



## **Additional evidence regarding the Fifth Lane on the Southern Outlet**

During the first hearing into the fifth lane on the Southern Outlet on October 4<sup>th</sup>, Infrastructure Tasmania gave evidence that the principle rationale for proceeding with the project is that it had been a Government election commitment. However, the document produced by Infrastructure Tasmania - *"Our infrastructure future – 30 Year Infrastructure Strategy"* (2019) is completely at odds with the Government view about what needs to happen with transport in the future. (The details are covered in 1 below.)

The question that needs to be asked is, - how can the views of professional officers in Infrastructure Tasmania be ignored? Their views are so different to those of the Government in terms of what constitutes suitable transport scenarios for the future. The thirty year strategy is a serious document and more than a 'thought bubble'; it is carefully written and 67 pages in length.

The Joint Parliamentary Committee is charged with establishing that a project will (be):

- meet the identified need;
- the best solution;
- fit for purpose;
- value for money, and;
- a good use of public funds.

Based on the criteria established and published by Infrastructure Tasmania in their 30 year strategy, together with evidence tendered by community groups during the first hearing, this project fails on all counts and should not be granted permission to proceed in its current form. The problems of congestion in Hobart are well recognised and need to be solved but this project, if implemented now, would cause major problems during construction and not achieve the desired outcome.

Circular Economy Huon (CEH) is firmly of the view this project should not proceed at this time. Retain the design work that has already been completed, in case it is needed in the future, and proceed with an integrated transport pilot program in Kingborough and the Huon Valley.

In addition to discussing the implications of the 30 Year Infrastructure Strategy this submission also has sections on the over-primed civil construction industry, the challenge of construction work during the day, the disturbance caused by night-time construction, the indirect costs associated with the project, and the impact of the fifth lane on green-house-gas emissions.

## 1. Transport now and in the future

(CEH strongly recommends that members of the Committee take the opportunity to read the Infrastructure Tasmania publication; *“Our infrastructure future – 30 Year Infrastructure Strategy”* (2019).)

1.1 *“Our infrastructure future – 30 Year Infrastructure Strategy”* (2019), is an impressive publication from Infrastructure Tasmania that spells out the future strategic framework and how this impacts the provision of infrastructure in Tasmania across various fields including transport.

In the **Overview** section of the report it lists a number of criteria for developing infrastructure including:

- “building a sustainable and resilient state”;
- “taking account of climate change”;
- “the need to think and act differently”;
- “require(ing)s the sound use, management and operation of resources”;
- “adaptive ways of getting around and innovative interfaces will become hallmarks of Tasmania’s future”, and,
- “Good practice methodology is fundamental to infrastructure planning and maintenance”.

There is little if any evidence that these principles have been applied to the Southern Outlet. Instead this project comes from the old playbook of, ‘if it’s congested - build more roads’.

1.2 The **Strategic Framework** p.7 contains the following paragraph:

“Some of the opportunities are arguably not ‘infrastructure projects’. The existence of infrastructure alone does not always enable people to get from where they are to where they need to be; nor does it guarantee in all circumstances that services will be delivered in an affordable and efficient manner. Building more and bigger assets is not always the most appropriate response to infrastructure challenges and demand.”

This paragraph is exactly the position that CEH is promoting. Mobility is not just about roads, instead it is about taking an integrated approach to planning and integrating different transport systems, private and public, to improve mobility for all sections of the community.

1.3 In the section of the report - **Good Infrastructure planning and management**, there are a number of statements about the preferred basis on which infrastructure planning should be based. Below are six direct quotes from P. 12 of the document:

- *Infrastructure decisions are supported by evidence*
- *Non-infrastructure solutions will always be considered*
- *Infrastructure decision-making is aligned with settlement and land use planning*
- *Decisions about infrastructure investment are prioritised on a value for money basis*
- *Ensure (ing) that a project meets need*
- *Make (ing) sure it provides broad benefits to the community.*

Unfortunately each of the principles of good infrastructure planning and management listed above do not seem to be followed in the Southern Outlet project.

1.4 Under the section “**Live anywhere, work anywhere**” p30, 31 and 32 , there are some observations about the future of transport and the way it needs to change from hard to soft assets. These ideas are supported by CEH as they represent a new way of thinking, instead of building an extra lane in the Southern Outlet. The report states that there will be an ongoing role for cars, and CEH agrees: it goes on to say that there needs to be a mode shift to reduce congestion and improve sustainability.

*“It is anticipated that cars will have an ongoing and major role in Tasmania’s transport system. Nonetheless, it is important to be proactive in seeking to encourage mode shift from cars to other forms of passenger transport in order to enhance efficiency, reduce congestion and achieve a level of sustainability.”*

The report also talks about the importance of technology for on-demand transport and other vehicles. This is identical to the views of CEH and the previous material we have provided to the hearing about the work of data analytics companies like Liftango and Via. Unfortunately this approach is not being applied to address the congestion problem in Hobart.

In some more detail the document lays out the benefits of on-demand transport:

*“On-demand transport allows customers to access shared transport when and where they want. Existing public transport services run to a scheduled timetable or fixed routes. New technology enables transport providers to dynamically optimise a route, reducing traffic delays. Shorter waiting times and boarding times make this system more efficient. These flexible and demand-responsive point-to-point services are being piloted around the country to refine the technology to allow easier use by the customer.”*

Surely this is exactly what is needed in Hobart?

While there are many more valuable observation in the document, this section will conclude with a quote about the merits of adopting Mobility-as-a-Service.

## Mobility as a Service (MaaS)

Mobility as a Service is a new way of thinking about transport. It involves a shift away from personally- owned transportation towards mobility solutions that are consumed as a service.

MaaS is the concept that people can plan, book, and pay for all their transport needs through a single platform. MaaS systems offer customers personalised access to multiple transport modes and services, owned and operated by different mobility service providers, through an integrated digital platform for planning, booking and payment. The systems could include all local public transport modes available in their area as well as car-share, ride-share and active transport modes like bike-share and walking.

There would be no need to know about the availability of any of these individually or to create an account with each of the service providers. The customer would simply choose a MaaS provider and access all of those services as and when they need.

Given the important insights to transport presented by Infrastructure Tasmania in this report, it seems incredible that the Government would still be aiming to build a fifth lane on the Southern Outlet before taking up the 'softer' mobility options. When the 30 Year Infrastructure Strategy was published in 2019 many jurisdictions had started exploring and implementing new ways of dealing with congestion, with the rapid pace of technology innovation over the past 3 years there are now many more case studies that can help southern Tasmania implement an excellent solution to Hobart's congestion problems.

## **2. An over-primed civil construction industry**

According to a member of the Tasmanian Building and Construction Roundtable, who works in a management capacity in civil construction, the industry is already overheated. (The 'Roundtable' was established by the Department of State Growth to assist with facilitating the implementation of new construction projects.) Contracts for construction work are already going to interstate operators and they are hoping to employ local people to work at an operational level. But it is well known that the construction industry overall is short of tradespeople.

It is our understanding that the high level of construction will continue to push contract prices up further which will add to the large increases over the last 3 years. Therefore it would seem logical to hold the project until the anticipated impact of world recession starts to exert downward pressure on both materials and labour.

If the Department of State Growth is still confident about being able to deliver the project within the price and timescale being suggested, it would be expedient for the Committee to ask for them to supply the name(s) of the likely tenderers for the

project and for the Committee to make contact with them directly. This of course would become confidential information.

### **3. The challenge of day-time construction**

To build a project like the fifth lane requires heavy plant and equipment and many skilled tradespeople to work with and around the machinery. For most of the period of construction it will require lane closures to allow for any work to take place. A major challenge is that this is already a busy road and that lane closures are likely to cause long delays. While the logical time to work on the project will be during the day so that work can be done in the natural light this also coincides with the higher traffic flows. It was evident from the October 4 Hearing that the Department of State Growth were struggling to say when construction could take place and when lanes would need closing.

A more logical solution is to postpone the project until after there has been a strategic campaign to introduce an integrated travel plan to get more people onto buses, on-demand minibuses and professionally run car-pooling schemes. By taking this approach vehicle occupancy would be greater and the number of vehicles less, thus causing less congestion when lanes are closed.

### **4. The challenge of night-time construction**

During the first hearing the Department of State Growth suggested that construction could take place during the later evening and overnight. This would require the use of flood lighting. In terms of the volume of traffic, night time construction is a sensible option. However, this would be a major disruption for people living in the area. Families with young children are settling down small children from around 6.30 in the evening – the last thing they need is heavy machinery and jack hammers stopping young children from getting to sleep! What compensation payments would be required to mitigate this intrusion?

This is a major project and is almost impossible to find times when construction wouldn't impact either road users or people living on both sides of the Southern Outlet. It is a heavily built up area with a relatively high density of population. Again, the only sensible solution is to first address the issue of increasing the occupancy of vehicles so there are fewer vehicles needing to use the Outlet. It would also mean limiting heavy truck movements on the road to proscribed hours, encouraging more people to work from home for more days and improving other services in Kingston and Huonville so there is less need to travel to Hobart.

### **5. Indirect costs of building a fifth lane on the Southern Outlet**

Apart from the direct costs of building a fifth lane, and these costs seem to be less than certain, there are a range of costs that the community will have to pay either directly or via public money.

There are indirect costs associated with poor health outcomes from respiratory disease and heart attacks etc resulting in additional medical attention and hospitalisation.

The fifth lane will encourage more car ownership and this is more costly than using a mixture of public transport. Without a good transport alternative families will experience ongoing cost of living pressures which will impact their wellbeing.

More roads require more maintenance. Once completed the road will be an ongoing and increased cost on the public purse.

#### **6. The fifth lane and green-house-gas emissions.**

Ground transport is responsible for around 30% of emissions in Tasmania. The fifth lane will increase emissions both during construction and through encouraging more vehicles onto the Southern Outlet when completed. The implications of increasing GHG is well understood and the negative climatic impact is a great social, environmental and monetary cost.

Increasing vehicle emissions is counter to the intent of the Government's "*Climate Smart Tasmania – 2020 Climate Change Strategy*" (2013) which set a clear vision of cleaner and more efficient transport systems including public transport.

It is also at odds with the Government's "*Climate Action 21 Report Card*". This document outlines the importance of "*promoting the use of electric vehicles and alternative forms of transport, and optimising the use of existing vehicles*", (i.e. car-pooling).

Building the fifth lane on the Southern Outlet runs counter to the Tasmanian clean and green branding. If, instead we adopted an integrated transport strategy, increasing bus usage, on-demand transport, car-pooling and active transport our image would be bolstered.

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