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Emissions Reduction and Resilience Plan – Transport

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the *Emissions Reduction and Resilience Plan – Transport*. It is encouraging to see the government address the problem of rising transport emissions to ensure Tasmania's net zero target is met into the future.

Reducing transport emissions by supporting Tasmanians to switch to more sustainable active and public transport options will also bring added benefits to the state.

More people being more active is good for community physical and mental health outcomes, reduces air pollution, provides cheaper transport options for people of all ages and abilities to get to school and work, will help reduce serious injuries and deaths on the roads and allows our limited road capacity to carry more people.

This submission will be concerned with priority areas 1. increasing the use of public and active transport in Tasmania, and 5. supporting action through partnerships with governments, industry and other stakeholders.

Consultation Questions

1. How can we build on the work already underway to reduce emissions and build resilience in the transport sector?

There is already work being done by community and governments to encourage people to make the switch to active and public transport but it hasn't been funded and coordinated to the extent needed.

There are two issues.

The first is the physical infrastructure, which can be expensive when engineering solutions are needed to create extra capacity but not nearly as expensive as building new roads.

While state and local governments are working towards putting new active transport into existing road reserves and other suitable corridors, the funding allocated means progress is far too slow and piecemeal to encourage people out of cars and onto bikes and other micro-mobility devices.

We need a rethink of transport budgets to move much more money into building All Ages and Abilities (AAA) cycling networks that can be used by

children travelling to school, retirees heading to activities or mums and dads getting to work and running errands. Until people feel they have safe places to ride, they are unlikely to take it up in any meaningful way.

The second issue is behaviour change. There is room in our roads for safer cycleways that people will use if we rethink on-street parking. This means reducing on-street parking as a way of encouraging people to take alternative transport modes or replacing that parking with off-street options. This is an important body of work, especially in conducting research and education of businesses which may otherwise oppose the removal of on-street parking. If the community understands the benefits of removing parking for safe cycleways it will hopefully allow easier and quicker roll out of new cycleways.

The other behaviour change issue is people thinking of cycling as a recreational pursuit rather than transport option. While our Back on your Bike and Ride2School programs are working to address this, we are operating on minimal budgets and could do much more to promote and enable transport riding with bigger staff and equipment budgets.

2. What future opportunities do you think will have the most impact?

Expanding and improving the cycling infrastructure to a AAA standard will undoubtedly have the biggest impact on uptake of active transport, as surveys consistently place concern about safety as the number one barrier to riding for most people.

As well as the actual paths, secure bike parking infrastructure will also have an impact on riding for transport.

E-bikes are ideal for transport but because of their expense owners are reluctant to leave them locked in the street without other security layers to deter thieves. The Locky Dock electronic bike parking docks in New Zealand are an example of how a network of secure parking options alongside cycling paths can help encourage people to ride. They are also notable because they incorporate behaviour change messages into their parking dock signage for extra reinforcement.

E-bike uptake will also have a big impact. If people haven't ridden an e-bike they don't understand their potential as a transport option. E-bikes flatten hills, don't cause riders to get hot and sweaty, allow riders to ride further, give more consistent travel time reliability and help riders comfortably carry young children, groceries and work gear.

The government is already offering e-bike grants as a way of getting more people onto e-bikes for transport, as we know the purchase price is a barrier for some people. Other encouragements successfully used elsewhere include e-bike libraries and short-term leasing.

E-bike libraries are important for Tasmania as our market is not large enough for short-term commercial leasing operators like Lugg and Carrie to come

here. Libraries give people the chance to try an e-bike for a couple of weeks to see if it fits with their lifestyle before they make the decision to invest in a bike. This is especially important for cargo bikes as they have the greatest potential to replace car trips for families and businesses but are more expensive to purchase. The ACT Government funds community organisation See Change to run an e-bike library. Other options are to partner with local governments to host and staff such libraries.

Because commercial leasing operators have not come to Tasmania, there may be a place for governments to help subsidise short-term and long-term rentals or run them themselves. An example of this would be to encourage the current e-scooter hire companies to bring e-bikes to Tasmania by offering subsidised passes to low-income Tasmanians.

No-interest loan schemes are another way for the government to help low-income Tasmanians purchase an e-bike. This would help people who can't afford the upfront cost but could pay a loan back using the money they would normally have used for parking and petrol or bus tickets.

Behaviour change programs are also important to help people use the infrastructure that is in place or planned. Sometimes you have to show people that the infrastructure is for them and how to use it, especially when it's not their habit to ride, walk or catch public transport.

Our Back on your Bike program is an example of a behaviour change program that is helping people get the confidence they need to ride for transport. This involves honing participants' basic riding skills, helping them find a bike that suits them, planning routes that feel more comfortable for them and then riding with them to give tips on road-riding if needed.

The program recently had a participant who lives in the Kingborough region who could see that the upgraded Whitewater Creek Track could get her to work in Kingston but just needed help and encouragement to take the final step of riding it to work. Last week, after a few Back on your Bike sessions, she rode to work for the first time.

3. Are there any priorities or future opportunities missing from this draft Plan?

Secure bike parking is an important opportunity that hasn't been captured, this should be supported along major bus routes as well as throughout urban centres. This could include electronic docks, cages accessible by an app, or app-operated lockers, as long as people know their bike is likely to still be there when they finish what they are doing.

Better integrating cycling and public transport opportunities is mentioned but needs further fleshing out. The ferry trial between Bellerive and Hobart demonstrates the demand for public transport options where people can take their bike with them.

The proposed expansion of ferries should ensure this continues to be the case, as well as building secure bike parking options at terminals. Future ferry designs should also better accommodate bicycles and scooters in terms of ingress and egress and increased capacity for parking on board.

The proposed rapid bus system should also have secure bike parking at its heart, especially as the stops will be bigger and fewer and act more like train stations. The design parameters for these rapid buses should require bicycles and scooters to be carried, whether that's outside or inside the bus, and bus stops to be long enough to account for outside bike racks if that's what's chosen.

A trial of bicycles aboard buses would help more people to replace car trips with a bike–bus–bike trip. While Metro ran its own very short, limited trial of bike racks on the outside of buses several years ago, it was purely operational. Now that Metro's fleet is all low-floor there is the opportunity to trial taking bikes on board buses and strapping them into the two areas set aside for prams and wheelchairs. This trial should be independently run and evaluated and consider current and potential passenger desires and satisfaction, technological innovations, and operational matters.

4. Are there other ways we can collaborate to reduce emissions and build resilience in the transport sector?

The draft plan does not include targets for the sector or the five priority areas. This means there is no yardstick to measure whether current actions and future opportunities are working.

Does the government want to stop the level of transport emissions from increasing, allow it to increase but by a reduced level, or reduce it, and if so by how much and how quickly? While net zero from 2030 is the broad target, more segmented targets are needed to ensure funding is directed to the most effective activities.

It may be that the yet-to-be-released updated Walking and Cycling for Transport Strategy includes such targets. If this is the case, then they should be incorporated into the emissions reduction plan, along with industry/government targets in other strategies that focus on public transport, freight, personal cars and light commercial.

Targets will help government and industry to allocate the necessary funding to the different opportunities. Active transport is underfunded compared to other transport modes, if opportunities in this area work to reduce transport emissions then their funding should be increased accordingly.

Another missing piece in this puzzle is an overarching authority driving the behaviour change process to make Tasmania an active transport state. Breaking people out of set habits whether it's as drivers, passengers or the people designing and building our transport systems, will require coordinated change management to get results.

Whether this sits in the current Department of State Growth where most of the work is already underway, RECFIT or somewhere else with a whole-of-government focus, there needs to be someone responsible for bringing all the strands together to strive for change and meet set targets.

Such a body could be responsible for planning, delivering, educating and communicating the actions needed to reduce emissions by getting more people walking, riding and catching public transport.