

From: [REDACTED]
To: [Public Works](#)
Subject: Submission to PWC regarding Northern Access Road to Macquarie Point
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Hobart Northern Suburbs Rail Action Group
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The Secretary
Public Works Committee

Parliament of Tasmania
Parliament House

Hobart TAS 7000

The Hobart Northern Suburbs Rail Action Group (HNSRAG) categorically rejects the Northern Access Road as it is currently planned.

The publicly-available plan shows that the road will completely destroy the railway line and railway corridor entry into Macquarie Point and Hobart. This will prevent any future rail access to the planned stadium or into Hobart, and both are vital for Hobart's future.

The Transport Mode Study conducted by PwC on behalf of the State Government, completed in 2020, showed clearly that rail has the potential to deliver four times more jobs and development than a busway. The report also erroneously assumed an unnecessary wider track gauge which increased the likely cost of rail, but even so, the cost of rail was only 23% more than that of a busway. For the busway to be even *equal* to rail, it would need to cost just one quarter that of rail!

Rail is also a major attractor for public transport – in Canberra, 43% of the users of its new light rail line are new to public transport. Canberra obviously had bus services before the rail was built.

In cities around Australia, new rail lines have been built on the basis that they are by far the best way to encourage new higher-density housing development, thus curbing expensive and congestion-inducing urban sprawl, and easing existing congestion. This has happened despite the very high costs that most of these cities have had to pay. Happily, Hobart does not have that issue because we have an existing railway line that merely needs upgrading to be made suitable for use. The only other place this happened in Australia was in Sydney for the first light rail line which, coincidentally, made use of an inactive former freight railway line. This light rail connection from Rozelle to Sydney Central cost comparatively little and has been very successful.

To contemplate ignoring these advantages and the potential that rail has is short-sighted and foolhardy in the extreme. Whilst the Government's Hobart Rapid Bus Transit plan has regrettably not yet been made public, thus the specific details of the plan are unknown, there is no situation in which the destruction of the railway corridor is warranted.

For the record, in 2016 the State Government had pledged to 'preserve the rail corridor,' yet this plan clearly breaks that pledge to the people of Tasmania.

HNSRAG supports the idea of rapid bus transit to *other* parts of Hobart's suburbs, like the Eastern Shore and Kingston areas, as well as improving bus services overall. However, the destruction of the railway is completely unjustified, and whatever the parameters of the Government's busway plan are, it is certain that the busway will not be able to achieve anything comparable to rail.

Rail is over seven times more energy efficient, including when compared to electric buses. Electric trains are clearly far more environmentally friendly than diesel or hydrogen buses. Trains can carry far more people per trip than even a large articulated bus. This also means that far less

drivers are required to move far more people. This will be critical for the stadium, where it is clear from planning documents that the buses required to move even a fraction of those attending a 'sold-out' event will vastly exceed the current capacity of our bus system. The planned 'Bus Rapid Transit' (BRT) is extremely unlikely to add sufficient capacity, as even with a large number of big articulated buses, the BRT will still be mostly restricted to the normal road network, and thus constrained by traffic congestion.

Finally, the destruction of the railway will prevent heritage trains from operating into Hobart on Sundays or for special events.

Hobart reportedly has the fourth worst congestion in Australia, despite being only the thirteenth largest city. This can only be adequately addressed by introducing a commuter rail service. Improving other public transport systems such as buses and ferries is required, but only rail can make a qualitative and quantitative difference.

Thus, destroying the railway corridor for an ill-considered and unwanted busway must be rejected. Even if the busway itself is not using this part of the corridor (near the Domain and Macquarie Point), the railway line must be retained. If the State Government is unwilling to see sense, the railway should still be kept so that a future government has the opportunity to restore rail services as easily as possible.

There is definitely space in the area discussed for the railway corridor to be retained and road access for buses and service vehicles to Macquarie Point and the wharf area to be possible. It seems from our perspective that the intention of the planners was to prevent or at least make much more difficult, any future use of the railway line. We condemn this possibly deliberate sabotage of a vital infrastructure asset and urge that this government alter its plans accordingly.

Hobart's future, and the future success of the planned stadium, depend upon it.

Sincerely,

On behalf of the Hobart Northern Suburbs Rail Action Group
Toby Rowallan
President

