Tasmanian Planning Policies: submission on consultation draft

The RACT has broadened its focus from the motor vehicle and those who own and operate one, to the wider challenges, benefits and consequences that flow from their use.

It addresses a much deeper interest and understanding by our members of the evolving nature of transport in all its forms and their concerns about the health and wellbeing of Tasmanians and of the Tasmanian environment.

Good land-use planning is pivotal in delivering on those ambitions by ensuring the Tasmanian quality of life is not only maintained but enhanced.

Today the RACT's suite of policies reflect that wider focus and the concerns of our 210,000 members.

Those policies embrace private, public and active transport, the heavy vehicle sector, the environment, land use planning, and emerging technologies.

The overarching principle behind them is that they are fully integrated into a long-term vision to deliver a safer, sustainable environment in which to live, work and travel.

Unless all our policies and all their moving parts work seamlessly together, we will not deliver on that vision.

It is that tightly integrated policy approach that is the foundation of our Greater Hobart and Greater Launceston Mobility Visions, which are strategies we believe will create more liveable cities over the next 30 years.

The vision considers infrastructure, land-use planning, public transport, active transport, social and community cohesion and future technologies.

The same principles of an integrated approach should apply to the suite of Tasmanian Planning Policies outlined in the consultation draft.

The policies outlined in the consultation draft would enable the key deliverables enunciated in our suite of policies.

- We want to see Tasmania's planning system used to help reduce congestion.
- We want to see governments focus on how major development can impact traffic congestion.
- We support the development of settlement strategies for our cities that encourage people to live closer to work, school, public and active transport as well as community spaces.

The RACT wants to see all levels of government develop a settlement strategy for key urban centres. They must consider mixed-use hubs in urban areas that include infill residential development and densification in proximity to active transport, high frequency/rapid public transit, as well as employment, education, retail, services, recreation and community spaces.

Government should take account of future economic and social opportunities, including development, as well as minimise impacts to the road network by ensuring the community has universal access to a range of transport options.

The RACT supports the development of higher density hubs in existing outlying suburbs. These areas can also cater for the decentralisation of industries, services and attractions.

Government should also consider behaviour change programs that encourage the use of more sustainable modes of transport and make more efficient use of existing infrastructure. Those mode shifts will directly impact future land-use planning in the provision of transport options.

It therefore follows that the impact on road networks should be adequately considered during the assessment of residential or commercial development, particularly if there are mode shifts to public transport or shorter travel times because of the development of higher density residential and commercial hubs on city fringes.

The RACT has also advocated for limiting the size of urban growth boundaries to reduce the continued development of greenfield sites in outer Tasmanian suburbs and on urban fringes.

We also want to see local government and the State Government grant road authorities more control during the approval process for any development, to consider the impacts on road networks.

Planning policies should also consider the impact of emerging technologies such as electric vehicles and their associated charging-station networks, fuel cell (hydrogen) vehicles, and autonomous vehicles.

Autonomous vehicles, by virtue of the technology required on-road as well as in-vehicle, will have a significant impact on road infrastructure planning and costs and, as a result, on land-use planning generally.

This emerging technology is well within the scope of this land-use policy development. Federal and State Ministers for transport and infrastructure agreed at their May meeting to have national regulatory arrangements for autonomous vehicles in place by 2026.

The ministers also agreed to review Australia's readiness for the commercial deployment of automated vehicles with the scope of work coming before them in May 2022. That work will inform future transport, infrastructure and land-use policy.

One example of emerging technology is co-operative intelligent transport systems, which allow vehicles to communicate with each other and the road environment. These technologies are located both on the road and inside cars.

Regional land use planning will be critical to the successful implementation of this technology, particularly how regional transport corridors—vital to regional economies and the health of regional businesses -- are upgraded to deal with autonomous vehicles as they are introduced into the heavy vehicle sector for freight.

The location of transport hubs close to roads that are technologically enabled for autonomous vehicle use will be a vital planning consideration in the decades ahead.

Land use planning is also vital in encouraging mode shift from the private vehicle to public transport as a means of easing city congestion.

The autonomous vehicle technology will also extend to public transport, where the RACT wants to see:

- High-frequency, fast, reliable and affordable public transport in our cities.
- Easy and safe access for people walking or riding to public transport.
- Other public transport options, such as ferries, light rail, electric buses and trackless trams.

These emerging technologies will usher in a revolution in regional transport and in infrastructure strategies in the decades ahead. That means Tasmania's planning policies will need to inform those strategies, the action plans that flow from them, and how they integrate into planning regimes.

Integration is the key to the policy framework as outlined in the consultation paper. In that regard transport and infrastructure is a vital component across economic development, settlement and liveable communities.

In particular, the impact of emerging technologies outlined above needs to be considered across the suite of policies.

In transport and infrastructure alone, emerging technologies will have a significant impact on transport efficiency, safety and the environmental outcomes.

As they will be the driver of strategic decisions by all levels of government, the planning policies need to reflect the growing influence of emerging technologies on how we move about, where we work, and where we live.

Our full policies on land use and emerging technologies can be found here:

https://www.datocms-assets.com/49357/1626740671-ract-land-use-planning-and-mobility-policy.pdf

https://www.datocms-assets.com/49357/1626740666-ract-emerging-mobility-technologies-policy.pdf

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