**SUBMISSION TO THE COMMITTEE FOR GREATER HOBART**

**This submission is only concerned with the issues of transport for Hobart and the Greater Hobart area**

The key issues of transport for both Hobart and Greater Hobart have been a topic of discussion for decades. In the Moving Hobart Forum in March 2017 the focus was on the traffic moving into Hobart from Kingston, Bridgewater, New Norfolk and Sorrell flowing along the Southern Outlet, Brooker Highway and Tasman Bridge. What has changed since then is the increasing traffic volume from the growing communities in Kingston, Sorrell Bridgewater and New Norfolk.

Various proposals have been offered have been looked at improving these traffic flows by improvements in public transport, light rail, ferries, tunnels and a Western bypass round Hobart CBD.

**Bypass**

This Western bypass proposal envisaged diverting a proportion of traffic from the Davey/Macquarie couplet to a bypass linking the Southern Outlet to the Brooker Highway.

A 2012 GDH Report by DIER for the Hobart City Council included an analysis with a similar link. The Report concluded that in 2031 there would be only 1189 vehicles per day(pm) and 1000(am) in a tunnel. Additionally 14 % of the traffic on the main feeder routes (essentially Davey and Macquarie) were currently through traffic as distinct from CBD bound. A later study by consultants in 2020 found that although a western bypass was technically feasible it 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 Street couplets and the Southern Outlet, Brooker and Tasman Highways using tunnels, interchanges and bypasses were considered but these would be unfundable by both State and Federal Governments. The Minister for Infrastructure, Michael Ferguson, declared the project unfeasible.

**Bus transport**

In 2012 the Legislative Council Standing Committee on Integrated Public Transport heard from Ms Hazelgrove then CEO of Metro. She outlined the Adelaide passenger service model where the State Government owned most of the buses, ticketing infrastructure and radio network suggesting a scenario where the Tasmanian government could sell the contract out the services.In my submission to the Committee I put forward matching this with the Light Rail group advocacy of renewed stations on the closed Hobart-Bridgewater railway which could be linked to the Metro in an integrated public passenger service.

I would be worth investigating the viability of making bus travel free at peak times for commuters from Kingborough, Sorrell, Bridgewater and New Norfolk.

In 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”. The ‘ Roads to the Future: Hobart Congestion Traffic Analysis’ 2016 had already emphasised the provision of improved public transport and active transport modes would assist in reducing motor vehicle demand.

**Fifth Lane**

In this context should be of concern that the government documents obtained under the Right to Information reveal that the proposed Fifth Lane on the Southern Outlet has potential to cause serious traffic wide disruption, delay emergency vehicles and close the southbound lane on the Outlet for up to eight months.

In a letter to the then Premier Peter Gutwein in 2021 the signatories noted that since the decision to implement the Fifth Lane was made significant developments entirely challenged its necessity. It was claimed independent advice put the economic cost of construction at likely to exceed $70m.

 Given the change in working life patterns a review of the project was essential. Bus interchanges, ferry services and targeted growth in the Kingborough and Huon dramatically swung the scales against the Fifth Lane construction. The project was based on the assumption that the transit lane would necessarily induce people to use public transport but bus travel would still be 2-3 minutes longer than a car and less convenient. Instead the money should be spent on an integrated transport plan with park and rides, car pooling and community based transport to facilitate a shift to hight occupancy vehicles including public transport-significantly reducing vehicle movements in and out of Hobart.

The project was listed in the Hobart City Deal in 2016 but the Hobart City Council did not request its inclusion and the City Deal partners did not receive key documents and there was a lack of consultation with them. No business case or traffic modelling or costing required under the City Deal was undertaken for the project. Nor did it make sense to reduce traffic congestion in Macquarie Street by widening the Southern Outlet. It was claimed that unless commuters were persuaded to travel by bus instead of by car the plan would be a white elephant.

The Fifth Lane proposal as it stands has the following results:

1.It reinforces the choke point at the entry to Davey and Macquarie Streets. The government documents obtained under RTI note that insufficient funds had been allocated for the Fifth Lane project for the transit lane and total works to alleviate congestion on the Southern Outlet Macquarie-Davey Streets corridor.

2.The City Deal had advocated $51m for the Southern Outlet roadworks including earthworks involving unstable dolerite rock and clay on a steep slope. The cost for roadworks alone was $35m according to the government documents.

3.the Department of State Growth estimates that the Fifth Lane would reduce travelling time on the Southern Outlet to under 20 seconds for cars and buses for most of the day and at peak times for cars travel time to 10 minutes on average and 1.5 minutes for buses.

4.The target under the City Deal to increase the percentage of commuters using public transport from 6.4% to 10% would be knocked out in 12.5 months by the 3.6% growth in Southern Outlet traffic.

5.It ignores the City of Hobart transport Strategy, the RACT Congestion Report and the State Government Hobart Transport Vision.

In 2014 Tasrail decided to cut the rail freight operation from Hobart to Bridgewater to the Transport Interchange Hub there. At the time Neil Tomlin, Toll Manager (now Tasrail Corporate Affairs and Strategy Manager) at Hobart port estimated that as a result 600,000 tonnes of freight per year(essentially lorries) would go on the Brooker Highway. The decision by Tasrail was a commercial one but the congestion level on the Brooker needs to be verified by State Growth.

**Light Rail**

In 2015 Rene hiding then Minister for Infrastructure claimed that a 35m contract with Metro provided ,with 3.5m for new buses’ ‘the biggest banf for your buck over light rail,.This was in the context of the Pricewaterhouse Copers report then questioningthe viability of light rail.This Report ,together with previous ACIL consultants reports into light rail,failed to undertake a market survey of potential users of light rail but relied on Metro passenger numbers supplied by DIER.The ACIL study also omitted the effect of future housing development along the line of rail

This omission has been highlighted by research from Professor James McIntosh of Curtin University.Thi9s shows that from an analysis of passenger rail in Pert hand Melbourne that proximity to rail sevices generally increases property values across residential and commercial sales of between 10-20%.Hobart architects Paul Johnson and Wesley Hindmarsh backed the light rail project in Hobart as they argued it would increase a string of high value communities and economic activity along the length of the rail corridor.

Following on the State Growth Transport Vision for 2018-2030 Rene Hidding in 2018 had come round from his earlier opposition and endorsed proposed infrastructure investment to include activating the northern suburbs rail corridor for passenger transport.

The rail corridor has been not been maintained by Tasrail since it discontinued rail freight usage. At Granton part of the track has been removed and at Macquarie Point terminus track has also been cut. The State Government has proposals for the rail link to be turned into busway but no action has yet been taken

In its current state the rail link would inolve a cost for upgrading with passing loops and stations( Toby Rowallan Mercury 24 January 2024).However the cost of restoring the rail link would be less than the busway alternative. Apart from providing the benefits outlined, light rail would also support the Transport Museum in Glenorchy and the revival of heritage rail including the Derwent Valley Railway

**Ferries**

The trial of a regular ferry service between Hobart wharf and Bellerive has concluded with the State government putting forward the River Derwent Service Master Plan.

A claim made by Minister Ferguson at the commencement of the trial that it was’ part of solving Hobart’s traffic problem’ (Mercury July 20 2023) needs justification. To begin with the users of the ferry were both cyclists and foot passengers. There seems no have been no prior investigation by State growth to indicate that the ferry would take car traffic. In addition, apart from providing disability access from the Bellerive wharf, there was no provision for infrastructure to deal with parked cars belonging to ferry passengers.

There are two key proposals offered for Derwent River services.

The first is from Mark Drury (‘Jetty project could build brighter future’ Talking Point Mercury 17 December 20230.He claims that ’we can do better than offer a bus stop on the water’. The State government should be spending money on a facility that would have greater benefits to the community advocating the Jetty Project as an ‘ideal synergy’ between a ferry stop that draws the community to the foreshore but unlike a ferry terminal only, becomes an income -generating potential, which helps pay for the infrastructure. The Jetty Project involves creating a ferry terminal as an over the water facility, fully accessible as a community asset that encourages community interaction and recreation which improves connection, social interaction. Such a terminal could be customised to meet each communities needs.

Bob Clifford offers an alternative view (Mercury December 28) where he sees the Derwent River becoming a ‘mini Sydney Harbour’ within the next decade. Any new terminals he believes should be kept simple and free of mod cons so that they can be simply and in greater number; ’glorified bus stops is all we need-just simple pontoons that the ferry comes alongside-if people want ro add to them, great’. The terminals didn’t need to resemble Brooke Street Pier and should be able accommodate two ferries at a time, including a large vessel with the capacity to carry 300-400 passengers. His design for the terminals was about 10X10 meters with a ferry either side and ‘a bit of a lid to keep the rain out’. He wants 16-18 terminals built with government focus on making the service attractive to tourists as ’the tourism market will probably end up paying for this’.

Of the two proposals Bob Clifford’s is preferred. The ferry terminals could be fabricated by Incat and floated into position at given access sites on the Derwent. The Drury proposal would take longer to provide and if the terminal itself was funded by the government it would be more costly than under the Clifford concept.

It doesn’t need to0 be either/or as Bob Clifford holds if the bus stop model is adopted then the Drury Street Pier model could follow.

 The River Derwent River Service Master plan lists the following a the best locations for ferry terminals: Hobart, Bellerive, Lindisfarne, Howrah, Wilkinsons Point, Sandy Bay, Regatta Point, Opposum Bay with an existing jetty could be added plus Old Beach, Granton and Bridgewater.

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(This organization does not necessarily endorse this submission)