



Legislative Council

MEDIA RELEASE

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SWEEPING PUBLIC TRANSPORT CHANGES PROPOSED

Sweeping changes to the operations of Metro bus services and a minimum 12-month trial of an integrated ferry service on the River Derwent, are among twenty-nine recommendations from a Legislative Council inquiry into public transport services in Southern Tasmania.

The report of the 12 month inquiry by the Legislative Council Committee also calls for the establishment of a dedicated public transport unit reporting directly to the Minister for Sustainable Transport and the re-writing of the business case for a Northern Suburbs Light Rail service.

The Chair of the Inquiry, Adriana Taylor MLC, noted that the Committee had received an overwhelming response that there should be choice in public transport and that for commuters at least, it needs to be frequent, reliable and integrated. Mrs Taylor also said the Committee found significant and systemic weaknesses in the provision of public transport in the South of the State.

“The community clearly supports an integrated intermodal public transport system and is concerned about the deficiencies with the existing bus services. For example, Metro Tasmania does not have sufficient funds to fully implement its network plan, its timetable is difficult to understand and its operations are not integrated with private bus operators who form part of public transport services in the South,” Mrs Taylor said.

Mrs Taylor commented that the Committee had spent considerable time assessing the various proposals for a northern suburbs light rail service and had received expert evidence in relation to the use of the rail corridor.

“The northern suburbs light rail proposal clearly has the potential to succeed but will fail unless it uses a triple bottom line approach to the business case to fully exploit the potential value of the existing rail corridor to the broader Hobart community” she said.

“One aspect of the Government’s business case that has seriously troubled the Committee has been the proposal to terminate the service at Glenorchy, rather than operate the service to MONA and beyond, to take advantage of the potential passengers that are drawn to this iconic tourist destination”.

“It is proposals like this that help explain why Hobart has the worst public transport figures in the country” she said.

Mrs Taylor said that the Committee believed a comprehensive trial of a passenger ferry service, with appropriate incentives, on the River Derwent for at least 12-months, was the only way to determine whether a permanent service would be supported by the Community.

“The Committee received consistent evidence that there had been a lack of engagement by Government in relation to a number of proposals for a commuter ferry service and that such a service had not historically been a Government priority”.

“However, we understand that in recent days, the Minister has now agreed to work with the latest proponents to refine its proposal for a ferry service”.

Mrs Taylor said that the Committee hoped the Government would act quickly to implement or address the recommendations contained in the report.

A copy of the full report is available online at:

http://www.parliament.tas.gov.au/ctee/Council/GovAdminB_ito.htm

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