

155 Main Road, Austins Ferry, Tasmania, Australia, 7011

Phone/fax: (03) 6249 1579 - Email: [bobhroddam@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:bobhroddam@yahoo.co.uk)

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Mr Stuart Wright  
Committee Secretary  
Legislative Council  
Parliament House  
HOBART TAS 7000  
[Stuart.wright@parliament.tas.gov.au](mailto:Stuart.wright@parliament.tas.gov.au)

## **Submission to Legislative Council Inquiry into Integrated Transport Options**

My submission deals with three aspects of the need for integrated transport options:

1. The future regarding the availability and cost of fossil fuels for vehicles,
2. The need to retain the existing rail corridor between Brighton and Hobart, regardless of the results of current efforts to promote the Northern Suburbs Light Rail Service, and
3. Proposed improvements to the Metro bus services.

### **The future availability and cost of fossil fuels for vehicles**

It appears that we are close to, or may have even passed, the situation referred to by some as '*Peak Oil*'. This term refers to the fact that the global demand for oil is now exceeding the availability of producers to supply that demand.

This does not, of course, mean that we are going to run out of oil overnight. However, over time, the availability of oil will decrease; with a corresponding increase in price. Any new resources are likely to be of lower quality and more challenging to develop: with a consequential price increase. Coincidentally, the fast developing Chinese and Indian economies are increasing their demands for energy, including oil!

Whilst alternative forms of energy for vehicles is being developed, particularly electricity, we must recognise that much of the electricity generated in Australia – apart from Tasmania – is itself generated by coal and oil-powered power stations. This may result in an increased demand for Tasmanian generated electricity via BassLink. In other words, Tasmanians, as individual vehicle owners/users, may not benefit from our ability to generate relatively clean electricity.

This reduced supply capacity by traditional oil producers may be further exacerbated by their need to shepherd their dwindling resources for home consumption. They may have to decide between the evils of reduced export income, and civil unrest from a citizenry that has reaped the rewards of heavily subsidised fuel for decades! One only

has to look to the riots that occurred in, for example the USA, during the early 1970s OPEC induced oil shock.

As oil imports to the developed countries, such as Australia, decline there will need to be some sort of rationing, as used in the UK during WWII. Presumably priority for the reduced supply would be for emergency services, the military, industry and – hopefully – public transport.

The consequences of this predicted supply shortage is that the average consumer will no longer be able to jump into his/her vehicle whenever they want. They will have to carefully consider every journey! This means that in the medium to longer term there is likely to be a greatly increased demand for public transport.

### **The need to retain the rail corridor between Brighton and Hobart**

I recently attended a most interesting address by the Hon. Tim Fischer to a group of people regarding the proposed Northern Suburbs light rail. Members of this committee were present. I think it is pretty reasonable to describe Tim as a railway *tragic*. Notwithstanding this, he made a most telling case for the retention of the existing railway corridor between Brighton and Hobart. If sections of this are allowed to be developed for some other enterprise; the cost of replacing the corridor would be prohibitive – both in terms of land acquisition and the provision of the physical infrastructure.

For the reasons outlined above, dealing with the likely increased demand for public transport, I believe that the need for a light rail system using this corridor will develop more strongly than at the moment. Given the likely improvement in battery technology and other systems, the cost effectiveness of light rail can only improve in the future.

Accordingly, I submit that the existing Brighton to Hobart rail corridor must be retained for likely future use of a light rail system.

### **Proposed improvements to the Metro bus services**

The topic of this committee's current investigation is *Integrated Transport Options*. I think it is reasonable to suggest that Metro Tasmania is currently unable / unwilling to integrate its own services within the Greater Hobart area.

I have used public transport (i.e. Metro) for most of the 22 years since my family moved to Austins Ferry. The main factors that influenced this decision were financial, environmental and safety (one less idiot on the road most of the time!).

Because I live on the main bus route from Bridgewater to Hobart, the weekday service is pretty reasonable, until the evening. The weekend service is abysmal if one wants to connect with other services. Here are some examples, for someone wishing to travel to or from the Northern Suburbs:

#### **Sunday travel to University Sandy Bay campus**

Depart Austins Ferry on 117 at 9:06am., scheduled arrival at Hobart, 9:44 am. This is **four minutes after the 53 bus departs for Sandy Bay and the University at 9:40 am.** My options are to (a) walk, which is OK if the weather is reasonable and I'm not carrying too much; (b) taxi, or (c) wait 56 minutes for the next bus!

(NB no. 42 bus @ 8:22, arrives Hobart @ 9:07. The no. 42 then runs at two hourly intervals on Sundays, arriving in Hobart at 11:17 am., 1:17 pm., 3:17 pm., 5:17 pm and 7:07 pm.)

The return trip on Sundays is as inconvenient. Buses are scheduled to arrive in Hobart from the University/Sandy Bay at twelve minutes past the hour from 9:12 am to 8:12 pm. The buses depart Hobart for the Northern Suburbs at ten past the hour – i.e. **two minutes before the bus arrives from the University / Sandy Bay**. My options are pretty well limited to the 58 minute wait for the next 117 departure. (even for me, walking is not really a practical option, and I'm not really interested in forking out for a taxi!)

### **Weekday evening travel from University: Monday to Wednesday**

Interesting talks and other events are often scheduled at the University in the evenings. Some finish as late as 10:00pm. Buses departing the University arrive in Hobart at 7:27, 7:57, 9:12, 10:12, 11:12, pm and 1:12 am. Buses servicing Austins Ferry depart Hobart at 7:10 am (118) and 10:10 pm. This is a three hour gap. Also, please note anyone arriving after the 9:12 pm (i.e. 10:12 pm) arrival from the University in Hobart either walks home or pays for a taxi on Mon./Tue. or Wednesday evenings. There are no. 42s running after the 6:50 pm. Hobart departure. There is a no. 38 service from Hobart on these evenings at 8:10 and 9:40 pm., but these terminate at Claremont.

### **Proposed solution**

There is a fairly simple solution to this problem of buses just failing to connect. It is called *pulsing*, a term Metro told me about when I raised the issue with them in a letter dated 19 February 2010. The relevant paragraph reads thus:

*“Your suggestion of scheduling all the evening services into a 10 minute period to enable easier transfers is referred to as pulsing timetables and is generally done for transfers between high capacity modes such as rail to buses to get customers to the suburbs from the station. However, it can be applied in a context as you have suggested and will be something that Metro will consider in future reviews that we undertake.”*

That was over two years ago, and nothing has changed on this front!

Yours sincerely

Bob Holderness-Roddam