

A Legislative Council committee examining potential tourism opportunities for the North-East rail corridor has called for public input into the inquiry

Launceston Airport Upgrade

There appears to be a surge in potentially available public moneys to improve infrastructure in the North of the State.

When such moneys become available a quick search is done on things to spend it on otherwise it will be lost and this means maybe not the best use of the moneys due to a required quick decision. Examples maybe continually altering malls, unwise resiting of bus stops and moving a perfectly sited University onto a flood plain.

An ideal project would be to extend the runway at Launceston airport to accommodate larger aircraft and allow direct International flights.

Hobart's Llanherne Airport 500 Metre runway extension will be completed in 2018 and this will allow the proposed direct transport of Milk products from North West Tasmania's Woolnorth agricultural complex each fortnight. It will also allow other Tasmanian products to be directly flown from Tasmania to China and Asia.

An extension of the Launceston runway would be relatively straight forward and would need levelling of a rocky knob at Breadalbane creating work for local construction companies. This added to the work to extend the runway would provide an everlasting infrastructure asset for North Tasmania. The extent of the work may be equated with the size of the Breadalbane to Perth Highway upgrade.

The benefits will be ongoing plus allow flights from overseas to have alternate landing fields in the State when required due to weather conditions or freight waiting predominantly from the North or South of the State.

Over the next 3 years it is probable the number of visitors to Tasmania will increase, some coming directly on International flights but the domestic visitor increase will probably be coming on larger planes (ex international routes)directly to Llanherne thus reducing the Launceston Airport traffic.

An incidental bonus is that the Western Junction rail is adjacent to the airport and any future tourist train could link directly with the Airport terminal. Possibly a service to Launceston, Scottsdale Scenic railway via Tunnel and also to the North West Tasmanian Cities.

This is a real do-able and ongoing valuable infrastructure build.

The Federal Government is currently investing in airport Infrastructure.

The time is right to create an ongoing valuable assets for North Tas.

G. Long Launceston