

Geoff Lewis
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Dear Mr Lewis

Thank you for your letter of 19 February requesting responses to issues regarding the future of the State's passenger transport system.

I have pleasure in responding to your questions on behalf of all Liberal Members and Candidates.

We are happy to answer any supplementary questions, and would appreciate if our responses could be published in full, as written.

Yours sincerely

Matthew Groom MP
Shadow Minister for Sustainable Transport

The creation of a central passenger transport authority, and a Future transport plan that includes improved services to rural and urban fringe areas and the adoption of agreed minimum service levels

The Liberals recognise that the Tasmanian bus and coach industry provides Tasmanians with an essential alternative means of passenger transport, particularly for parents and students in regional Tasmania, and plays a critical role in ensuring the future sustainability of the State's land-based transport system.

The challenge in Tasmania is that our population is dispersed across larger cities, country towns and smaller rural communities and the relatively small passenger transport system has struggled to meet the needs of all public transport users consistently across the State.

The State is reliant upon buses as the predominant mode of public transport. The Labor-Green Government, however, has failed to address the disadvantage faced by many Tasmanians living in rural, regional and lower socio-economic areas of the State who are unable to access, or have difficulty accessing, reliable bus services to go about normal, day-to-day activities.

In particular, there is little coordination between regional, urban fringe and metropolitan services that would, if addressed, increase the coverage and frequency of services across the State to the benefit of all road users.

As part of our Plan for Tasmania, the Liberals are committed to ensuring a sustainable transport future for Tasmania that takes into account urban, urban fringe and regional passenger transport needs and services and reduces Tasmania's over-reliance on the car as the prime mode of transport.

We have recently committed to developing a Transport Access Strategy to provide better integrated and coordinated transport services for Tasmanians disadvantaged through frailty or age, to reduce social isolation.

Our strategy will investigate centralised one-stop published information and a website that shows the full range of commercial, public and not-for-profit transport options, how to access them, fees, route maps and timetables (if applicable).

West Coast Bus Service

For many on the West Coast, travel to the region's closest major centre is unaffordable, if not unavailable, and this only adds to their sense of disadvantage and isolation. The Liberals will allocate \$100,000, and work with a suitable contractor, to trial a service linking major West Coast towns to Burnie.

New bus stops

We have also committed to investing \$300,000 to construct newer, safer bus stops for Tasmanian students, particularly those living in regional areas. This funding will allow for the construction of up to 10 new bus stops and associated infrastructure, in order to reduce the

risks to students and other users who rely on buses to take them to school or work, and return them safely home.

Families and the community need confidence that the trip to and from school is safe, and our policy will provide the infrastructure to keep students, particularly in regional areas, out of harm's way. We will work closely with local councils and bus operators to identify areas of need in their municipality and we will work together to deliver safer travel for Tasmanian students across the State. Local councils will be able to submit applications to the Fund for a contribution toward the construction of safer bus stops and associated infrastructure in their areas.

Integrated network, ticketing and customer information between all operators, public and private

We recognise that many Tasmanians are deterred from using public transport because of the multiple timetable and ticket systems being used by different service operators.

We know, for example, that some passengers who travel into Hobart from regional areas using a private bus service are forced to disembark once they reach the city fringe to take a connecting Metro service, after purchasing a second fare, to continue their journey to the city centre. Moreover, some independent bus operators travelling into the Hobart area from regional areas are currently forced to bypass passengers along the route who are waiting for a Metro service to the same destination.

The Liberals will work with operators to facilitate the better coordination of existing bus services between Metro and other independent contractors in all areas through the development of a Transport Access Strategy to provide better integrated and coordinated transport services for Tasmanians disadvantaged through frailty or age, to reduce social isolation.

Our strategy will investigate centralised one-stop published information and a website that shows the full range of commercial, public and not-for-profit transport options, how to access them, fees, route maps and timetables (if applicable).

We will also explore the potential to develop and improve the existing Greencard system with a view to the full integration of ticketing between bus service providers in metropolitan and non-metropolitan areas, and, as appropriate, other modes of transport which would enable passengers to seamlessly travel on all services with one ticket.

Improved contract certainty beyond 2018

We recognise that the bus and coach industry requires – and deserves – certainty to ensure that Tasmanians continue to be provided with a reliable and efficient alternative means of transport and to provide operators with the security and confidence to invest further in their fleets, grow their businesses, stimulate employment opportunities and protect the future viability of the industry.

To provide affordable, accessible and sustainable passenger transport services, the Liberals will provide operators with a clear and straightforward contract determination process to improve their confidence in the future operation and viability of their respective businesses.

This model will not only ensure fairness to operators, but will provide a strong basis for long term capital investment in the sector resulting in a more modern, reliable fleet of vehicles, improved bus safety, particularly in rural communities, and reduced carbon emissions as a result of an increased reliance on environmentally friendly vehicles and fuels.

At the conclusion of the current 5+5 year contract terms in 2018, the Liberals will commit to a further 5+5 contract for incumbent operators, subject to the meeting of key performance conditions and the on-going need for the particular service in a particular area.

This model will also provide for a consistent measure of performance across all bus contracts, greater incentives for operators to perform and, importantly, better long-term service delivery for Tasmanian bus passengers.

Transport Minister portfolio

If elected on March 15, the Liberals will drive the development of a sustainable transport future for Tasmania from within the new Department of State Growth, which will be created by merging the current Department of Economic Development, Tourism and the Arts, with the Department of Infrastructure, Energy and Resources.

The Department of State Growth will be focused on aggressively attracting and increasing investment, creating jobs and growing our economy. And it will oversee the key drivers of growth - economic development, infrastructure, transport, energy and resources, under one department.