

# DERWENT VALLEY RAILWAY



DERWENT VALLEY RAILWAY INCORPORATED – ABN 61 868 683 773

10 August 2012,

Legislative Council Committee on Integrated Transport Options,  
Parliament House,  
Hobart, TAS. 7000

## SUBMISSION PERTAINING TO BRIDGEWATER - HOBART RAILWAY

Dear Honourable Members,

The Derwent Valley Railway Inc. (DVR) is a non-profit, volunteer run, rail preservation establishment and tourist passenger rail operator based in New Norfolk. The DVR was created in 1990, evolving from the Tasmanian Locomotive Company, which itself took over Tasmanian Rail Tours, the pioneer of the return of tourist orientated rail passenger train excursions on the Tasmanian main-line rail network in 1984.

From 1990 to 2005, DVR and its predecessors successfully operated tourist rail passenger excursions on both the Derwent Valley Line and Main South Line to Hobart. Initially operating from a base at Cadburys railway station yard and commencing / terminating passenger services from Derwent Park railway station, DVR subsequently moved its base to New Norfolk and commenced / terminated passenger services from Hobart, at the Regatta Grounds.

A significant part of the DVR's operating scope involved operating into and out of Hobart. Significant event public excursions, such as those operated on Australia Day, Easter and Mothers/Fathers Day which worked to locations such as Parattah and Ross, all commenced / terminated in Hobart, due to the central point for assembling maximum patronage.

Charters operated for schools, hotel chains and corporate events (particularly conventions), were invariably started out of Hobart. Immediately prior to the cessation of rail access in 2005, due to network management and maintenance issues arising from Pacific National's dissolving corporate commitment to the Tasrail business, DVR had secured preliminary agreement to provide rail services to cruise ship operators visiting the Port of Hobart after many years of intensive negotiation. It was very disappointing that the network collapse prevented DVR from providing what could have been a very successful and memorable shore-based attraction to visiting cruise ship passengers, enhancing Hobart's attractiveness as a destination.

### **Retention of the Bridgewater - Hobart railway line**

The DVR submits that the retention of the Bridgewater - Hobart rail line as a serviceable rail link is critical for the future prospects and success of DVR, once network access and Public Liability barriers are overcome - issues which the main-line Tourist & Heritage rail sector, together with the State Government, local Councils, Tasmanian Railway Ltd (Tasrail) and several corporate interests are studiously working towards overcoming.

### **Particular issues that are especially pertinent to the serviceability of the Hobart line include:**

- maintaining the network connection at Bridgewater Junction as it currently exists;
- maintaining access across Bridgewater Bridge;





- ensuring responsibility for road (level) crossing protection is assumed by DIER as per their responsibility for all road traffic control and protection;
- maintaining a functional minimum of usable rail lines in Hobart Rail yards, after the exit of Tasrail and Toll Transport, including retaining access to the track on Macquarie No. 5 wharf and provision for future rail access to Elizabeth St. pier / Mawson Place.

DVR is aware of and supportive of potential complementary users of the Hobart rail line, that would enhance the viability of maintaining the line. These include;

- Hobart Northern Suburbs Railway;
- Tasmanian Transport Museum;
- Tasrail (potential for ongoing freight exists from Nyrstar Risdon and occasional overseas shipping utilising the Port of Hobart).

DVR is particularly concerned about the potential redevelopment of the future to be vacant Hobart rail yards. We would request that any developer of the site consults widely with not only rail stakeholders but also rail orientated specialists, to ensure sufficient rail track is retained within the redeveloped yard to facilitate the potential for future commuter rail service, operating concurrently and comfortably with occasional rail tourist passenger excursions, such as those that could be operated by DVR or TTMS as well as freight access to Macquarie 5.

**Sufficient track in Hobart yard should at a minimum include:**

- Through access to Mac. 5 and Mawson Place;
- At least two (with space for expansion to three) tracks along the length of Hobart yard (one stabling track (loop siding, with a passenger platform) and one through line, to facilitate, terminating tourist passenger excursion trains and being able to move locomotives from one end to the other or allowing future commuter trains to pass unimpeded).
- Allowable developments in Hobart yard should be compatible with the ongoing presence of rail and not comprise potential developments (e.g. residential or health) that could give rise to public objection to the ongoing presence of rail operations.

DVR is aware of the success of the Intercity Cycle Track and the desire to extend it towards Bridgewater. Although there are some engineering challenges, DVR believes there is scope for the Intercity Cycle Track to be built alongside or adjacent to the existing track between Claremont and Bridgewater WITHOUT impinging on the existing rail track and clearances.

DVR agrees with HNSRAG that there is also scope to install crossing loops along the existing Hobart Line, to facilitate complimentary operation of commuter trains, tourist trains and occasional freights without significantly damaging the existing cycle track.

**Conclusion**

It is the position of the DVR that the severing of the Hobart Line at Bridgewater, disablement of Level Crossing protection and failure to preserve rail access through Hobart yard would be to the severe detriment of potentially successful and productive rail users, such as DVR, TTMS, HNSR and Tasrail.

It would put potentially intractable barriers to efficient carbon reduced or neutral transport and severely hamper renewal and redevelopment of one-time industrial properties along the rail route to new residential developments, which would contribute to the potential viability of a commuter service.

The proposed HNSR rail commuter service is the most efficient manner to exploit the people moving potential of the Hobart Rail Line corridor. The profile of the route and road crossing interface is not conducive to a paved bus express corridor, with frequency, noise and pollution likely to cause major objections to adjacent residents.

Reducing the scope for sourcing and serving bulk freight customers, such as Nyrstar, Risdon or

the Port of Hobart, undermines the move towards more efficient freight transport and the need to reduce carbon pollution.

Finally, barriers to the restoration of a viable tourist rail passenger service will lead to ongoing issues with maximising the tourist visitation and spending potential that could be exploited by the City of Hobart and the Derwent Valley.

The DVR recommends to Honourable Members to support the retention of the Bridgewater - Hobart railway line as an ongoing usable asset, protect rail access through the Hobart yard and allow future rail line users to maximise the line's benefits for the people of Hobart, the Northern Suburbs and Southern Tasmania.

Yours sincerely,

*Stephen Zvillis*

Human Resources and Safety Manager  
on behalf of the Board of the DVR