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Committee Secretary
Legislative Council
Parliament House

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Legislative Council Inquiry into Integrated Transport Options for Southern Tasmania

It is with pleasure that I present this submission to the Legislative Council Inquiry on behalf of University of Tasmania Environment Collective (EC) members to lend support to increased development of an integrated public transport network for Southern Tasmania.

An integrated public transport system

An effective, integrated public transport systems fulfils a significant role in the liveability of any city, engaging and fostering communities. Reducing car dependency in favour of sustainable transport can deliver a wide range of notable improved economic, social and environmental outcomes. A few of which I will mention here in brief.

Firstly, an efficient public transport system, that integrates residential and employment hubs, plays an important role in moving skills, labour and knowledge within and between markets, stimulating productivity¹. Public transport corridors have shown to create 'activity centres' that encourage and foster transit orientated development, and in turn through providing easy access to public transport increase adjacent property values. In comparison, maintaining a car dependent culture proves to be an ongoing expensive endeavour that requires unsustainable growing government investment, with little beneficial economical outcome. As depicted in the present Tasmanian Budget the State Government is currently pouring excess of \$250 million dollars annually in upgrades alone². The EC submit that a transition from road transportation as the sole motive of infrastructure projects to sustainable forms of transportation would greatly alleviate growing transport costs, and through runoff effects provide greater economical outcomes.

¹ Tourism and Transport Forum Position Paper (2010), *The Benefits of Public Transport*, Sydney

² Government of Tasmania (2012), *Tasmanian Budget 2012-2013, Southern Region*, Hobart

Furthermore, transport is a key factor in social inclusion: connecting communities to employment opportunities, education, healthcare and social activities. An efficient public transport network provides a fast and cheap transport option, that facilitates social inclusion to low income earners, the elderly, people with a disability and the unemployed. Improving access to public transport for these groups is essential to social equality. With an increasing elderly population, the shift towards sustainable transport is paramount to decrease already existing high levels of transport disadvantage and social exclusion³. Additionally, an effective sustainable transport system through either walking or riding to transport hubs further supports healthy activity, whilst removing stress associated with driving a private vehicle through congested traffic⁴.

Finally, an efficient public transport system fulfils a significant role in reducing carbon emissions. High levels of private transport dependency contribute to the growing figure of 22% of state wide emissions, the second largest source of emissions⁵. Australia's high level of car dependency is a leading factor in Australian cities being ranked as the most polluted in the developed world⁶. By removing cars from the streets, public transport noticeably reduces air pollution which in turn helps preserve Tasmania's unique environment. A transition to a cleaner environment is impossible without governments acknowledging the necessary transition from private to public transport.

Identifying the problems

It is the view of the EC that public transport in Southern Tasmania lacks efficiency, innovation and integration, and thus falls significantly short of assuming title as an effective system. Inefficient public transport networks have failed to engage communities, consequently generating low levels of patronage and high levels of private transport dependency. EC submit that public transport in Southern Tasmania **fails** to:

- reciprocate to community transport needs.
- offer an integrated public transport system that incorporates ease of connectivity between transport modes.
- deliver frequent services - services often do not operate for long periods of time.
- deliver reliable services - both late and early buses are a common feature of Metro Tasmania.
- provide quick journey times - 'express' services generally take double the time of private car transport.
- provide consistent wheelchair accessible transportation – the majority of the Metro Tasmania bus fleet are wheelchair inaccessible.

³ Hobart Northern Suburbs Railway Action Group Inc (2012), *Legislative Council Inquiry*, Hobart

⁴ Tourism and Transport Forum Position Paper (2010), *The Benefits of Public Transport*, Sydney

⁵ Sinclair Knight Merz (2012), *Review of The Climate Change (State Action) Act – Part Two*, Sydney

⁶ The Garnaut Climate Change Review (2008), Ch 21.4.1

- provide sufficient information surrounding Metro Tasmania services such as bus routes and timetabling.

Subsequently, public transport in Hobart has failed to mobilise communities and thus been rendered with the lowest levels of patronage in Australia⁷. In addition to this, where as national public transport trends show significant growth, Metro Tasmania patronage remains for the most part stagnant. In light of this, there is considerable potential to increase the public transport market share in Southern Tasmania. Through identifying and responding to problems at hand, developing holistic strategies and increasing investment, Southern Tasmania can play a leading role in progressive sustainable transport in Australia.

Suggestions for the future

An attractive sustainable transport network needs to support the use of multiple transport modes. Assessing the function various transport modes- pedestrian, cycling, bus, light rail, ferries- can play in providing an efficient sustainable transport network, and engaging with the needs of communities are paramount to the success of sustainable transport in Southern Tasmania.

With this in mind, the EC kindly make the following suggestions to the Legislative Council Inquiry in regards to firstly, holistic considerations:

- implement an integrated sustainable transport network that incorporates light rail and ferries.
- provide an attractive sustainable transport option that promotes accessibility, ease of use and convenience.
- maximise access to and from residential and employment hubs with healthy and sustainable transport options.

And secondly, shorter-term considerations:

- engage with communities and working groups to assess transport needs.
- simplify complicated bus routes and timetables to allow for ease of transport.
- upgrade high-transit bus stations to include electronic timetable displays.
- link existing bike-transit corridors with one another to create an integrated bike network.
- prioritise the Hobart Northern Suburbs Railway project.
- revert one-way streets that include the use of public transport to two-way to remove unnecessary delays around the CBD.

⁷ Australasian Transport Research Forum (2011), *Long term patterns of Australian public transport use*, Adelaide

- provide Wi-Fi on high-transit services.
- provide through-bus services that directly link the north of Hobart with the south.
- increase online accessibility for commuters, with both mobile apps and an online trip planner.

We are happy to meet with you to further discuss ideas.

Yours in anticipation,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "A. Doyle". The signature is written in a cursive, slightly slanted style.

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