

MEDIA RELEASE

NEWS FROM THE UNIVERSITY OF TASMANIA

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ATTENTION: Chiefs of Staff, News Directors



Liveability important for growth of regional areas

A UTAS Professor is urging North-West Tasmanians to tell others what locals already know – it is a great place to live.

UTAS School of Management Professor David Adams said the concept of liveability – the way people feel about a place in relation to quality of life – has become increasingly important in attracting people to and retaining them in regional areas.

He said an increasing number of local councils were developing liveability and settlement strategies, often with a focus on attracting and retaining young professionals.

According to recent research, more than half of young professionals on the North-West Coast plan to leave the region in the next five years.

“This is not a good sign,” Prof. Adams said.

He said research by the Organisation for Economic Co-Operation and Development (OECD) reflected a strong correlation between liveability levels and rates of economic investment growth and innovation.

“Regions where governments, businesses and communities work together to match liveability incentives with investment attraction do much better than those that just focus on attracting businesses,” he said.

“There are more and more places like the North-West that are adopting a liveability strategy and benefiting greatly from it with an increase in population.”

Prof. Adams said these areas were actively shaping their futures through liveability, targeting specific groups of people and catering to them through a defined and co-operative approach.

“For example, with our increasingly greater proportion of older people on the North-West Coast compared to most other areas of Tasmania and Australia, we could put more effort into aged care industries and actively seek older retirees into the region.

“But this would mean a rethink of how we plan out towns and the services we provide.”

Prof. Adams said OECD research found people were seeking the amenities of a big city combined with the lifestyle afforded by a country town.

The North-West Coast was in a prime position to take advantage of this movement.

“Recently the Tasmanian Demographic Change Advisory Council has published population projections relating to local government areas in Tasmania that don’t paint a pretty picture in terms of projected future growth for some areas in the North-West,” he said.

“If the Coast can look to harness and promote liveability, aiming to provide complementary linkages between facilities and services, this can go a long way towards gaining a competitive advantage.”

Prof Adams will present the free forum, *Liveability – How are We Tracking and Whose Responsibility Is It Anyway?*, at the UTAS Cradle Coast campus this Thursday.

His presentation will look at international liveability measures and how the North-West of Tasmania is tracking, exploring recent indicators of lifestyle and what the future might hold for the region’s population, industries and jobs.

The event is the second forum in the Institute for Regional Development’s 2008 café forum series, *Global Concerns – Regional Responses*.

A former Waratah resident, Professor Adams is an adviser to the OECD and the World Bank on the *Measuring the Wellbeing of Societies* project.

He has also worked on various local and national liveability strategies including *Melbourne 2030*, and is a Director of Northern Tasmania Development and the Launceston Chamber of Commerce.

- *Liveability – How are We Tracking and Whose Responsibility Is It Anyway?*, will be held at the Cradle Coast Campus this Thursday (May 22) at 7pm, with refreshments served at 6.30pm. The event is sponsored by Advance Burnie.

For more information and reservations: (03) 6430 4949 or email ccc.support@utas.edu.au

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