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Submission to the

LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL SELECT COMMITTEE

On

GREATER HOBART TRAFFIC CONGESTION

On behalf of the Tasmanian Parliamentary Labor Party.

The issue of traffic congestion in the Greater Hobart area and the problems it creates for commuters, industry and tourist traffic alike is one of the key issues confronting Southern Tasmania.

Traffic congestion has a massive impact on liveability and our economic productivity.

The Tasmanian Labor Party is consulting widely on these issues and is in the policy formulation phase of that consultation process in the lead up to the next State election in 2022.

We will have a comprehensive policy to put before the Tasmanian people.

With that in mind, we make the following comments in addressing the Terms of Reference.

Terms of Reference —

- (1) The scope of Greater Hobart's traffic congestion and its impact on the community and economy;

Our capital city is in desperate need of a long-term plan to alleviate congestion. It requires short-term action to ease the current pressure with a stepped-out plan for the future. Failure to act now will turn Hobart into a gridlocked and broken city, failing to meet expectations of its citizens and visitors.

Time is our most valuable resource, particularly for working people. Traffic snarls erode our time to relax, to be with our children and simply get things done. In the past four years, people in Hobart have been spending far too much time stuck in traffic.

If the Government does not act soon, the benefits and advantages of living and working in Hobart will evaporate. Failure to act will also have a massive impact on the state's economic productivity.

There are regular and unnecessary instances of congestion in the greater Hobart area. If just one car breaks down in the city, on the Brooker Highway, on the Tasman Bridge or on the Southern Outlet, the capital often is reduced to gridlock.

In terms of commuters from the Sorell, Clarence, Kingborough, Huon, Glenorchy, Derwent and Brighton Municipalities there are regular instances of extended delays and slow moving traffic on the Tasman Highway, the Brooker Highway, the Southern Outlet and extending to the Huon and Channel Highways. This all adds to the time people are away from work and their families and reduces the ability of industry to move their products/produce into and through our capital city. All of these issues add to the cost of living for families, costs for businesses and quality of life for all.

(2) Causes of congestion, including physical and topographical barriers;

Hobart has its challenges. We have a CBD squeezed between a river and a mountain. The river is wide with a harbour that restricts our ability to cross and we have more than 70 per cent of people coming into the small CBD from the Clarence, Kingborough, Glenorchy and municipalities beyond.

Hobart, with an increasing population and growing popularity with tourists, which brings with it wonderful benefits but also creates challenges and quite simply, our infrastructure is failing to keep up.

The nature of our road system funnels traffic into the city towards the Macquarie and Davey Street couplets that become very congested, this combined with bottle necks such as the Tasman Bridge, the Southern Outlet and the Brooker Highway provide no options for traffic to be easily dispersed.

Solutions proposed outside of the Hobart CBD without a combined CBD and regional solution is literally just kicking the problem down the road.

- (3) Strategic planning processes between Commonwealth, State and Local governments;

There is a lack of co-ordination between these tiers of Government; this is highlighted by the failure of the City Deal to make any meaningful impact on a shared vision for the future, a coherent and supported approach with dealing with the issue of congestion.

- (4) Future Initiatives to address Traffic congestion in the Greater Hobart Area

It is worth stating again that if the Government does not act soon the benefits and advantages of living and working in Hobart will evaporate. Failure to act will also have a massive impact on the state's economic productivity.

The strategy must be comprehensive, with complementary strategies that ensure we can move around our city and region with the least of amount of anguish and stress.

Some of them are infrastructure upgrades to alleviate key congestion points such as the Southern Outlet, Davey and Macquarie streets intersections, as well as the Sandy Bay Davey St intersection. The potential use of underpasses to reduce queuing at lights must be considered at these points and potentially other key points on Macquarie and Davey streets.

Upgrades must occur where the Domain Highway meets the Brooker Highway.

An integrated public transport service including buses, light rail and ferries must be planned and investment provided – the proviso being that an integrated service must be reliable, time efficient, affordable and able to meet the needs of the students and families travelling to and from appointments, work, schools and the University.

An integrated service will also require comprehensive town planning and consultation with Councils to ensure the benefits of public transport corridors facilitate medium density housing, commercial, retail and educational developments to further reduce future impacts of population growth.

The Tasman Bridge is under enormous pressure and planning for how we build capacity across the river at this point must commence.

Alternative working arrangements for public servants must also be considered to assist in taking volume out of the network at peak travel times.

No single idea alone will resolve the situation, but combined, they will add up to a far more efficient and user-friendly commuter experience.

(5) Any other matters incidental hitherto.

N/A