

Submission to the Joint Standing Committee on Public Works:

Southern Outlet T3 Transit Lane

Author: Anthony Dick Blanks

Notes

This submission draws heavily on the documents listed in the 'References and further reading' section on pages seven and eight of this paper.

References in the text of this submission e.g. [2: 31] refer the reader to the second report in the list in the 'References and further reading' Section, in this case **2 Hobart City Deal Southern Projects. Sub-Project 1: Southern Outlet Transit Lane Concept design Report December 2020, Revision B**, page 31.

The Sub-Project Concept Plans and Reports: (References 2 – 6) are all at least 2 years old, and the underlying research and planning somewhat older. Where cost estimates have not been redacted they are at least two years old and at best indicative only.

Introduction

The Department of State Growth describes the Hobart City Deal - Southern Projects in the following terms:

The Southern Projects are a suite of coordinated transport projects being delivered and funded by the Tasmanian Government, to help make things better for you and better for Hobart.

The Southern Projects is [sic] an end-to-end solution that will make bus travel more attractive, providing an easier ride for bus users all the way from Huntingfield to Molle Street.[1]

The suite of projects consists of five sub-projects. Links to each of the sub-project proposal documents are in the References and Further Reading section of this submission.

I will confine my brief comments to elements of Sub-projects 1, 2 and 3 as they are closely connected.

These Sub-Projects are:

Sub-project 1: Southern Outlet Transit Lane. This is the proposal for the introduction of a northbound transit lane on the Southern Outlet between Olinda Grove and Hobart/Macquarie Street. The lane will operate as a T3 lane for use by buses, private vehicles carrying three or more occupants, taxis, and emergency service vehicles.

It is of concern that three properties in Dynnyrne Road have been purchased for this Sub-Project before the plan for the on-ground works have been finalised and before the Joint Standing Committee on Public Works' review of the Sub-Project proposal has been undertaken.

Sub-project 2: Macquarie/Davey Bus Priority. This is the proposal for bus priority measures on Macquarie and Davey Streets which will contribute to the success or failure of the T3 Transit Lane.

Sub-project 3: Kingborough Park-and-Ride. This covers the design and construction of park-and-ride facilities at two locations in the Kingborough municipality. Two sites were chosen: – Browns Road, Firthside and Huntingfield. At the time of writing Sub-Project 3 on-ground works are nearing completion. If the park and ride facilities and associated bus services are not utilised as expected the need for the T3 Transit Lane will be significantly diminished.

I am unable to comment on the two remaining Sub-Projects below:

Sub-Project 4: Park-and-Ride Bus Service: This deals with the development of a park-and-ride bus service model to support the two Kingborough park-and-ride facilities (sub-project 3), the Southern Outlet transit lane (sub-project 1), and the bus priority measures proposed for Macquarie and Davey Streets (sub-project 2).

Sub-Project 5: T3 Enforcement: Self-explanatory. See under References and Further Reading for details.

Questions which the Public Works Committee would wish to address are:

1. Do the proposed works meet an identified need or needs, or solve a recognised problem?

I submit that the proposed works covered by Sub-Projects 1 – 3 purport to address and solve a recognised problem of peak hour congestion at the northern end of the Southern Outlet Road. This is attributable:

- in part to the number of vehicles using the Southern Outlet Road,
- in part to the congestion at the traffic lights at the intersections of the Southern Outlet Road and Davey and Macquarie Streets,
- in part to congestion in upper Macquarie Street caused by the traffic lights at Antill, Molle, Barrack and Harrington Streets, and,
- in part to the practice of dropping off pupils of St Michael's Collegiate School with disruption of traffic flow that this practice causes.

The proposed T3 Transit Lane may shorten the time to drive from Kingston to Davey Street but the savings in travel time will be minimal.

Sub-Project 5: T3 Enforcement identifies the likely need for additional legislation, a potential risk

The Huntingfield and Firthside vehicle parking facilities are too small to prompt a significant reduction in the number of light vehicles presently using the Southern Outlet Road during the morning peak. Kingborough Municipality is experiencing a housing construction boom which will generate additional city-bound traffic.

An example of the coming development is the Government's Huntingfield Stages one to three development which in the course of the three stages will make available 688 housing lots over the next seven years. [8:1], [9:1]. Consequently any solution which is satisfactory at present is likely to be overtaken by additional future demand.

2. Are the proposed works the best solution to meet identified needs or solve a recognised problem within the allocated budget?

It is not possible to answer this question as the FY2022-23 budget for each sub-project is not available and representatives of Works Tasmania have quoted wildly different costs for components of the three sub-projects.

The proposed clearway in Macquarie St would be relatively cheap to implement and should allow traffic to move more freely, especially if:

- extended to the Harrington Street intersection.
- applied to both sides of Macquarie Street, and,
- vigorously enforced

3. Are the proposed works fit for purpose?

Sub-project 2? Possibly in the short term, but likely to be unable to meet future demand.

Sub-project 3? I have experienced the Park and Ride service in the city of York, UK. Population 202,800 as compared with greater Hobart's 251,047 (both 2021 Census). York has 5,100 parking places spread across six sites as compared with Hobart which will have 218 places across two sites. [7:1]

If the aim of Sub-project 3 is to reduce light vehicle commuter traffic on the Southern Outlet Road this is not a convincing solution.

The Park and Ride facility should be greatly enlarged, buses provided to run a shuttle service (e.g. departing every eight to twelve minutes or sooner if filled).

4. Do the proposed works provide value for money?

As for question 2 above this question is impossible to answer without knowing what are the present base cost and contingency sums.

5. Are the proposed works a good use of public funds?

As for questions 2 and 4 above this question is impossible to answer without knowing the present base cost and contingency sums which could be used to prepare a Business Case for each Sub-Project. It is amazing that this has not been done for Sub-Project 1 for which the costs (including Sub-Project 5 (T3 Lane Enforcement) must be approaching \$100M in 2022-23 dollars.

Estimated Sub-Project Costs (all as of 2020)

See links to the Sub-Project Proposals / Reports in "References and further reading" section following for further information.

Sub-Project 1

The total 2020 base estimate for construction cost is \$30,148,800. Based on the probabilistic cost estimate, there is a 50 per cent chance that the final project cost will be below \$35,798,800 and a 90 per cent chance that the final project cost will be below \$39,998,800. [2:64]

The cost estimates are summarised in the following table.

2020 Report Cost Estimate	P50 (\$m AUD)	P90 (\$m AUD)
Base Cost Estimate	30.15	30.15
Contingency	5.65	9.85
Total Project Cost Estimate	35.80	40.0

Sub-Project 2

Project proposal does not provide any costs.

Sub-Project 3

Browns Road Park and Ride [4:65]

Based on the probabilistic cost estimate, there is a 50 per cent chance that the final project cost will be below \$1,632,000 and a 90 per cent chance that the final project cost will be below \$1,743,000.

2020 Report Cost Estimate	P50 (\$m AUD)	P90 (\$m AUD)
Base Cost Estimate	1.34	1.34
Contingency	0.29	0.40
Total Project Cost Estimate	1.63	1.74

Huntingfield Park and Ride [4:66]

(Text redacted, but meaning of figures is as for the Browns Road Costs)

2020 Report Cost Estimate	P50 (\$m AUD)	P90 (\$m AUD)
Base Cost Estimate	5.14	5.14
Contingency	1.14	1.59
Total Project Cost Estimate	6.28	6.73

In both instances the text of the Design Report specifically states

‘Cost escalation has been excluded from this cost estimate’ [4:66]

The Firthside Park and Ride facility provides 44 parking spaces. [7:1]. When completed the Huntingfield site will provide parking for 174 vehicles. [7:1].

Using the estimated P90 Project Cost Estimate, the estimated 2020 cost per parking space at Browns Road was \$39,546, and the cost per space at Huntingfield was \$38,678.

These cost estimates are at least two years out of date and do not include any cost of purchasing the land at either site, because both seem to have already been Crown Land. However any expansion of the Park and Ride program would require the purchase of land on the open market. The land most suitable for Park and Ride facilities is flat and close to existing developments, just the sort of site being sought by developers.

Are the works a good use of public funds? That is not something within my expertise, other than to say that without the Park and Ride Sub-Project the case for Sub-project 1: Southern Outlet Transit Lane would be seriously weakened.

Moving Forward

The Government of Tasmania has already commenced work and expenditure on the Hobart City Deal Southern Projects, Sub-Projects 1 – 5: Consultancies, Surveys, Reports, purchase of 3 homes in upper Dynnyrne Road, and the construction of two Park and Ride facilities.

While the activities, and construction to date constitutes significant expenditure that expenditure pales into insignificance when the likely cost of the Southern Outlet T3 Lane construction works is considered.

It can be argued that before finally breaking ground and committing to an expenditure likely to reach \$100M it would be wise to stress test those components of the Hobart City Deal Southern Projects Already completed or which can be implemented with minimal expenditure of time or money.

A reasonably logical sequence of actions to implement and stress – test the components of the projects is:

1. Establishment of the Macquarie Street Clearway and evaluation of its effectiveness under present traffic loads. Cost estimate not available but likely to be minimal. If effective in improving traffic flow then move on to:
2. Resolution of the congestion at the intersections of the Southern Outlet Road and both Davey and Macquarie Streets. Cost estimate not available. If improvement in traffic flow is achieved then:
3. Evaluate the success of the Kingborough Park and Ride service, albeit this would be before the construction of the T3 Transit Lane.
4. If the Park and Ride operation results in satisfactory bus passenger loads and a reduction in peak time light motor vehicle numbers and travel times between Kingston and the Hobart CBD then:
5. Construct the T3 Transit Lane as proposed with provision for additional traffic growth. Cost estimate varies depending on the person offering the estimate but probably close to \$100M in 2022 dollars.

Points to note

These include the following:

While there remain six sets of traffic lights to interrupt the traffic flow at the intersections of the Southern Outlet Road and Davey and Macquarie Streets, and at the intersections of Macquarie and Antill, Molle, Barrack and Harrington Streets a smooth traffic flow cannot be expected, clearway or no clearway.

While traffic entering or crossing the Southern Outlet Road from Davey Street (both directions) and Macquarie Street city-bound, does so on the same level traffic flow at the northern end of the Southern Outlet Road will be stopping and starting. A previous proposal to address this problem seems to have fallen out of favour.

The congestion in the right-hand city-bound lane of Macquarie Street caused by the dropping off of students at St Michael's Collegiate school, the queuing for a drop-off space and the re-entry of vehicles into the traffic stream will continue to disturb traffic flow albeit downstream of the Macquarie Street - Molle Street intersection.

Extending the Macquarie Street Clearway to the Harrington Street intersection would facilitate the movement of traffic wishing to avoid congestion in the lower part of Macquarie Street and the alternative of using Molle and Goulburn Streets (and Barrack and Bathurst Streets as well) to move from Macquarie Street to Harrington Street.

In Conclusion

The Committee members are thanked for their work and their patience.

References and further reading

1. Hobart City Deal - Southern Projects.

On-line information brochure last updated on 5 September 2022

https://www.transport.tas.gov.au/projectsplanning/road_projects/south_road_projects/hobart_city_deal_-_southern_projects

The following reports were produced between March and December 2020 and are apparently the latest editions available

2. Hobart City Deal Southern Projects. Sub-Project 1: Southern Outlet Transit Lane Concept design Report December 2020, Revision B.

71pp. Prepared by Pitt & Sherry and WSP for the Department of State Growth

Water-marked 'Released under RTI', content heavily redacted including pp.32, 34, 37, 38, 41, 42, 43, 57,

https://www.stategrowth.tas.gov.au/_data/assets/pdf_file/0004/312367/RTI_21-22-5_-_Record_2_pt1.pdf

3. Hobart City Deal Southern Projects Sub-Project 2: Macquarie Street and Davey Street Bus Priority Traffic Impact Assessment November 2020.

67pp. Prepared by WSP for the Department of State Growth

Water-marked 'Released under RTI', Unredacted.

https://www.stategrowth.tas.gov.au/_data/assets/pdf_file/0004/321673/RTI_21-22-12_Record_6.pdf

4. Hobart City Deal Southern Projects Sub-Project 3: Kingborough Park and Ride Concept Design Report.

357pp. Undated. Watermarked "Released under RTI". Some redactions.

https://www.stategrowth.tas.gov.au/_data/assets/pdf_file/0005/321683/RTI_21-22-12_Record_10.pdf

5. Hobart City Deal: Southern Projects Sub-Project 4: Park-and-Ride Bus Service Model Report.

63pp. Prepared by WSP for the Department of State Growth March 2020.

Status: CONFIDENTIAL Water-marked 'Released under RTI',

https://www.stategrowth.tas.gov.au/_data/assets/pdf_file/0009/321678/RTI_21-22-12_Record_12.pdf

6. Hobart City Deal Southern Projects Sub-Project 5: T3 Enforcement Concept of Operations Report.

53pp. Prepared by WSP for the Department of State Growth August 2020

Status: CONFIDENTIAL Watermarked "Released under RTI". Some redactions.

https://www.stategrowth.tas.gov.au/_data/assets/pdf_file/0010/321679/RTI_21-22-12_Record_13.pdf

Indicative costs redacted (p15)

7. New park and ride facility opens at Firthside.

https://www.premier.tas.gov.au/site_resources/2015/additional_releases/new_park_and_ride_facility_opens_at_firthside

Media release by Michael Ferguson, Minister for Infrastructure and Transport 24 March 2022

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8. **Huntingfield Development Stage One.** (218 Building Lots)
<https://www.communities.tas.gov.au/housing/community-infrastructure/community-infrastructure-projects/land-release-projects/huntingfieldlandrelease/huntingfield-development-stage-one>
Department of Communities Website
9. **Huntingfield Development Stages Two and Three.** (470 Building Lots)
<https://www.communities.tas.gov.au/housing/community-infrastructure/community-infrastructure-projects/land-release-projects/huntingfieldlandrelease/huntingfield-development-stages-two-and-three>
Department of Communities Website