From: Liz Smith
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To: Climate Change
Subject: Submission on transport emissions reduction draft plan

Categories:

Emissions Reduction and Resilience Plan – Transport

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Reduction of emissions from transport in Tasmania must be one of the most important steps towards making genuine cuts to fossil fuel emissions in the state.

The importance of moving forward with this Plan cannot be overstated in view of the dramatic changes in the world's weather as climate systems breakdown and extreme weather events continue to increase in frequency and severity.

Everything that we can do must contribute.

I am concerned that the Plan does not demonstrate the sense of the urgency that is now essential. Every state must rapidly contribute to reducing emissions – and the effects of the GHG that is in the atmosphere now will continue to be felt for centuries to come.

A plan to reduce GHG emissions must demonstrate immediate actions, each with a time frame and a target to be adhered to.

Despite its importance, the emphasis on converting ICE cars to EVs is not egalitarian and efforts to reduce costs to the those on lower incomes must be made. In order to make the transition to EVs there should be widespread introduction of electric minibuses that allow flexible services, so that public transport genuinely becomes mobility as a service. Technology to provide on-demand services is now available and could significantly reduce (though not eliminate) the use of private cars, especially for commuting into Hobart and other major centres.

Obviously, this would come at a public cost, but it would reduce the need for increased road infrastructure. The introduction of an integrated transport strategy, such as the draft developed by Circular Economy Huon, and allocation of a contract to a data analytics

company such as Liftango or Via could raise public awareness and enthusiasm for changes that would significantly increase shared use of cars, minibuses and larger buses.

There has been a lot of concern about congestion in the morning “rush hour” in Hobart and, as a Huon Valley resident, I would like to address some ways in which this problem could be reduced, while also reducing GHG emissions.

Such solutions should be included in the Transport Emissions Reduction Plan.

1. **Car-pooling**

An immediate strong campaign, with incentives, to encourage commuters to share transport should be commenced immediately. This could be promoted in workplaces so that those working in public services eg State Government offices, local government, universities schools, health services, etc were able to connect with others living reasonably close to their homes. This might also result in active transport when people walk to a place where they meet their car-pool driver, and thus benefit their health. If half the cars that now have single occupancy were to carry one passenger who would otherwise drive themselves, the reduction in numbers of cars would drop to the point where congestion would be much reduced and would no longer be perceived as a problem.

2. **Public transport**

The new Park and Rise (P&R) station at Huntingfield is becoming better patronised and each car there represents less congestion. Better bus services from the P&R and electric minibuses to bring commuters to the P&R would increase efficiency. It is not clear whether all drivers who park there use the bus services or whether they car-share from the station.

3. **Working from Home.**

Since the Covid 19 pandemic there has been a marked increase in working from home and this trend may increase and become a predictable effect on reduced traffic during the morning “rush hour”.

4. **Electrification**

Rapid electrification of buses and introduction of flexible routes using electric minibuses which would enable bus passengers to reach the P&R from further away. Again, this would encourage active transport to a pick-up point.

5. Comfort and convenience

Public transport must also be improved in terms of what is offered to the passenger. Comfortable seating and WiFi are essential so that commuters can catch up on emails etc while travelling, and layouts reorganised to enable this. Emphasis on making bus journeys enjoyable and useful could be used to change attitudes to public transport.

If the measures listed above were to be enacted within one year, GHG emissions would be reduced.

Reduced traffic on the Southern Outlet would mean that congestion was no longer an issue (as it is not during school holidays), unless there is a serious accident somewhere in the road network.

There are many studies worldwide that demonstrate that increasing road capacity increases car use and thus GHG emissions and congestion. This is true whether the energy required for transport is fossil fuel or electricity.

The measures listed above would inevitably come at a cost. However, the cost of new roads, such as the fifth lane on the Southern Outlet, would not be required. Unfortunately, the transfer of funding from road construction to transport as a service within the current structure of the State system seems unlikely to occur unless the need to reduce GHG emissions is taken very seriously by all levels of government and the public. This will be difficult to achieve that our way of life is based around owning a car, or SUV.

The need for a fifth lane on the Southern Outlet below Tolmans Hill should be reconsidered immediately, before work on the roadway starts.

The proposed new design for the additional lane has not been revealed, nor has the cost or the emissions resulting from the roadworks and the case for this project is not strong. This was demonstrated at the hearings of the Joint Standing Committee on Public Works when assessing the project.

The committee was divided on its justification, and minority reports detailed the reasons why it should be rejected. Has any further evidence supported a strong case for the expenditure?

The State of Tasmania cannot afford to continue with “business as usual” in terms of roads and transport if Tasmania is to achieve net reductions on GHG emissions in the immediate future.

There must be a strong campaign and genuine incentives, not just “education” and encouragement, to get people, and especially commuters, to change their habits for their own health and that of the planet, as well as for the liveability of our cities.

Thank you for the opportunity to respond to the Emissions Reduction and Resilience Plan – Transport and I look forward to the outcome of this consultation and the actions that will result.

Elizabeth Smith BSc PhD Grad Dip Env Planning