

# Mayor 'walks on water'

BY LIBBY BINGHAM

TAKING in the views from the end of Devonport's almost completed elevated walkway for the first time, Mayor Annette Rockliff says it's like "walking on water."

The impressive 10-metre high structure juts over the beautiful Mersey River.

"It feels like you can reach out and touch the Spirit of Tasmania," Councillor Rockliff said.

It provides an incredible viewing platform for the Spirit ferries and ships coming in and out of the city's busy working port.

A significant element of the Devonport City Council's \$17 million Waterfront Park project, the elevated walkway, is expected to be completed by August in alignment with other areas within the Living City precinct.

That includes a nature-based playspace with a three-metre high, five-metre wide, 12-metre long organic timber climbing structure with a large net attached and sand underneath.

"It looks like a gigantic-scale game of pick-up



**LANDMARK:** Devonport Mayor Annette Rockliff tours the city's new elevated walkway jutting over the Mersey River for the first time. Pictures: Rodney Braithwaite

sticks," installer Brett Price of Marcus Construction said.

The Richter Spielgerate play structure is the only one in Tasmania. The same company installed the best one by the German company

interstate at the Royal Melbourne Children's Hospital.

Climbing up to the 160 metre long by six metres wide walkway, Cr Rockliff said the outlook once she arrived at the top was expansive.

"What an amazing view visitors will have when they step up on this decking; it's brilliant, with views of the river, the city, surrounding suburbs, and mountains," Cr Rockliff. "This has been a



**PLAYSPACE:** Marcus Construction's Ben Price, Mayor Annette Rockliff and Vos Construction site manager Marc Polden with a model of the climbing structure.

long time coming, but it was always part of the council's Living City vision. It's really exciting to see this walkway almost complete. I can't wait for the public to be right here experiencing these views of our great city.

"The function of the elevated walkway allows people of all abilities to safely cross Formby Road and the rail corridor and connect to the waterfront trails, with the two lifts available at either end of the walkway."

She said the new waterfront precinct drew people to the river visually and physically. Most of the walkway construction is complete.

Installers put down about 8.5 kilometres of Blackbutt timber decking and erected the handrails and perforated aluminium balustrade. The precast concrete lift shafts at either end of the walkway were installed with clear glass for the lift car to get finished this week. Cr Rockliff said once the walkway was completed about August the balance of the Waterfront Park would follow shortly. She said the coastal playspace slide tower was already up and the nature-based log climbing structure would also be in place by the end of this week. The barbecue shelter and toilets were next.

## Financial assistance being considered

BY CLAUDIA WILLIAMS

THE Prime Minister has been involved in discussions to consider financial assistance for regional newspapers, a cabinet minister says.

This follows Australia Community Media, Australia's largest publisher of regional news and the owner of this masthead, calling for bipartisan support for emergency financial assistance to help save regional newspaper publishing.

ACM was recently notified that the only Australian supplier of the newsprint used

for regional newspapers will soon increase prices by as much as 80 per cent.

Health Minister Greg Hunt said the government was considering emergency financial assistance to protect local newspapers and regional journalism jobs.

"I spoke with the Prime Minister and the leadership group this morning from Tasmania," he said in Burnie on Tuesday. "I was part of a national hookup which was considering it."

"I don't want to preempt the decisions of the Prime Minister and the commu-

nications minister, but I can say that as recently as this morning the Prime Minister was engaged in the issue."

Also speaking in Burnie on Tuesday, Labor Member for Chifley Ed Husic said Labor would support looking at what proposals were put forward.

"We'd be interested in it and if there are propositions that have been put forward that we can look at, definitely," he said.

Liberal Member for Bradon Gavin Pearce said he supported the call for emergency financial assistance.

"I'll be making sure that this is pursued," he said.

"The Advocate is part and parcel of our community. It's the thing that is on the crib tables of every business and I know how important The Advocate is to everybody in our community."

Senate candidate for the Jacqui Lambie Network, Tammy Tyrrell said all politicians should step up and support regional news.

"All of us, wherever we come from in politics - we need to lay down our arms and figure out how to sort this, now," she said.



Health Minister Greg Hunt in Burnie on Wednesday. Picture: Eve Woodhouse

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## BROELMAN'S VIEW



## Regional newspapers need support

## EDITORIAL

REGIONAL newspaper companies, including ACM, which owns this masthead, are asking for urgent federal government help in the face of an existential crisis brought about by a dramatic rise in the cost of newsprint.

Proprietors have known for some time Australia's only newsprint manufacturer was planning to increase its prices and had factored in a 30 per cent jump in the cost of paper. What they could not prepare for was an actual increase in the cost of the product of 80 per cent.

This is why ACM, in conjunction with the Country Press Association, has appealed to the Communications Minister Paul Fletcher for emergency funding to soften the immediate impact of the new pricing structure.

While Mr Fletcher is yet to accede to the request, Deputy Prime Minister Barnaby Joyce has spoken out in support of regional newspapers saying they play a vital role in the lives of the communities they serve and needed to be protected.

Although the federal government is already considering recommendations for assistance to regional and community mastheads following the recent parliamentary inquiry into regional newspapers there are fears this may come too late.

Labor's communications spokeswoman Michelle Rowland and Opposition Leader Anthony Albanese have flagged bipartisan support for an immediate positive response.

The CPA and ACM want an urgent intervention with emergency funding to stop mastheads, some of which have served their communities for up to 150 years or more, from falling off a cliff. Longer term assistance, based on the recommendations to the parliamentary inquiry, would then provide a bridge to a more sustainable future.

Key recommendations from ACM included tax concessions for newsprint purchases, tax rebates for businesses that advertise in their community masthead and a minimum spend by the federal government on advertising in regional print media.

According to a report released by the ACCC in 2019 there were already 21 local government areas which were not covered by a single newspaper. That has jumped to 31 LGAs since the start of the pandemic.

This latest blow could not have come at a worse time for a trusted media sector that has already been decimated by droughts, bushfires, the pandemic and floods over the past five years. With the price rises to take effect on July 1 time is short. Unless a rescue package is developed soon it may be too late for some communities to save the local newspaper.



Greg Blake, Tullah

## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

## Ignore empty promises, vote for who you trust

## PUT PRINCIPLED PEOPLE FIRST

Another election and I think I'm going to gag again. Once more we are forced to witness the coterie of party politicians involved in an unsavoury auction for our votes.

As ever, at election time, these people vie with each other to see who can promise more of our tax dollars to win themselves a seat in parliament.

These candidates must assume the average voter to be uninformed and easily wooed if they attempt to win our votes by simply pledging to throw our money at every project that comes along and telling every audience what they believe they want to hear.

Our citizens deserve to be represented by people with principles they will stand by, not by those who promise the unachievable.

Responsible electors will disregard empty pledges and place their vote with someone who appears principled and trustworthy (or the least untrustworthy).

Steve Puccetti, Ambleside

## FAR FROM A GOOD LEADER

Over the past 30 years, from 1992 to 2022, the Liberals have claimed Labor had higher unemployment, higher interest rates, and higher electricity prices than under a Liberal government.

As we have just heard, the wholesale price of electricity has risen by 141 per cent since this time last year. Mr Morrison can't blame this on Labor because it happened on his watch. On the interest rate rise, the Reserve Bank of Australia sets it, not Mr Morrison or Labor. Don't lay the blame on Labor.

Out of the 30 years the Liberals governed for 20 of them, Labor only 10. What did they do in that 20 years that benefitted our country? Sweet nothing.

The cost of living has spiralled out of control. Families can't afford to buy food. A

## THE ADVOCATE LETTER GUIDELINES

Preference is given to letters submitted via [theadvocate.com.au](mailto:theadvocate.com.au) and of 150 words or less. Letters can be edited for space, clarity or legal reasons. Submissions should include the name and address of the author and a phone number. Only the suburb of the author will be published.

wealthy country in Third World standards. Poverty in the 21st century is unacceptable and it's all under Mr Morrison's watch.

They say history always repeats itself. Just like Nero did, he played the fiddle while he watched Rome burn. Mr Morrison sat sipping drinks on holiday in Hawaii while he watched Australia burn. Do you call that being a good leader? He's all self.

Audrey Hutchison, Nowra, NSW

## NOT A REASON TO VOTE LABOR

Bill Shorten, former leader of the Labor Party, has pledged a royal commission into the Robodebt fiasco if the ALP wins the election. If that is an incentive to vote for the ALP, he's scrapping the bottom of the barrel.

The Greens pushed for a royal commission at the time, however, the Libs admitted it was wrong and a mistake, repaid millions of dollars in wrongful charges and a class action saw those affected receive extra payments.

It is in the past and a royal commission will cost taxpayers millions of dollars to prove what is already known; robodebt was a complete failure of the Government through Centrelink that caused emotional and financial distress to thousands of Australians. Come on Bill, if you want votes, spruik a cause that is current and relevant to voters.

Alan Leitch, Austins Ferry

## THERE ARE ALTERNATIVES

It is often reported that the issue in the Tarkine is basically between the MMG mining company closing its doors and losing 600 jobs, or losing 285 hectares of Tarkine rainforest. Your readers would welcome a more nuanced appraisal and explain the alternatives that MMG has.

Obviously, the position for the dam in the Tarkine is the cheapest alternative, so the company uses the threat of closing the mine and losing 600 jobs, to protect its multi-million dollar profit (to go offshore).

They do have other extremely viable alternatives, which perhaps would mean even more jobs.

If they want our minerals, then the true cost of mining in the 21st century should not be at the enormous expense of our natural heritage... 285 hectares of ancient myrtle and 500-year-old eucalypts. MMG must use the more viable alternatives that are available.

Sarah Kersey, Devonport

## TRAUMA DOES TAKE ITS TOLL

Some communities take their meagre emergencies service volunteers for granted for many years and when they are on the verge of closing down or have closed down, they act or get upset about the situation.

It's a vicious circle after 29 years volunteering for the Tasmania Fire Service on the West Coast I have seen a few or more bad incidents; some that I have been effected by, but over time you get to harden up a bit but it's not easy on your family either. They see it every time you arrive home or hear you blame yourself that you could have done more and realise they don't want to follow you in your footsteps and why would you want to encourage them to join a service or anyone for that matter. It takes its toll.