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secretary@southhobart.org
ARBN: IA10232

26 August 2021

Hon Rosemary Armitage MLC
Inquiry Chair – Road Safety Select Committee
Legislative Council

c/-rst@parliament.tas.gov.au

Dear Ms Armitage and Select Committee members,

Thank you for the opportunity to make a submission to the *Legislative Council Road Safety Inquiry*. The South Hobart Sustainable Community (SHSC) has a membership of over 360 residents, and the Active Transport group has prepared this response on their behalf. We have also invited the community, via a Facebook post, to make their own submission.

Our response addresses the terms of reference, which are **‘to inquire into and report upon ways in which to improve road safety in Tasmania’**. We share your concern regarding the Tasmanian fatality rate of 6.6 deaths per 100 000 population, double that of Victoria, and that our state has seen an increased rate of serious road crashes and fatalities in the past decade.

We acknowledge that for the majority of population, cars are the most convenient form of transport. The nature of Tasmania’s main cities and dispersed settlement almost dictates cars as the main mode. Many of the factors that would significantly influence vehicle use are directly within the Tasmanian Government’s control – such as transport funding and planning, land use planning, driver licensing, road speed limits, costs of vehicle registration, road charging and lane restrictions and ownership of the public transport fleet.

We start from the premise that road safety should start with protecting the most vulnerable road users first (i.e. pedestrians and cyclists; children and aged); so switching from our current transport planning approach which seems focused on speed and convenience to one focused on safety of all road users.

It is also worth noting the extensive body of international and national studies that qualify how they have made that change to their transport systems, and recommend the 2008 article—*Making Cycling Irresistible*—which summarises how the Netherlands, Denmark and Germany achieved cycling shares of between 10 and 27 per cent by promoting safe and convenient cycling by:

- creating extensive systems of separate cycling facilities
- modifying intersections and providing traffic signal priority
- traffic calming so a wide range of people felt safe riding with motorised traffic
- investing in secure and extensive bike parking facilities
- making it easier to use bicycles and public transport
- investing in promoting cycling and educating motorists and training cyclists



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- modifying traffic laws to provide cyclists with greater protection
- making car use less convenient and more expensive.

Achieving major change required agencies to understand and address in the strategy the needs of people who don't regularly cycle. New or inexperienced cyclists are likely to require infrastructure and road conditions that provide a high degree of separation and protection from traffic, education about cycling basics and encouragement to take up cycling.

CYCLIST SAFETY INCIDENT RATES

In the last ten years 11 people have lost their lives' in Tasmania and 104 have incurred a serious injury whilst riding a bike.¹ Motor vehicles are involved in 80% of crashes that result in the death of a person riding a bike².

To reduce the number of people who get killed while riding a bike we need to create more separate spaces to ride, lower speed limits in built up areas, create smarter vehicles and put in place more supportive legislation for bike riders.



Bike rider fatalities have not reduced for 20 years, despite all other road user deaths decreasing. (Australia wide figures).

HOBART'S CYCLING RATES

Hobart City Council's "Bike Plan" had a target for the number of trips by bicycle to be 5% by the year 2002 and 10% by the year 2012³. In 2019, 1% of trips in Greater Hobart were by bicycle⁴.

According to State Growth's Active Transport Strategy most people are prepared to cycle up to 30 minutes or around 10 km to access work or education.⁵ The 2019 Greater Hobart Travel Survey found the average trip to be 8.4km.

¹ <https://www.bicyclenetwork.com.au/newsroom/2021/08/12/road-safety-that-helps-people-riding/>

² <https://www.bicyclenetwork.com.au/our-campaigns/bike-rider-fatalities/>

³ www.hobartcity.com.au/Council/Strategies-and-plans/Bike-plan

⁴ www.transport.tas.gov.au/__data/assets/pdf_file/0009/263466/Greater_Hobart_Household_Travel_Survey.pdf

⁵ www.stategrowth.tas.gov.au/__data/assets/pdf_file/0004/88780/Tasmanian_walking_and_cycling_for_active_transport_strategy.PDF



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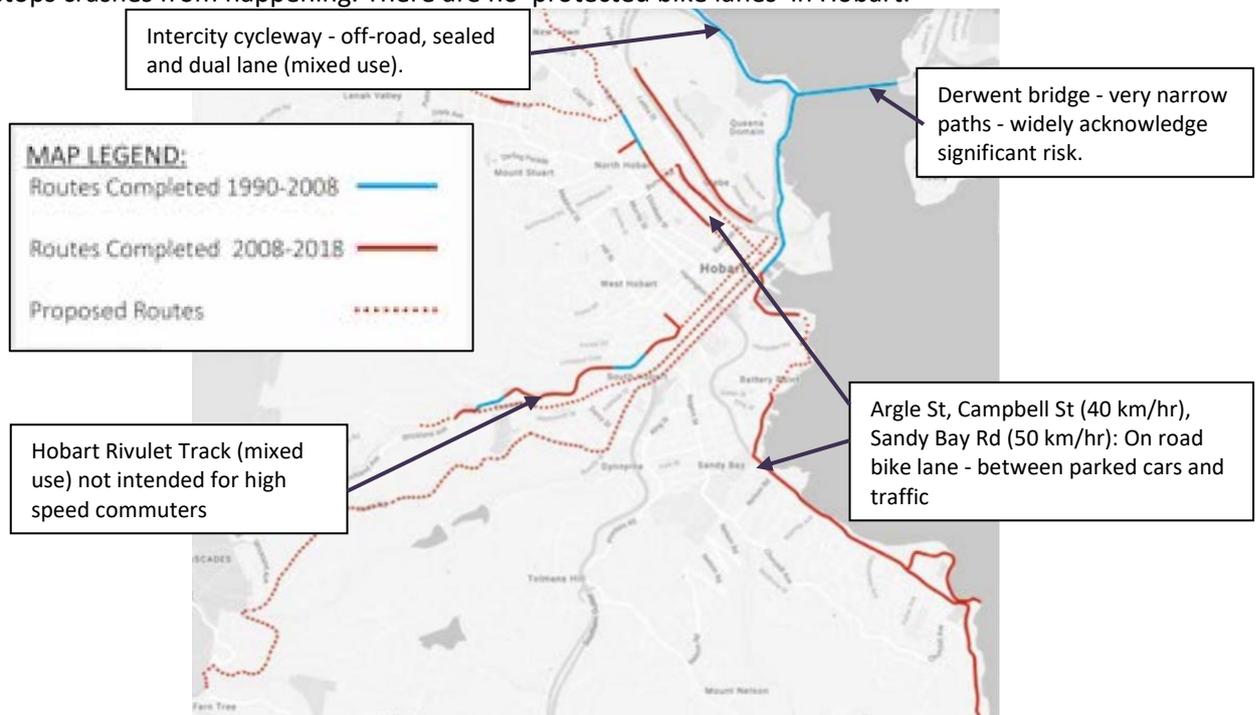
With electric bikes becoming popular, people are becoming even more willing to commute by bicycle. However, many reports cite road safety as being major deterrent when people choose not cycle.⁶

HOBART'S BIKE LANES

Between 2008 - 2018 approximately 15km of bike tracks have been created in Hobart, the majority being painted lanes (where bikes often travel between parked cars and traffic moving at 50km/hr).

Parked cars present significant risks to cyclists due to the possibility of a car door opening; this is called 'dooring'. In Victoria between July 2011 and June 2016, according to VicRoads, **there were 771 car doorings involving bike riders**. Of these two were fatalities and 177 were serious injuries.⁷

Protected bike lanes that put a physical barrier between people driving cars and people on bikes stops crashes from happening. There are no 'protected bike lanes' in Hobart.



Hobart Bike Lanes - Proposed and existing⁸

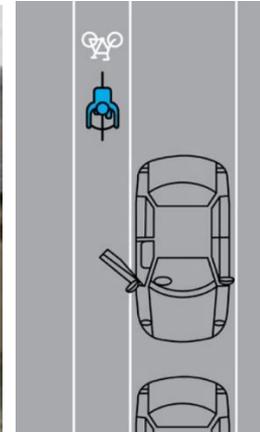
⁶www.australasiantransportresearchforum.org.au/sites/default/files/2008_Bauman_Rissel_Garrard_Ker_Spiedel_Fishman.pdf

⁷ https://www.bicyclenetwork.com.au/our-campaigns/doorings/

⁸ https://www.hobartcity.com.au/files/content/public/council/strategies-and-plans/city-of-hobart-transport-strategy-2018-30/transport-strategy-themes-doc.pdf



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Sandy Bay Road bike lane - constructed 2014-16. Showing risks typical of Hobart's painted bike lanes. The cyclist is exposed to both a 'dooring risk' and minimal space. Many cars do not provide a 1m overtaking gap when overtaking. The speed limit is 50 km/hr.

SOUTH HOBART - CONDITIONS AND RISKS

South Hobart has one of the highest commuter cycling rates in the country with 7% of people commuting by bike, compared to 1% in Greater Hobart and 1% in Greater Melbourne (2016 Census).

The number of cyclists in South Hobart has increased from 2% in 2001. We believe this is, in part, due to the improved Hobart Rivulet Track conditions providing a safe riding experience. This is in contrast to some of the other inner Hobart suburbs where cycling doesn't even register on ABS Quick Stats at 4%, such as North Hobart, West Hobart (3%), New Town and Sandy Bay.

We also note South Hobart has a high walking rate - comprising 15% of journeys to work (2016 Census). This has remained fairly stable over time, with only a marginal increase from 14% in 2001. Obviously the proximity to major employment generators such as the CBD and UTAS campus is a significant factor, with the lower half of the suburb being within a 30 minute walk.

Hobart Rivulet Track

The Hobart Rivulet Track was upgraded in 2015-16 and is a largely unsealed 2.6 km track from Cascade Brewery to Hobart CBD. Many cyclists and pedestrians use the Rivulet Track to commute. The 2011 Hobart Rivulet Strategic Master Plan states the track was never intended for high speed commuter traffic and recommends to investigate improvements for Cascade Road⁹.

Macquarie St, Cascade Road and Strickland Avenue

Many cyclists use the Hobart Rivulet Track to commute, however a consistent stream of cyclists use Cascade Road for their commute. Cascade Road is faster, is more direct and has better links to surrounding suburbs. Also, many do not feel safe on Rivulet Track after dark.

⁹ <https://www.hobartcity.com.au/files/assets/public/strategies-and-plans/hob-riv-park-strat-mast-plan.pdf>



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On Macquarie Street, Cascade Road, cyclists are exposed cars travelling at 50km/hr (with many travelling faster), trucks travelling to and from Cascade Brewery, a 'dooring' risk from parked cars and an uneven road surface. It is notable that City of Hobart has invested in “raised threshold crossings” at five street intersections on the southern side of Macquarie Street between D’Arcy St and Southern Outlet.

This road treatment not only improves accessibility for pedestrians, but people on mobility devices, wheelchairs and prams, and acts as a visual cue for motorists that pedestrians have a legitimacy in the road corridor. This should be the default construction in local shopping districts and on new estates, or reconstruction of urban and suburban roads, to encourage more walking/accessibility.



Elboden St and Macquarie St junction “raised threshold” treatment - constructed 2019.

Strickland Avenue is a narrow and windy road with long stretches with no footpaths, and minimal street lighting. The speed limit is 50km/hr.

146 cyclists were recorded on the Hobart Rivulet Track and 100 on Macquarie Street during the 2019 nationwide commuter count.¹⁰

South Hobart Primary School

Bicycles are a great way to provide children with independence, transport and exercise. Yet 16% of car trips in Hobart are for the school drop off / pick up¹¹; many parents do not think our roads are safe for cycling.

¹⁰ <https://www.bicyclenetwork.com.au/our-services/transport-surveys-and-data/data-dashboard/>

¹¹ www.transport.tas.gov.au/__data/assets/pdf_file/0009/263466/Greater_Hobart_Household_Travel_Survey.pdf



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South Hobart Primary School is located adjacent to the Rivulet Track and many children use the rivulet to travel to school and 'cargo bikes' becoming more popular for parents. However, many of those living without direct access to the Rivulet Track, are not comfortable with allowing their children to cycle. School drop-offs by car still significantly contribute to congestion around the school.

WAYS TO IMPROVE ROAD SAFETY IN SOUTH HOBART (with potential for successful initiatives to be applied throughout Tasmania)

We should be protecting the most vulnerable road users, some of the most effective ways to do so are discussed below.

Segregated bike lanes

One of the most effective interventions to protect people riding is to separate them as much as possible from larger vehicles. While there is Austroads advice to separate people on bicycles from vehicles once traffic volumes and speed reach a certain point, very few places in Tasmania do so.

Speed limits

Speeding is a great risk for vulnerable road users. A person hit by a vehicle travelling at 30 km/h has a 90% chance of survival, at 40 km/h it's 60% and at 50 km/h it's 10%. One of the simplest ways to improve the safety of vulnerable road users is to reduce speed limits. Making 40km/h a default in shopping districts and high foot traffic areas would be a logical first action.

Truck safety

Nearly one-quarter of crashes where cyclists die in Australia involve heavy vehicles, and this statistic has not changed for the past 20 years. We'd like to see more safety devices on heavy vehicles that reduce these blind spots, and better education of drivers and cyclists/pedestrians.

Enforcement of safe passing distance laws

We'd like to see police forces actively enforce minimum passing distance laws through activities like Operation Close Pass, which are used in countries like the UK. This uses footage taken from police cars or motorbikes, or by police officers on bicycles with the technology and backup to catch drivers who are breaking the law.

Better funding models

The Tasmanian government does not have a dedicated funding stream for such infrastructure, with project funding and one-off cycling infrastructure funds announced during election campaigns and varying in size each time. There needs to be an ongoing fund to retrofit separated cycling infrastructure to state and council-owned roads. We endorse the State budget recommendation by peak body Bicycle Network Tasmania for a funding commitment of \$20 per person (\$10.8m for 2021-22) to enable the significant ongoing investment in tackling this task to begin.^{12 13}

¹² <https://www.bicyclenetwork.com.au/newsroom/2021/08/12/road-safety-that-helps-people-riding/>

¹³ <https://www.bicyclenetwork.com.au/our-campaigns/submissions/tas-budget-1921-22/>



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CONCLUSIONS

We believe that cyclists in South Hobart, and wider Hobart, are put at unreasonable levels of risks. A significant number of cyclists travel along Cascade Road; a road with 50 km/hr speed limit (with cars routinely going faster than this) and frequent buses and trucks from the Cascade Brewery. On Strickland Avenue there is no footpath and the road is narrow and winding.

We ask the Legislative Council to ensure there is greater leadership, direction and incentives to implement safe options for cyclists. With improved cycling and pedestrian infrastructure, more people will cycle and walk. This will lessen burden on the climate and on congested streets.

Our group is keen to attend the public inquiry in support of our submission, and can be contacted via secretary@southhobart.org

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Anna Blake', is written over a light blue horizontal line.

Anna Blake

Convenor, Active Transport group – on behalf of South Hobart Sustainable Community