

WILDSIDE MTB PRESENTATIONS TUESDAY, 22 JANUARY 2008

Distinguished guest, Ladies & Gentlemen, girls & boys:

It is my great pleasure to join you all here after what's been a sensational four days of mountain-bike racing.

Firstly, I'd like to offer my congratulations to all 440 competitors in the 2008 Pure Tasmania Wildside Mountain Bike Race. Good to see family involvements in the sport. Talking to proud dad. Lew Jamieson, about Tim's race, great to see such pride and family tradition, good on you.

Competitors, you've covered 2000 kilometres of our beautiful and diverse Tasmanian wilderness to make it here today and that is an incredible feat. I am in awe!

You've raced through some of Tasmania's most dramatic and challenging terrain. From the rugged, alpine landscapes of Cradle Mountain to the wild coastal scenery of Ocean Beach – I hope you had a chance to enjoy the view and the colours, which change continuously.

This, the sixth Wildside MTB, has attracted a record number of competitors – a 50 percent rise on the last event in 2006.

Two thirds of you have travelled from interstate – in fact, all Australian states and territories are represented here today.

I would also like to acknowledge those riders who have travelled across the world to be here – from as far as Canada, Switzerland and the Netherlands.

And of course, to our local competitors, congratulations to you and thank you for supporting this fantastic Tasmanian event.

Since it started in 2002, Wildside has become the premier mountain-biking competition in the country. This internationally renowned event has put Tasmania on the map as one of the world's ultimate mountain-biking destinations.

But it does much more than that: Wildside MTN profiles Tasmania, and specifically our stunning west coast, as an adventure tourism destination – spreading the word that Tasmania is a place for wild, natural experiences on both a national and international stage and the friendliness of the West Coasters is legendary.

The Tasmanian Government, through Events Tasmania, supports this event through its Events of Regional Significance Program; recognising that Pure Tasmania Wildside MTB brings substantial economic benefits to the west coast, attracting hundreds of visitors to the State.

To the event organisers, sponsors, crews and the many volunteers involved in making this event happen, thank you for your tremendous work and congratulations.

We look forward to 2010, when the bar will be raised once again and Pure Tasmania Wildside MTB will be even bigger and better.

And for those of you not heading straight to the National Mountain Biking Championships tomorrow, I urge you to explore the rest of our amazing island – perhaps on four wheels instead of two – and we look forward to welcoming you back to the west coast for Pure Tasmania Wildside MTB 2010!