TRAFFIC FIX Talking Point 13 June 2020

Would a Western Bypass ease Hobart’s traffic congestion?

The State Growth Traffic Origin Destination Report (June 2017) cites its own 2016 study of traffic movements passing through Hobart. This showed that during morning peak time more than 75% of journeys that start in the east, north or south of Hobart end in the city. During the afternoon peak more than two thirds of journeys end in the east, north or south began in the city. This supports an 2012 GDH report in 2012 which found a similar CBD through traffic proportional split.

This State Growth study supports an earlier case I made that the bulk of traffic is CBD bound and that the Evers tunnel proposal tunnel proposal is no solution to Hobart’s traffic congestion (Talking Point ‘Don’t dig us into a costly black hole March 14 2018).Earlier the Department of Infrastructure, Energy and Resources (DIER)in ‘Congestion in Greater Hobart: Response to Issues’ 2011 made critical comment on similar proposals made previously. Tunnels and bypasses it claimed were ’vastly out of proportion to the traffic issues and reflects an infrastructure approach rather than a network or system wide perspective to address traffic issues’. A bypass was unlikely to solve traffic DIER concluded that building a tunnel or a bypass was unlikely to solve traffic issues on Macquarie or Davey Streets because most traffic was not through traffic. The DIER report raised concern that either building a tunnel or a bypass was likely to have an impact on Hobart’s many heritage buildings.

A bypass proposed could skirt the CBD to the west and connect the Southern Outlet to the Brooker Avenue and the Tasman Highway. Such a route would likely impact Hobart’s many heritage buildings and involve extensive property acquisition particularly between Molle and Melville Streets. An elevated freeway would also create a significant visual impact against the backdrop of Hobart CBD and the foothills of Mount Wellington. The lower slopes would also be affected by a bypass from McRobbies Gully to South Hobart.

The State Growth Hobart Transport Vision for 2018-2030 clearly states ’Constructing more roads alone will not solve the problem. It will simply create more traffic, more inner congestion and reinforce our reliance on the car. Increasing the proportion of the population of the population using public transport will reduce traffic congestion across the entire road network’. The then Infrastructure Minister Rene Hidding endorsed the proposed infrastructure investment to bring this desired result(p9)as:

1 investment in a new CBD transit hub

2 provision of infrastructure facilities for a new ferry service

3 activate the northern suburbs rail corridor for passenger transport

4 Davey and Macquarie Street transit priority measures

4 priority measures on key northern and southern arterial corridors for passenger transport

Of these 1 has yet to be acted on,2 is at consultation stages,3 was a late conversion by the Minister after years of consultant’s reports and delay but no clear action to date, 4 is in operation after a tussle by the State government with Hobart City Council over its road governance.;4 is in the process of being implemented.

What is missing from this mix is park and ride into Hobart into Kingston providing (recommended by the RACT in 2010) and Sorrell.

The State government is in no financial position to spend what could be the cost of $500,000 for a bypass.

The Mercury in 2018 estimated that at least 11 reports had been made on Hobart’s traffic congestion and problems. The State government set in train yet another in 2018 hiring GDH to investigate the sustainability of a western bypass of the CBD.

The State government is in no financial position due to its virus recovery spending to fund the cost of a bypass

We do not need a congestion of transport consultants. Bypass the bypass and make the 2017 Hobart Transport Vision a reality.

John Livermore

www.johnlivermore .com

Fellow Chartered Institute of Logistics and Transport

Editor Laws of Australia: Transport

None of the above necessarily support the views express