

Bus transport system in Southern Tasmania.

From my perspective as a former Metro Tasmania employee for twenty years, I offer the following for your consideration. The main content of this document is based on information that is freely available on the internet or sourced from Annual Reports. I don't believe any confidential or sensitive information is included.

During my service from 1991 to 2011, there has never been a complete overhaul of all Hobart bus services at the same time. Selected areas have been given attention from time to time and special projects such as Doorstoppers in New Town, Warrane and Chigwell and Hail & Ride in some other selected suburbs, but all have been done in isolation without considering the entire network.

Many of the routes operating today closely match those operating in the 1980's or earlier.

The most significant work done recently was the Eastern Shore Review, but again apart from a small number of areas, many services remained virtually unchanged except for route numbers and destination time changes. The best features are:

- Buses to and from Seven Mile Beach and Lauderdale not travelling via Clarendon Vale & Rokeby (more direct, quicker trips).
- Quicker travelling times to parts of Mornington and Geilston Bay
- Improved access to Rosny Park (Eastlands), and
- More evenly spaced headways to and from Clarence Street – Hobart and Eastlands – Hobart.

All services and timetables developed must comply with the service standards as determined by DIER, which I understand to be based on population densities as indicated by the Census reports.

Also, the size of the bus fleet, kilometres travelled, both in-service and direct running and manpower (roster) costs also impact on the total budget. The Eastern Shore Review and in fact virtually all changes made in the last 20 years have been made with these considerations in mind.

The most recent changes of which I am aware are the Channel services, which despite the Legends being tidied up still have a lot of route variations. I have an issue with the timetable which has a column that states "Look for Bus Number.." which includes legends for School Term or School Vacation. I am sure most buses would not display the "S" or "V" on the front of the vehicle. This could create confusion for customers not familiar with the system.

Last year, 2011, due to insufficient running time on the X1 and Route 42 services, timetable modifications were made. The effect on passengers on the X1 service was minimal but it had a big

effect on trip linkings and dead running. Changes to the route 42 timetable were made in isolation to all the other Main Road/ New Town Road services (Routes 28, 31, 32, 34, 36, 37 & 38) thus producing a result of imbalanced spacing of services. For example where previously buses would depart Glenorchy Bus Station inward at even ten minute intervals (assuming all buses ran on time) they now depart at varying intervals from 3 to 20 minutes apart that results in bunching and longer waits for customers. (old 3.45, 3.55, 4.05, new 3.45, 4.05, 4.08 and old 4.25, 4.35, 4.45, new 4.25, 4.45, 4.48.)

In Hobart around 136 buses are used in the peaks during school term and just under 100 in school vacation. Therefore almost 40 are dedicated school buses or service trips that run on school days only (some school runs disguised as service runs). It would be helpful to the entire network if there were fewer buses that took students from one side of Hobart to another and whilst the Tasmanian Government are taking steps to encourage students to attend their local schools, time will show how successful this will be and what resources can be saved.

In my experience, the services that run along densely populated areas past shops and schools etc. at good (high) frequencies work the best, (compare New Town Road with Park St.)

In short, I think we should aim for better frequencies along the main arterial roads to reduce waiting times and increase patronage. Buses should make minimal diversions down side streets and route maps should not resemble a bowl of spaghetti.

The arterial roads I think should be targeted are;

- New Town / Main Road to at least Berriedale or Claremont.
- Augusta Road / Lenah Valley Road (provide 15 minute frequency instead of 30 minute)
- Brooker Highway to Elwick Road (use 'outer suburb' buses as expresses.)
- East Derwent Highway to Golf Links Road
- Cambridge Road to Mornington
- Clarence St to Shoreline
- Sandy Bay Road to Tarooma
- Cascade Road, South Hobart

Also provide Express buses via the Southern Outlet to Kingston, Blackmans Bay and beyond.

Every attempt should be made to provide a faster service from the outer suburbs and in fact any location beyond 12 – 15 kilometres from Hobart.

A frequent service for the University both via Sandy Bay Road and Regent St is also warranted.

Services to inner areas not close to an arterial road should have direct access to Hobart City in the peaks and a local service inter-peaks, evenings and weekends. (For example West Hobart to North Hobart and West Moonah to Glenorchy and/or Moonah)

As not all passengers are destined for Hobart City, some cross-suburban services are desirable, however due to street system restrictions with topography, to get from North to South or South to East, one needs to travel via the city, so instead of all buses terminating in the city, I would like to

see alternate buses, say from the Main Road corridor, continuing on to the Eastern Shore (at least Eastlands) or the Southern Suburbs (Sandy Bay-Taroona or Kingston-Blackmans Bay.)

Similarly, alternate buses from the Southern suburbs could continue on to either the Eastern Shore or northern suburbs and buses from the Eastern Shore could alternately continue on to the South or North.

Adelaide and Canberra have good examples of through-city services.

I believe we missed an opportunity recently with the introduction of Greencard and the INIT ticketing system to obtain a tag-on tag-off system which would give much more accurate data for researching patronage and passenger movements.

Having undertaken Monash University's short course in Public transport Planning and otherwise reading widely on the subject, I think the main points to consider when considering changing or creating new bus services are;

- Shorter waiting times and faster trips (attempt to keep within 10 minutes more than the equivalent trip by car.
- Don't take "Cooks tours" of suburbs en route – keep as direct as possible
- Use clean and comfortable vehicles.
- Keep timetables accurate and routes uncomplicated and in an easy to read format. Regular times past the hour or 'clock' times are easy to remember.
- Minimise transfers in peak periods and where transfers are necessary ensure connections are made.

Two of several other factors that impact on bus patronage are car parking availability and cost, which is particularly cheap in Hobart compared to other Australian capital cities and the use of Bus Only lanes and Bus traffic signals which is underutilized in Hobart at present.

Time restrictions do not permit me to go into further details here and I haven't had the time to produce a detailed plan, but I am confident the buses that are on-road today could be deployed with greater efficiency and productivity to provide a service to 21st century standards for our beautiful city.

Thank You

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