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The Secretary  
Legislative Council Select Committee – Greater Hobart Traffic Congestion  
Legislative Council  
Parliament House  
HOBART TAS 7000

Dear Sir / Madam,

**RE: Sorell Council Submission – Greater Hobart Traffic Congestion**

Thank you for the opportunity to provide this submission to the Select Committee. Traffic congestion impacts to the south-east region have increased significantly over the past ten years across commuter, business and tourism road users. Understandably the effects of this congestion on economic, community, education and reputational factors are widespread.

The Sorell municipality has experienced the highest population growth rate in Tasmania from 2013 to 2018. Current Treasury Department population forecasts to 2038 indicate Sorell will continue to experience ongoing growth at nearly six times the state average, per annum. This is in addition to strong tourism/visitor numbers accessing the region (Hobart Airport growth is 5% per annum).

The four south-east Councils that comprise the South East Region Development Association ("SERDA") completed an evidence based 10 year regional Economic Infrastructure Strategy in 2015 (Glamorgan Spring Bay, Clarence, Tasman and Sorell). The Strategy identified supporting infrastructure for a range of economic infrastructure opportunities, took into account the key demographic and economic modelling that underpins the growth requirements and provided a staging framework.

One key finding of the Strategy was that 74% of Sorell municipality residents travelled out of the region for employment and utilized private transport above the State average. The difference in peak traffic flows between School terms and School holidays is also evident.

Council has accordingly advocated for investment in better transport and education options with recent funding commitments to upgrade the Sorell School, increase public transport services from Sorell and undertake a range of transport corridor improvements welcomed as important first steps. It was hoped that improving public transport affordability was also to be addressed as part of the recent Metro service contract review that would result in better use of the service. To further change behaviour in a significant way, a dedicated public transport / T3 lane may be needed.

The provision of local employment opportunities is also a key factor in reducing demand on the transport corridor, shoring up Sorell's self-sufficiency and better functioning as the south-east service hub. Offering government and allied services (including health) would also assist in reducing travel into Hobart. A subsequent body of work carried out by SERDA was a Regional Workforce Plan in 2017 which identified a significant number and range of employment opportunities and requirements into the immediate future. In

2017 the region supported approximately 23,000 jobs with official labour force projections indicating an additional 1900-2000 jobs in the region by 2020.

The matter of coordinating the strategic planning processes across all levels of government that enable decisions to be made in a timely manner that result in targeted and appropriate public and private investment on a regional catchment basis remains, however, an inefficient work in progress. This extends to risks associated with long term infrastructure investment decisions and commitments surviving changes in three levels of government and often over very short timeframes. Not an easy scenario to rectify nor control.

The Southern Tasmania Regional Land Use Strategy (STRLUS) is nearly ten years old and was informed by data that is now 16 years old. It was never intended to be a statutory planning instrument in the manner it has become. It was intended, however, to be a live land use planning tool based on current data. The State government has advised it will be the subject of a review following the introduction of a suite of new planning policies. The policies are intended to be completed by the end of 19/20 with the STRLUS review to then commence.

A timeframe, framework and resourcing for the STRLUS review must be provided and committed to.

An associated matter to be considered is that of how the State government can ensure their agencies and agency staff are fulfilling the policy decisions of the government. As an outlying peri-urban Council, we are trying to balance our own sustainability against our local and regional role and position our operations and decision making accordingly. The State government has a population growth agenda with Sorell in a position to facilitate this in a co-ordinated and pragmatic way. There are ongoing challenges with the government's position being delivered, understood, accepted and implemented consistently across their workforce.

Contemporary land use planning for many years has supported increased population densities within inner urban areas but with controlled growth in key regional centres. It is submitted that a reliance on and expectation that affordable residential growth in Tasmania can be provided through inner urban densification is unrealistic. There is the potential for the Hobart City Deal to deliver a range of benefits, however, the effectiveness of this will require robust commitment and accountability. It is hoped the two forecast fastest growing Councils in the state to 2038 sitting on the periphery of Hobart as adjunct Councils to the City Deal, will be properly considered as part of the longer term city strategy.

If you require any matters to be further clarified, please do not hesitate to contact me on **62 69 0005**.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Robert Higgins', with a stylized flourish extending to the right.

Robert Higgins  
**GENERAL MANAGER**