

Brett Spaulding



The Secretary
Public Works Committee

Parliament of Tasmania
Parliament House
Hobart TAS 7000

I am writing to express my concern regarding the proposed construction of the Northern Access Road to the Macquarie Point precinct as it is currently planned.

Of most concern is that the current plan shows the new road will completely occupy the rail corridor from the Domain Slipway access road through to the Macquarie Point site, blocking any connection from the existing rail corridor. This will preclude the possible future introduction of light-rail from the Northern Suburbs through to the new Stadium and onward to the Hobart CBD.

Transportation studies have repeatedly shown that rail transport, including light-rail, is superior to bus-based modes of transportation not only in environmental aspects of their operation but in its ability to attract investment and development along the transport corridor. Indeed, this government's own Transport Mode Study conducted by PwC in 2020 found that Light-rail was estimated to generate over four times the number of new dwelling completion and four times the number of jobs within ten years of the transport mode beginning operation.

Those are the type of investment returns that would have any other government clambering to seek investment partners and developing plans to capitalise on the wonderful asset the existing rail corridor represents. Instead, the current proposal risks cutting off this opportunity, condemning the city's transport development along with the stadium proposal to a sub-standard future of increasing congestion and subdued investment.

And it's not just Hobart's Northern Suburbs that will miss out. The current Tasman Bridge is within 40 years of its 100-year design life and calls are already being made to begin the design of a replacement crossing. It is conceivable that any new design will incorporate the introduction of a light-rail line from the Hobart CBD across to the Eastern Shore and on to the Hobart Airport. Such a line would likely join the existing corridor in the section between the Domain Slipway and the Tasman Bridge, but if the corridor has been severed from the Macquarie Point present and Hobart CDB by a new access road then this route would be lost.

There is also an opportunity to connect the existing rail corridor to the tourist precinct around Macquarie Wharf and the Hobart Waterfront that would be lost if the new access road goes ahead in its current form. The Tasmanian Transport Museum Society (TTMS) at Glenorchy has been extremely successful in restoring the existing railway line from Glenorchy to Berriedale, with plans to continue the reintroduction of tourism rail services along its lease to Granton. There is a wonderful opportunity to also extend such operations along the existing rail lines south of Glenorchy towards Macquarie Point, with the possibility of extending the line to the vicinity of the cruise ship terminal at Macquarie Wharf 2. This could be a great tourism drawcard, not only offering the opportunity of heritage rail trips, but also partnering with possible activities at destinations along the line such as the Botanical Gardens, the TTMS site at Glenorchy, MONA, Cadbury's or other attractions yet to be identified. To block all these possibilities with a road that has the opportunity for alternative alignments would seem extremely short-sighted.

The cost of any proposal needs to not only weigh up the costs and benefits of what it is trying to achieve but also the opportunity costs of precluding other alternative uses of the site. The section of the rail corridor set to be occupied by the proposed Northern Access Road is key in that it represents a vital link from the transport corridor to the north through a site that is highly constrained by the Derwent River and former HMAS Huon development on one side and the Hobart Cenotaph and Regatta Ground on the other. The nature of the terrain is such that the gradients and existing infrastructure are prohibitive for any alternative alignment of any future rail-based transportation proposal and I urge the Committee to reject the Northern Access Road proposal in its current form and suggest a solution that enables the possible future activation of a rail-based transport option to be preserved.

I believe the future liveability of the Hobart as a city and the success of the new Macquarie Point Stadium depend on it.

Yours faithfully,

Brett Spaulding