EASING THE CHOKE-WAYS TO FIX HOBART’S TRAFFIC CONGESTION

Bob Cotgrove rightly criticises the State Growth proposal to demolish houses in Dynnyrne alongside the Southern Outlet to accommodate a fifth lane (Talking Point 13 April) He argues that this reinforces the current choke point at the entry to Davey and Macquarie Streets.

So what options do we have to ease traffic congestion in Hobart and what can be ruled out?

A 2017 State Growth Traffic Origin Destination Report 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 75% of the journeys end in the east, north or south began in the city. A $700,000 study in 2020 found that a western bypass was technically feasible but would cost $3.4bn and require a population of 2 million people to be viable and only save motorists 2 to 4 minutes travelling time. Better connections between the Macquarie and Davey Streets and the Southern Outlet, Brooker and Tasman Highways using tunnels, interchanges and bypasses were considered but the consultants concluded at the cost of $3.4 these would be unfundable by both State and Federal governments. The Minister for Infrastructure Michael Ferguson declared the project unfeasible.

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 using public transport will reduce traffic congestion across the entire road network’.

In 2018 then Infrastructure Minister Rene Hidding endorsed proposed infrastructure investment to bring this desired result 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

5 priority on key northern and southern arterial corridors for passenger transport.

1 was never acted on;

2 is due to be a service from Bellerive restricted to pedestrians and cyclists with no back up parking infrastructure at Bellerive for vehicles which would take traffic off the Tasman Bridge.

3 has been put on ice by the Minister for yet another consultant’s report(12th?) to consider options for use of the northern suburbs light rail. Kristie Johnston has supplied the argument, which should be supported, for the need and viability of a passenger light rail and revitalisation of land along the corridor.

4 is in operation but needs a designated lane for bus transport.

5 would benefit from free buses from Sorell and Kingston during peak traffic times; the 2014 decision by Tasrail put 600,000 tonnes of freight on the Brooker with resultant congestion-a commercial decision- but could reinstating the port link could be reconsidered?

The record of the Gutwein government on these issues has been lack lustre and inadequate action by the Infrastructure Minister in solving a problem that has increased over time

We are not using the expertise we have so bringing in Bob Clifford to design and plan ferry infrastructure. We need to integrate Metro in improving existing links between the feeder towns of Sorell, Kingston and New Norfolk.

Join the dots -to solve Hobart’s traffic strangulation

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