

Government Administration Committee of the

Legislative Council

- Integrated Public Transport -

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Integrated Public Transport

Overview:

1. All transport should be considered in the context of declining oil production and the need to set priorities for the use of fuel stocks by different modes of transport, and the most efficient use of the resource within any transport mode. This requires co-ordination.
2. Therefore it is advisable for the government to transfer transport department resources to a new Transport Authority to co-ordinate and integrate all traffic movements, both freight and passengers. This is not about nationalisation, but alliance building. Competition is out. It is too inefficient. Market determinism should not be used as a substitute for sensible social policy.
3. It follows then the use of private vehicles in built up areas and main thoroughfares needs to be severely restricted, by legislation rather than taxation, to remove congestion, make big savings on fuel use, greatly curtail pollution and road rage, radically improve public amenity and allow the free flow of alternative modes of transport.
4. Cars are THE problem. Legislation is needed to give priority to public transport by compulsory car pooling during peak times. Motoring is a privilege, not a right, but motorists won't willingly give up privileges if they perceive others will take advantage of them. Therefore government needs to provide a legislative structure to ensure compliance by all for the greater good of all. Governments should give a lead by banning Targa and all other motor sports. Sooner or later fuel rationing will have to be introduced, so people need to be prepared for it.

5. Plans for integration can be staged. Rather than having a huge capital outlay up-front, sometimes relatively simple and cheap changes can make a big difference, e.g. removing kerb-side parking to allow for a bus clearway, or closing off some streets to prevent short-cutting by motorists and to give priority to pedestrian flow.

6. Hobart railyards should be a major part of any transport plans. This opportunity should not be allowed to be hijacked by politicians for the sake of their billion-dollar fantasies and jobs for their mates in the building industry. It should not become an elitist enclave.

7. Given the need to reduce pollution and make transport more energy-efficient with declining oil supplies, airlines are extremely vulnerable. Tasmania should be preparing for the demise of airlines particularly across the Strait to Melbourne. Consideration needs to be given to a new generation of ferries carrying only passengers, no vehicles at all, re-routing the inter-city rail line to provide a fast connection to the ferries, and establishing a sea link to New Zealand for passengers, operating out of Hobart.

8. An integrated public transport network will benefit both locals and visitors. Considering the number of road accidents involving visitors and the vulnerability of car hire firms to fuel limitations, more public transport will be needed in the near future. Apart from main-line buses, a rural mail bus network should be created to connect rural localities.

9. Don't be put off by government allegations of "non-viability". Look at the total costs including the externalisation of road-building expenses and the social consequences of wrong priorities. Forget "the Economy". It's a fraud. What Tasmania is facing is the

need to totally restructure our transport system for both freight and passengers and we are already at a disadvantage because of not decades but a century of neglect and unworkable compromises.

10. The best laid plans put forward by industry and customers are usually screwed up by politicians with their short-sighted focus on re-election, narrow-minded attitude to infrastructure, saving money for budget sweeteners (bribe), looking after mates, and bowing to the selfish motoring lobby. There's no future in effective transport management without a comprehensive change of mentality in elected decision-makers. They usually make things worse. That's why there needs to be an independent Transport Authority.

Infrastructure:

Sometimes you have to make the best of a bad job because the alternative is too expensive and too disruptive and not justified by the small population base, although that didn't stop the government going ahead with both Kingston and Brighton by-passes - great expense for little real benefit. Now they want a big new bridge to replace the Bridgewater causeway. Is this real transport infrastructure for the post-petroleum society, or simply delusions of grandeur?

One of the worst pieces of infrastructure is the Tannan Bridge. It was not designed to provide the option of train or tram, nor bikes and pedestrians. The five lanes are so narrow that there is no room for error. Morning peak sees three streams of traffic from north, south and east converging on the bridge, causing congestion, while there is no easy access for pedestrians or cyclists to negotiate the maze of roads around the approaches.

While the state government and the Hobart City Council fail to prevent private motorists driving into the city at this time the situation will continue to deteriorate. Therefore I suggest that the bridge be returned to four lanes, two each way and no tidal flow, and that no single-person cars be allowed over the bridge during peak times.

More buses could be put on but how can Metro take the risk of putting on more services if there's no guarantee that people will use them? It's no good suggesting a congestion tax because some people would still be prepared to pay it for the privilege of driving door to door, and governments have a vested interest in maintaining a tax even if it doesn't produce an acceptable social result.

Motorists will not willingly give up their privileges. There needs to be actual physical prevention. Cars with a single occupant have to be turned back. However, the problem for pedestrians and cyclists

remains. Therefore, I suggest that a free ferry be run from Montagu Bay to the Powder Jetty for cyclists and those on foot.

The Tasman Bridge is the classic example of the total disregard for everyone except motorists and the state of government decision-making.

The northern and southern approaches to Hobart also need car control but it will be more difficult to police these approaches because of access to side streets. Temporary road blocks could be put up in strategic places to prevent this.

The point to be made here is that congestion is caused by private motorists, and their selfishness prevents public transport from operating effectively. There is not even any enlightened self-interest at work here because peak time traffic with all its stopping, starting and idling is extremely inefficient in the use of fuel and hugely polluting, which affects the health of those walking to the city, but of course ^{this} is one of those externalised costs. Therefore I suggest that compulsory car pooling (minimum of four to a car) be introduced as soon as possible.

Parents taking their children to school by car, and picking them up again in the afternoon, is another source of congestion as well as being a significant safety issue at the school entrance. Again, parents won't stop this until they are made to. There are plenty of buses and "walking buses" can also be used. Therefore, I suggest that parents are made to use buses or walk their children to school, while high school students should be old enough to go by themselves. This means buses only zones for a hundred metres either side of a school.

With private traffic greatly reduced, exclusive bus lanes in clear-ways can be marked out, with bus stops moved out to the lane if appropriate, so that buses don't have to move in and out of the traffic flow. This will improve travel times. At the moment, even though buses have right of way to get into traffic, motorists fail to give it.

Elizabeth Street/Main Road is a prime candidate for a perman-

ent clearway and bus lanes, with the removal of car parking and access to the main shopping blocks of Moornah and North Hobart. The Hobart City Council has a submission from me on North Hobart precinct as well as on Sandy Bay Road, and a comprehensive plan for traffic management on the waterfront and the inner-city area. No feedback from them on anything. Macquarie and Sarsay Streets could also become clearways with bus lanes. This is not a cost issue but a political one. Therefore, I suggest that one of the roles of the proposed Transport Authority would be to ferret out all the ideas put to councils and governments and publicise them for public discussion. Some will be incompatible of course, but the point is to encourage real public involvement and not this farcical "public consultation".

Another point of contention is the bus mall outside the GPO. The western side of the street is the main pedestrian thoroughfare from the Elizabeth Street Mall to Franklin Square and conflicts with people waiting for buses. This can be resolved by removing the bus stops and street furniture to Collins Street and making the bus mall one way, out to Macquarie. It involves changes to traffic flows in Collins Street and removal of cars and car parking. This too has been suggested to the Hobart City Council as well as to Metro. Therefore I suggest that to be followed up too.

Lawncroft has the Cornwall Square bus interchange but Hobart has nothing. Something similar could be done with Melville Street car park. Again, this has been suggested, but there's no indication the HCC has even considered the possibility.

With rail, the situation is bad but can still be remedied. Governments have a history of choosing not just between good and bad options but between any better ones and the worst possible one, and taking the worst. The whole history of rail in Tasmania is blunder upon blunder. One bad decision can cause a cascade of bad decisions which are usually political rather than technical.

In one generation, governments have taken off the inter-city pass-

enger services, closed down the suburban commuter services, removed the old stations, put a new road into Darcy Street, which prevented the old stations being re-used, ran down line maintenance, sold the whole system for a song to see the branch lines closed down and the second suburban line ripped up, even though the new cyclingway has proven popular. Next they'll totally stuff up the railyards redevelopment, rip up the remaining track to Brighton and close off the rail option permanently. This goes beyond party politics. This is sheer lunacy. Why aren't these people committed - to an asylum?

Given that rail has more options for motive power, can be more energy-efficient than road (and less polluting) and will reduce the congestion on the main North/South highway, with declining petroleum availability the rail option needs to be given priority, with funding directed away from road to rail.

Therefore, I suggest that the railyards should be kept, in part at least, for passenger and light freight services, as well as the commercial port operation, with platforms, sidings and sheds. This would support a northern suburbs express service, the inter-city and ferry service, and a miscellaneous light freight service to Launceston and Devonport. A shuttle bus could connect with the Bus Mall and the proposed transit centre in Melville Street.

Some of this remedial money should be used to survey the rail crossings between Hobart and Brighton with a view to improving safety by closing some, replacing them with bridges or tunnels for pedestrians, re-routing traffic to other crossings, and assessing others for grade separation. I suggest this start ASAP.

Also, funding should be made available for an immediate start on surveying a new north-south line suitable for a fast passenger service to Launceston and the Bass Strait ferry. This line could be later electrified.

Branch lines need to be upgraded and re-opened for passenger traffic. The line to Maydena for example connects with Mount Field national park, the entrance to the World Heritage Area and Forestry Tasmania's railtrack.

rides. It could also be an entrance/exit to the proposed Wellington Range walk. The train ride itself would be an attraction, while bulk travel could open up opportunities for tourist accommodation in the area. I suggest that Tourism Tasmania needs to give serious consideration to this.

The northern suburbs passenger railway could be re-instated initially with diesel railcars (second-hand) running express services between Glenorchy and Hobart during peak times, leaving buses to pick up in between. A passing loop could be installed at the old New Town station site by relocating the plant nursery and diverting the bikeway. The line could be built up from there with the minimal capital outlay. It could even be run by Tasrail and could be started almost immediately.

Ferries too have a role but not here, there and everywhere, as according to some optimists. Ferries are best when connecting places that would otherwise have a long circuitous route, as at Oporrum Bay and Bruny Island. A bus from Adventure Bay could connect with a ferry from Denne's Point, which would then pick up at South Arm and continue to Hobart.

I don't see the benefit of a ferry to Glenorchy because that would mean a shuttle bus from Wilton's Point to the shopping centre across a major highway and a railway line. It would be quicker and more direct by railcar. I don't see any point in running ferries parallel to existing bus or rail routes unless it was express, as from Bridgewater to Hobart for example. People still have to get to ferry terminals so they might as well catch a bus direct to town. However there could be opportunities for ferries to connect with Dover via Allonah on Bruny Island or even to connect with the Tada Bay railway (which I suggested decades ago). An expanded rail network, overnight accommodation and a new wharf at Deep Hole could prove attractive especially with Hastings Cove and the thermal springs nearby. I suggest Tourism Tasmania look into this as well.

With declining fuel supplies it would not be a good idea to bring any kind of road vehicle across the Straits, therefore the next generation of Bass Strait ferries should be low profile, sail assisted, for passengers only, no vehicles. Trains would meet the ferries to bring people to Launceston and Hobart, while a weekly ferry from Hobart to Melbourne could then make it a round trip, with Tasmania's East Coast done in daylight. This too has been suggested, to the TT line.

Conclusion:

We don't need to spend hundreds of millions on infrastructure. It now, the problems are not technological but sociological. It's about setting priorities for a post-petroleum society, and that means firstly and most importantly removing cars from the roads wherever they are causing problems. This one step will free up infrastructure for public transport (and walking) more than anything else. Hobart is excessively "car-friendly" and that's destroying the social amenity of not just the capital city and suburbs but rural areas as well.

Human settlement is tied up with modes of transport. Both suburban and rural sprawl are the result of the dominance of the car. We need to rebuild not just public transport but settlements. One other initiative that I suggest is to make public transport a tax-free zone - no g.o.t., no carbon tax, but these are federal issues.

Aims of a Transport Authority:-

- to co-ordinate various transport bodies (Inshail, TT line, metro, ferries, rural buses, mail)
- to integrate services, interchanges, fares, avoid duplication and create a web
- to prioritise public transport through infrastructure changes, busways, removing cars
- to promote appropriate technologies and fuels, and ensure strategic reserves of fuel
- to consult with local government and the public
- to make recommendations to Cabinet for legislative changes
- to set up a fund for purchase of transport vehicles
- to identify and promote resettlement nodes + transport services for them.

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