



**POTENTIAL:** The much-maligned town of Triabunna is located in a beautiful part of Tasmania.

# Hope for Triabunna rebirth

**T**HAT cover story on the Spring Bay mill in the current edition of *The Monthly* on the shenanigans of politicians, assorted forestry figures, environmentalists and its visionary new owner certainly stirred the hive. Better get up there and take another look around.

Thus it was that last Saturday morning at around 7am, when it was still dark and cold, I headed east. A glorious time to be travelling, watching the dawn break, the odd scattered fluffy meringue clouds take on colours of palest pink and slate and lilac. No traffic to speak of, through Sorell, still sleeping, and along roads that shimmy and sway up and down hills, the landscape punctuated with the odd interesting old cottage or shepherd's hut.

Familiar sights. The figure of St John the Baptist outside the eponymous church at Buckland, Louisa Anne Meredith's Gothic cottage at the entry to Orford, then on to Triabunna.

To hear some of the locals speak of their town one might imagine it is located on an idyllic antipodean Riviera. It isn't. It's on the whole a grim little town of concrete-block construction.

True, it's relatively neat, but its chief appeal is what nature (or God if you believe in him or her) endowed it with, a sublime natural beauty, a divine view and, on most afternoons, a sunset to put Santorini to shame. This is a ravishing chip of coastline that man and the developer have managed to comprehensively ruin.

I hesitate to use the word bogan that the colourful mayor of Glamorgan and Spring Bay chose to describe some of his constituents, but truth hurts, and I feel M. Cadart is right on the money.



**MY TASMANIA**  
**Leo Schofield**

The town is tidy, as if property owners acknowledge the privilege of living in such a beautiful spot and keep their own patch spruce, but the overall impression is created by indifference.

The sign outside the town declares it to be the home of Forestry and Fishing, in that order. Time to paint over the former. The mill and the unspeakable company that owned and ran it are part of history. Natural resources are finite. It's easy to understand that the loss of jobs has generated anger, possibly a sense of hopelessness.

But how can a spot as beautiful as this lack another kind of future, the future the new owners of the former mill envisage?

Triabunna (or Queenstown for that matter) is not the only place where time has marched on. Consider Detroit, home of Motown, for a century the automobile capital of the world. Enter Japan, Korea, Germany, France, even India, and Detroit is now a ghost town. Or Eastman in Rochester, New York, home of Kodak, a company that dominated the world film and camera market. A proud city that once had its own symphony orchestra. Now it's bankrupt, like Detroit.

It's all very well for workers in the forestry industry to want things to stay the way they were. They won't. And blaming Labor and the Greens for their woes is idiotic. Maybe

displaced workers don't want to learn to pull lattes but there's a market for coffee and none for woodchips.

However, there are charming parts, including the Esplanade with a marina packed with pricey craft and some handsome buildings in town. Opposite is glorious Maria Island, a multiple award-winning tourist destination.

As you drive up towards the former mill, there is a property called Rostrevor, well maintained and with magnificent vistas to the north and west.

But slap bang on the water is a disused factory, the former headquarters of Seafish Tasmania, now a shambles of tin sheds and industrial detritus. A measly hand-lettered board announces the site is for sale.

There is so much that could be rehabilitated in the town but some want to pump out quibble and quiddity, using the mayor's comments to that purpose.

The entire east coast of Tasmania is one of the most beautiful sequences of landscapes on earth. It can be the destination to dream of, but not while hostility reigns towards one of the most brilliant and visionary projects in the country. And a privately funded one to boot. Just like MONA.

Adversity should propel change. As the old song goes, Triabunna needs to pick itself up, dust itself off and start all over again.

**A** BIG round of applause for the Festival of Voices which this year was a roaring success, a true community event that warmed our hearts, generated laughter and joy. Congratulations to the premier too for ensuring that this event has essential three-year guaranteed funding. I attended three events and had a whale of a time.