them.

And so you can run the great risk that people will come along—and we had lots of people coming along to the community meetings who had some fantastic input, but there were also people who came along purely to push one particular barrow. So it was really important in that community consultation phase that we did not let the
barrows, and the real particular issues, take over the agenda. And they became part of the process, but they did not become the whole process.

**Question**

So, again, are you actually … [inaudible]

**Judith Walker**

Yes, very much so. The promotion is a very important part of the Tas Together process. But, really, Tas Together has to gather its own momentum. The Board is not there to achieve the goals, the benchmarks. It is a community driven process, and really it is beginning to become embedded into the way in which things are done, into planning processes, into policy making processes, into action.

Now, the thing which frustrates all of us, after all the incredible excitement and the launch of the document, and everything was exciting, and then it seemed as if there was there was this real lull, and I think people got a bit disillusioned because it did not all happen in six months. And that, I think, yes, we felt that frustration, particularly going around the communities, we every month were out on the road, were running forums, or were holding our Board meetings in communities, but now we are beginning to see how, in not a terribly public way, the TT goals are beginning to drive processes.

We were in Burnie last week for a Board meeting and we met in the Burnie Council Chambers and a lot of people came in to talk with us, people from Burnie City Council, people from the community, and when we looked at what Burnie City Council was doing, looked at their strategic plan and, guess what? It is built up around the Tas Together goals and targets. Listen to people in the community; see how their organisations, how the local arts group—right across the board. And so that is beginning to percolate, but it is not a great big public show. It has to gather its momentum and it will not do that, you know—shouting from the rooftops.

So, it is a process which we need to monitor, we need to review, because it will not stay the same. Targets will need to change. The way in which we do things changes, but I think we will see, over time, a much greater realisation that if we are going to move our community forward in the way that the community has said it wants to move forward, it will happen; it is happening.

I am going to have to wrap us up now, if that is okay, because otherwise everybody will have drunk the drinks and that would be a real shame.

**James McAlpine**

I have got to go and get my hair done, anyway.

**Judith Walker**

Sorry?
James McAlpine

I have got to go and get my hair done.

Judith Walker

You are going to have your hair done. Okay, Jim, that is all right, before you put on your nice clothes for this evening. Anyhow, it is Happy Hour. It is drinks up in the exhibition area. Thank you again for being a really nice group to work with and for spending your time when you could have been at the hairdressers, and Jim would like to say the final word.

James McAlpine

Yes. We realise there was not much time for questions and probably we have not answered people fully. We will hang around for a little while, if anyone wants to come and talk specifically, we are happy to do so.

Judith Walker

That is right. So, can I ask you, please, to thank our panel members—Jane Bennett, Lee Prince and Jim McAlpine. Thank you.