

**Submission to: LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL SELECT COMMITTEE: GREATER HOBART TRAFFIC CONGESTION**

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**Greater Hobart traffic congestion and one solution**

Traffic congestion in Greater Hobart happens on feeder roads and in the CBD at peak hours when people are going to work and returning home from work in the CBD, mostly via cars.

I work in the Hobart CBD 4 days a week and I commute from Kingston by Metro bus, so I witness traffic congestion at peak hours first hand.

I choose to travel by bus because I believe it is vital to keep carbon dioxide and nitrous oxide emissions to a minimum. A Metro bus can take 60 passengers, but most of the cars that I see passing the bus on the Southern Outlet only have one occupant.

I also find it more relaxing to travel by bus.

Most people travel into or out of the Hobart CBD, not across it. A 2012 report by consultants GHD for the Department of Infrastructure, Energy and Resources supplied to the Hobart City Council (HCC) showed that only 14% of traffic on the main feeder roads was through traffic travelling across the CBD.

Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) data from Census Day in 2016 noted that:

*...5.2% of employed people in Greater Hobart used public transport...as at least one of their methods of travel to work and 70.3% used car (either as driver or passenger)(ABS 2016 Census QuickStats, Greater Hobart)*

Although Hobart has a very poorly developed public transport system compared to other Australian capital cities, the majority of commuters in other capital city catchment areas with good public transport networks also choose to travel to work by car.

Across Australia on Census Day in 2016:

*Of the 9.2 million commuters...79% travelled to work by private vehicle, 14% took public transport and 5.2% either cycled or walked... (ABS 2071.0.55.001)*

Although Greater Hobart sorely needs a much improved public transport network, these statistics reveal that even if it is greatly improved, the majority of people will still choose to travel by car.

To me this points to the fact that the Tasmanian Government, and indeed other state governments as well, need to look towards congestion tax models to get commuters out of their cars and into public transport. Hitting the hip pockets of commuters as a deterrent to travelling by car is the logical way to go. While it is relatively cheap and easy to drive a car, people will keep driving and there will still be traffic congestion.

In February 2003 a congestion charge was imposed on car drivers going into central London in the United Kingdom on weekdays (there are some exemption categories; for example taxis and disabled drivers). The charge stands today at \$AUS21.00 and is levied on drivers entering the zone between 7am and 6pm on weekdays. It has been hugely successful:

*...Between 2002 and 2014, the number of private cars coming into the [central London congestion] zone fell by 39%... (Badstuber, Nicole, London congestion charge: what worked, what didn't, what next, *The Conversation*, April 11, 2019)*

Building tunnels, bypasses and extra lanes is not the way to go for Greater Hobart.

Getting private cars off the roads and improving public transport is essential to reduce traffic congestion and to lower emissions in the face of rapidly advancing climate change.

### **Other matters – kunanyi /Mt Wellington – Pinnacle road traffic congestion**

kunanyi is Tasmania's third most popular tourist attraction and the most visited natural attraction.

In 2015-2016 approximately 445,000 people visited the mountain one or more times (Poll M & Wild A, March 2017, kunanyi / Mount Wellington: Visitation to the Mountain. Report prepared for the City of Hobart by Natural Acumen, Hobart).

The ever-increasing tourist numbers and resultant overcrowding, traffic congestion and shortage of parking, particularly at the Pinnacle and the Springs, can turn a visit to the mountain into an unpleasant experience for many visitors and locals.

Traffic congestion on Pinnacle Road is no longer confined to a few busy holiday periods.

I fail to understand why full-size (57seater) tour buses are permitted on Pinnacle Road. They contribute to traffic congestion and two of these buses hardly have room to pass when they meet on some sections of the road. This was the response from HCC Traffic Engineering when this issue was raised:

*...These are vehicles [57 seater buses] that are legally able to drive on Pinnacle Road without need for any special permits or permissions. To prevent these vehicles from using Pinnacle Road would require a statutory ban, implemented via State Government approval. Such bans are able to be implemented (for example in Hobart, a ban was implemented on Proctors Road after two separate fatal crashes involving heavy vehicles). On Pinnacle Road there is no history of crashes that would justify such a ban... There is also no other viable access to the Mt Wellington summit for the large number of tourists who wish to enjoy the attraction...(Email from Owen Gervasoni, Senior Engineer, Roads and Traffic, Traffic Engineering, HCC to Jane Wilson 16 April 2018)*

Crossing Pinnacle Road at Middle Springs is hazardous for pedestrians. There is a long overdue need for a pedestrian crossing here, for a reduced speed limit in the vicinity of the Springs zone, and more prominent signage to warn drivers they are approaching a pedestrian zone.

*A Road Safety Audit of Pinnacle Road* was completed by the HCC Traffic Engineering Section in early 2018. To the best of my knowledge it has not yet been made available to aldermen or the general public.

In 2018, The HCC licenced a new operator to run a mountain shuttle bus service. This is a good service but it is sufficiently expensive that it is unlikely to attract anyone with access to a car, thus it won't help to reduce Pinnacle Road traffic congestion.

To tackle this issue the HCC needs to look towards implementing a cheaper shuttle bus service such as that which operates at Cradle Mountain. On very busy days the congestion could be monitored and such a shuttle bus deployed when needed whilst restricting the number of private cars accessing the mountain. Associated with this is the requirement for a large car park at the shuttle bus terminus. The HCC has recently undertaken to investigate the Halls Saddle quarry site as a visitor centre and parking site and this has potential to be a suitable location.

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