



## **Media Report for The Tasmanian Department of Economic Development and Tourism 10-17 April 2009**

### *Politics/Economy/Social*

Thursday, 16 April, 2009

#### **Govt To Track Mobile Phone Users' Web Site Viewership**

The Ministry of Communications plans to join forces with wireless carriers, advertisers and other private-sector firms to calculate viewing rates for Web sites loaded on mobile phones to assist businesses with advertising and sales promotion activities.

The ministry aims to analyse how cell phone users view Web sites. Its computation methods will be modelled after those used for TV ratings. The collated data will be analysed and disseminated to corporations.

The viewed Web sites will be divided into various categories, such as fashion, leisure and real estate, with viewership to be further broken down based on age, sex and other factors. The data will also include Internet-specific traits, such as Web site tracking.

The ministry is to use the current cell phone networks and call for around 6,000 users to participate. Major personal handyphone system (PHS) service provider Willcom Inc. has indicated a willingness to help, with other carriers also likely to come on board. A set trial period is to start in the fall.

Businesses in Japan spent some 698 billion yen on online advertising last year, skyrocketing 280% from five years earlier to overtake that for radio and magazines.

But companies have no way of determining the effectiveness of cell phone advertising and have been calling for action. The ministry has previously advocated for the Internet to be more convenient for businesses, and has now determined that it must spend government funds to evaluate the effectiveness of mobile advertising.

(The Nikkei 16 April morning edition)

### *Industry/Market – Australia*

Friday, 3 April 2009

#### **Tasmanian Wine and Oyster Matching at the Australian Embassy**

The Australian Embassy Marketing Office (AUSTRADE) held the first seminar on Tasmanian Wine and Oyster matching.

Tasmanian oysters are in season in during the northern summer and Tasmanian wines are well known for their cool climate characteristics. The seminar aimed to encourage the matching of Tasmanian oysters with wine, with the aim of starting a new eating trend.

Around 70 chefs and sommeliers from a range of hotels and restaurants attended the event. The seminar covered Tasmania as a region for produce and wine, with a particular focus on food safety, from the farming stage through to export of the product.

Tasmania is the southern most island in Australia and winter is July to September, the peak season for oysters. Antarctic Ocean currents carry rich nutrients, perfect for oysters to thrive. The cool climate brings a delicate and elegant texture and taste to the wines.

(Translation from Nihon Shokuryo Shinbun (Japan Food News) 3 April edition)

Friday, 17 April 2009

## **National Australia Bank Opens Office in Osaka**

One of Australia's 4 largest banks, National Australia Bank (NAB), opened its first trade office in Osaka yesterday. This is the bank's second office in Japan, after Tokyo.

NAB will focus on high wealth individuals and corporates, offering a range of asset management services. Greg Story, Country Head Japan, National Australia Bank told a press conference that he hopes the office will become a fully fledged branch possibly within three years.

(Translation from the Kinki Edition of the Nikkei Newspaper 17 April edition)

Thursday, 2 April 2009

## **More Students Choosing Undergraduate and Postgraduate Education –Nursing And Education Popular**

Australia's natural resources boom maybe showing signs of slowing, however demand for both under graduate and postgraduate positions in Australian universities is on the rise. The unemployment rate hit 5.2% in February, the highest in 4 years, which is thought to be contributing to the increase.

After graduating from high school, many young Australians work as volunteers to get a taste of real working life before entering university, however with a recession looming these opportunities have all but dried up, leading to more students to go straight to university from high school.

Australian universities begin the year in February or March. The University of Technology Sydney (UTS) reports a 20% increase in post graduate applications on the previous year, while Griffith University reports a 5% increase in enrolments. In Western Australia, who owes much of its good fortune to the last resources boom, the University of Western Australia has seen enrolments up by around 300 students. The fact that high paying jobs in the mining sector are disappearing is seen as a contributing factor.

After gaining acceptance to a university in Australia, it's permissible to defer studies, and many young students travel abroad on working holiday visas. However the University of Tasmania reports such requests have fallen by 23% this year.

Recession-proof areas such as nursing and education are becoming increasingly popular.

As demand for Australia's natural resources decreased due to the current economic climate, the country's GDP in the second quarter of the 2009 financial year dropped by 0.5%, the first negative result in 8 years. Unemployment is expected to increase to 7% in 2010.

(Translation from the Shinano Mainichi Newspaper 2 April edition. Kyodo News)

Thursday, 16 April, 2009

## **Global CO2 Capture, Storage Group To Be Launched In Australia**

An international organisation to promote carbon capture and storage as a method of reducing global warming gas emissions will hold its inaugural meeting Thursday in the Australian capital of Canberra.

The Global Carbon Capture and Storage Institute, or Global CCS Institute, has been established under the lead of the Australian government. It has attracted a total of 15 countries, including Japan, Australia, the U.S. and European nations, as well as some 50 companies.

The Japanese contingent at the meeting will likely include representatives of the government, Mitsubishi Corp., Toshiba Corp., Hitachi Ltd. and about seven other firms and organisations. The attendees are expected to formally adopt the institute's initial goals, such as conducting roughly 20 tests around the world by 2010 and paving the way for the commercialization of CCS technology by 2020.

To meet these objectives, the institute plans to draw up environmental and safety standards for CCS and carry out studies to find regions suitable for the technology. Furthermore, it plans to support its commercialisation by matching businesses looking to lock away carbon dioxide with those possessing ample storage spaces, such as depleted oil wells, for example.

CCS technology collects carbon dioxide emissions from coal power plants and other facilities and buries them under the seabed and underground. Tests have already been conducted by both the government and private sector in Australia, where coal mining is a key industry.

(The Nikkei 16 April morning edition)

### *Industry/Market – Japan*

Saturday, 28 March, 2009

## **US Cherries Maybe Launched Without Fumigation**

On 27 March, The Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries (MAFF) started to receive public comments from Japanese citizens regarding the permission of importation of US cherries without methyl bromide (MB) fumigation. This is the same process both New Zealand and Tasmania in Australia needed to follow before being granted permission. Public comment will be collected up until the 25<sup>th</sup> of April. MAFF plans to permit import starting this summer, subject to public approval.

New Zealand was granted permission in December 2005, followed by Tasmania, Australia in November 2008. However, the volume of US cherries was 8454 MT in FY2008, which is 99% of Japan's total imports. This figure dwarfs the imports from New Zealand and Australia, so careful examination of the data and monitoring will be required to prevent codling moth entry.

Nihon Nogyo Shinbun (Japan Agriculture News) 28 March edition

Tuesday, 14 April, 2009

## **Aeon To Set Up 500 Small Supermarkets Over 3 Years**

Aeon Co. plans to open 500 convenience-store-sized supermarkets in the Tokyo area by February 2012, becoming the first major retailer to build a network of such small stores, The Nikkei learned Monday.

The stores will be limited to the Tokyo metropolitan region, focusing on areas with booming populations, including Tokyo's 23 wards, Yokohama and Kawasaki.

Aeon is aiming for annual sales of around 100 billion yen from this new business -- on a par with midsize-supermarket operations. Investing roughly 15 billion yen, the major retailer seeks to rein in initial outlays and rents by using the sites of former convenience stores, vacant stores in commercial districts, and other existing properties.

With retail space of 130-200 sq. meters apiece, the new stores will be about the same size as convenience stores. Merchandise will be akin to that available at regular supermarkets, including perishables and items sold under Aeon's popular and affordable private brand. But targeting top-selling products, the stores will offer only 3,000 or so items -- roughly one-third of a regular supermarket's overall line-up. The small supermarkets will operate from 6 a.m. to midnight.

Aeon began opening small supermarkets on a trial basis at the end of 2005 and now believes that it has a profitable business model for them.

The firm had been focusing on suburban shopping centres after rules on opening large stores were relaxed back in 2000. But large-store sales have been in the doldrums amid chilled consumer spending, with Aeon likely suffering its first net loss in seven years in the year ended February 2009. As a result, the company is curbing its spending on shopping centres -- which can cost tens of billion of yen per location -- to zero in on small supermarkets and other growth areas.

(The Nikkei 14 April morning edition)

Tuesday, 14 April, 2009

## **Lawson, Other Convenience Stores Face Slower Growth In FY09**

Such convenience store operators as Lawson Inc. are bracing for weaker growth this fiscal year following last summer's introduction of an age verification system for cigarette vending machines that led to increased customer traffic.

The taspo age verification cards are now required for all vending machine purchases of cigarettes. More customers have opted to buy cigarettes at convenience stores, where they also pick up other items.

Lawson's unconsolidated same-store sales jumped 6.5% last fiscal year, the first rise since the firm went public in 2000. This helped boost group operating profit 6% to a record 49.1 billion yen.

But Japan's No. 2 convenience store chain operator said Monday that it expects operating profit to rise 3% for the year ending February 2010. President Takeshi Niinami explained that this estimate was based on same-store sales growth tumbling 5-6 points as the boost associated with the taspo smart card gets factored in. As a result, same-store sales will likely be almost flat, he indicated.

Other convenience store operators similarly anticipate that the taspo effect will have little impact on the bottom line this fiscal year, with the top four firms bracing for slower growth or declines in operating profit.

Same-store sales at industry leader Seven-Eleven Japan Co., which is under the umbrella of Seven & i Holdings Co., were positive for the first time in nine years in fiscal 2008. And at fourth-ranked Circle K Sunkus Co. they hit positive territory for the first time since the 2004 integration that created the firm.

But this fiscal year, same-store sales at Seven-Eleven, No. 3 firm FamilyMart Co. and Circle K Sunkus are seen up just 0.5%.

(The Nikkei 14 April morning edition)

Sunday, 12 April, 2009

## **Marubeni Signs Deal To Procure Grain For China Stockpiles**

Japanese trading firm Marubeni Corp. has signed a comprehensive agreement with China Grain Reserves Corp. (Sinograin), a state-run firm that manages the country's grain stockpiles.

Marubeni will procure soybeans and grain products for Sinograin outside China, and the partners will also invest in shipment facilities in producer countries.

China aims to secure and stabilize its grain imports using Marubeni's procurement strength. The Japanese firm, for its part, will gain a major new marketing channel in China and increase its bargaining power with grain producers.

This is the first time for a Chinese firm to established a business alliance in the area of food reserves.

Sinograin was established in 2000 to support the country's food-stockpiling efforts. It manages about 75 million tons of grain, including stockpiles, annually -- about twice Japan's total grain and bean demand.

Marubeni plans to initially procure 4 million tons of soybeans, almost equal to Japan's total imports, from the U.S. and South America in the first year for delivery to Sinograin. The firm plans to expand its business with Sinograin to include the procurement of corn and wheat.

(The Nikkei 12 April edition)

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