

# EDITORIAL Issue 35 Summer 2004 – 2005

## A very good year ...

This year has seen the economic good times roll on. Standard & Poors have raised the state's credit rating to AA+; we are enjoying healthy budget surpluses and for most, although by no means all of us, life is good, at least in a material sense.

There is always a danger of complacency in good times and it is as well to remember there remains much to be accomplished. Our current position of economic strength provides us with opportunities to ameliorate the negative impacts of some of the problems we will inevitably confront within a decade or so.

The end of cheap petroleum has arrived and this will reverberate throughout the economies of the developed world. Climate change, coupled with continually rising demand for water, will require the careful (and co-operative) management of this resource.

Now is the time to plan for the unprecedented demographic changes that will occur as the mass of baby boomers – my generation – approaches the end of their working lives.

The cultural life of the state has continued to enrich us and must be given every opportunity to flourish.

The Tasmania Symphony Orchestra is a case in point. It is often described as an excellent *small* orchestra and is exactly the size orchestra for which the great composers of the romantic period wrote. The TSO enables the listener to enjoy "authentic" classical music. Perhaps this is why so many excellent musicians have chosen to live in Tasmania and why visitors frequently include a TSO concert as part of their holidays.

This has not been the best of years for the Tasmanian National Trust; the differences and disagreements within the organisation have been public and damaging. The Trust is charged with the custody of an enormous number of

Australia's heritage buildings. Its relatively small number of members faces a task that is daunting to say the least. The contributions of the volunteers must be valued and a way found to ensure that the dedication of decades does not come to nothing.

Although there will always be a need for financial support, it is important that individuals make their own contributions. By simply enjoying a concert or visiting a heritage property, you will be helping ensure ongoing viability. To put it bluntly: "Use it or lose it."

In this our official bicentennial year, many around the world would be very grateful if they had our problems. Life here is so rich in its quality. This is the season then to enjoy the rewards of a year's toil: the foodfests; the cultural, sporting and other pleasures of summer. And, maybe, some time out in the bush.

In the beautiful landscape of this "island of mountains", though shaped and reshaped by human beings, there remain many places where you can hear the quiet of ancient Gondwana: where the human constructs of modern civilisation seem to vanish as soon as you lose sight of the road and your car, and where your personal computer and mobile phone cease to be your masters.

A North American subscriber wrote to me this year lamenting that he would probably never have an opportunity to visit Tasmania but found comfort in the fact that such a place still exists and that we should count ourselves lucky ...

May I wish our readers and commercial partners all the best for the festive season, and peace and prosperity in the coming year from the very hard-working and creative TASMANIA 40°SOUTH crew.

