

Legislative Council Inquiry

Integrated Transport Options

Submission from Derwent Valley Community House

About Community House

Since 2004 the Derwent Valley Community House has been working with the local community to identify, develop and implement activities for individuals and groups of all ages and backgrounds. Our volunteer management committee is representative of the local community with 11 active members. We currently have three part-time staff members each bringing valuable skills and knowledge to ensure a smooth, vibrant and well run Community House that is meeting the needs of our community.

We currently host a range of service providers including Community Corrections Probation Officer, Centrelink, Wise Employment and Commonwealth Rehabilitation Service on a weekly basis. The Derwent Valley Community House also supports a large range of community groups including a Children's Choir, gardening club, craft and an AA group and has over the last few years run a very successful adult learning program which has included a large range of topics from photo manipulation, soap making to boat licence and planning your funeral. This program has been extended to include the upper reaches of the Derwent Valley. Adult Literacy and Numeracy and Learner Driver Assistance is also provided by the Community House.

Our service is expanding to include a Community Shed and Community Garden which will provide opportunities to engage with a wider range of people in our community from youth to older members, along with partnership opportunities with other service providers.

About The Derwent Valley

New Norfolk is situated 34 kilometres from the centre of Hobart and it takes approximately one hour by bus to travel that distance. Other options could include use of the rail or river with potential saving of travel time, however an integrated bus service that links New Norfolk with some closer services than the city should be considered to reduce the traffic congestion on our roads, save time for the public and keep costs down.

The Derwent Valley is currently experiencing an economic and social recovery after a generation of decline due mainly to downsizing or closure of our major industries. Recent Australian Bureau of Statistics data has identified the Derwent Valley area in the top 5 fastest growing regional areas in Tasmania. However the Socio-Economic Disadvantage Index shows Derwent Valley as rating in the bottom 3 regions in Tasmania.

According to the Australian Bureau of Statistics 2010 the postcode of 7140 has 52% of the population between the ages of 15-54 years. The Census also indicated that unemployment was 7.3% against a national figure of 5.1%. Further, the area has low post school qualifications with a percentage of 40.6% (2006 data) and registered motor vehicle rate of 501 per 1,000 population.

Current situation

Although the Derwent Valley has its own bus operator (Derwent Valley Link Service), services are geared to take people to Claremont, Glenorchy, Hobart or are aimed at school travel. The bus travels to Granton, Claremont, Glenorchy and Hobart with travel to other areas difficult with multi bus changes required. While New Norfolk Township can be seen as having an adequate public transport system to the above, the outer reaches have a limited (not daily) or no service available at all.

At a recent meeting of multi-disciplinary service providers working with the community in New Norfolk it was identified that many clients and families were needing to access bus services between New Norfolk and Bridgewater. Each service present was able to identify clients that would utilize this type of service on a fairly regular basis to see family in Bridgewater or speciality services that are not currently in New Norfolk, such as medical services, educational services and mental health services.

We heard that Community Corrections offer Driver courses for those offenders who have lost their licence, but that for the course to be cost effective there is a minimum number required (not possible to achieve this number in New Norfolk). These courses are held in Bridgewater but New Norfolk offenders are unable to attend simply because there is no transport between the two locations.

Another example is the mental health services and support that is available in Bridgewater but once again not available to residents of New Norfolk because of lack of transport.

Bridgewater has recently opened a trade training centre but try getting a student from New Norfolk by bus to attend.

The issue

After studying the current timetables and locations of the bus stops for both the Metro and Derwent Valley Link buses it is clear that the timetables in some cases would link up to allow for a transfer from one to the other.

The issue is in the bus stop locations at both Granton and Boyer Road. Derwent Valley Link has stops in both these locations however Metro have removed their stop at the Granton Roundabout with the closest now located outside York Hotel approx 1km and over 4 lanes of traffic from the Link stop. Metro have also removed their

stop opposite the Derwent Tavern which also results in a crossing of 4 lanes of traffic and a 1 km walk to link the two buses.

Metro response to date

The above issue was raised with Metro earlier this year and they have suggested that the public travel to Claremont or Glenorchy to change buses for Bridgewater. We estimate this would add another 15 to 30 minutes each way to a trip providing the timetables matched up with no waiting time.

We don't believe this is either a viable solution nor an integrated service.

Desired solution

An integrated service that looks at all transport options public and private which includes linkages of townships and looks at timetables and stops be developed.