

THE NORTHWEST AND WEST COAST



THE CENSUS HELD IN March 1851 recorded a total European population of 70 130 for Van Diemen's Land, but only 1557 persons were found on the Northwest Coast with 857 estate labourers and tenant farmers around **Stanley** and 700 bush settlers and timber workers between Port Sorell and Port Frederick (see Devonport). The West Coast was unpopulated by Europeans; permanent settlement by them had been absent since the closing of the penal station at Sarah Island in **Macquarie Harbour** in 1834. Fifty years later the census of 1901 placed the Tasmanian European population at 172 445. The development of small farms and country towns along the Northwest Coast and of mining townships throughout the northern half of the West Coast had brought the population of this region to 46 313. Only the southern half of the West Coast remained as wilderness. The balance between east and west had radically altered; one person in four, not one in fifty, was found in the 'new' Tasmania of the two western regions.

The eastern half of Tasmania had developed in the 1820s and 1830s, while the west derived its character from the 1870s and 1880s. This was the main factor in creating the dichotomy between the two zones. The geographical divide between **Deloraine** and **Latrobe**, the district where east and west are in closest proximity, was as pronounced as any in nineteenth-century Australia. Key words used in describing the east include sheep, convicts, gentry, Anglican and tory. The matching list for the west substitutes potatoes, free settlers, yeoman farmers, bush religions and frontier liberals.

Some of the differences are of historical interest, and regionalism has been used to explain the changing nature of colonial politics. Some are mental. The true test of regional allegiance in Tasmania involves support for football leagues: the Latrobe Demons are in the Northwest league; the Deloraine Roos play in the Northern Tasmanian league. Other differences are visible in the landscape. The mix of building materials and styles varies between the regions. In 1901 there were 8059 dwellings in the state constructed of brick or stone, but only 255 were found in the seven western electorates.

Most of the differences between east and west can be traced to the timing of the period of intensive settlement. The west was outside the settled area of early Van Diemen's Land. Systems of land settlement and land use developed for the grasslands and open forest of the east were inappropriate for the rainforest and mountains of the west. One early surveyor measured tree density near the Inglis River, finding on average 7000 trees per hectare with a typical height of 15 metres. The Van Diemen's Land Co was forced to select its 141 640 ha grant away from the settled districts, taking up the available open country in the extreme northwest in 1825. Sheep were soon replaced by cattle and eventually tenant farmers complemented convict servants as the company came to terms with the problems of developing its blocks.

New agricultural systems and new concepts about the proper structure of society were needed to move settlement into the forest. The first attempt to change the basic orientation of Tasmanian society occurred in the early 1850s. It was believed that the development of the western regions would alleviate the problems caused by the exodus to **Melbourne** and the goldfields. The three options considered by the colonial authorities were: opening the Northwest for agricultural settlement; opening the West Coast for pastoralism; and discovering a local equivalent to the diggings at **Bendigo** and **Ballarat**.



The Nut at Stanley: The Van Diemen's Land Company established its headquarters here in 1824 and held a large area in the northwest of Tasmania. Watercolour by an unknown artist, c1840.

ALLPORT LIBRARY AND MUSEUM OF FINE ARTS, STATE LIBRARY OF TASMANIA

The apparently inexhaustible market across Bass Strait provided an opportunity to occupy the Northwest Coast. The fertility of the basaltic soils of the low plateaux found between every pair of rivers was acknowledged. The climate was mild and moist. Land that had repelled the pastoralist was suitable for subdivision into small farms. Settlers could slowly carve a home out of a 30–40 ha bush block using the new techniques of ringbarking and burning to remove the forest cover. The plan called for the modification of the land laws to provide for credit selection, as the target group were men of limited means who would take up bush farms as an alternative to emigration. The documentary record uses terms such as ‘a sturdy yeomanry’ and ‘a respectable class of labourer’ in referring to the typical settler. Most were colonial-born, though some were the family immigrants of the 1850s.

The attempt to create an agricultural frontier met with limited success. The Pre-emptive Rights Regulation of 1851 encouraged timber piracy and land speculation which created barriers to real settlement in the critical region east of the Forth River. The Waste Land Act of 1858 was more effective and placed many settlers on the land in the Kentish district (see Sheffield). The population of the Northwest Coast rose to 5416 by 1861. However many problems remained. Poor transport, inappropriate crops, and the decline of the Victorian market led one witness appearing before a select committee to conclude that heavily timbered country was ‘dear enough as a gift’.

The second and third options considered for diverting some of the population outflow into the west were unsuccessful. These policies were based on unrealistic concepts. One was that the buttongrass plains scattered throughout the West Coast region were suitable for grazing; the other that gold would be found in schists and slates along the 146th meridian. Official survey parties were sent out to delimit land that could be taken up for grazing under special concessions for difficult country. Other parties searched the rivers for traces of alluvial gold. Important scientific and geographical data were acquired, but there were no practical results.

By 1870, the west had experienced two decades of bush settlement that had done little more than create a thinly settled strip along the southern shore of Bass Strait. Of the 8826 persons found along the Northwest Coast, half were located east of the Forth River and another quarter in the vicinity of Stanley. It was a peripheral area. Three stages a day would

travel between **Launceston** and **Deloraine**: only three a week would journey westwards to **Devonport**.

The situation was to abruptly change. On 4 December 1871, James 'Philosopher' Smith discovered tin at Mount Bischoff (see **Waratah**), 60 kilometres south of Emu Bay. Mining commenced in 1875 and profits began in 1878. One successful mine encouraged further exploration. Prospectors worked south from **Waratah** and north from **Macquarie Harbour** across what the secretary of mines described as 'wild, mountainous, trackless country subject to extraordinarily heavy rainfall'. New finds came in regular succession. The **Zeehan** silver fields boomed in the 1880s and the Mount Lyell copper fields opened in the 1890s.

In 1881 West Coast settlements were recorded in the census for the first time — 1252 people near the Mount Bischoff mine (see **Waratah**), 50 miners working alluvial gold near Corinna on the Pieman River and 41 at the tin deposits at Mount Heemskirk. Much of the population was from interstate or overseas, Victorians making up a significant element of the mining workforce. This unusual population mix and the nature of company mining rapidly created a distinctive regional identity.

West Coast wealth circulated around the colony. Exports passed £1m in 1875 and **Queenstown** copper pushed trade past the £2m mark in 1898. Dividend income flowed east to **Launceston** and **Hobart**. Mount Bischoff alone paid £1.8m to the end of the century. New markets were created for the agricultural and industrial products of the colony. Mining also created a new spirit throughout Tasmania.

The old attitude held that transport was a local matter; the new spirit involved government in the construction of a railway system. In 1882, parliament approved the extension of the railway from its 1871 terminus at **Deloraine** to the Mersey (**Devonport**). The final strategy called for a main line parallel to the coast with light railways, trams and roads to serve the interfluves. Exports would be railed to Devonport or **Burnie** for shipment on the steamers that would soon dominant coastal trade.

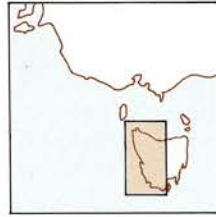
The development of an integrated transport system was responsible for turning potatoes into the mainstay of the farm economy and settlers flocked to the area once bush farming had become profitable. Most were from stagnant districts in eastern Tasmania, though some came from other colonies or from Britain. Population along the northwest coast increased most rapidly in the 1880s, rising from 12 618 to 20 714. The area on which potatoes were grown rose in the same period from 2165 ha to 4954 ha. There were other repercussions of the railway strategy. One of the first followed the decision to terminate the Mersey extension at **Devonport**, the better port, rather than **Latrobe**, the larger town. By the next census, Devonport had become the largest centre on the coast. Its position was further enhanced by the continuation of the railway to **Ulverstone** in 1890. The trade of Don, Forth and Leith shifted to the deep-water facilities at Devonport, these minor ports surviving only as country villages. Similar adjustments occurred in the **Burnie** district in the 1890s. The present urban hierarchy was established.

One in four Tasmanians now lives in the western regions. Compared to 1901, more live in cities and towns along the Northwest Coast, while fewer live in rural districts and in mining townships. Geographical change has been continuous, but it has not eradicated the regional identity and regional structure that developed in western Tasmania during the second half of the nineteenth century.

Roger Kellaway

SUGGESTED READING

- C.J. Binks, *Explorers of western Tasmania*, Launceston 1980.
 G. Blainey, *The peaks of Lyell*, Melbourne 1954.
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 R.H. Hooper, *The King Island story*, Sydney 1973.
 H. Reynolds, 'Regionalism in nineteenth century Tasmania', *Tas Hist Res Assoc*, 17, 1969, 14-28.



BURNIE [41°03'S 145°55'E]

Popn: 305 (1881), 7235 (1947), 14 201 (1961), 20 368 (1981). Named in 1828 after William Burnie, a director of Van Diemen's Land Co. Originally known as Emu Bay. Area sighted and Round Hill named by George Bass and Matthew Flinders in 1798. Original village estab in 1829 on Blackman's Point, now part of port area, following opening of coastal access point for Van Diemen's Land Co blocks at Surrey and Hampshire Hills by Henry Hellyer in 1827. Became a timber port in the mid-1830s. Land in district opened in 1842 and town reserve surveyed, but progress slow due to company's land sales policies. Burnie Inn, built in the mid-1840s and licensed 1847-1900, now reconstructed in park. Town proclaimed in 1866. Prosperity followed discov of tin at Mt Bischoff (see Waratah) in 1871: Burnie became port for tin with opening of tramway from mine in 1878 and replacement with rlwy in 1884. Breakwater built 1886-90 to improve safety of harbour. Commercial centre moved closer to port at this time. Emu Bay Rlwy extended in 1900 to serve mines of

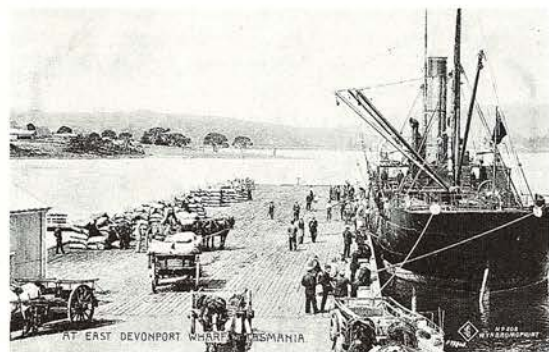
Zeehan-Rosebery district and capture trade for port. Govt rlwy from **Launceston** opened in 1901. Associated Pulp and Paper Mills Ltd estab here in 1938, based on timber from 128 000 ha of private forest and cutting rights over all land within 24 km of Emu Bay Rlwy. Titanium oxide produced since 1948.

DEVONPORT [41°10'S 146°22'E]

Popn: 532 (1881), 3620 (1911), 10 597 (1954), 21 424 (1981). Named after coastal town in Devon, England. Formerly called Port Frederick, then Mersey River. Lower Mersey R charted in 1823, district explored and surveyed for Van Diemen's Land Co in 1826. First European settler arrived in 1826, was killed by Aborigs in 1829, discouraging other settlers for a time. Town of Torquay estab on east bank of Mersey in 1851: Formby (west bank) laid out in 1853, only became dominant when attracted rlwy in 1885. Two settlements joined as Devonport in 1890. Port facilities (store, wharf and beacons) built in 1854. Don R tramway begun in 1854 to bring timber from Don R valley to small port at Don. Replaced by rlwy in 1916 to haul limestone from Broken Hill Proprietary Co quarries: line closed in 1963, section restored for tourist services in 1971. Boat building, sawmilling and minor coalmines important in the 1850s. Marine Board first met in 1868. Rlwy from **Launceston** opened in 1885. Port progressed rapidly in the 1890s. Apple growing in district to south from 1898. Lighthouse (RNE) built on Mersey Bluff in 1899. Bridge over Mersey R built in 1901. Textile mill opened in 1953. Terminal for Bass Strait vehicular ferries from **Melbourne** estab in 1959. Aborig carvings on Mersey Bluff discov in 1929, site protected and 'Tiagarra' museum of Aborig culture estab in 1972. Wesley Vale paper mills began production in 1971. Promising oil and gas find in Yolla Basin offshore in late 1985.

GORDON RIVER [42°42'S 145°49'E]

River explored and named by Capt James Kelly in 1816 after James Gordon who lent him a whaleboat to circumnavigate Tas. Narrow belt of forest on either side of river preserved in 1939. Lake Pedder was main feature of scenic reserve proclaimed in 1955, but flooded in the early 1970s as part of Gordon R hydro-electric scheme despite bitter controversy and prolonged



Postcard, c1910.
IN PRIVATE POSSESSION

protests. Road from Maydena to Strathgordon Hydro-Electric Commission township built 1962–65. Lake Gordon and enlarged Lake Pedder completed by 1974, latter diverting headwaters of Huon R into Gordon system. Southwest Nat Pk proclaimed in 1968, extended in 1976, became a UNESCO Biosphere Reserve in 1978 and was further extended and added to World Heritage List in 1982. Wild Rivers Nat Pk proclaimed in 1980, setting stage for confrontation between Lowe govt and Hydro-Electric Commission over proposals to build second stage of scheme involving dam on lower Gordon R. Lowe sacked by his party prior to referendum on issue. Controversy culminated in confrontations between protestors and police at Warners Landing in 1982–83 and federal govt intervention to halt scheme in 1983.

GREAT LAKE [41°53'S 146°45'E]

Name descriptive: known earlier as Great Lagune. Reached by John Beaumont in 1817. Constable Jorgen Jorgenson sent to explore area in 1826 and was impressed by grazing land at southern end of lake. Small dam built at southern end 1911–14 to raise level of lake and supply water to Waddamana A power station, designed to supply power to planned zinc refinery at Risdon (see Risdon Cove); taken over by govt in 1914, generators installed by 1916. Dam raised successively in 1922, 1967 and 1982. Waddamana B power station completed in 1949. Great Lake Power Development Scheme begun in 1957 to divert water northwards to Poatina, Tas's first underground power station, completed in 1977.

KING ISLAND [39°51'S 143°59'E]

Popn: Currie 215 (1911), 887 (1961), 560 (1966), 859 (1981); island 766 (1911), 2778 (1961), 2592 (1981). Named after Gov King of NSW by John Black in 1801. Sighted by Capt Reid of the *Martha* in 1797. Quickly attracted sealers but seals and sea elephants soon wiped out. Lieut Robbins formally but hurriedly took possession of island in 1802 by raising Union Jack (upside down) near present Naracoopa while Frenchman Nicholas Baudin was there. First lease taken up in the 1830s; first record of permanent European settlement in 1855. Lighthouse built on Cape Wickham in 1845. There have been over 50 shipwrecks along island's coast, more than 2000 lives lost: *Cataraqui* wrecked in 1845 near Currie with loss of 407 lives; in 1867 lighthouse keepers at Cape Wickham had to care for more than 450 migrants from shipwreck. Much of island thrown open for settlement in 1886. Gold and tin mined in 1905, scheelite discov in 1911. Scheelite mine originally open-cut, now 2 underground mines. Port developed at Grassy, largely a company town. Soldier settlement on island after both world wars. Airfield completed in 1962. Mineral sands mined for rutile and zircon on east coast 1968–77.

LATROBE [41°14'S 146°25'E]

Popn: 711 (1881), 2401 (1981). Named after Charles Joseph La Trobe, administrator of Tas in 1846–47 and also administrator of Port Phillip District (1839–51) and lieut-gov of Vic (1851–54). First European settler

in district in 1826. Village founded in 1850, laid out in 1853. Tramway to Formby (see Devonport) opened in 1855. Mersey and Deloraine rlwy built in 1871 to capture trade of North Midlands for Latrobe, but never completed. Lucas Hotel (RNE) built c1870. Frogmore (Nat T, RNE) built in 1880. Courthouse built in 1883, now museum. Rlwy from Launceston to Devonport built in 1885 and routed through town after local pressure. Largest town in Northwest Coast region in 1881. First 'world championship' axemen's carnival held here in 1891. Cycle club formed in 1896 when first Latrobe Wheel Race run. Tasmanite Shale Oil Co began production in 1930.

LUINA [41°28'S 145°23'E]

Popn: 458 (1971), 522 (1981). Original township developed in 1898 following discov of copper and tin. Mining ceased in World War I due to difficulties in recovering ore, began again in 1968. New town completed in 1967, opened in 1968. Now produces 400 000 tonnes of ore per annum from Aust's second largest tin mine. Copper also mined in the 1980s.

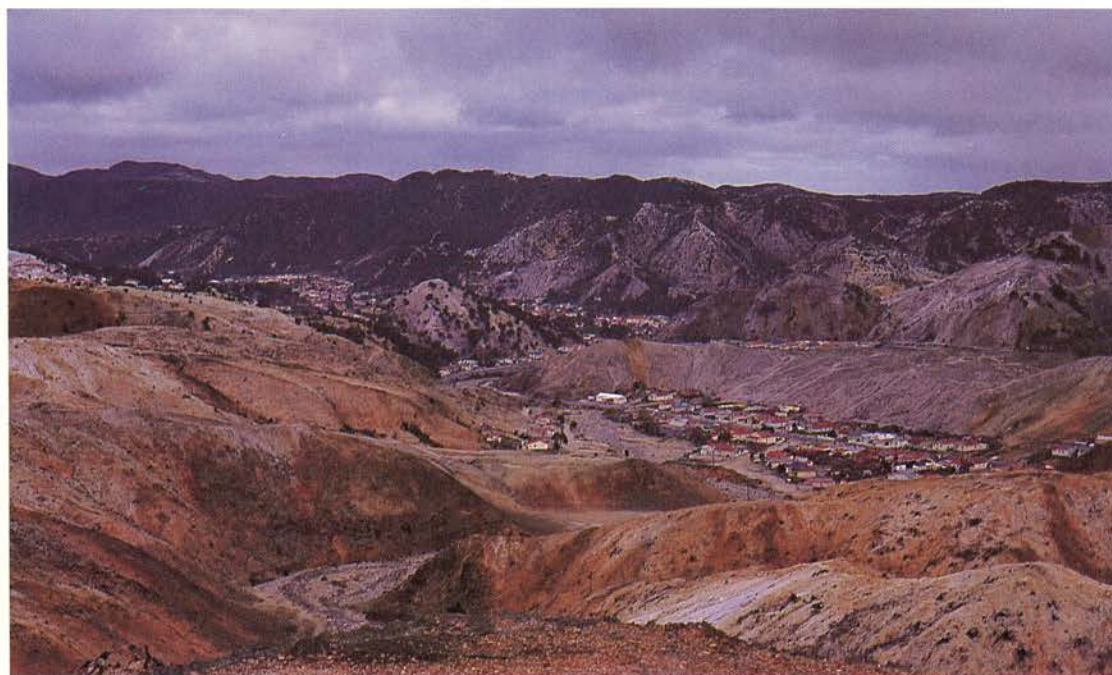
MACQUARIE HARBOUR

[42°14'S 145°18'E]

Capt James Kelly explored harbour in 1815 and named it after Gov Macquarie of NSW. Sighted by Abel Tasman in 1642, but not explored. Capt Birch granted first licences to cut Huon pine in 1816. Entrance surveyed in 1819 and markers estab. Prison estab on Settlement (or Sarah) Island in 1822 with convicts from Hobart; abandoned in favour of Port Arthur in 1834; briefly revived in 1846. Convicts cut Huon pine in district and along Gordon River. Prison mentioned in Marcus Clark's *For the term of his natural life*. Small Grummet Island used as place of secondary punishment 1821–33, during which time there were 85 deaths, only 35 from natural causes. Both islands in historic reserve (RNE) from 1926. Macquarie Harbour was headquarters for expeditions by George Robinson, 'Protector of Aborigines', to round up remaining Aboriges in the Southwest, many of whom died here. Lighthouse (RNE) built on Cape Sorell at entrance to harbour through Hells Gates in 1899 to replace earlier lights. Breakwaters inside entrance built by large labour force and completed in 1900, inner channel dredged. Channel over bar at entrance dredged by Strahan Marine Board in 1909.

PORT DAVEY [43°20'S 145°54'E]

Named by James Kelly in 1815 after Lieut-Gov Thomas Davey. Matthew Flinders sailed past entrance in 1798. First licences to cut Huon pine granted to Capt Birch in 1816. John Oxley examined harbour in 1820; some of hinterland explored by Lieut James Hobbs in 1824. Track cut from Huonville to Arthur Range in 1836 later extended to Port Davey. Pine in district virtually cut out by 1879 and settlement abandoned. Whaling ships sheltered in Port Davey for most of 19th cent obtaining supplies from small settlement at Bramble Cove. Foreshores in conservation area from 1951. Bay whaling settlements for hunting and rendering down right whales existed for a time at



Queenstown, entirely denuded of vegetation, except for the peaks of the surrounding mountains. Timber from the surrounding hill sides was used to fire the copper smelters and mine furnaces operating in the early 1900s. Bushfires and sulphur-dioxide fumes prevented regeneration, resulting in massive soil loss. Recently, limited regeneration has taken place in the form of rainforest scrub.
Photograph by Audrey Smith, 1965.

New Harbour, Cox Bight and on the Maatsuyker Islands to the south, but resource depleted by 1890s. Tin discov at Cox Bight in 1891 and mined spasmodically to modern times. Track cut from Port Davey to Tyenna near upper Derwent River in 1898 and huts provided to give some hope to people shipwrecked in southwest Tas.

QUEENSTOWN [42°03'S 145°34'E]
 Popn: 5051 (1901), 3659 (1911), 5025 (1971), 3714 (1981).
 Named after Queen Victoria.

Early yrs Area explored by Charles Gould in the 1860s. Gold discov to south of Mount Lyell in 1881. This find and Iron Blow area pegged by 1883. Company mining has been continuous since 1888 when Mount Lyell Gold Mining Co formed; stamp battery set up in 1889, but goldmining finished at Mount Lyell by 1891. Town of Penghana estab in 1892 when value of copper in 'waste' recognised and Mount Lyell Mining Co formed. First Mount Lyell smelters of 1895 designed by R.C. Sticht, general manager until he died in 1922 — design copied in many parts of world. Hills laid bare by demand of 11 furnaces for timber, regeneration prevented by sulphur fumes until recently. In 1896 Penghana destroyed by fire and new township of Queenstown estab further down valley including first hotel and store. Rlwy to **Strahan** completed in 1899, closed in 1963. Empire Hotel (RNE) completed in 1901.

Amalgamation and after Mount Lyell and North Lyell companies amalgamated in 1903 and centred operations on Queenstown at expense of other settlements (see below). Company built hydro-electric scheme at Lake Margaret to supply mine and town, completed in 1914. Refinery opened in 1928. First rough road to **Hobart** built in 1932. New open cut at West Lyell came into operation in 1934. Refinery closed in 1964, smelters in 1969, West Lyell mine in 1972; main mine has struggled to remain viable in the 1970s–80s with govt loan assistance and retrenchments. Final closure scheduled for 1988. Queenstown is listed as a historic town on RNE. To early 1980s had produced 900 000 tonnes of copper, 547 tonnes of silver, and 26 400 kg of gold.

Other settlements Gormanston (popn: 1760 (1901), 782 (1911), 358 (1976)), original mining settlement in district, estab in 1881–82 by miners working the Iron Blow and grew rapidly after gold discov on Mount Lyell field in 1883. By 1884 had first official post office on West Coast. Became base for North Lyell Copper Co formed in 1897, but declined after merger of the two main companies led to operations being centred on Queenstown. Linda is now a ghost town; Royal Hotel closed in 1952. Serious underground fire there in 1912 killed 42 miners. Teepookana was estab in 1895 where rlwy from Queenstown reached highest navigable reach of King R, but embryonic port failed when line completed to **Strahan** in 1899. Crotty was

smelting centre for North Lyell mine: two furnaces built by 1901, but abandoned with amalgamation of North Lyell and Mount Lyell companies in 1903. Pillinger, North Lyell Company's port on **Macquarie Harbour**, met similar fate. New Crotty township planned and partially built in 1982–83 to house workers on Gordon and Franklin dams, but construction halted after federal govt intervention (see Gordon River): partially completed town used for workforce on construction of smaller King R dam.

RENISON BELL [41°48'S 145°26'E]

Popn: 106 (1911), 47 (1933), 254 (1966). Tin discov in 1890, alluvial mining followed. Concentrator built in 1907. Deposits exhausted in 1922, but new ways found to treat deeper ores in 1936 and these brought here from Boulder–Battery area for treatment. Substantial new reserves found in the 1950s leading to expansion: new concentrating plant and underground mine developed. It is the world's largest underground tin mine with capacity to treat 850 000 tonnes of ore per yr and produce 46 per cent of Aust's demand.

ROSEBERY [41°45'S 145°33'E]

Popn: 352 (1911), 1923 (1961), 1774 (1966), 2675 (1981). Named after British prime minister Lord Rosebery. Gold discov in 1893, zinc-lead ore body in 1894. In 1897 main Primrose mine opened and copper discov. Emu Bay Rlwy from **Burnie** extended to **Zeehan** in 1900 and used to transport output. Unsuccessful attempts at local smelting ceased in 1913 with closure of Zeehan smelters and mines virtually closed. Revival with new complex flotation technology introduced in 1927. Mines bought by Mount Lyell Co (see Queenstown) in 1936 and zinc ore railed to Risdon (see Risdon Cove) for electrolytic refining. Lead and copper sent to Burnie for export. Additional ore brought

by aerial bucketway from Electrolytic Zinc Co mine at Williamsford, 7 km away, until 1985. Waratah Hwy, first road to north coast, completed in 1963. Deliveries of zinc, silver, lead and gold ore from new Que River mine began in 1981. Township of Mount Read founded in the 1890s, but soon declined with rise of Williamsford.

SHEFFIELD [41°22'S 146°20'E]

Popn: 263 (1881), 1076 (1911), 586 (1961), 945 (1981). Named after city in Yorkshire, England. Kentish Plains district explored by surveyor Nathaniel Kentish in 1842. District isolated by bad roads, not surveyed until 1859. Recognised as significant agric district as early as 1870. Many Christian Brethren immigrants from England settled in area. Mersey–Forth hydro-electricity scheme with seven power stations begun in 1963, opened in 1973; controlled from centre in Sheffield.

SMITHTON [40°50'S 145°09'E]

Popn: 612 (1911), 3378 (1981). Named after Peter Smith. Area held by Van Diemen's Land Co from 1825. Local prosperity followed demand for farm produce from Vic goldfields and Mount Bischoff (see Waratah) tin field. Duck River Butter Factory opened here in 1904. Many farms estab on drained swamplands developed systematically by local boards and, later, the state. Smithton Harbour Board estab in 1910, but tidal problems prevented port expansion. In more recent times modern butter and casein factory, largest in Tas, and sawmills, including largest hardwood mill in Aust, have opened. Woolnorth to west is only property still owned and operated by Van Diemen's Land Co. Pollution monitoring station set up on Cape Grim in the early 1980s. Aborig carvings similar to those of Central Aust were found on west coast at Mt Cameron in 1971.

Sirahan, Macquarie Harbour, Tas



Postcard, c1905.

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STANLEY [40°46'S 145°17'E]

Popn: 332 (1881), 484 (1901), 818 (1961), 603 (1981). Named after secretary of state for colonies c1840. The Nut (hill overlooking town) sighted by Matthew Flinders in 1798. Capt James Kelly passed on circumnavigation of Tas in 1816. Area assessed for European settlement in 1823–24. First settlement took place and residence of Van Diemen's Land Co agent estab at Highfields in 1824. Homestead built 1835 for Van Diemen's Land Company's agent: company's first homestead in district built c1826 also remains (RNE). London-based Van Diemen's Land Co was estab in 1825 to cultivate land and breed sheep on 141 600 ha granted to it in northwest Tas. Bluestone Old Customs Bond Store built in 1835 from ships' ballast. Joseph Lyons, only Tas-born Aust prime minister, born here in 1879, premier of Tas 1923–28 and PM 1932–39. Last family of Tas Aborigs found near Circular Head in 1842. Sales of land and town development began in 1842 when township named and surveyed. St James' Presbyterian church built in 1853 was one of Aust's first prefabricated buildings, being shipped in sections from London. Schoolhouse (Nat T) built in 1866. Marine Board founded in 1868: for many yrs only 'port of entry' on Northwest Coast. Van Diemen's Land Co shifted headquarters to **Smithton** in the 1920s. Listed as historic town by Nat T and RNE. Iron ore piped from **Savage River**, 98 km to south, to Port Latta to east of Stanley as slurry. Ore pelletised there and loaded for shipment from 2.2-km jetty capable of handling ships of up to 105 000 tonnes.

STRAHAN [42°08'S 145°20'E]

Popn: 1504 (1901), 839 (1911), 429 (1933), 489 (1954), 402 (1981). Named after Major George Strahan, Gov of Tas 1881–86. Earlier known as Long Bay and Regatta Point, and began as a Huon pine milling centre. Village founded in 1877 as supply base for Mt Heemskirk tin mines; town proclaimed in 1892. Govt rlwy from **Zeehan** opened in 1890, closed in 1960. Growth boosted by Mount Lyell copper (see Queenstown): rlwy from **Queenstown** opened in 1899, using an Abt rack and cog system on one section, closed in 1963. Once a busy port which handled more cargo than any other Tas port. Marine Board estab in 1900, much work carried out to open **Macquarie Harbour** for larger vessels. Combined customs house and post office (RNE) built in 1901. Former Union Steamship Co office built in 1894, now council offices. Officially closed as commercial port in 1969 after Mount Lyell Co began to rail ore to **Burnie** instead of trucking it to Strahan. Now important tourist centre and starting point for **Gordon River** cruises. Centre of protests against Gordon and Franklin rivers dam proposals in 1982–83.

ULVERSTONE [41°09'S 146°11'E]

Popn: 2005 (1911), 9413 (1981). James Fenton began farming on Forth R in 1840, later wrote *History of Tasmania*. Paling splitters in area from 1848 to supply **Melbourne** market. Town estab in 1852, town blocks

sold from 1856. Aust's first axemen's contest held here in the early 1870s. Town proclaimed in 1888. Rlwy opened in 1890. Dame Enid Lyons, Aust's first woman member of House of Representatives (1943) and first woman cabinet minister (1949) born here in 1897.

WARATAH [41°26'S 145°32'E]

Popn: 1252 (1881), 1639 (1911), 217 (1971), 342 (1981). Named after local flora. Tin deposits discov in late 1871 by James 'Philosopher' Smith: town estab in 1872 and mining begun by Mt Bischoff Co in 1875. Site of first mining boom in Tas. Mt Bischoff was world's richest tin mine, described as 'a mountain of solid tin'. Closed in 1935 having yielded 81 000 tonnes. Horse tram from **Burnie** built by Van Diemen's Land Co opened in 1878, converted to steam rlwy in 1884, taken over by Emu Bay Rlwy Co in 1897. Lead and silver produced from mine at Magnet, 6.5 km to south, 1894–1949. Que River silver, lead, gold and zinc mine shipped first ore to **Rosebery** in 1981 and company built 53 homes for employees at Waratah in 1982. **Luina** and **Savage River** mines have also contributed to revival of town's fortunes.

WYNYARD [40°59'S 145°45'E]

Popn: 526 (1901), 168 (1881), 1281 (1911), 2185 (1954), 4582 (1981). Named after Major-General E.B. Wynyard, commander of British forces in NSW, Van Diemen's Land and NZ in 1850. Village founded in 1841, became a town in 1861. District settled by Europeans in the 1840s. Table Cape lighthouse (RNE) built in 1888. Rlwy opened in 1912. Oldest marsupial fossil found in Aust discov at Fossil Bluff.

ZEEHAN [41°53'S 145°21'E]

Popn: 1965 (1891), 5014 (1901), 3951 (1911), 1002 (1933), 698 (1954), 1750 (1981). Mt Zeehan named in 1798 by George Bass and Matthew Flinders after Abel Tasman's flagship of 1642. Tas's third largest town with reputed 10 000 popn in 1908 after rich silver-lead ore discov in 1882, although little development until 1888–91 boom period. Rlwy to **Strahan** opened in 1890 (closed in 1960); line from **Burnie** opened in 1900. Smelters built in 1898, closed in 1913 after mines began to fail and ore treated at **Rosebery**. Ore recovered 1893–1908 boom period worth £4m. School of Mines built in 1894, now a pioneers' museum. Grand Hotel built in 1898. Gaiety Theatre opened in 1898: once largest in Aust, seating 1000 and presenting Enrico Caruso, Nellie Melba. New lode discov in 1947, but last mine closed in the 1960s. Loading facilities built at Melba Flats to north for shipment of Mount Lyell ore (see Queenstown) by rail to Burnie. Now main town servicing reopened **Renison Bell** tin mine. Large tin deposit found on edge of town in 1982, but no mining by late 1985 and development dependent on higher tin prices. Dundas to east once site of large mining town (popn 1080 (1891)) with first pegging in 1882; virtually deserted by 1914.