



MEDIA RELEASE

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Sustainability at the Heart of a Thriving Economy

Paul Gilding, a globally recognised authority on sustainability and business, says sustainability is an economic issue that local councils can not only participate in, but drive the agenda to create a sustainable and prosperous future for their communities.

In his keynote address, *Why Sustainability is the Defining Economic Issue of the 21st Century*, at the Local Government Conference held at Wrest Point today, Gilding says sustainability is the foundation of a strong economy and society.

“This is not just a philosophical question but a practical short-term economic idea that can guide the development of Tasmania’s economy,” he says. “Tasmania has long seen environmental or green issues as something that need to be ‘balanced’ with environmental protection, as though there was a choice. But what if we could see them as the best way to generate wealth and improvements in the quality of life for everyone in Tasmania?”

“The exciting economic sectors in Tasmania in the last decade are the ones closely aligned with a sustainability agenda: aquaculture; tourism that emphasises local food and experiences; niche and large-scale food of various types; attracting people from interstate to move here with their wealth to set up new businesses and invest in local ideas and people.”

“Tasmania will never compete by trying to be big, or produce commodities. We’ve seen in forestry and many other examples that doing so makes no economic sense. But being ‘big at doing small’ and leveraging our ‘disadvantages’, such as distance and isolation, as advantages might just be our best strategy.”

“Local Government can play a crucial role in such a strategy because it is an inherently local idea – small-scale food and tourism, helping new business quickly establish with a minimum of red tape, letting innovation flourish and celebrating local connections and the qualities of our local areas are all strengths.”

About the speaker: Paul Gilding is a writer, corporate advisor and advocate for a sustainable economy. He is widely recognised as a global authority on sustainability and business and is a Fellow at the University of Cambridge Program on Sustainability Leadership. He has served as CEO of a range of NGOs and companies including Greenpeace International, and his book *The Great Disruption* has been widely acclaimed. He currently lives in Cygnet, Tasmania.

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