

Legislative Council Inquiry Into

Integrated Transport Options

**Improving Access to the Bridgewater
Trade Training Centre**

Submission from:

**Colony Partnership Brokers,
Colony 47**

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Acknowledgement and thanks

The following organisations and individuals have been consulted for the preparation of this report:

Bridgewater Trade Training Centre, New Norfolk High School, Glenora District High School, Bothwell District High School, Oatlands District High School, Campania District High School, Claremont College, Derwent Valley Community House, O'Driscoll Coaches, Metro, The Department of Energy Infrastructure and Resources, Youth Network of Tasmania and the Tasmanian Youth Forum, and the Acting Transport Commissioner.

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Improving Access to the Bridgewater Trade Training Centre

1.0 Overview

This submission will provide an overview of the Bridgewater Trade Training Centre [BTTC] and then outline the basic principles which have guided the recommendations contained in this report. The recommendations are then presented in categorised groupings.

It is important to stress that teachers and principals are doing an excellent job in arranging transport to ensure that young people can attend the Bridgewater Trade Training Centre [BTTC]. All educational officers consulted portrayed a 'can do' mentality and are doing everything possible to source and provide transport to and from the BTTC.

Despite the good work of educationalists at the local level the issue of transport has been somewhat of an afterthought for the BTTC facility and is unfunded. As a consequence Transport has been dealt with on a somewhat ad hoc basis. The purpose of this submission is to look more broadly at what is now happening and make recommendations for integrating transport with the aim of improving access efficiently and effectively to maximize attendance opportunities for potential participants. Many of the recommendations are broad in nature and cannot be resolved by a single school or collectively by the education sector and will require a strategic whole of Government approach.

While this submission is specifically focused on the BTTC it is likely that a number of the recommendations apply equally to other education facilities in Tasmania.

Some students spend many hours a day on bus transport. It may take an hour to get to their nearest main centre from where they live, and then it can be another hour on a bus to get to the BTTC meaning that these students spend up to four hours a day on a bus. While it is outside the scope of this submission it is recommended that consideration be given to the provision of appropriate accommodation facilities to enable participants to attend the BTTC without needing to undertake a long time travelling each day.

Information for this report has been gathered from face to face discussions and telephone conversations with Principals and Deputy Principals, officers from Metro and O'Driscoll Coaches, the Youth Network of Tasmanian and the Acting Commissioner of Transport. To better understand travel patterns of students currently enrolled at BTTC a survey of all students' travel routes was undertaken for the week commencing July 31 2012.

2.0 The Bridgewater Trade Training Centre

The Bridgewater Trade Training Centre was established with Federal Government funding through the Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations under the Trade Training Centre in Schools Program. The broad objectives of the program are:

- to increase the proportion of students achieving Year 12 (or an equivalent qualification); and
- help address skills shortages in traditional trades and other eligible occupation areas.

The BTTC is situated adjacent to the Jordan River Learning Federation Middle and Senior Schools at Green Point Road, Bridgewater. There are five other 'partner schools' that have a financial stake in BTTC. These are New Norfolk High School, Glenora District High School, Bothwell District High School, Oatlands District High School and Campania District High School. Enrolments for prevocational programs are also accepted from people in other areas of southern Tasmania.

The facility was built at a cost of \$5.5 million and was completed by the end of 2010. It has impressive facilities for training participants in welding, sheet metal work, automotive maintenance, vehicle bodywork, plumbing, bricklaying and carpentry.

The Trade Training Centre in Bridgewater has an important role to play in providing opportunities for trade training and for enhancing engagement options for young people. The BTTC has been established to cater for a broad cross section of student. Some students are motivated, articulate, and resilient and will succeed with little additional assistance. Other young people are on the verge of disengagement and seriously at risk of 'falling through the cracks' if not supported appropriately. This cohort of young people is most unlikely to enrol or continue at the facility unless there is appropriate transportation.

The two main types of courses offered are Taster Programs for students from years 9 and 10 and Prevocational courses for participants in years 11 and 12 and older members of the public who want to up-skill or retrain.

3.0 Guiding principles

There are five principles on which the recommendations in this submission are based.

3.1 Access, equity and education

Reasonable transport options need to be available for all potential participants in the designated catchment area of the BTTC.

The catchment area of the BTTC is extensive ranging from beyond Ouse in the west across to Bothwell and Oatlands in the north, down to Campania in the east and including greater Hobart on both sides of the river. The majority of

this region has a dispersed population that is both rural and remote. Educationally young people from rural and remote areas in Tasmania are far less likely to transition from year 10 to year 11 and proceed from year 12 to further training, education, or employment. Only around 49% of country based young people make this transition. Given that over 86% of jobs now require a post year 10 qualification it is more important than ever before that this cohort of young people are provided with appropriate transport options to participate in education and training with transitional opportunities.

3.2 Cost efficiency

Transport has to be delivered in a cost effective manner given the overall financial position of the Tasmanian Government.

It is recognised that transport costs need to be contained while providing access to the BTTC. Tasmania already subsidises public transport to around \$70 million a year. On average, fare paying bus services operate on a Government subsidy of around 75% of the cost of providing the service. In addition to this many schools and colleges in Tasmania provide additional transport to improve access, either directly or through a third party. There is scope for considering if educational institutions are currently providing transport services in the most cost effective form.

3.3 Health and wellbeing

An integrated transport system needs to allow for and provide opportunity for exercise through walking and cycling.

For young people to gain employment in the trades they need to be physically fit and healthy. Where possible healthy options need to be built into transport as recommended in the *Tasmanian Urban Passenger Transport Framework*, DIER 2010. This will mean providing routes and partial route access for cycling and walking to BTTC. It is recognised that there are challenges to providing opportunities for exercise for participants that travel from rural and remote areas due to time and distance.

3.4 CO₂ emissions

An integrated transport system needs to minimise the amount of carbon dioxide released into the atmosphere.

Most, if not all, vehicles in Tasmania run on fossil fuels. Some vehicles produce more carbon dioxide per passenger transported than others. Some transport practices produce more carbon dioxide than others. Usually vehicles with a high occupancy deliver better outcomes than vehicles with only one or two occupants. Newer vehicles are better than old. The relative cost of providing transport is not necessarily an adequate measure for deciding on the environmental impacts resulting from the transport.

3.5 Integrated transport

The term '*integrated transport*' is usually used in the context of linking up different forms of transport. This is clearly very important. The concept is extended in this submission to include the integration of institutions and people with transport. It does not always follow that transport services should change to meet the needs of an institution. It may mean that schools, colleges and the BTTC should change their practices to fit in with existing transport systems. Individuals may also need to change their travel patterns to maximize transport options.

4. Issues and recommendations

4.1 Overarching issues

The Federal Government funded the building and equipment to establish the BTTC facility; however, no resources have been provided for transporting students by either State or Federal Governments. As a result educational administrators have worked hard with the resources at their disposal to provide transport for participants to attend the facility. There are a number of changes, beyond the scope of Department of Education officers at the local level which have the potential to improve access and efficiency for participation in the BTTC in the future. Many of the issues raised in this submission in the context of the BTTC apply across the whole education and transport sectors.

At the top level, consideration should be given to whether educational institutions should be organising their own transport needs. Should this be the responsibility of the education sector or the transport sector? Many educational institutions currently organise and fund their own transport and this can be considered to be subsidisation of the transport sector. If instead of schools and colleges organising their own transport it was handed over to the transport sector, would transport be handled more efficiently and effectively? Would this in turn allow educationalists to concentrate on education to improve attainment and transition? From the transport perspective it would need to include discussions regarding the role of scheduled service networks and Community Transport.

Some argue that if vehicle ownership were transferred from educational institutions to Community Transport these vehicles would be available to the community for considerably longer than is currently the case. This could cater for the transport needs of communities at weekends and during school holidays.

These issues can only be examined and answered through a whole of Government approach, together with representation from appropriate sections of the transport sector and young people.

Recommendation 1 - Roles and responsibilities of transport and education sectors

Establish an executive level integrated transport partnership that meets regularly to consider and resolve current, future and potential issues impacting on education and transport. Membership to include the Secretary of the Department of Education, [or delegate], the Transport Commissioner, representatives of the Tasmanian Bus Association, Community Transport and representation from young people.

4.2 Potential transport efficiencies

Apart from considering the roles and responsibilities of transport and education there are other efficiencies which should be examined. Schools with their own cars, minibuses, and coaches should look at the most cost effective way they can be driven. Discussions with Principals showed that teachers, teacher's aids, or dedicated drivers may be used. A teacher is paid between \$400 and \$450 a day whereas a trained driver is paid in the vicinity of \$200. There may be cost savings that schools can make by re-examining who should drive education vehicles. It is also likely that a trained driver will deliver a higher level of safety.

Recommendation 2 – Bus and mini-bus drivers

Examine the feasibility of establishing a pool of registered trained drivers which could be employed on an ad hoc basis for school transport.

The 'Southern Integrated Transport Plan 2010', Department of Energy Infrastructure and Resources [DEIR] and the 'Tasmanian Urban Passenger Transport Framework', DEIR 2010 outline and promote the potential benefits of new technology to assist transport options. Due to the dispersed population of the region served by the BTTC this technology could be particularly valuable. Transport both to and from Bridgewater is often dependent on private car usage. If there is illness or a mechanical problem participants may not be able to attend or can arrive late. In many areas of the world ride sharing technology has been operating which improves connectivity amongst transport users. Consideration should be given to developing a system which would be appropriate for southern Tasmania.

Recommendation 3 – Ride sharing technology

Investigate and introduce ride sharing technology which will assist parents, schools and participants to access the BTTC.

4.3 Public Transport

4.3.1 Bridgewater and Brighton

Public buses from Hobart travel to Bridgewater via the western side of the Derwent. Bridgewater is also close to the bus route from New Norfolk and higher up the Derwent Valley to and from Hobart. There are also regional buses that come down the Midlands Highway and pass through Bridgewater. This submission is not calling for radical changes or a substantial increase in service provision to and from Bridgewater. However there are some changes which would improve connectivity.

It also needs to be noted that Brighton and Bridgewater transport requirements should be continually monitored to ensure that community needs are being met. This is particularly important with the developing transport hub and the increasing number of businesses being established at the industrial estate. It is likely that the needs of the commuters to the region could well coincide with the transport needs of participants at the BTTC which could make a greater frequency of service viable.

Recommendation 4 – Growth at Brighton and Bridgewater

Continuously assess the transport needs of people relocating or commuting to the Brighton and Bridgewater area.

Recommendation 5 – BTTC start and finish times

The BTTC should regularly monitor the arrival and departure times of buses to, through and from Bridgewater and arrange instructional schedules to best suit existing transport schedules.

4.3.2 New Norfolk/Derwent Valley

To attend the BTTC students from New Norfolk can catch a regular Derwent Valley Link service either early in the morning or to arrive by mid-morning. [Currently the prevocational courses start at 9.00 am and the taster courses at 11.00am.] The early morning bus service goes along Boyer Road and stops at the MacDonald's round about which is about 10 minutes walk from the BTTC.

The mid morning bus from New Norfolk goes down the western side of the Derwent River and students need to stay on the bus to alight opposite the York Hotel on Main Road Granton. They then cross the road and catch a Metro bus going to Bridgewater. They also have the option of continuing on the bus to the Springfield interchange and taking a bus back out to Bridgewater.

While neither of these options represents particularly well integrated transport, they are feasible for able bodied students. There are problems however for older people, or parents with young children and a pram who need to access government services in Bridgewater. The solution to this problem would be for one of the Derwent Valley Link mid morning services to go into Bridgewater township and in the mid afternoon the similar route is reversed to transport

people back to New Norfolk. Community consultation will be required to assess the most suitable timing for busses to take this route. This service could then also cater for students attending courses at the BTTC.

Recommendation 6 – Reroute scheduled service

Route one mid morning Derwent Valley Link Hobart bound bus from New Norfolk through Bridgewater to access government services and one New Norfolk bus back in the afternoon.

4.3.3 Collinsvale

There is no public bus service to and from Collinsvale. A student from Collinsvale currently studying at the BTTC is dependent on a private vehicle to access a bus service at Berriedale.

Recommendation 7 – Collinsvale service

Examine the demand and feasibility of providing a public transport option from Collinsvale to link in with existing trunk routes in and out of Hobart.

4.3.4 Eastern Shore

There is no public bus service that travels from Rosny to Bridgewater in the morning and returns in the afternoon. Existing services going west from Rosny go to Hobart via the Bowen Bridge. If there was a linkage from Rosny through to Bridgewater this would save quite an amount of travel time.

Recommendation 8 – Eastern shore integration

Examine the demand and feasibility of providing a linking public transport option from Rosny to Bridgewater at peak periods during the day.

4.3.5 Oatlands

There is no scheduled school/public bus service that runs daily from Oatlands to Bridgewater and back which would enable students to attend BTTC. The only service from Oatlands, with Redline leaves at 11.20 arriving at 12.30 in Hobart. Students from Oatlands who are accommodated for the week in Hobart catch a service on Sunday evening from Oatlands and return on Friday evening. Currently Oatlands District High School provides school transport to attend the BTTC arriving for an 11.00 commencement but this service would not provide access for someone wanting to participate in the pre-employment program which starts at 9.00. This is an equity issue and needs addressing with either appropriate transport or the provision of accommodation.

Recommendation 9 – Equity for Oatlands

Investigate the demand and feasibility for providing transport for students from Oatlands to attend the BTTC.

4.4 Transport savvy

4.4.1 Timetables

Discussions with individual students and the survey of participants currently enrolled at the BTTC demonstrated that not all young people are able to access and understand timetables. This is probably a combination of comprehension by young people and the way the information is presented electronically or in hardcopy. It is acknowledged that Metro is putting effort into improving the presentation of their timetables however there are probably cutting edge solutions that would enhance what is currently available. Part of this process will be to consult young people as to how to best connect and be accessible to young people. For some people the answer will be with the creative use of new technology, for others who are not ‘connected’ there need to be other solutions. This issue is significant, and the crunch is that if young people are unable to understand timetables they will not take public transport.

Recommendation 10 - Timetable comprehension

Take a systematic approach to ensuring that young people are able to read and understand timetables so that they can access scheduled bus services. [This may be a responsibility of either the education or transportation sector.]

Recommendation 11 – Timetable presentation

Investigate innovative timetables presentation through new and other technologies being used interstate and overseas and introduce to Tasmania.

4.4.2 Bus travel

Some young people, especially those who may have moved to the state, may have limited or no experience travelling via public transport in Tasmania. The survey of transport of students at BTTC showed that these students were getting lifts rather than using public transport, as they were unfamiliar with how to access these services. To maximize the usage of public transport systems that are provided in Tasmania all young people need to be confident travelling by public transport.

Recommendation 12 – Experience busses

Ensure that all young people have the opportunity to travel by public transport. [This may be a responsibility of either education, transportation or support services.]

4.4.3 Travel plans

Model travel plans should be prepared for people coming from all locations to access and return from the BTTC. This will include the suggested mode of travel, times and locations. These need to be specific to different times of the day and updated as routes and schedules change. For participants travelling from remote areas this is likely to necessitate consultation with communities and local government as well as transport and education providers. Travel plans should be made available through transport and education websites and available in hard copy for those people who do not have access to the web. Travel plans need to become an integral part of the information supplied by BTTC to all potential participants.

Recommendation 13 – Develop travel plans

Model travel plans need to be developed and made readily available for all potential locations that participants live to enable them to access and return from the BTTC.

4.4.4 Real time passenger information

Real time transport information informs about the actual whereabouts of transport. It is extremely helpful when in a hurry to link up with public transport or waiting for transport to arrive. The location of transport may be made available through screens at bus and coach stops or through smart phones.

Recommendation 14 – Real time transport information

Install real time transport information on a progressive basis across public transport in southern Tasmania.

4.5 Youth friendly transport

4.5.1 Bus Stops

Despite the best efforts of public transport providers there are challenges in providing youth friendly services. These issues are particularly prevalent when people are waiting for transport. With only a few exceptions bus stops are just a metal post in the ground without seating or protection from the weather. Even where there are shelters these are for the most part unattractive and not conducive for waiting for transport. Bus stops and shelter do not have to be like that. Efforts should be made to ensure bus stops are not only accessible and appropriate, but they are engaging, in order to encourage people in southern Tasmania to use public transport. There are many examples around the world where bus shelters have been created that are artistic, witty and provide comfort. Some examples can be found on <http://www.toxel.com/inspiration/2009/05/01/15-unusual-and-creative-bus-stops/> and there are many other websites. It is suggested that southern Tasmania could start creating attractive bus stops in strategic locations through

involving youth organisations, MDT trade training organisations, arts associations, and businesses through working in partnership.

Recommendation 15 – Creative bus stops

Identify youth and education service providers in selected locations to work in partnership with other organisations to create attractive youth friendly bus stops.

4.5.2 Bus interchanges

Many young people both get off and access buses in Elizabeth Street at the GPO or nearby. It would be good to create a safe social space where students could sit while waiting for transport. This is particularly important issue during the cold seasons in Tasmania. The Youth Network of Tasmania have also referred to anecdotal evidence of young people reporting that they feel unsafe at bus stops, particularly in spaces such as the Elizabeth Street Mall, and that more needs to be done to make such places safer, clean, attractive and connected. There are ample cafes near by that can provide refreshments during business hours but there are very limited options after that. As most young people live on a tight budget it would be ideal if there is a youth friendly space that is free and easily accessible.

Recommendation 16 – Elizabeth Street

In conjunction with local Government youth services create a youth space at the bus interchange in Elizabeth Street.

4.6 Healthy transport options

While healthy transport options for many of participants of the BTTC are probably limited there are a number of ways in which they can improve transport times and cost. Those who live near the facility could walk and those a little further away can walk or cycle. Healthy transport options need to be built into the modal travel plans discussed in 4.4.3 above.

Of the 41 respondents to the BTTC participant transport survey, 1 walked to the facility, 5 others either walked and took a bus or car. No one travelled by bicycle. Seven students travelled by school bus, and a further 12 accessed a public bus. Bus travel might also have involved some walking. One person had a motorbike and the remaining 16 travelled by own/parent/friends car.

If the proposed routes in the ‘Hobart Regional Arterial Bicycle Network – Draft 2008’ are developed they will provide a link from Hobart for part of the way. But realistically it is probably only by reviewing existing walking and cycling options nearer to the facility that usage will increase.

Recommendation 17

Ensure Travel Plans [4.4.3 above] include healthy options which may include either walking to reach access public transport either at the start or finish of a trip.

Recommendation 18

Encourage Brighton Council to create walking and cycling track ways which provide and improve access to BTTC.

5. Conclusions

This submission has made a total of eighteen recommendations to improve integrated transport and access to the Bridgewater Trade Training Centre. Several of the recommendations are suggesting changes or reviews which may lead to changes in transport provision. Many recommendations are about measures to improve accessibility of transport and/or course scheduling to build participation particularly amongst young people.

This submission has not investigated or dealt with the transport concerns of special interest user groups other than for the BTTC in the catchment area covered by the Centre. However, it is anticipated that if several of the recommendations are implemented it will improve transport availability for other cohorts of people.

Colony Partnership Brokers will welcome the opportunity to make a contribution to achieving outcomes for several of the recommendations by talking to appropriate stakeholders with the aim of developing partnerships to improve transport integration.

The recommendations have been based on the principle that integrated transport is not the sole responsibility of transport providers but also requires changes may need to be made by individuals and organisations. It is only by working collaboratively and constructively that a more efficient and effective joined up system will be created. Transport is a social issue, improving access to the BTTC is essential so that it can provide young people with an opportunity to transition to meaningful employment and become a full citizens in Tasmanian society.