

The Secretary
Parliamentary Standing Committee on Public Works
PARLIAMENT HOUSE HOBART 7000

Dear Mr Hennessy,

The Bridgewater Bridge design before you may not be the best solution for traffic which wishes to serve to or from the north. The design is totally reliant on the Northern Outlet, constructed in 1975 as one of many results of the Tasman Bridge collapse. The Northern Outlet and resultant feed into the Brooker Highway are already nearing full capacity and with urban sprawl now including New Norfolk, with a further one thousand home development promoted last month, these highways should not be expected to be the general corridor for the north. This new bridge will only provide a further three kilometres at 80 kilometres per hour from Brighton interchange to the Granton Hill.

If we accept that 90% of the traffic to use the bridge emanates from or wishes to go to north of Bridgewater, then it should be diverted along the Eastern Shore gaining the option of using either the under utilised Bowen Bridge (opened 1977) and/or proceeding on to Cambridge which is fast becoming an industrial hub and certainly the direct approach for access to Tasmania's international freight and passenger airport from anywhere north of Bridgewater.

The better solution would be to develop the Back Tea Tree Road from its Brighton interchange off-ramp to follow relatively flat farming land to its junction with Grasstree Road. At that point, traffic for the northern suburbs could access the Bowen Bridge via a cut-and-fill highway through Grasstree Hill with links to Jordan Hill Road, and the East Derwent Highway which I note has been undergoing extensive upgrades.

Cambridge industrial, Hobart International Airport, and all southern beaches including South Arm peninsula, would enjoy freeway access through the farmland corridor which would commence at the Eastern Outlet. I note already a newly opened approach to Cambridge from north-east of the township has a link to the Eastern Outlet.

Basically, there would be a new highway from the Bridgewater interchange to Cambridge with an off-ramp for the new Grasstree Hill link to the Bowen Bridge whereby the bridge construction funding would be re-directed to re-directing traffic to where it wants to go and relieves the already near-capacity northern outlets. In 2019 "Infrastructure Australia raised concern that the projects huge cost would outweigh the benefits."

This approach with fit-for-purpose highways on the Eastern Shore is a critical path to the effective implementation for access to the north and providing much needed traffic options for south-east Tasmania's biggest residential growth area being the southern beaches, Sorell and Brighton municipalities, Coal River Valley, and New Norfolk. The western shore would now have three options for travel to the north. The demographics have changed since Sen. Eric Abetz obtained the first Bridgewater Bridge funding which was deemed as a critical corridor to Launceston, but now these highways with links to existing infrastructure may be better value as southern Tasmania plans and builds for its contribution to a population target of 650,000 by 2050.

With 90% of traffic removed from the existing Bridgewater Bridge its life may be extended for a simpler structure possibly floated into place. It is better value for less money as most of the

interchanges already exist and mostly level accessible farm topography is quicker to construct and will open more quality residential options as Tasmania continues its population growth to 650,000. The current Bridgewater Bridge proposal provides none of these benefits.

Yours Sincerely,

Mr Chris Merridew

9 August 2021