

The Secretary,

21st July 2021

Parliamentary Standing Committee on Public Works,

NEW BRIDGWATER BRIDGE.

Although the title of the Committee refers to a new Bridgwater bridge, I would respectfully suggest that the consideration of the Committee should not be limited to a bridge as the only option for a crossing of the Derwent at the location of the existing causeway and lift bridge.

I have two principal concerns with the present proposals.

One is the grossly excessive cost for a project which with no provision for rail, inherently fails to accomplish its aims, and

The second is the stated lack of any provision for a rail link to the existing Launceston and Derwent valley lines or, for that matter, to the Bridgwater/ Brighton/Pontville district.

In this respect, it would be unrealistic to assume that the existing permanent way between the Hobart waterfront and Granton will not be utilised in the not too distant future for a light rail service allowing for future passenger transport to/from the broad acres of the Bridgwater/ Brighton district, currently awaiting the attentions of a developer, public or private, to relieve the present shortage of affordable housing; and for tourist rail connection to the existing Derwent valley/National park permanent way.

The second concern is that there is more than one way to cross the river while preserving a navigable waterway - an essential for possible future industrial development in the New Norfolk area, and for future tourist operations to the Derwent Valley.

I refer to the option of a short tunnel, or parallel tunnels, at the site of the present crossing. On the pre condition that provision for rail is a non negotiable requirement, this would answer the objection that the need to provide for railway grades would totally disqualify the existing bridge concept; and also eliminate the need for extensive infrastructure connecting such a bridge. For this to be a practical option, it is also necessary to accept that the existing causeway is in such a fragile state that to provide the required road and rail connection to an actual river crossing, it would probably be necessary to construct a piled (concrete?) platform over the causeway between the Western shore and the site of the river crossing itself.

The use of tunnelling would at one stroke dramatically reduce the overall cost of the whole project and resolve the engineering objections to such a dramatic rethink and eliminate the need for any air-draft concerns.

While tunnelling is a novel idea for this long lived scheme, tunnelling techniques have advanced dramatically in recent years, and the various tunnelling projects, mostly precast concrete sunk on site, successfully undertaken in Sydney in the past few years speak for the practicality of the concept, or at the very least, the imperative that it be properly investigated at the professional level before embarking on the terrifyingly expensive and unfit for purpose, bridge alternative.

David Keyes

