



MINISTER FOR COMMUNICATIONS  
INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY AND THE ARTS  
THE HON DARYL WILLIAMS AM QC MP

**Address to cocktail function to celebrate the achievements of  
the Intelligent Island Program**

**Waterline, Murray Street Pier, Hobart**

**Wednesday 7 April 2004 at 6.30pm**

Thank you Norm [Norm McIlfatrick, Secretary of the Tasmanian Department of Economic Development].

The Hon Paul Lennon [Premier of Tasmania]; Mr Neville Roach [Chairman of the Intelligent Island Board] and his fellow Intelligent Island board members; the Hon Lara Giddings [Minister for Economic Development]; ladies and gentlemen.

**Introduction**

1. Anyone who harboured any doubts that Tasmania lives up to the label “Intelligent Island” would only have to glance at my itinerary over the next 24 hours to be convinced that it is a label that has firmly stuck.  
In the space of just a few hours tomorrow I will be visiting Telstra’s world-class Broadband e-Lab, attending the debut of some exciting digital content projects and helping to launch a website that takes e-government into new territory.
2. And this evening, I join with you in another celebration of Tasmania’s growing and sustainable ICT sector.

**The Intelligent Island Program**

3. The Intelligent Island Program has been funded under the Building on Information Technology Strengths (BITS) Program.  
It is just one of a number of significant investments in Australia’s ICT future that were financed from the sale of the second tranche of Telstra shares.

The Tasmania's ICT sector's share of that investment alone amounted to almost \$160 million.

And this investment in Tasmania, in turn, is part of the Australian Government's broader national strategy for building our ICT capability.

### **The approach of the II Board**

4. A program like Intelligent Island is only as successful as those who administer it.
5. The thing that has been particularly impressive about the work of the Intelligent Island Board, over the life of this program, has been its determination to come up with ICT initiatives and solutions that are tailor-made for this state.

There is always a temptation, when dealing with a fast-evolving industry, to be swayed by what is happening elsewhere, to focus on the fashion of the moment.

6. The Intelligent Island Board has been scrupulous about supporting initiatives that are designed to build on the existing strengths of the Tasmanian ICT sector, and to build for durability.

This has been evident in its early commitment to getting a clear picture of Tasmania's ICT strengths.

And it has continued to be evident in its attitude towards the proposed Centre of Excellence.

### **The Centre of Excellence**

7. The Tasinformatics Centre of Excellence is a significant investment not only in Tasmania's ICT future, but in the future health of the nation.
8. The management of information is increasingly important to the effective delivery of health services.

The Centre, a collaboration of the Tasmanian Department of Health and Human Services and the University of Tasmania, will play a major role in developing skilled graduates and in the development of the health information systems of the future.

And by linking with local entrepreneurs to promote the commercialisation of its research, it will help build an even stronger ICT sector here in Tasmania.

9. It is this kind of strategic thinking that will deliver long-term benefits to the people of Tasmania.

This is the kind of careful planning that will deliver greater sustainability to the ICT sector, by building on existing strengths, with an eye to emerging trends.

10. I wish to thank the Chairman of the Intelligent Island Board, Mr Neville Roach, and all those who have served on Board since its establishment, for their careful consideration of the issues facing the Tasmanian ICT sector and their focus on securing long-term benefits for the State.

### **The In-tellinc incubator**

11. Some of those benefits are already readily apparent.

One major Intelligent Island initiative, the ICT incubator In-tellinc, for example, has already nurtured a number of impressive ICT start-up companies,

Their products range from online photo labs to document management systems, mapping software and smart cards.

The progress of In-tellinc compares favourably with that of the BITS Incubators in the other States and Territories.

### **Conclusion**

12. I don't think anyone should under-estimate the challenge that has faced the Intelligent Island Board.

The Australian Government knows only too well the difficulty of allocating resources where they are most needed and where they will be best spent.

Ensuring that the Intelligent Island funds are committed to projects that will develop the long-term viability of the Tasmanian ICT sector has been an exacting task for the Board.

13. As I said, there is often external pressure for quick decisions and immediate outcomes, sometimes at the expense of longer-term planning and a more strategic focus.

14. I think the Board has been diligent and methodical in its work.

And I believe the approach it has taken has given Tasmania the best

prospects for getting true, long-term value from the Intelligent Island funding.

15. The Australian Government endorses this strategic approach.
16. As the Premier has indicated, the Tasmanian ICT sector is crucial to the future of this State, and is well-placed to grow strongly in coming years.
17. Particularly interesting are the Whitehorse Strategic Group statistics showing a substantial ICT base already exists in Tasmania.
18. The Government has been a proud supporter of that industry, through initiatives like Intelligent Island and the Launceston Broadband Project. And our commitment in 2004 remains as solid as ever.
19. Thank you for the opportunity to join you for this celebration of a very Intelligent Island.