



Tasmania
Level 3, 124 Exhibition Street
Melbourne, 3000

T: (03) 9654 3777
E: vic@planning.org.au
W: planning.org.au/vic

ABN 34 151 601 937

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The Secretary
Legislative Council Select Committee – GHT
Legislative Council
Parliament House, HOBART 7000
By email: ght@parliament.tas.gov.au

LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL SELECT COMMITTEE - GREATER HOBART TRAFFIC CONGESTION

Planning Institute of Australia (PIA) Tasmania Division welcomes the opportunity to make this submission to the Committee.

GREATER HOBART'S TRAFFIC CONGESTION AND ITS IMPACT ON THE COMMUNITY AND ECONOMY

Greater Hobart is experiencing a relatively rapid urban growth, with low density residential development in outer dormitory suburbs, with Hobart's central business area acting as the focal point for employment, services, entertainment, retail, and education. Building or purchasing a home on the urban fringes is perceived as more affordable but results in greater travel distances, as evidenced by the Origin Destination survey undertaken by the Department of State Growth.

The reliance on motor vehicles across Greater Hobart not only impacts on the environment but has growing impacts on both the economy and the health, inclusiveness and accessibility of its residents. Infrastructure Australia has recently published a report analysing the cost of road congestion across Australia. Whilst Hobart is not specifically considered, the report *Urban Transport Crowding and Congestion*¹, finds the cost of congestion will almost triple nationally from 2016 to 2031.

It is anticipated that without increasing the focus on managing existing infrastructure assets and improving strategic transport planning, Greater Hobart may experience similar increases to the cost of congestion.

Recent research has indicated that congestion has an increasing impact on mental and physical health. It has been reported that in the United States, sitting in congestion has been found to increase the rate of domestic violence by up to 6%². The Heart Foundation in Tasmania published the *Healthy by*

¹ <https://www.infrastructureaustralia.gov.au/sites/default/files/2019-08/Urban%20Transport%20Crowding%20and%20Congestion.pdf>

² <https://qz.com/909319/when-there-are-traffic-jams-theres-also-an-alarming-rise-in-domestic-violence/>

Design guideline in 2010 which advocates for increasing active and public transport modes as a way to increase physical health and reduce the risk of heart disease³.

Any improvement to transportation across Greater Hobart must consider inclusiveness and accessibility. Transport is also considered one of the biggest barriers to work in Greater Hobart⁴, especially for young people entering the workforce. Recommendations and actions to improve the integration and connectedness of the existing transport network with land use planning within the State Government's Transport Access Strategy⁵ should be considered.

Furthermore, transport is now the subsector which is attributed to the largest greenhouse gas emissions in Tasmania⁶. Tasmania currently has, on average, the oldest passenger vehicles in Australia—an average of 12.3 years old—resulting in many being made before more stringent emission standards⁷.

CAUSES OF CONGESTION, INCLUDING PHYSICAL AND TOPOGRAPHICAL BARRIERS

Increases in population living on the urban fringe limit options for reliable transport into the city. Yet car-based transport has been shown to be increasingly unreliable in Hobart⁸ and is at times approaching capacity⁹. Some roads in Hobart's CBD including Macquarie Street are even occasionally losing capacity due to an oversaturation of motor vehicle use in the afternoon peak¹⁰.

Hobart's location and topographical constraints increase the complexity of the planning of transport options, however Hobart and indeed Tasmania are not alone in the nation when it comes to the current challenges of growth and infrastructure planning.

STRATEGIC PLANNING PROCESSES BETWEEN THE COMMONWEALTH, STATE AND LOCAL GOVERNMENTS.

Nationally PIA has strongly endorsed a federal parliamentary inquiry's call for the development of a national plan of settlement to help guide the growth of Australia's cities and regions. The Standing Committee on Infrastructure, Transport and Cities made the recommendation in its report into the Australian government's role in the development of cities tabled on 17 September 2018.

At that time, PIA National President Brendan Nelson said rising community frustration at the nationally disjointed growth of our cities and regions meant governments and policy-makers needed to consider new ways to ensure that Australia's cities and regions remained some of the most liveable in the world. *"It's clear we're reaching a tipping point in terms of the pressures on our cities, towns and regions,"* Mr Nelson said.

³ <https://www.heartfoundation.org.au/images/uploads/main/Programs/Tasmania-healthy-by-design.pdf>

⁴ <https://www.abc.net.au/news/2019-08-29/neysan-applied-for-140-jobs-but-did-not-get-a-single-interview/11462376>

⁵ https://www.stategrowth.tas.gov.au/__data/assets/pdf_file/0007/174076/Transport_Access_Strategy.PDF

⁶ http://www.dpac.tas.gov.au/__data/assets/pdf_file/0009/375858/Tasmanian_Greenhouse_Gas_Accounts_2016_Report.pdf p.12

⁷ <http://www.abc.net.au/news/2018-08-02/tasmanians-driving-oldest-cars-in-the-nation/10055930>

⁸ https://www.tomtom.com/en_gb/trafficindex/city/hobart

⁹ https://www.transport.tas.gov.au/__data/assets/pdf_file/0011/132986/Hobart_Traffic_Congestion_-_Traffic_Analysis.pdf p.18

¹⁰ https://www.transport.tas.gov.au/__data/assets/pdf_file/0011/132986/Hobart_Traffic_Congestion_-_Traffic_Analysis.pdf p.18

PIA believes it is important to recognise that the challenges around the current state of congestion in Greater Hobart are inextricably linked to broader strategic planning issues including importantly settlement strategy, from the national level, through State, regional and down to the local level.

It is understood that the Government intends to create a suite of State Planning Policies including a Settlement and Liveable Communities Planning Policy however the detail and implementation timeframe is unclear.

Currently there are a number of existing strategies that guide land use decisions in the Greater Hobart area, primarily the *Southern Tasmanian Regional Land Use Strategy (STRLUS)*; for transportation the *Southern Integrated Transport Plan*, the *City of Hobart Transport Strategy 2018-2030* and the State Government's *Transport and Access Strategy*.

Currently the STRLUS provides the existing framework for settlement including an Urban Growth Boundary for the region, Planning Schemes within the region are required to be consistent with this Strategy, however it has been recognised at both Local and State Government levels that the current regional strategies including STRLUS are in need of review.

Unfortunately, the State Government has indicated that, barring minor amendment, review of the STRLUS will not occur in the short term. PIA considers that to effectively plan for improvement in the mobility of Greater Hobart, a coordinated settlement strategy possibly through the proposed Planning Policies, and the review of the STRLUS is necessary. The settlement strategy should include consideration of jobs growth as a spatial element, given where people work is as important as where they live in planning for transportation. A State Planning Policy which considers housing density and public transport should also be an aspect of a state-wide strategy, to consider the dwelling density required to sustain a public transport system along key routes.

PIA would therefore like to advocate for outcomes that consider the broader land use issues, to guide the region's growth, rather than concentrating on ad-hoc interventions. Stronger collaborations between all levels of government, possibly through the *Greater Hobart Act 2019*, could improve existing siloed strategic planning and infrastructure delivery at the local government level.

FUTURE INITIATIVES TO ADDRESS TRAFFIC CONGESTION IN THE GREATER HOBART AREA

Initiatives to address traffic congestion in Greater Hobart can be broken into two categories, infrastructure/physical and policy based improvements.

Policy based changes include:

1. The development of a settlement strategy to provide certainty as to where future populations will be located and how they will be accommodated, through coordinated Commonwealth and State Government actions.
2. Development and implementation of the Tasmanian Planning Policies to guide a state-wide approach to settlement, growth and transport (including public transport).

3. Resourcing of data collection implementation of the review of the Southern Tasmanian Regional Land Use Strategy.
4. Consideration of schemes used elsewhere to share the benefits of infill development across all councils. This can be done through providing disincentives for land banking while at the same time providing potential revenue to assist with construction of park and ride or other public transport infrastructure. Examples like the Metropolitan Region Improvement Fund in Western Australia, or congestion charging in cities like Stockholm and London should be considered.

With respect to infrastructure:

1. Review existing infrastructure to determine capacity levels of all roads and public transport services and how these assets might be better managed through Traffic Demand Management principles.
2. Consider inclusion of performance indicators or targets for increased usage in service contracts for Metro and private bus service providers, to create incentives for providers.
3. Consider the use of bus and transit lanes for specific routes and bus priority measures at intersections to improve network flow and travel time.
4. Consider the implementation of public transport network along the existing rail corridor (eg light rail or bus rapid transport) as not only a transportation measure but also to facilitate land use goals as well as improving access and inclusion throughout Greater Hobart.
5. Consider free public transport incentives on existing Metro services within specified routes or areas, to encourage greater participation levels and create commuter mode shift.
6. Review car parking requirements within the State Planning Provisions of the Tasmanian Planning Scheme, to consider either the reduction of minimum requirements or inclusion of maximum requirements, in specific areas or for appropriate uses, to deter reliance on private car use.

PIA Tasmania would welcome the opportunity to be part of any further consultation or involvement in the Committee's considerations.

Yours sincerely



Alex Brownlie

Planning Institute of Australia, Tasmanian President