

1 September, 2011

Dear Premier

I am writing to express my extreme disappointment at your government's decision to withdraw all funding from *Island* magazine in 2012, effectively closing the magazine.

Island magazine has been published in Tasmania since 1979, publishing and promoting local writers of the calibre of Richard Flanagan, Heather Rose, Robert Dessaix, Danielle Wood, Rohan Wilson, and James Boyce, along with international talent and important new voices.

Since I became editor in January 2011 we have launched a digital version of *Island*, a new website (with online subscription and submissions), formed a new management board and a national editorial committee. Our most recent issue, on MONA, has been the subject of an ABC Radio National feature program and widely reported on elsewhere across the country, including at the current Melbourne Writers Festival, where I spoke on various panels about *Island's* national significance and its centrality to Tasmanian writing. The issue is on its way to selling out.

Your comment that the decision to defund *Island* was based on a 'trend' to online rather than hard-copy publication is, unfortunately, ill-informed. *Island* this year has developed an exciting digital publishing stream to complement our hard-copy publication, including ePub versions of every issue (sold on our website and at Readings eBookstore). We have received funding from Hobart City Council and your own office to develop ePub editions of the magazine's extensive back catalogue, monetising a remarkable and valued resource. Industry best practice around the world is for publishers to develop a two-stream publication program: print and digital. A multi-platform approach is the best way forward for publishers to maintain readers and build new audiences.

Island is the only Tasmanian publication with a national profile: it allows us to tell our distinctive stories to the rest of the country. Conversely, the closing of *Island* is not a state-only concern: ending 'one of the nation's most important journals' (The Australia Council) significantly reduces the options all Australian writers of essay, memoir, short fiction and poetry have for publication and professional development.

Yours sincerely,



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