



Greater Hobart Strategic Partnership State Budget 2020-2021 Submission - August 2020 Update Active and Public Transport Services

In formulating the Tasmanian State Budget 2020-21 in light of the COVID-19 pandemic, the Clarence, Hobart, Glenorchy and Kingborough councils request the Tasmanian Government takes action in four key areas:

1. Increase government spending on public transport services so Tasmania no longer has the lowest per capita expenditure in the nation, so we can encourage commuters back on to buses and we can achieve our aims of reducing congestion;
2. Expand cycleway infrastructure to establish an integrated commuter cycleway network across Greater Hobart including trials of pop up cycling lanes, to encourage a switch to active transport;
3. Establish a Public Transport Agency within State Government, to enable the development of coordinated and strategic active and public transport policy and provide support to Metro Tasmania and other contractors to increase the frequency, reliability, affordability and accessibility of buses; and
4. Clarify responsibility, and increase funding, for bus shelters to help encourage people back into public transport and ensure compliance with the *Disability Discrimination Act 1992* by the deadline of 2022.

INTRODUCTION

Hobart's population growth will continue to bring significant opportunities to our capital city. Over 220,000 people live in Greater Hobart and this is forecast to increase by another 20,000 people over the next 10 years. Around one million people visit Hobart and its surrounds each year as part of their holidays in Tasmania.

The growth will, however, place pressure on public transport services and infrastructure in our capital city and surrounding areas. The challenges are playing out right now in the traffic congestion being experienced at the entry points to the city.

As a thriving capital city we need an efficient, integrated public transport system that responds to the needs of passengers by providing frequent, reliable, affordable and

accessible services. Our collective challenge is to provide a public transport system that makes public transport a more attractive option than the private vehicle option.

This Submission is focussed on increasing commuter transport via bus, as this mode of public transport is considered the best solution to help reduce congestion across Greater Hobart in the short term.

As we progress into the COVID-19 recovery phase, this submission is also oriented to developing an integrated cycleway network across Greater Hobart which encourages a switch to safe active transport options for commuters.

Over the coming years the Hobart City Deal partners are taking a range of action to improve liveability and to promote the idea of a '30-minute city'. We aim to give residents the opportunity to live, work, study and access services and cultural experiences locally. We also aim to ensure businesses and tourists are globally connected through sustainable and efficient public transport and other infrastructure.

The Hobart City Deal and the *Greater Hobart Act 2019* set out a framework for strategic collaboration between the four Hobart metropolitan councils and the Australian and Tasmanian Governments. This is an unprecedented opportunity to work together on a place-basis, in local and state government, with providers and the community to establish a dynamic and sustainable public bus transport service and a network of integrated cycle ways.

To achieve our aims, and to build a sustainable public transport system that will support our productivity and quality of life, we need a strategic investment now.

The Hobart City Deal Implementation Plan provides a Greater Hobart Transport Vision that targets capital investment and smart technology solutions. The plan includes scoping of a common ticketing system and encouraging the uptake of public transport. This latter initiative is not detail specific. The provision of enhanced services is required to complement this investment in infrastructure, to ensure the Hobart City Deal is effective in establishing a reliable, sustainable and cost effective transport system.

THE CHALLENGES

Population growth is leading to an increase in traffic in the CBD. Prior to COVID-19 over 80% of commuter journeys in and around Hobart were by car and this is higher

than any other capital city in Australia.¹ As we progress through the COVID-19 recovery phase, commuters continue to experience congestion and delays at peak times in the morning and evening when travel to work combines with school traffic.

Prior to COVID-19, only 5% of journeys to work in Greater Hobart were by public transport.

COVID-19 has had a significant impact on public transport patronage, according to Metro Tas in July 2020, patronage on buses was still at 20-30% less than pre-COVID utilisation.

Public transport plays a vital role in promoting social equity by providing access to jobs, education, services and entertainment. Limited access to public transport can put many people at risk of social exclusion. Tasmanians most likely to experience transport disadvantage are young people, people on low incomes, people with disability, older Tasmanians, and people in rural and remote parts of the State.

While improvements are being made, more can be done to encourage people to shift away from driving, and back in to more environmentally sustainable and safe public transport options.

We acknowledge the Kingston Congestion Package under the Hobart City Deal, an investment of \$13M for park-and-ride facilities, new bus stops and additional express buses into Hobart. Within the \$7M complementary package of Council projects, it is proposed to fund the preparation and part implementation of a Kingborough Bike Plan – to encourage active transport within Kingborough.

We welcome these targeted capital investment and smart technology solutions to reduce congestion, however our success will be hampered without a strategic focus and additional specific investment in active and public transport in Tasmania.

Currently Tasmania's public transport funding is the lowest per capita in Australia and there is a lack of a coordinated, strategic approach to policy within State Government. This is a particular problem for our bus and active transport infrastructure.

There are two clear areas of concern. Firstly, it has become apparent that the Metro business model will not meet future needs as we seek to address congestion and promote greater use of public transport. We are aware that the Metro bus fleet is scaled to meet average demand across the day rather than peak demand. A change

¹ Minister for Infrastructure and Transport, Submission to Legislative Council Select Committee – Greater Traffic Congestion, 2019.

to a 'peak demand' business model would most likely require changes to the work rostering arrangements for bus drivers. We encourage Metro to undertake a review of its operations with a primary focus on achieving better public utilisation of public transport infrastructure through a 'peak demand' business model.

Secondly, there is currently no clear responsibility for providing and managing bus stops and shelters. This confusion needs to be resolved if we are to comply with the *Disability Discrimination Act 1992* (DDA) requirement that 100% of bus stops meet the national Disability Standards for Accessible Public Transport (DSAPT) by 2022.

A strategic, system-wide approach that places the needs of passengers at the centre of decision-making is necessary to achieve the joint targets of congestion reduction and increased public transport utilisation.

THE SOLUTIONS

We acknowledge and welcome the funding commitments by the Australian and Tasmanian Governments to reduce congestion and improve transport across Greater Hobart. There is more that can be done to manage our growth challenges, to sustain our productivity and protect our quality of life, if we invest strategically in public transport service delivery.

The transport sector is experiencing rapid innovation with advances in user interfaces and communications, electric vehicles and autonomous vehicles. We have an opportunity to grow our City in a sustainable way, taking up the opportunities that technology brings and ensuring that no one experiences transport disadvantage.

To create this future we need an increased investment in active and public transport and a strategic approach to policy. We also need to review and reset the Metro business model and clarify responsibility for bus shelters as a key piece of infrastructure to improve access and passenger experience.

1. Increased investment in public transport

A modal shift from private cars to public transport is an important response to the growth challenges around our City. It will reduce road congestion and the need for city parking as well as improving walkability and improving city amenity.

A key goal in the Hobart City Deal is encouraging the uptake of public transport as a regular and primary transport choice. Our aim is to reduce the number of single occupant drivers on the regular commute to work to 50% from the current starting

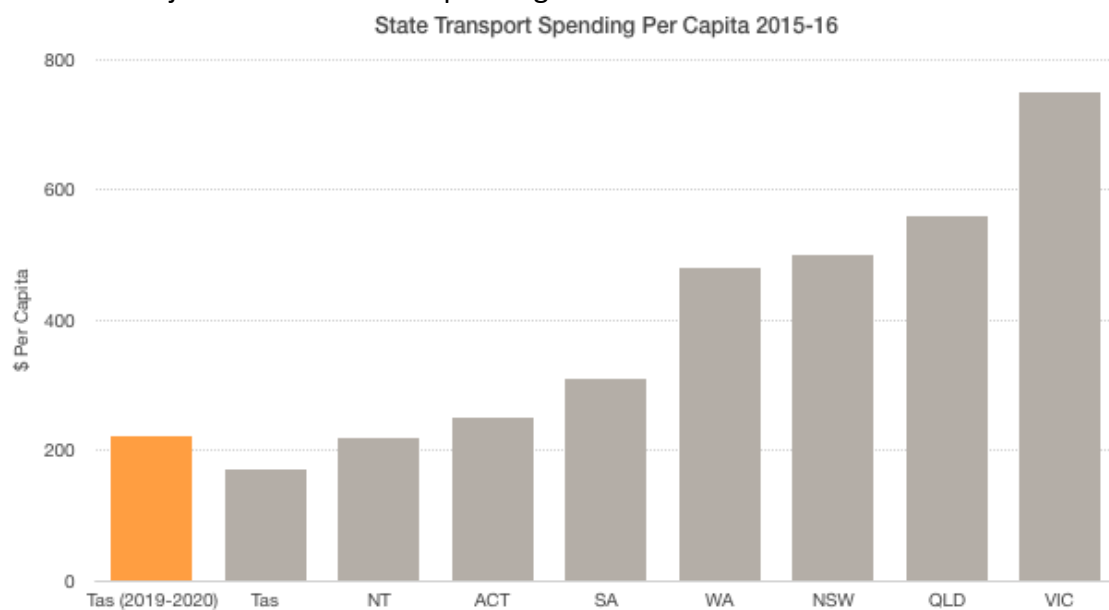
base of 62.6% across the four council areas. We also aim to increase the number of people using public transport on their regular commute to work by 10%, an increase from the current base of 6.4% across the four Hobart metropolitan council areas.

Research by the Tasmanian Council of Social Services (TasCOSS) shows that Tasmania’s passenger transport funding remains the lowest per capita in Australia.

While the total funding for passenger transport in Tasmania in 2019-20 has increased, it remains lower than other jurisdictions at \$221.36 per person per year.² The next lowest expenditure in 2019-20 is the Northern Territory at \$254.92 per capita.

Figures from 2015-16 show state transport spending per capita at approximately \$750 in Victoria, \$560 in Queensland, \$500 in New South Wales, \$480 in Western Australia, \$310 in South Australia, \$250 in the ACT and \$220 in the Northern Territory.³ This compares to just \$180 in Tasmania in 2015/16.

It should be noted that all other jurisdictions use passenger rail transport. The comparison between Tasmania and the Northern Territory is the most useful as they are the two jurisdictions without passenger rail.



Source: TasCOSS

The current level of per capita funding is inadequate for meeting the public transport needs of Tasmanians. It is unlikely to achieve the expansion and integration of

² TasCOSS internal policy brief, June 2019

³ TasCOSS, Budget Priorities Statement 2017-18

services that will be necessary to address our key growth challenges and overcome transport disadvantage. An increase in investment now will enable the barriers to accessing public transport to be addressed and establish a sustainable system that can accommodate future growth and changes in technology.

From discussions to-date, it is evident that significant additional public investment is required to assist Metro Tasmania, and other contracted providers, provide a more frequent, reliable, affordable and accessible public bus transport service. The provision of this service is in line with the needs and expectations of the community.

REQUEST: In order to put Tasmania’s investment closer to all other jurisdictions we recommend a budget increase for public transport services so that Tasmania is spending a minimum of \$300 per capita. This commitment would be a starting point for addressing the joint targets of reducing congestion and increasing the use of public transport established within the Hobart City Deal Implementation Plan.

A key initiative for the increased funding is the development and delivery of a peak demand based business model for Metro. It is also vital that the funding deliver the initiatives outlined below.

2. Expand cycleway infrastructure

In the COVID-19 recovery context a unique opportunity exists to expand cycleway infrastructure to create an integrated commuter cycleway network across Greater Hobart.

The concept of developing a “core arterial bicycle network to create urban connectivity”⁴ in Greater Hobart is not new. Sections of the network exist as the Greater Hobart Councils are continually investing in cycleway infrastructure, but in this COVID-19 recovery context we see an even greater impetus to create interconnected routes comprising of bike lanes and multi-user paths, for safer commuting.

The Hobart Regional Arterial Bicycle Network Plan (2009) identifies a desired logical network of arterial bike routes across the Greater Hobart area.⁵

An integrated cycling network in Greater Hobart could maximise the use of highway corridors to fill in the missing links in a commuter cycleway network. For example, upgrading the Tasman Bridge with a dedicated cycleway could link with a future ferry transport hub to promote Eastern access into the rest of Greater Hobart.

⁴ Hobart Regional Arterial Bicycle Network Plan 2009

⁵ http://www.cyclingsouth.org/index.php/component/k2/item/86-bike_plan.

As economies open up post COVID-19, jurisdictions across Australia and the rest of the world are using this time to trial pop up cycling lanes to improve cycling infrastructure and to encourage a behaviour change switch to active transport.

For example, the NSW Government and Sydney City Council have recently announced investments in temporary and pop up measures to provide safe route options for commuters and pedestrians ⁶ Similarly, the City of Melbourne is proposing to fast-track the delivery of 40 kilometres of bike lanes on key routes to help people travel safely and support city businesses to recover from the COVID-19 pandemic.⁷ Auckland is building new permanent cycling infrastructure in 2020-21 which will reallocate space to active and sustainable modes of transport only.⁸

Hobart City Council is well positioned to trial a State funded pop up approach to cycle way infrastructure, with planning currently underway for a formal trial of new cycling lanes in in the Hobart CBD. An option for a 'pop-up' cycle lane is a proposal to repurpose the 3rd lane in Campbell Street in the CBD as an interim measure prior to the commencement of the trial arrangement. Hobart City Council is also keen to explore activation pop up opportunities on road ways to provide other road users and the community an example of sustainable travel movements in locations throughout the city.

We see the opportunities to increase local cycling trips across all of Greater Hobart. With significant experience and expertise in delivering cycling infrastructure across our municipalities, we are keen to partner with State Government under the Hobart City Deal banner, to align our cycling infrastructure in a networked and coordinated approach across the whole of Greater Hobart.

REQUEST: In order to establish cycling as an integral part of the overall transport network for the region, we seek a funding commitment to establish an integrated cycle way network and a trial of pop up commuter bike paths across Greater Hobart.

In partnership with State Government we also seek to plan together for a networked cycle way implementation strategy across Greater Hobart.

⁶ <https://www.transport.nsw.gov.au/news-and-events/media-releases/new-pop-up-cycleways-to-help-us-get-back-to-work-and-school>

⁷ <https://www.melbourne.vic.gov.au/news-and-media/pages/fast-tracking-40-kilometres-of-new-bike-lanes-in-melbourne.aspx>

⁸ https://www.c40knowledgehub.org/s/article/Prioritising-cyclists-and-pedestrians-for-a-safer-stronger-recovery?language=en_US

3. Strategic public transport policy through a State Transport Agency

Management of transport services cuts across state government departments and levels of government, including the Department of Education (school buses) and the Department of Communities (not-for-profit transport). There are a range of documents and reports that provide guidance on public transport policy and strategy including the Transport Access Strategy, Tasmanian Urban Passenger Transport Framework, the RACT 30-year Transport Vision, the City of Hobart Transport Vision as well as the Hobart City Deal Greater Hobart Transport Vision. There is, however a lack of a coordinated vision promoting active transport as an alternative transport solution.

There is no overarching active and passenger transport strategy or framework for the State, neither is there a single senior official or agency with system-wide responsibility for land use planning and active and public transport planning. This lack of strategic approach and lack of integrated decision-making is hampering responses to our complex growth challenges.

The collaborative frameworks established through the Hobart City Deal and the *Greater Hobart Act 2019* provide a significant opportunity to address these challenges.

The Greater Hobart Councils are making collective decisions to ensure our City is accessible. Creating incentives for using public transport by improving services and infrastructure is integral to achieving this. We are seeking to achieve the objectives of the *Greater Hobart Act* by facilitating the efficient flow of transport in the Greater Hobart area. This includes encouraging, promoting and providing for urban renewal, and affordable housing, that enhance amenity, liveability, ease of access to places and facilities and the provision of passenger transport services that meet the needs of commuters.

Our work will have a greater chance of success if it were underpinned by a coordinated, state-wide strategic approach to active and public transport policy, and by dedicated central resources within State Government. This could be in the form of a Public Transport Authority. It is important that the approach be whole-of-government and cross-sectoral, based on collaboration and partnership with the needs of commuters at the centre of decision-making. Any future system needs to adopt a culture of continuous improvement in the provision of frequent, reliable, affordable and accessible services.

Within the scope of the single transport authority suggested above, a coordinated approach to business planning for public transport services could occur. This would

assist to achieve the 'peak demand' model discussed above and facilitate any consequential changes (such as work arrangements).

REQUEST: We suggest that a senior official position with Deputy Secretary status within State Government be tasked with coordinating the integration of active and public transport policy.

Other jurisdictions place this position within a Public Transport Agency with dedicated resources within State Government, to enable the development of a coordinated strategic public transport policy and active transport solutions.

4. Clear responsibility for, and investment in, bus infrastructure (shelters)

One important way of reducing traffic congestion and encouraging more people onto public bus transport is through adequate infrastructure at bus stops. Passengers benefit from appropriate footpaths and lighting, shelter and seating and connectivity through free wifi and real time display screens. State investment in bus shelters would be indicative of a new paradigm based on passenger convenience and comfort.

There are 3500 bus stops in Greater Hobart, and they are used by a range of private operators as well as Metro Tasmania. Decisions on providing seats and shelters are determined by a range of criteria including passenger boarding numbers, local government planning regulations, the ability to fund installation, and compliance with the Disability Standards for Accessible Public Transport (DSAPT).

By 2022, 100% of bus stops must comply with the DSAPT by meeting standards in relation to minimum infrastructure for footpaths, shelter, lighting and information.

Tasmania's ability to provide this vital infrastructure and meet the 2022 deadline is currently being hampered by the lack of clear responsibility for the funding and maintenance of bus shelters in Tasmania. Councils do not have responsibility to provide public transport infrastructure, and they do not have budget allocations for bus shelters. It is our understanding that Metro Tasmania is not currently funded as part of its contract with the State Government, to maintain, upgrade or extend bus stops. Neither has the State Government taken responsibility for bus infrastructure.

As a result, the approach to bus stops and shelters is uncoordinated and ad hoc. It is particularly stressful for residents seeking action on bus stops and shelters to be redirected between these stakeholders.

Tasmania is not alone in this confusion. Issues of ownership, funding responsibility and compliance for bus stops are common challenges faced by local and state governments across the country.

The Australian Human Rights Commission acknowledges that in many parts of Australia there is continuing debate about who is responsible for the obligations under the DSAPT: “In many parts of Australia responsibility clearly rests with one body while in other areas partnership arrangements exist, including between local and state governments.”⁹

Bus shelters are strategic assets that bring opportunities for commercialisation and enhanced resident and visitor experiences. In our submission to the Legislative Council Select Committee on Greater Hobart Traffic Congestion, the Mayors of Greater Hobart identified bus infrastructure upgrades as a priority.¹⁰

The priority of providing new bus shelters across Greater Hobart includes smart technology allowing for real time information about upcoming bus location, including delays and accessibility.

As part of being a smart city, Hobart also has an opportunity to create a digital bus shelter backbone that helps connect Greater Hobart’s services and precincts. The digital bus shelter services could include:

- Digital wayfinding to complement traditional signage
- Public WiFi
- Full LoRA Network (long range, low power)
- CCTV infrastructure upgrades
- Innovation precinct alliance projects
- Public and environmental planning analytics
- Tourism and promotion

An investment in a digital bus shelter backbone for Greater Hobart would help increase the use of public transport, reduce traffic congestion, and enhance public safety. It would also help create a common user experience and promote digital and social equality.

⁹ Australian Human Rights Commission, Guidelines for promoting compliance of bus stops with the DSAPT
<https://www.humanrights.gov.au/our-work/disability-rights/publications/guideline-promoting-compliance-bus-stops-disability>

¹⁰ Lord Mayor of Hobart, Mayor of Glenorchy and Mayor of Kingborough, Submission to Legislative Council Select Committee on Greater Hobart Traffic Congestion, 2019

The costs for fabrication of small shelters are estimated at \$11,000 each and installation is \$6500 each. There are 1760 nodes in Metro Southern Network including 546 bus stops within the City of Hobart and 73 bus shelters. Of these, 13 in the Hobart CBD are owned by City of Hobart and one is owned by the Department of Education.

Taking up the opportunities of technology is part of the City of Hobart's Connected Hobart Smart City Action Plan. The Plan outlines initiatives for tackling mobility-congestion problems and reducing sole reliance on private vehicles and carbon fuels.

REQUEST: Dedicated resources, and increased funding, within State Government to coordinate the management and maintenance of bus stops and shelters as key transport infrastructure to ensure compliance with the requirements of the Disability Discrimination Act by 2022.

CONCLUSION

An efficient, integrated active and public transport network is a feature of capital cities. Hobart's population is growing and the need for efficient modes of travel will also grow. If we are to meet the demands of the future we need to take a strategic approach to the provision of integrated cycle ways and public transport services now.

Tasmania's per capita spending on active and public transport needs to be raised. This investment can address the barriers to access and improve infrastructure like bus shelters. All Tasmanians, and the visitors who return to our State, will benefit from a strategic investment in our public transport system.



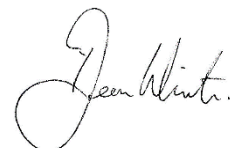
Lord Mayor of Hobart
Cr Anna Reynolds



Mayor of Clarence
Ald Doug Chipman



Mayor of Glenorchy
Ald Kristie Johnston



Mayor of Kingborough
Cr Dean Winter