PRESIDENT'S REPORT 2022-23

Annual General Meeting

Economics Society of Australia – Tasmanian Branch

Thursday 10 August 2023

Welcome to the 2023 Annual General Meeting (AGM) of the Tasmanian Branch of the Economics Society of Australia (the Society, the branch, the TAS branch).

1. ESA Tasmania Membership

As at 8 August 2023, the Tasmanian branch of the ESA had 49 active members, comprising 44 full members and five concession members.

2. ESA Tasmania Events and Activities

At last year's AGM the Committee agreed to better use its resources to deliver more frequent events for members. After a year of work behind the scenes, I think we can say we are beginning to achieve this. As COVID-19 transitioned from pandemic to endemic, we found out what changes were here to stay. More of us work from home at least one day a week, access to offices and venues has changed, and online platforms are here to stay.

For ESA, there have been positives. We have Committee members located in Hobart, Burnie, Launceston as well as interstate. Online meetings are easier to schedule and are likely to continue. We potentially have access to interstate and overseas speakers without requiring them to travel. The flip side of this is that it can be harder to secure in-person speakers, particularly from overseas, and there is an expectation that people can attend events in person and online. However, as we are seeking to encourage debate and discussion, in-person events and networking remain important.

Finding an suitable venue for events continues to be a challenge. Deloitte Access Economics has generously made a room at their Hobart Office available for meetings and small events. On behalf of the Society, I would like to acknowledge and thank them for this support which has enabled us to hold a small number of in-person events free of charge.

Table 1 Tasmanian Branch Events: 2022-2023

Date	Venue	Event	Speaker – Topic/Title
1 Sept	Astor Grill	**AGM**	NA
24 Nov	Deloitte Offices, Hobart	**Hybrid presentation**	*Parental Leave: Good for Dad, Good for the Economy* Preston Tsamassiros, Deloitte Access
5 July	Deloitte Offices, Hobart	**Presentation**	*Fishy Economics: Fishing Access Agreements and International Trade of Fish Products* Yifan Lu, UTAS
28 July	Hadley's Orient Bar	**Networking**	*ESA Monthly Debrief* Informal networking and discussion
10 Aug	RACV Hotel, Hobart	**AGM**	*Cost of Living: on the right track?* Paul Blacklow, UTAS and Graeme Wells, Deloitte Access Economics

Dr Paul Blacklow proposed a regular informal event to catch up and discuss current issues and economics. As a result, we have launched *The Monthly Debrief,* an informal networking event at 5pm on the last Friday of each month at Hadley's with the first event on 28 July.

We have invested in an ESA Zoom account to enable us to more effectively host online meetings, hybrid events and webinars. We are also partnering with the University of Tasmania for two upcoming events that will require a larger venue – the Giblin Lecture on 30 October with Danielle Wood and a presentation by Will Mailer, Chief Behavioural Scientist at CommBank on 14 September.

From the learnings of 2022-23, I suggest that in the upcoming year the Committee continues to meet online, we explore opportunities to stage in-person events in the north and northwest, seek appropriate and affordable venues suitable for hybrid events, consider hosting in-person networking events for Central Council webinars featuring eminent speakers and I warmly encourage members and non-members to join us in person for *The Monthly Debrief.*

If you have any suggestions for a venue, speakers or other activities, please contact a committee member or email admin@ESATas.org.au.

2.1. Tasmanian Economic Forum (TEF)

With significant resources allocated to convening ACE2022 in Hobart, the Tasmanian Economic Forum (TEF) was not held in 2022. The TEF is provisionally scheduled for November 2023 with details to be confirmed in coming weeks.

2.2. Giblin Lecture

Danielle Wood will deliver the 2023 **Giblin Lecture** at the Stanley Burbury Lecture Theatre in Sandy Bay on Wednesday the 30 August 2023. Danielle Wood is the CEO of the Gratton Institute and her presentation on addressing intergenerational inequity is titled '*Generation Next: Reimagining a better Australia*'.

2.3. Women in Economics Network

In 2022-23, Dr Swee-Hoon Chuah (UTAS) joined the National WEN Committee as Deputy Chair (Academic), and Dr Maria Yanotti (UTAS) has continued as the Tasmanian Chair. A wide range of online events have been convened by WEN over the past 12 months as well as the annual Australian Gender Economics Workshop and annual WEN Mentoring Retreat. All members of ESA are welcome to join WEN.

2.4. Prizes and Scholarships

The Branch sponsors a number of prizes for students of economics. At the TCE level, the Society offers sponsorship of pre-tertiary economics at all colleges in the State. A prize for pre-tertiary economics at Elizabeth College was awarded to Arjun Sharma for 2022.

The Society also sponsors awards for the highest overall achievement in each year of the Bachelor of Economics and Best Honours Dissertation at the University of Tasmania. It was my pleasure to present the awards for 2022 at a ceremony in February this year.

The ESA also administers the Mardi Dungey Scholarship which offers a $2,000 scholarship to year 12 students who:

1. Achieve an Australian Tertiary Admission Rank (ATAR) score of 95 or more.
2. Enrol in a Bachelor of Economics degree at the University of Tasmania, or a joint degree of which the Bachelor of Economics is a component.
3. Enrol in a full-time course at the University of Tasmania which includes the following units in the first year of enrolment:
    - BEA106 Introduction to Behavioural Economics
    - BEA111 Introduction to Markets and the Economy
    - BEA121 Economic Policy in Action
    - BEA140 Data Analysis for Business

Unfortunately, we have had no applicants since 2020. Information about the Scholarship is available on our website at https://esatas.org.au/latest-news-item/37198/mardi-dungey-scholarship. In 2022-23, the scholarship has been actively promoted at the UTAS Economics Challenge attended by Year 11 and 12 economics students and at ESA events. The Scholarship has also been promoted through direct communications to schools and teachers of pre-tertiary economics. A task for the Committee in the coming year will be to review how the Scholarship might be targeted more effectively, including a review of the eligibility criteria.

Table 2 Tasmanian Branch Awards 2022

Award	Recipient	Prize
Mardi Dungey Scholarship ATAR 95+ and enrolling in an Economics Degree at UTAS	No Applicants	$2,000 Membership for 1 year
Jenny Milne Memorial Prize for the Best Honours dissertation in Economics at UTAS	Michael Boon	$500 Membership for 1 year
First Year UTAS Prize Highest Achievement in 1st year Economics at UTAS	Sophie Janes	$200 Membership for 2 years
Second Year UTAS Prize Highest Achievement in 2nd year Economics at UTAS	Mia Grant	$200 Membership for 2 years
Third Year UTAS Prize Highest Achievement in 3rd year economics at UTAS	Joshua Stagg	$200 Membership for 2 years

2.5. Submission to the Senate Select Committee Inquiry into the cost of living

At the UTAS Macroeconomics Workshop in November 2022, Dr Graeme Wells gave a presentation on the cost of living. An outcome of the workshop was that four ESA members (Dr Graeme Wells, Dr Mala Raghaven, Dr Maria Yanotti and Mary Bennett) prepared a submission to the Senate Select Committee Inquiry into the cost of living. The written submission, made by the Tasmanian School of Business and Economics, provided evidence of the impact in Tasmania and the authors also gave evidence at a hearing on 10 July 2023.

2.6. Web presence

The website esatas.org.au is updated with news on forthcoming (and past) events, employment opportunities (for a small fee), the Mardi Dungey Scholarship and other relevant information. We also have a Facebook page which we have recently reactivated to increase our capacity

to share upcoming events with our networks. We are always looking for suggestions for improvement.

3. Central Council

The current members of the Central Council are:

Executive

- President – Catherine de Fontenay
- Secretary – Russell Ross
- Treasurer – Benedict Davies

State Representatives

- President ACT Branch – Patricia Cameron
- President NSW Branch – Nicki Hutley
- President QLD Branch – Pascalis Raimondos
- President SA Branch – Mark Henley
- President TAS Branch – Mary Bennett
- President VIC Branch – Alexander Millmow
- President WA Branch – John Roberts

National Editors

- Economic Papers – Guay Lim
- Economic Record – Renee Fry-McKibbin

Women in Economics Committee (WEC)

- Chair – Angela Jackson

3.1. Central Council Awards 2023

The Central Council awards were presented at the Conference Dinner at ACE2023

Distinguished Fellows	Professor Lisa Cameron and Professor Ian McDonald
Honorary Fellow	Not Awarded
Young Economist	Professor David P. Byrne
Distinguished Public Policy Fellow	Professor Meredith Edwards

3.2. Central Council Meetings and Activities

Since the last AGM, Central Council has met online in November 2022, and March 2023 and in person in July 2023 at ACE2023 in Brisbane. In addition to reporting on the Tasmanian Branch's activities, I participated in a reference group for a paper by Madeleine McGowan and Jacquie Dwyer published in the RBA Bulletin December 2022 entitled Economic Literacy: What Is It and Why Is It Important?

Increasing the engagement of students in the study of economics at school and university, particularly women and students in socioeconomically disadvantaged areas, is a key focus for Central Council. This week, ESA announced that it will partner with CSIRO in the 'STEM professionals in schools' program. Through this program, economists who volunteer can help students understand how maths is applied in careers. I encourage all members to find out more by registering for the online information webinar on 24 August 2024.

National Webinar Series

The Central Council has recommenced the Eminent Speaker Series with Joshua Gans presenting interstate and online in March 2023. They also host the National Webinar series, which are recorded and available at: national-webinar-series.

Journals

The Society's two journals, *The Economic Record* and *Economic Papers* are now offered online only. Online access will be provided to all ESA members with the cost absorbed by Central Council. As a result, there are now only two levels of membership – full membership and concession membership.

National Economic Panel (NEP)

Peter Martin at The Conversation continues to poll and publish the opinions of the **NEP**. The poll questions over the past year were:

Nov 2022	What's the most valuable thing the government could do to restrain the price of energy?
Mar 2023	How economists would raise $20 billion per year: If efficiency was the only priority, how should the government raise more funds?

If equity was the only priority, how should the government raise more funds?

May 2023 On May 9, the government delivered a budget designed, in the Treasurer's words to strike 'a balance between relief, repair and restraint'. What grade would you give the budget, given that objective: A, B. C. D, E, F?

The Tasmanian members of the NEP are Saul Eslake, Hugh Sibly, Mala Raghavan, Rana Roy, and Joaquin Vespignani.

4. Thanks to Committee

The activities of the Society would not be possible without the hard work of the volunteers of the committee. The committee members September 2022 - August 2023 were:

President:	Mary Bennett	
Vice-President:	Paul Blacklow	
Treasurer:	Alison Watt	
Secretary:	Liam Brown	
Committee:	Gabriel Halton	Biplob Chowdhury
	Isaac Poole	Kerry Hudson
	Amelia Hickman	Maria Yanotti
	Mohammed Huque	Paul Liggins
	Preston Tsamassiros	Rana Roy
	Robert Cotgrove	

I thank all the members of the committee for volunteering their time and energy in organising and running the branch. I would like to particularly acknowledge Liam Brown who has provided incredible support as Secretary, Paul Blacklow as Vice President and Alison Watt as Treasurer.

I would like to acknowledge and thank Paul Liggins, Gabriel Halton and Rana Roy, who are stepping down from the Committee after providing significant periods of service.

Mary Bennett

President of the Tasmanian Branch
Economic Society of Australia
1 August 2023