River Derwent Ferry Service Masterplan Consultation

RACT feedback

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The Royal Automobile Club of Tasmania

More than 215,000 Tasmanians are RACT members. We are the largest and strongest member organisation in Tasmania and an award-winning Tasmanian owned insurance company.

Established in 1923, RACT is an apolitical and independent transport infrastructure, road safety and mobility advocate. We increasingly advocate on the impacts of a changing climate and supporting improved community resilience. We are committed to supporting and furthering the interests of Tasmanians and we do this through a comprehensive program of consultation, education, awareness and public advocacy.

RACT is represented by senior staff in a number of stakeholder reference organisations in Tasmania and undertakes structured liaison with government and other stakeholder groups.

Nationally, RACT is a constituent member of the Australian Automobile Association (AAA), which represents some eight million Australians, and is represented on the board of the Insurance Council of Australia (ICA).

RACT is a regular contributor to the committees and forums of the AAA and the ICA.

Internationally, RACT has joined with other Australian motoring organisations as a member of the Fédération Internationale de l'Automobile (FIA) to work on road safety and related issues at a global level.

RACT's advocacy and public policy activity is defined by a series of policy documents developed and endorsed by the RACT Board.

These policies have been informed by history, experience, research, statistical analysis, consultation, industry knowledge and most importantly, through regular engagement with our member community.

Introduction

RACT would like to thank the Department of State Growth for the opportunity to provide feedback on the River Derwent Ferry Service Masterplan Consultation.

Safe and sustainable mobility that advances the social, economic, and environmental needs of current and future Tasmanians is a key area of concern for our members and one RACT continues to advocate for on their behalf. The development of a Derwent River ferry service was incorporated in the RACT Greater Hobart Mobility 2030 Vision after a substantial consultation and review process. We support the proposal to expand the Derwent River Ferry trial into a wider ferry network with a trajectory for growth over time. We acknowledge the complexities inherent in water transport, including not insignificant capital and operational costs, the complexity and intricacies of the community and local government consultation required in identifying and developing ferry stops.

We congratulate the Government on the development of the Draft Master Plan. Proposals of this nature reflect future opportunities for the development of improved mobility for the city and present social and economic opportunities that elevate the liveability and the quality of life for its residents. We are excited about the prospect of a contemporary Derwent River transport network and are pleased to be able to provide input on the draft masterplan.

Objectives of Ferry Services as part of the broader mobility outcomes

There is an opportunity for the Master Plan to articulate the role the Derwent Ferry network will play as a component of the overall Greater Hobart mobility network. Providing key metrics that guide principles and assessment criteria and measure outcomes will support understanding and engagement. It could also link the service outcomes more easily to other core Government policies and objectives.

Guiding principles - economic and social benefits

RACT generally supports the principles adopted for guiding the development of the Derwent River Ferry Service. However, we believe that two key principles are absent. The potential for economic and social impacts on communities serviced by a ferry are significant and should be incorporated as principles that guide decisions.

Experience from other river transport systems is that economic and social impacts are significant outcomes. Demonstrating the broader economic value of the project for Greater Hobart is as important, if not more important than its simple trip attracting capability.

The significant value beyond direct passenger transport is created through changes in property values including the ability to support higher density housing and increase business activity as well as the ability for ferries to interact well with active transport networks create more active communities and lifestyle options. With engaged local communities and planning they can support the development of high-quality mixed use urban villages within walking and active transport distance of the ferry stop can and should be a targeted economic outcome from the introduction of a permanent, frequent river transport network. The

Brisbane CityCat is an operating service where an uplift in both social and economic returns has been demonstrated. A community example is that around the Bulimba CityCat stop on the Brisbane River.

The master plan could articulate or outline a plan to identify opportunities to capture this value. Though Placemaking is addressed in the Master Plan this is an outcome of a decision to develop a Ferry Terminal not a principle that feeds into the decision process. Involving local government to develop holistic business cases that incorporate the broader economic and social impacts as part of the network design and the development of place-based and supporting infrastructure and community amenity is essential.

Greater Hobart's transport network needs to plan and cater for increased tourism numbers to support Tasmania's Visitor economy. The Tasmanian Visitor Economy 2030 strategy articulates the need to develop and deliver a 10-year infrastructure plan to support the predicted 2 million visitors to the state by 2030. The ability for visitors to be able to move around Hobart city is essential and ferries offer an attractive transport option.

Other ferry services play a significant role in visitor economies. Sydney Ferries, service a water-city, albeit significantly larger in scale, is a leading example. The use of the ferry network by tourists can; improve asset utilisation outside of peak hour, reduce visitor reliance on hire vehicles - freeing roads and car parks, provide a great visitor experience and enhance economic activity in areas outside the CBD. RACT would encourage the project to consider the opportunities to support visitor travel in the network design and place making elements, as well as the economic impact this may deliver. Co-ordination with the Visitor Economy Strategy is an opportunity to realise the best value for Tasmania.



Regatta Hotel Terminal, Brisbane River – incorporation and intersection with active transport.



Bulimba Ferry Terminal – supported the revitalisation of the suburb including increased density and improved facilities. Bulimba has also become a weekend visit destination for Brisbane locals using the Rivercat network.

Comment on preferred locations

RACT is not in a position with the information provided as part of the Master Plan to comment further on the ranking or preferred stations presented in the Master Plan. We support the evidence-based process outlined in the Master plan to develop ferry terminal locations and prioritisation, with the addition of economic and social impact principles as part of this assessment.

RACT does not support funding allocated for development of regular public transport ferry services be used for the purposes of developing event terminal locations unless their primary purpose is to cater for daily transit activities. The focus of the River Derwent Ferry Service Masterplan Consultation should focus on regular ferry services as part of the public transport network and improving mobility.

Event-based terminals

Two event-based terminals are part of the proposed ferry locations. Development plans for Wilkinson's Point and Regatta Point may change radically in the coming period. Funding for event-based ferry locations 'event' stops should be shared with a considerable proportion of costs for these facilities should be met by the 'event' holders. It may be appropriate to investigate Public Private Partnerships (PPP) options for this purpose.

Future planning options and considerations

The assessment criteria focus on existing infrastructure that can support a proposed location. Given the complexity in identifying a suitable location for this type of infrastructure RACT would also encourage a broader view based on the potential of developing supporting infrastructure to support the terminal not purely on what currently exists – particularly regarding active transport options.

Community Consultation

Ferry Terminals can have a positive impact on local communities. They can however represent a significant change for immediate residents of their local environment. RACT encourages and supports early and ongoing community consultation with impacted and wider community members in conjunction with Local Government.

Parking

RACT is in favour of the masterplan not including park and sail options at all stops. We would however encourage the masterplan to provide more detail on if and how parking could be managed around the ferry stops. Addressing access expectations and options to a terminal including active transport improvements would provide greater clarity and more meaningful engagement with communities and travellers.

RACT does not believe this is an issue than can be left to adjacent landowners or land managers to address and needs to be actively developed as an integral part of the Terminal location and development. Placemaking and land value uplift is arguably the biggest benefit of a ferry service, enabling traffic to drive to the stops and park in whatever space is available risks diminishing possible potential uplift that network would have otherwise achieved.

Competition between transport networks

The document in its assessment of potential wharf location refers to 'cannibalisation' of bus networks as a key negative in considerations. RACT does not agree this is a key consideration.

Ferries work well in waterside communities and can attract patronage that might not choose buses. They are not particularly 'cannibalistic' in 'stealing' bus passengers. Examples of other ferry services show that

ferries don't replace the need for buses, nor significantly draw patronage off buses. In Birkenhead, Auckland's North Shore ferry services have attracted new patronage while parallel bus patronage has also improved - a growth in overall public transport use.

Ferries can provide a higher degree of certainty in terms of journey and arrival time compared to possible quicker though less certain road-based options. This combined with the overall ferry experience and ease of integration with active transport makes ferry travel attractive for new public transport users and results in an overall uplift of usage.

Financial model and considerations

There are many ways to fund public transport including farebox return, direct subsidy, value capture and PPP. To date Tasmania has limited itself to farebox return combined with direct subsidy to the operator.

RACT would encourage investigating alternatives to capture value for the State. The investigation of the possibility of shared funding models for example a potential Private Public Partnerships (PPP) is encouraged with the aim to identify options that may alleviate the cost to members and the broader community of the service.

Measuring outcomes

A Ferry service offers several potential benefits, many of which are outlined in the Master Plan. It is important that relevant metrics of success for the network are articulated in the Master Plan. The measures would include some tailored specifically to Ferry service operations as well as broader public transport objectives as well as social and economic objectives.

Other comments

RACT also acknowledge and understand the limitation of Derwent River ferry network. Its scale will not solve traffic congestion – this requires a multi prong approach of which ferries are a small part. We recognise that capital expenditure and operational expenditure associated with ferry networks are more costly compared to other transport modes.

RACT is fully supporting an on-water network for its raft of other benefits. These include uplifting the consideration and usage of public transport, the ability to support strong active transport integration options and they can provide options for visitors to move around the city and local economic and social uplift opportunities.