

# Bold bid to put winter blues on ice

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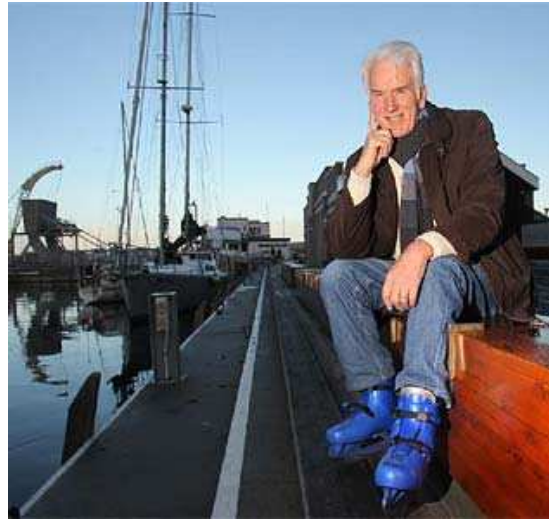
*Article by Michelle Paine*

*Picture: Nikki Davis-Jones*

**AN outdoor ice-skating rink would be a hub for a rejuvenated Hobart in winter, says alderman Damon Thomas.**

He said a winter rink on the waterfront would help the city capitalise on the very thing that turned away so many -- the cold.

Ald. Thomas's call for a winter entertainment and attraction strategy, including an ice-skating arena, will be considered by Hobart City Council tomorrow.



"I think we should look at a rink suspended over Constitution Dock. It would be close to the fish punts, Mures, a hub for activities," Ald. Thomas said.

"I'm picturing Gluhwein, roasted chestnuts, scarves flying. It would be part of making Hobart a winter destination."

The dramatic business downturn in cooler months was a constant battle for traders, especially in staffing.

"In winter, people are either hibernating indoors or at the airport waiting to leave," Ald Thomas said.

"The planes are full on winter departure and significant capacity exists inward.

"We need to come up with a range of different ideas to make Hobart a winter destination. We could link it with other attractions, for example Mt Field. We desperately need something, especially with the end of the Midwinter Festival."

He said there was little promotion of the city during winter and no link with other destinations.

"The state has not been active on this, and in any event the council's operation of the Travel and Information Centre makes it a strong contender for doing something," Ald Thomas said.

Hobart City Council is aware of a downturn in central Hobart, exacerbated by the loss of Myer and development in other suburbs.

Ald Thomas is seeking council approval for an investigation into supporting and promoting city-based winter amenity. He proposes financial assistance be considered for the strategy, depending on a proven business case.

The idea of an ice rink for Hobart was first raised many years ago and it featured in a wish list in the *Mercury* in 1997. Tasmania's only ice-skating rink is in Glenorchy.