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**FIXING TASMANIA'S BROKEN
PUBLIC TRANSPORT SYSTEM**

MAX DOUGLASS

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ABOUT THE MCKELL INSTITUTE

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF COUNTRY

This report was written on the lands of the Wurundjeri people of the Kulin nations. The McKell Institute acknowledges Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples as the Traditional Owners of Country throughout Australia and their continuing connection to both their land and seas.

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About this report

This report has been prepared by the McKell Institute in collaboration with Tasmanian Branch of the Rail, Tram and Bus Union.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY	5
KEY FINDINGS	6
RECOMMENDATIONS	8
PART 1: THE STATE OF PLAY	10
PART 2: A SYSTEM IN DISREPAIR	15
Tasmania's public transport spending is the lowest in the nation	15
A lack of investment is holding Hobart's public transport infrastructure back	19
Hobart's public transport system is underutilised, but this was not always the case	20
Hobart's current bus system is inequitable	24
The case of Glenorchy	30
Other Tasmanian communities merit further investigation	34
The viability of Tasmanian public transport is facing significant challenges	36
Hobart's bus system is being undermined by high driver turnover	36
Increased congestion threatens the current network's long term viability	37
Service provision and direction is limited by MetroTas' contract structure	38
PART 3: WHY SHOULD WE CARE	41
Public transport is crucial to individuals, communities, and economies	41
Mobility	41
Efficiency	42
Health, safety and security	42
Environment and land use	43
Economic development and productivity	43
Social connectivity	43
Tasmania has much to gain from public transport infrastructure investment	44
PART 4: THE WAY FORWARD	47
REFERENCES	51



TASMANIA'S PUBLIC TRANSPORT CONSISTS OF A SINGLE BUS NETWORK

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Accessible public transport is a crucial part of modern life. It facilitates access to employment opportunities, education, essential services, and to community participation. The importance of public transport is particularly pronounced for the most vulnerable.

Tasmania's public transport consists of a single bus network, MetroTas, which operates services throughout greater Hobart's five local government areas, as well as the cities of Launceston and Burnie. All other buses across Tasmania are privately operated.

Tasmania's public transport network was once among the most advanced in the southern hemisphere, but it now ranks among the least advanced in Australia alone. On a per capita basis, the Tasmanian Government contributes the least of any jurisdiction in Australia towards routine public transport services, and the second lowest proportion of its state budget.

Apart from tinkering around the edges of the existing bus network, Tasmania has seen no meaningful investments in public transport in decades. This comes as mainland states and capital cities, including those of comparable population to Hobart, make significant steps towards expanding their public transport networks.

In the case of Hobart, public transport was once a crucial element of the city's transport profile — with levels of use comparable to Brisbane, Perth and Adelaide. But it now represents only four per cent of all kilometres travelled.

This collectively means that Hobart residents miss out on the well-documented social, environmental and economic benefits of public transport. The potential economic upsides of targeted public transport investment in Tasmania are especially noteworthy as the state struggles with a chronic lack of public investment and relative economic underperformance.

Even then, Hobart's existing network is poorly planned, and fails to provide services where they are most needed. As the case study of Glenorchy illustrates, the most disadvantaged areas in Hobart's north see similar levels of service to the much more affluent south. These northern services fail to penetrate the pockets of greatest need despite the presence of accessible road infrastructure.

Apart from poor service coverage, other issues limit MetroTas ability to provide high quality and reliable services such as poor driver retention, low wages, the growing problem of congestion on Hobart's main roads, and the way in which MetroTas contracts with the Tasmanian Government.

While greater Tasmanian Government public spending on public transport and investment in more ambitious projects is recommended, there are also simple tweaks which would go a long way to making the existing network more efficient, equitable and a more preferable choice for commuters. These include planning bus services around areas of disadvantage (particularly in the inner northern suburbs), providing additional protections for drivers, prioritising transit-friendly infrastructure such as bus lanes, and re-thinking the way in which services are delivered under the *Metro Tasmania Act 1997* (Tas) to give the government greater control over planning and delivery of services.

KEY FINDINGS

- 1. Per capita, Tasmania spends the lowest in the nation on routine public transport service provision.** For 2023–23 this is projected to be \$115.06, compared to \$218.40 in South Australia, \$610.77 in Victoria, \$653.79 in Western Australia, \$702.25 in Queensland, \$117.42 in the Northern Territory and \$492.29 in the Australian Capital Territory. Data for New South Wales is not available.
- 2. Tasmania spends the second lowest proportion of its budget on public transport services, second only to the Northern Territory.** For 2023–24, only 0.94 per cent of the budget will be spent on public transport services, compared to 2.22 per cent in South Australia, 4.69 per cent in Victoria, 5.45 per cent in Western Australia, 5.13 per cent in Queensland and 2.98 per cent in the Australian Capital Territory. Only the Northern Territory, with 0.41 per cent, spends a lower proportion of its budget on public transport services.
- 3.** Even since the signing of the ‘Hobart City Deal’ in 2019 which committed to a ‘reliable, sustainable, and cost effective’ transport system, there have been **no meaningful investments in Hobart’s public transport system in decades.** This comes as mainland jurisdictions continue to aggressively invest in modern transport infrastructure.
- 4.** Of all capital cities, Hobart residents are the **least likely to use public transport.** But this has not always been the case. In the late 1970s, the proportion of total transport kilometres on public transport in Hobart was higher than Adelaide, Canberra, Darwin, and Perth, and was comparable to Brisbane. **Over the past 40 years this proportion has halved, whereas it has increased in Sydney, Melbourne, Perth, Adelaide, and Darwin, and decreased only minorly in Canberra and Brisbane.**
- 5. Tasmania’s existing network is inequitable and fails to adequately service areas of greatest need.** This is illustrated by the poor penetration of buses into pockets of disadvantage in the Glenorchy local government area of Hobart.
- 6. High levels of anti-social behaviour by commuters, recurring driver turnover, congestion and opaque contractual arrangements** are undermining the quality, reliability and safety of Hobart’s bus network.
- 7.** Public transport service routine spending and investment have positive economic externalities. Tasmania’s relative economic underperformance and low levels of **public investment suggest that public transport investment would bring substantial returns.**

RECOMMENDATIONS:

RECOMMENDATION 1:

The Tasmanian Government should spend more on routine public transport services .

The Tasmanian Government spends a paltry amount on public transport compared to other state and territory governments. It spends the lowest in the nation per capita on public transport services, and allocates the second lowest proportion of its state budget to public transport – second only to the Northern Territory. In Hobart, the 2019 ‘City Deal’ has failed to deliver any meaningful improvements to public transport services.

The Tasmanian Government should, on a structural basis, spend more of its budget on public transport services. Jurisdictions of comparable economic development and/or population, such as South

RECOMMENDATION 2:

The Tasmanian Government should plan more frequent and more penetrating services to areas of greatest disadvantage.

Equal service provision is not equitable service provision. Our analysis reveals that Hobart’s poorest inner suburbs are not seeing the levels or frequencies of service that they deserve. They have the most to gain from good service, and the most to lose from poor service. As a start, MetroTas should schedule more frequent and penetrating services into Hobart’s Glenorchy LGA and its surrounding suburbs.

Based on a public transport demand metric presented in the paper, other relatively disadvantaged areas of Tasmania such as Bridgewater in Hobart, and Newnham and Mayfield in Launceston, should be front of mind for public transport planners and policymakers, and merit further investigation.

RECOMMENDATION 3:

The Tasmanian Parliament should tailor a specific offence targeted at intimidating, abusing and harassing transport workers.

Transport workers deserve to feel safe at work. While low wages are the most

significant contributor to driver turnover, drivers are also leaving MetroTas because of inordinate and unacceptable levels of abuse, harassment and even violence. The creation of a specific offence would deter those who intimidate, abuse or otherwise harass transport workers. It would also go some way in retaining and recruiting drivers, and improving the reliability of services. Such an offence should be based on similar South Australia and New South Wales’ provisions designed to protect retail workers.

RECOMMENDATION 4:

The Tasmanian Government should prioritise investment additional public transport infrastructure.

Hobart’s increasing congestion problem implicates buses just as much as it does personal vehicles. Priority access for buses via investing in additional bus lanes would cut travel times, reward public transport users, and induce substitution away from personal vehicles.

But it is also clear that as Hobart continues to grow, buses alone will become increasingly unable meet the transport needs of residents. To safeguard its transport needs into the future, the Tasmanian Government should seek to plan and execute other larger public transport infrastructure investments such as proposed ‘bus rapid’ infrastructure and/or the ‘Riverline’ light rail. .

RECOMMENDATION 5:

The Tasmanian Government should reconsider its administration of MetroTas.

The current arrangement of the Tasmanian Government contracting with MetroTas – a public yet profit-seeking entity – for the delivery of an essential service is striking. It grants MetroTas too much discretion over cancellations and prioritisation, and leaves the Tasmanian Government without levers to pull.

MetroTas should be taken back into public control, or its establishing Act should be amended to include mandatory considerations such as socioeconomic disadvantage for service provision. Service contracts between MetroTas and the Tasmanian Government should be freely available to give the public a better idea of how and why consequential service decisions are being made.

PART 1:

THE STATE OF PLAY

Access to transport, whether private or public, is a crucial part of modern life. It has far reaching economic, social and environmental implications for both individuals and communities. As the Australian Human Rights Commission has noted, '[y]our right to participate in community life also means having the ability to get around'.¹

Australia's varied and unique geography and demography poses serious challenges for policymakers and planners. No two communities have the same transport needs, nor the same resources available to pursue those needs at scale.

Among Australian jurisdictions, Tasmania maintains a unique transport profile. It has an extremely low and highly dispersed population, with a notable lack of urban concentration.

As of the 2021 census, Tasmania had the lowest concentration of residents in its capital city – with 44.3 per cent residing in greater Hobart. This compares with 64.8 per cent of New South Wales residents living in Sydney, 75.6 per cent of Victorian residents living in Melbourne, and 48.9 per cent of Queensland residents living in Brisbane. This lack of concentration creates difficulties in achieving returns to scale on transport infrastructure in both Hobart and Tasmania more broadly – especially for public transport.

But this by no means implies that quality, affordable, equitable and safe public transport is unachievable. In fact, as this report will detail, there are meaningful changes which can be made immediately that would markedly improve public transport in and around Tasmania.

Part 1 of this report will detail the current state of play for public transport in Tasmania, with a focus on Hobart's existing bus network.

Like other jurisdictions, Tasmania is serviced by several private and public intercity coaches, as well as a small number of ferries.² However, regular high-volume public transport is only offered in the urban centres of Hobart, Launceston and Burnie – with approximately 80 per cent of passenger

boardings occurring in the capital.³ Services outside of Hobart, Launceston and Burnie (such as in Devonport) are entirely privately operated.⁴

'Public' services are operated by Metro Tasmania (**MetroTas**), a state-owned enterprise created by the *Metro Tasmania Act 1997* (Tas). Section 5 of the Act stipulates that the 'principal objective' of MetroTas is to 'provide passenger transport services in Tasmania ... and to operate those services in a manner consistent with *sound commercial practice*'.⁵ It is encouraged to, and indeed does, pursue profit in its operations; reporting a \$3.49 million profit before tax last financial year.⁶

Despite recent profits, MetroTas has historically required bailouts from the Tasmanian Government. As the Tasmanian Auditor-General noted in 2018, MetroTas was 'reliant on equity contributions ... to maintain its bus fleet, and [had] generated losses in each part of the past four years'.⁷

MetroTas maintain a fleet in Hobart of 167 buses,⁸ and operate 87 bus routes servicing approximately 1800 bus stops across Hobart. For ticketing purposes, Hobart is divided into 5 zones which jointly constitute the urban metro area.

Launceston is divided into 2 zones, and is served by a fleet of 50 MetroTas buses operating approximately 30 unique routes.⁹

Burnie operates a single ticketing zone, served by 14 buses operating on 8 unique routes.¹⁰

MetroTas adult urban fares for all areas are based on the zones in Figure 1 and 2, and increase as more zones are travelled up to a maximum of three. Regardless of zones, adult concession and student fares are flat. Adult concession categories include those with health care cards, pensioners, tertiary students, and state concession card holders.

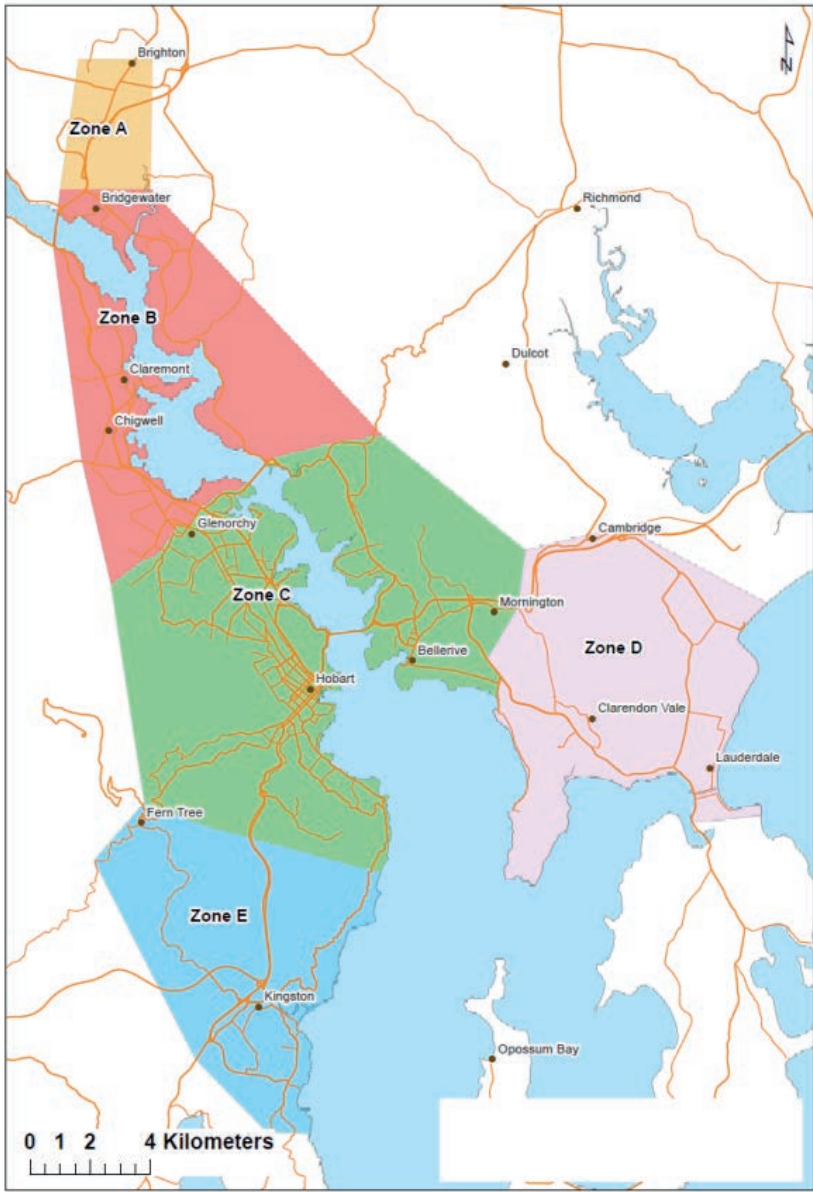
For all travellers, discounts of 20 per cent on applicable fares available for those travelling with a 'Greencard'. Users with Greencards are also entitled to relevant daily fare caps depending on their boarding, which those paying with cash are not. Table 1 represents the applicable fees for each fare class based on numbers of zones travelled, as well as applicable daily caps.

Table 1: Applicable Metropolitan Hobart Fees

Zones Travelled	Adult fares		Adult concession		Student	
	Cash	Green card	Cash	Green card	Cash	Green card
1 Zone	\$3.50	\$2.80	\$2.40	\$1.92	\$1.90	\$1.52
2 Zones	\$4.80	\$3.84	\$2.40	\$1.92	\$1.90	\$1.52
3+ Zones	\$7.20	\$5.76	\$2.40	\$1.92	\$1.90	\$1.52

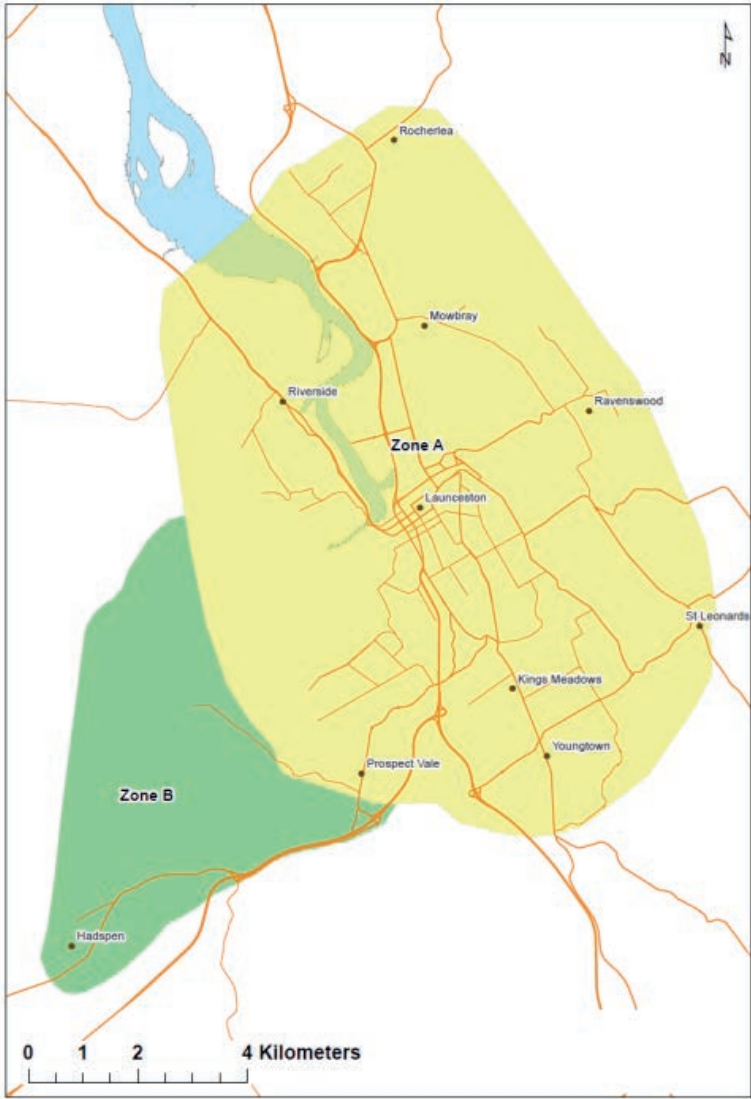
Source: Tasmanian Government: Transport¹¹

Figure 1: Hobart Urban Metro Areas



Source: Department of State Growth¹²

Figure 2: Urban Launceston Metro Areas

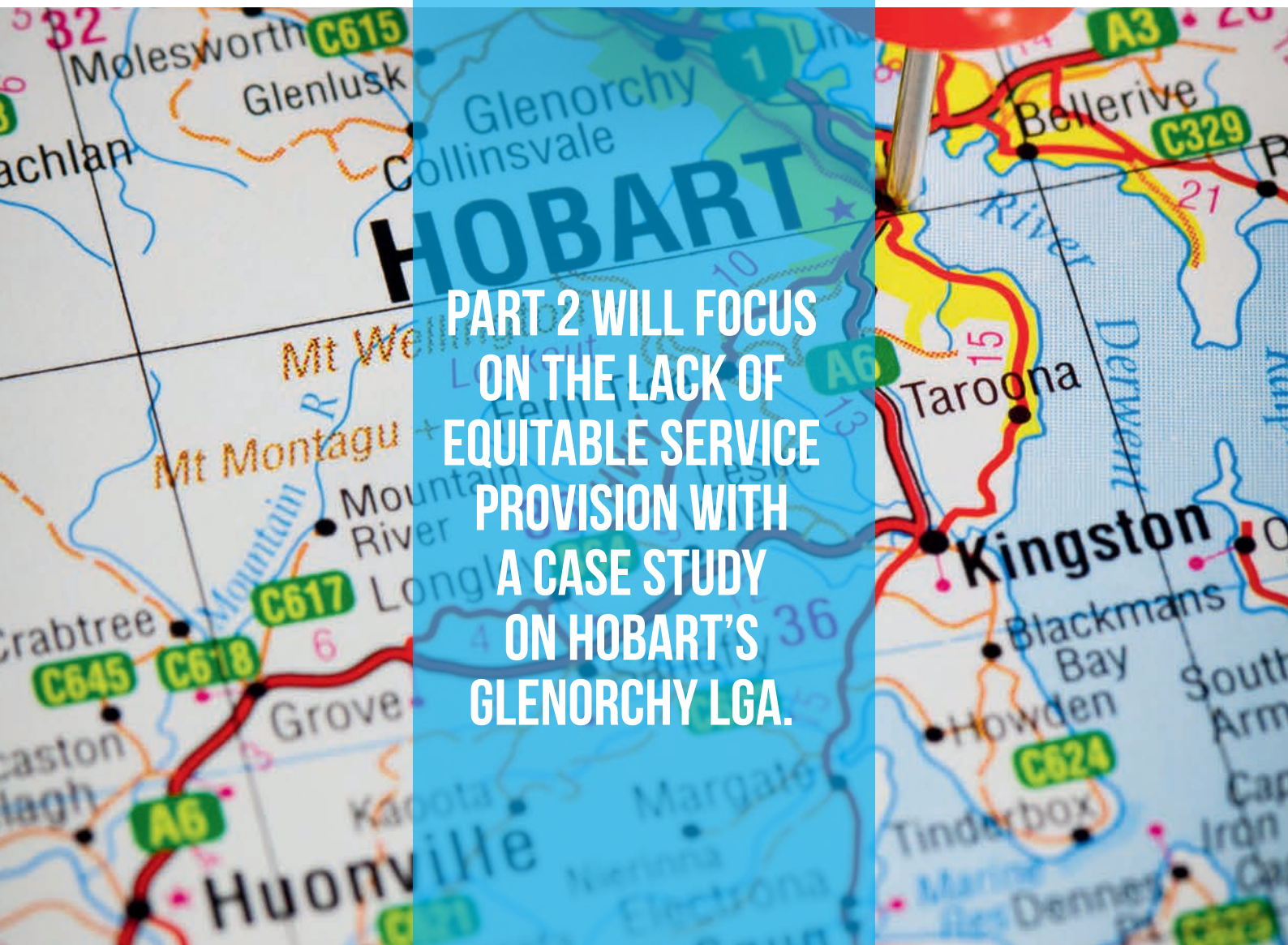


Source: Department of State Growth¹³

As MetroTas is first and foremost a business enterprise expected to act in a way consistent with *sound commercial practice*, public transport is essentially subsidised by the Tasmanian Government by entering into service contracts with MetroTas on an ongoing basis.¹⁴

Revenue from these contracts constitutes the vast majority of MetroTas revenue. For example, in 2022-23, service contract revenue constituted approximately 80.4 per cent (\$57.1m) passenger revenue, whereas ticket sales constituted only 16.4 per cent (\$11.6m).¹⁵

As will be discussed later in the paper, this contractual arrangement has been criticised as being too opaque and artificially constraining of public transport service provision.¹⁶



PART 2 WILL FOCUS
ON THE LACK OF
EQUITABLE SERVICE
PROVISION WITH
A CASE STUDY
ON HOBART'S
GLENORCHY LGA.

PART 2: A SYSTEM IN DISREPAIR

Part 2 of this report will detail the state of Tasmania's public transport system compared to the rest of the country, with a focus on greater Hobart. It will then analyse spending on routine services, investment in public transport infrastructure, and the system's patronage over time.

It will then focus on the lack of equitable service provision with a case study on Hobart's Glenorchy local government area (LGA), before using a bespoke demand metric to provide other areas in Hobart and Launceston of interest to policymakers and planners

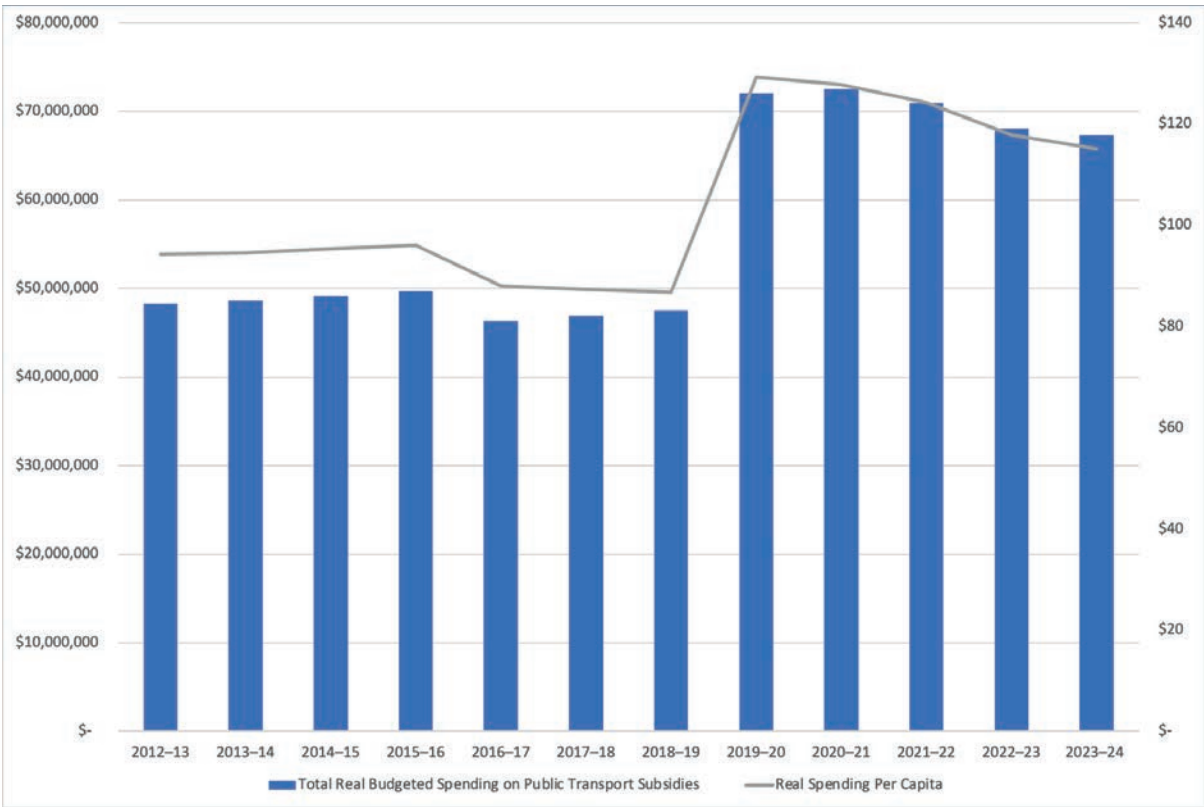
Part 2 will then analyse the growing issues of driver turnover, inadequate bus infrastructure, and the MetroTas contract structure as challenging the provision of public transport in Tasmania.

Tasmania's public transport spending is the lowest in the nation

Tasmanian Budget Papers track spending on general access public transport services subsidies, the vast majority of which is spent on service contracts with MetroTas (e.g., approximately 80.9 per cent in 2021-22).

Spending on general access public transport services has remained relatively steady between years, apart from a discrete jump between 2018-19 and 2019-20.

Figure 3. Tasmania total real budgeted spending on public transport (LHS) and real spending per capita (RHS) (2022-23 dollars)



Source: ABS; Tasmanian Government Budget Papers; Centre for Population Projections Forecasts¹⁷

Comparatively, Tasmania spends the lowest amount on public transport of all Australian jurisdictions with available data.¹ This was noted by the Legislative Council Select Committee on Greater Hobart Traffic Congestion in 2019, where the Committee relayed that ‘Tasmania’s per capita funding of public transport is reported to be the lowest in the nation’.¹⁸

1. Only New South Wales does not publish equivalent data.



Figure 4. Real public transport service spending per capita by jurisdiction (2022-23 dollars)

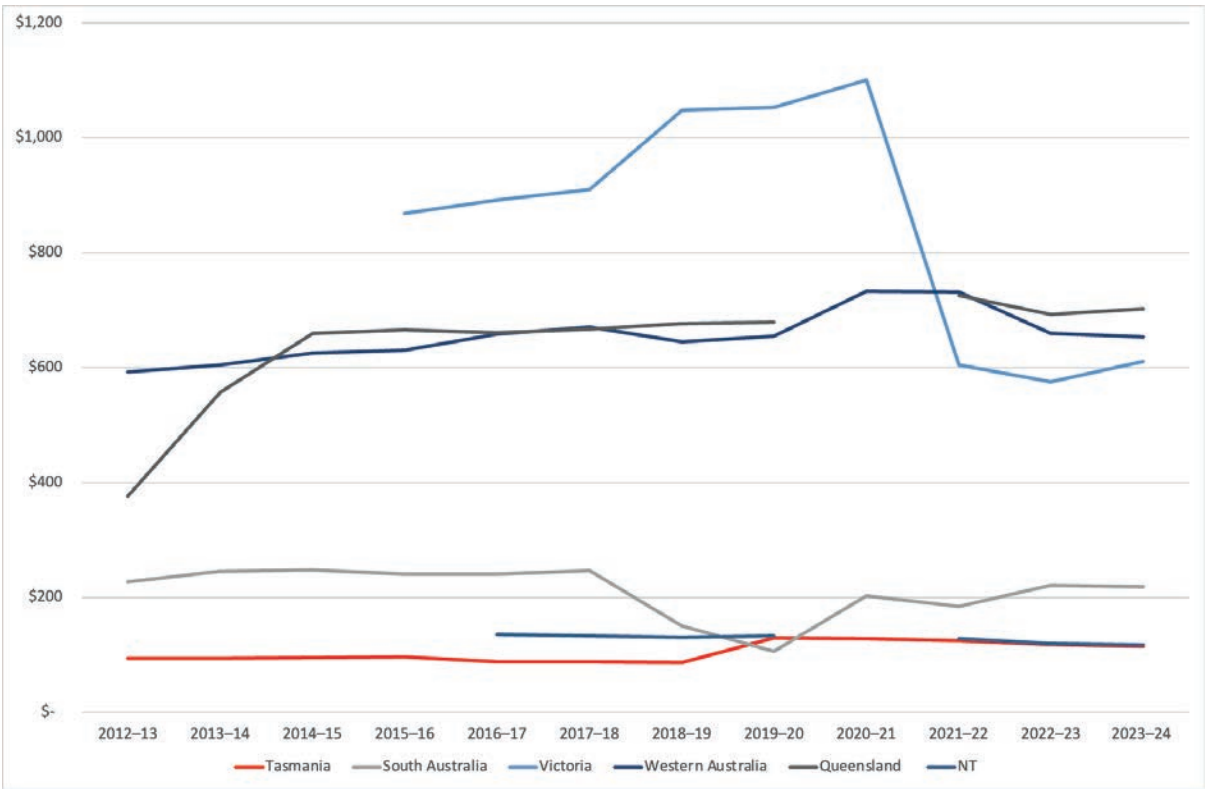


Table 2: Real allocated public transport service spending per capita: 2023-24 (deflated 2022-23 dollars)

Tasmania	South Australia	Victoria	Western Australia	Queensland	Northern Territory	Australian Capital Territory
\$115.06	\$218.40	\$610.77	\$653.79	\$702.25	\$117.42	\$492.26

Source: TABS; State and Territory Government Budget Papers; Centre for Population Projections Forecasts.¹⁹



Even on a proportion of total state budget basis, Tasmania is the second worst performer for jurisdictions with available data—allocating only 0.94 per cent of its total budget to public transport service provision for 2023-24.

Figure 5. Proportion of state budget allocated to public transport services

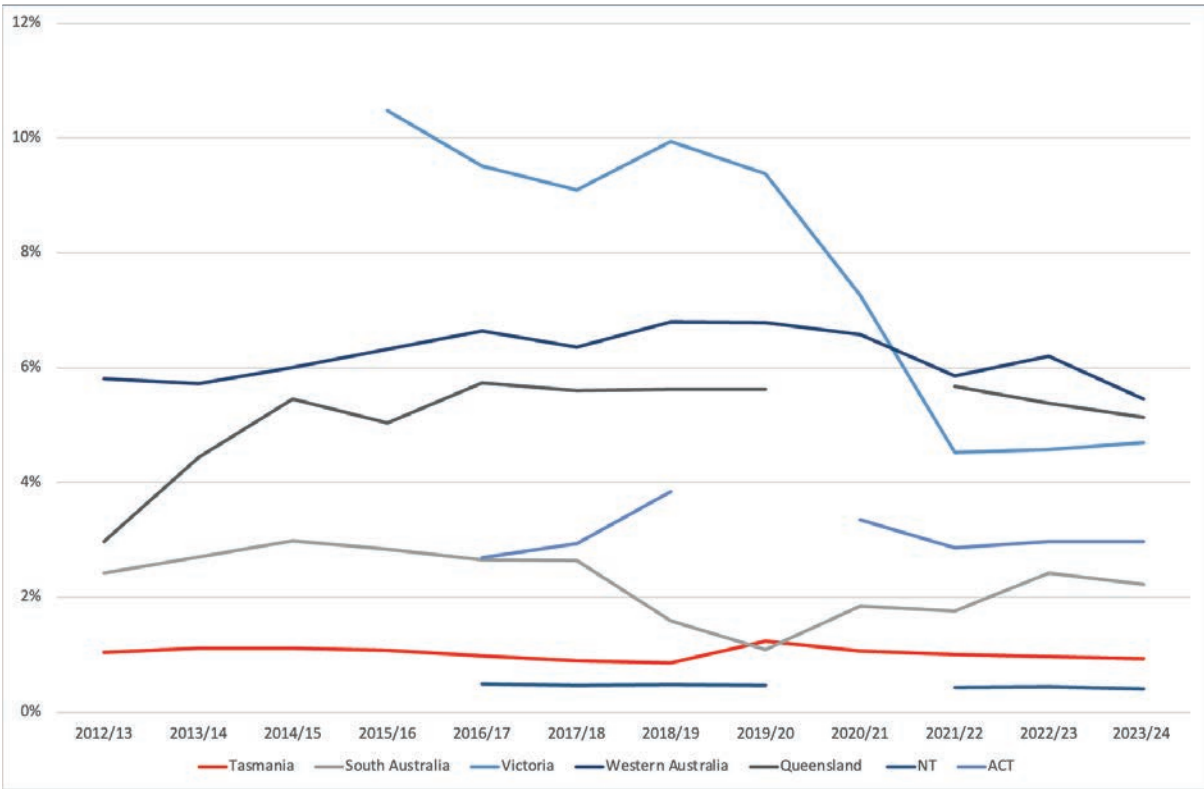


Table 3: Proportion of 2023-24 budget allocated to routine public transport services

Tasmania	South Australia	Victoria	Western Australia	Queensland	Northern Territory	Australian Capital Territory
0.94%	2.22%	4.69%	5.45%	5.13%	0.41%	2.98%

Source: ABS Population Data; State and Territory Government Budget Papers; Centre for Population Projections Forecasts.²⁰

Figures 4 and 5 only represent the routine subsidies on routine public transportation services offered by state and territory governments, and are not inclusive of investment in public transport projects. But after accounting for investment, the broader picture is comparatively more bleak.

A lack of investment is holding Hobart’s public transport infrastructure back

On 24 February 2019, the Commonwealth and Tasmanian governments, as well as the councils of Clarence, Glenorchy, Hobart and Kingborough signed the ‘Hobart City Deal’ (the Deal). Part of the Deal was the ‘Greater Hobart Transport Vision’, which sought to invest in and establish a ‘reliable, sustainable, and cost effective’ transport system, with a focus on ‘sustainable and efficient’ public transport.²¹

Over four and a half years later, there have been no meaningful steps taken under the Deal, nor have there been any considerable investments in Hobart’s public transport infrastructure. In fact, in August 2023, over 177 daily bus services were slashed from the existing timetable.²²

Since 2019-20, public transport investments have focussed on tinkering around the edges of the existing MetroTas bus infrastructure and bailing out MetroTas. While commendable, they can hardly be considered transformative changes to Hobart’s public transport infrastructure. For example, recent flagship initiatives since the signing of the City Deal include:

- \$3.3 million allocated for an electric bus trial in 2023-24;²³
- \$10 million allocated over six years for bus stop upgrades between 2022 and 2027;²⁴
- \$29.5 million to support MetroTas to implement common ticketing;²⁵ and
- \$4.5 million in 2019-20 for the ‘Metro Bus Infrastructure capital initiative’.²⁶

But the only express mention of the Hobart City Deal in the budget papers since 2019 has been in the 2019-20 and 2020-21 budgets, in which the Gutwein and Hodgman Liberal State Governments committed \$500,000 to additional bus services to apparently ‘establish a reliable, sustainable

and cost-effective transport system'.²⁷ All of these 'additional' services were presumably slashed in August 2023.

On the other hand, mainland states and territories are proceeding with large capital intensive public transport infrastructure investments. Notable examples include Victoria's Metro Tunnel Project,²⁸ New South Wales' 'Sydney Metro' project,²⁹ Brisbane's 'Cross River Rail',³⁰ and Western Australia's METRONET investments.³¹ Even Canberra, of comparable population to Hobart, recently made their largest single public investment of \$675 million in a light rail project.³²

Hobart's public transport system is underutilised, but this was not always the case

Apart from residents of the Northern Territory, Tasmanians are currently least likely to use public transport to get to work.

According to the 2021 census, only 3.16 per cent of employed people in Tasmania commuted to work on public transport. This compared to 4.00 per cent in New South Wales, 4.39 per cent in Victoria, 4.11 per cent in Queensland, 5.30 per cent in South Australia, and 7.41 per cent in Western Australia.

But with Australians across the country working from home, particularly in the eastern states, due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the 2021 jurisdiction level figures do not fully convey the disparity between routine public transport patronage in Hobart compared to other capital cities.

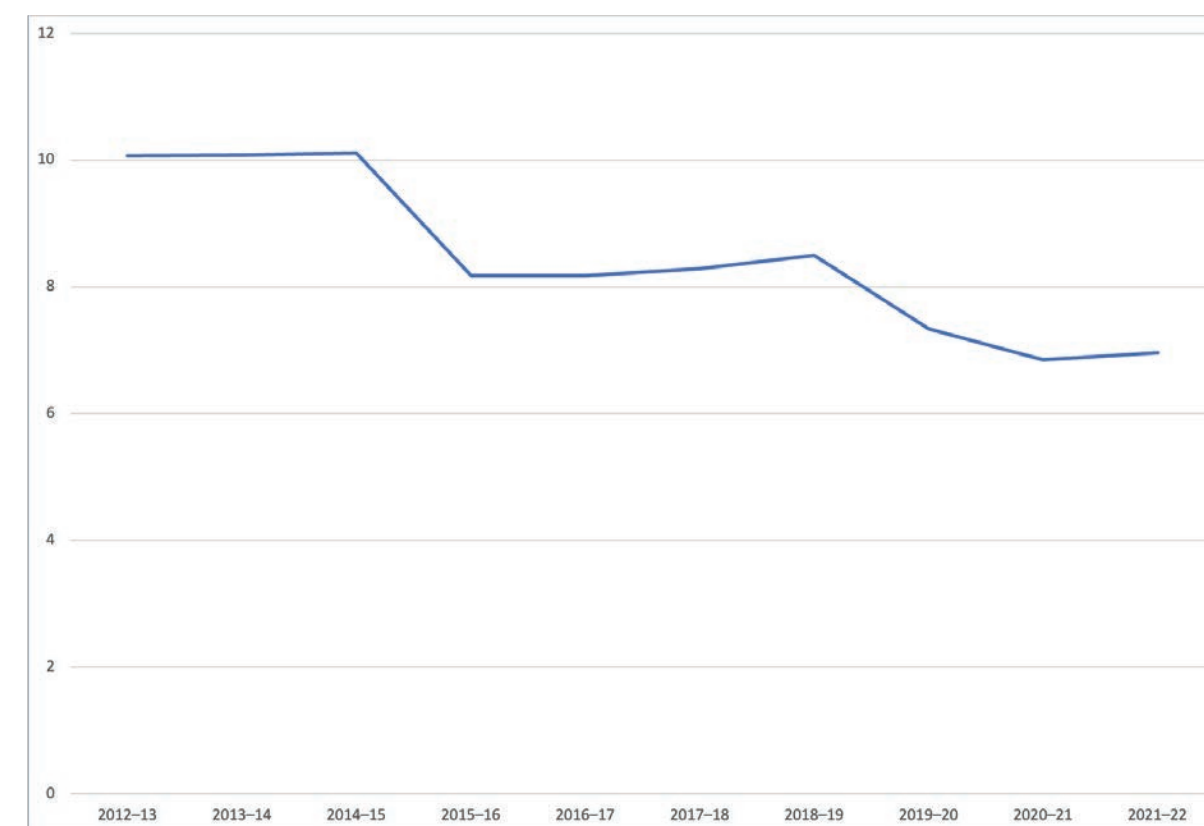
The pre-pandemic 2016 census data at the capital city level is more telling of inequality in public transport use across Australia. While almost 30 per cent of Sydney residents and almost 20 per cent of Melbourne residents used public transport to commute in 2016, this figure was approximately 5 per cent for Hobart. Even in Darwin, a city with 60 per cent of Hobart's 2016 population, 11 per cent of commuters used public transport.³³

The 2019 Hobart transport survey, conducted by the Department of State Growth, provides the most up-to-date and granular analysis of transport trends in greater Hobart. It found that, on any given weekday, 643,100 total trips were made by individuals in Tasmania's six local government areas. Of

these trips, only 30,000 were made on public transport—representing 4.66 per cent of all trips. On weekends, only 5,300 of 577,000 total daily trips were made using public transport, representing only 0.92 per cent of total trips.³⁴ These figures are near identical to the results of the 2010 survey, which found that 4 per cent of weekday and 1 per cent of weekend trips in Hobart were taken on public transport.³⁵

Ticketing data collected by MetroTas since 2012 suggests that public transport use in Hobart, Launceston and Burnie has plummeted over the last decade. In 2012-13, MetroTas recorded over 10 million passenger boardings, this has since decreased to under 7 million in 2022-23.

Figure 6. MetroTas total boardings 2012-13 - 2022-23 (millions)



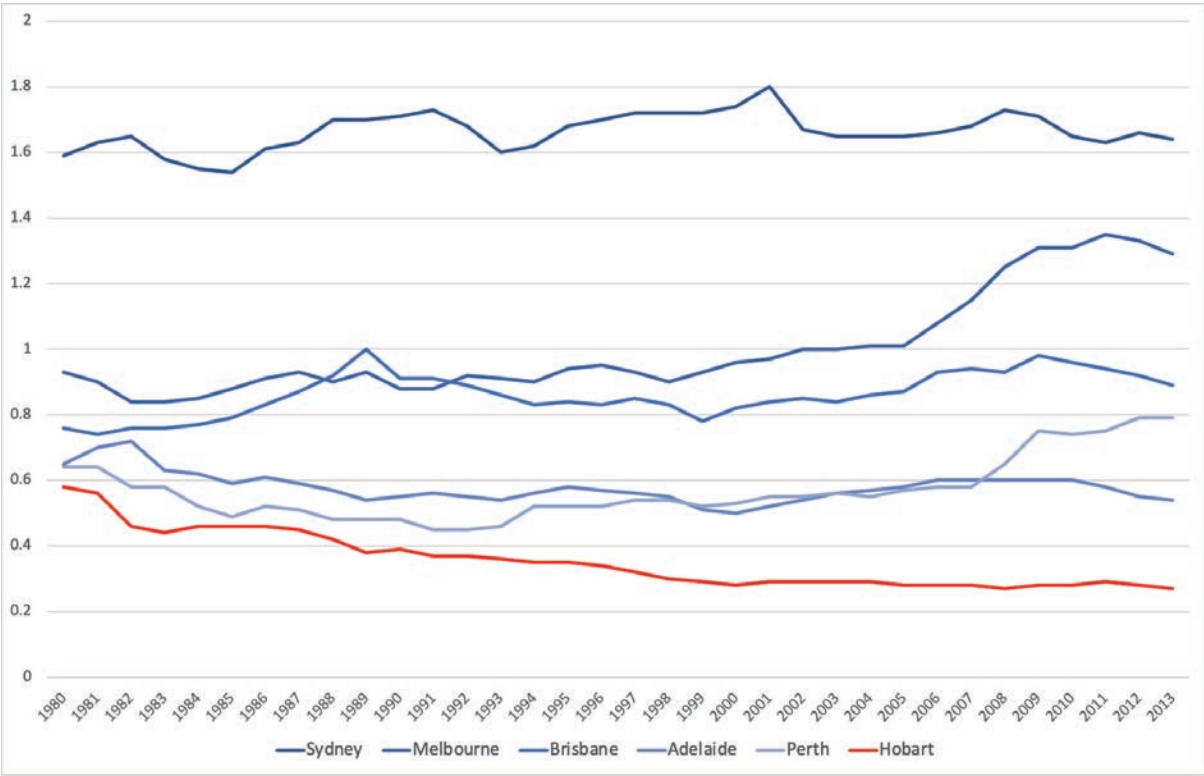
Source: MetroTas Annual Reports 2012-13 - 2022-23³⁶

On a per capita basis, boardings have fallen from 19.66 per resident per year in 2012-13 to only 12.09 per resident per year in 2022-23.² The most recent MetroTas annual report attributed this decrease to ‘the apparent permanent impact of COVID-19 on patronage’,³⁷ but the downward trend since 2012-13 would seem to suggest decreased patronage is structural and being driven by more than just the latent effect of the pandemic.

But Hobart (and Tasmania more broadly) has not always had such low relative and absolute levels of public transport use. In fact, Hobart operated the first ever electric tram network in the southern hemisphere.³⁸

Data collated in 2013 by the then-Department for Infrastructure and Regional Development suggests that historically, and until the early 1980s, Hobart’s public transport per capita per kilometre patronage was comparable to Adelaide, Brisbane and Perth, before beginning a steady and seemingly terminal decline.

Figure 7. Per capita public transport use (thousands of kilometres per person per year) 1980-2013



Source: BITRE³⁹

2. While the data actually covers boardings in Hobart, Launceston and Burnie, over 80 per cent of boardings occurred in Hobart in 2021-22.



More recent data on public transport between Australian cities before the pandemic suggests that the decline in Hobart’s public transport patronage is unique.

Figure 8: Proportion of total transport kilometres on public transport for capital cities, 1976-77 - 2018-19

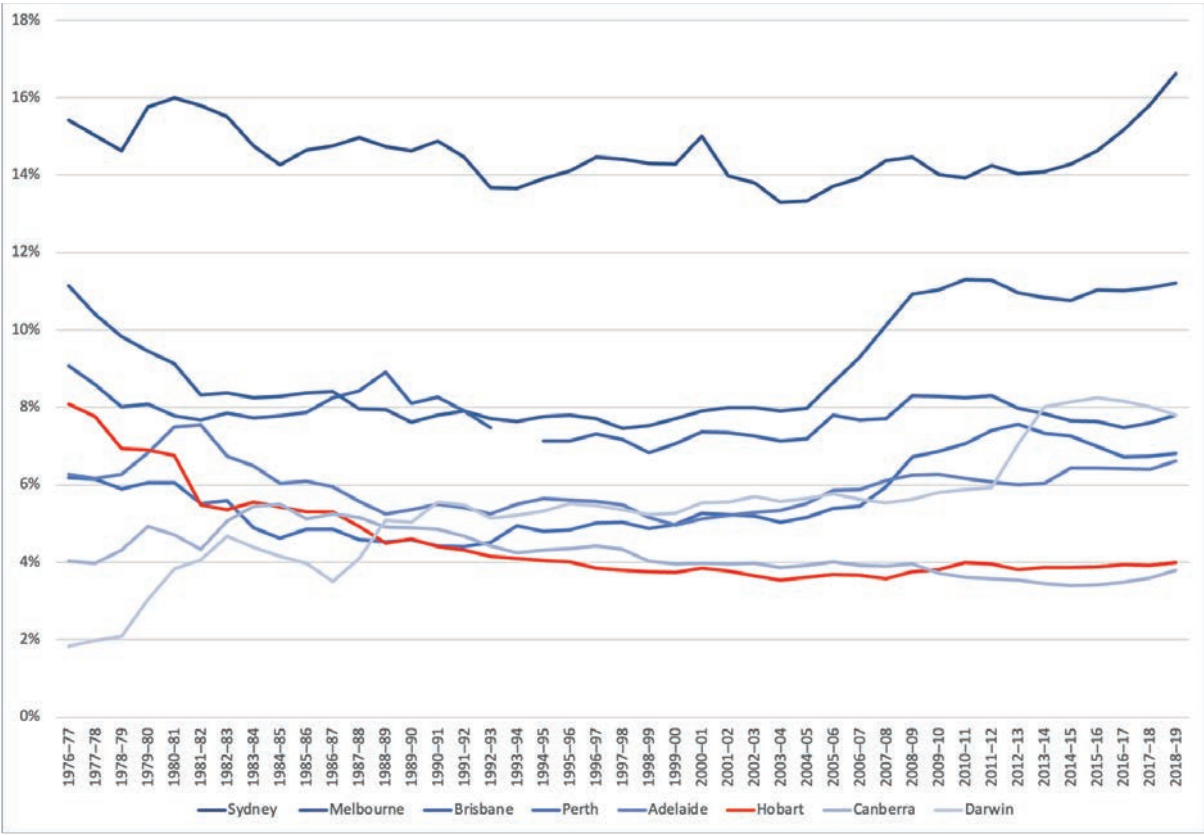


Table 4: Proportion of total transport kilometres on public transport for capital cities, 1976-77, 2018-19 and change

	Sydney	Melbourne	Brisbane	Perth	Adelaide	Hobart	Canberra	Darwin
1976-77	15.4%	11.2%	9.07%	6.2%	6.3%	8.1%	4.0%	1.8%
2018-19	16.6%	11.2%	7.8%	6.8%	6.6%	4.0%	3.8%	7.8%
Change	+1.2%	+0.1%	-1.3%	+0.6%	+0.3%	-4.1%	-0.2%	+6.0%

Source: Source: BITRE⁴⁰



While most capital cities experienced a decline in use until the late 1990s before experiencing an upswing immediately prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, Hobart experienced an almost-constant decline throughout the whole period. The proportion of kilometres travelled on public transport *decreased by over 50 per cent* from 8.1 per cent in 1976–77 to 4.0 per cent in 2018–19. This compares with increases in Sydney, Melbourne, Perth, Adelaide and Darwin, and relatively minor decreases in Canberra and Brisbane.³

Hobart’s current bus system is inequitable

As would be expected for a capital city, Hobart’s bus network extends to each of its metropolitan frontiers.

Services regularly run from Brighton in the city’s far north, through Glenorchy and the City of Hobart and down to Kingston in the far south. Less regular services extent south beyond Kingston into the nearby suburbs of Margate and Snug.

The main bus transport arteries on the north-south plane are Main Road from Hobart to Brighton, and Sandy Bay Road from Hobart to Kingston. Less regular services run along parallel transport arteries, and occasionally penetrate suburbs themselves.

Regular services also operate eastwards from Hobart, across the Tasman Bridge, to primarily service the city’s inner eastern coastal suburbs. Less frequent services extend eastward to the Sorell local government area.

Figures 9 and 10 represent the primary northern and southern operating areas respectively. Routes are colour coded in accordance with the General Access Service Standards outlined in Table 5 on the basis of total bus movements between 7am and 6pm on a regular weekday in August 2020, though they are not reflective of the bulk cancellations announced on 24 August 2023.

Table 5: General access service standards according to number of bus movements per day

High frequency (88>)	Premium (54–87)	Standard (42–53)	Urban (24–41)	Regional (14–23)	Access (6–13)	Daily (>6)
Dark Blue	Blue	Light Blue	Turquoise	Dark Green	Green	Light Green

Source: Department of State Growth⁴¹

3. Post 2018-19 data is omitted.

Figure 9: Northern metropolitan bus routes and frequency

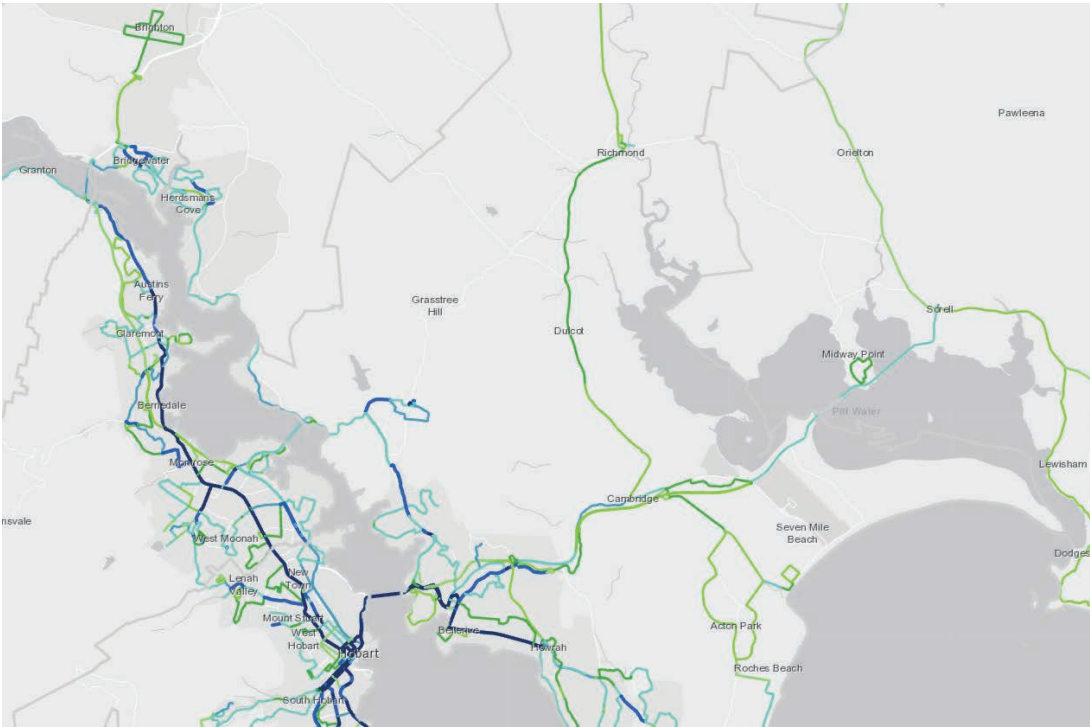
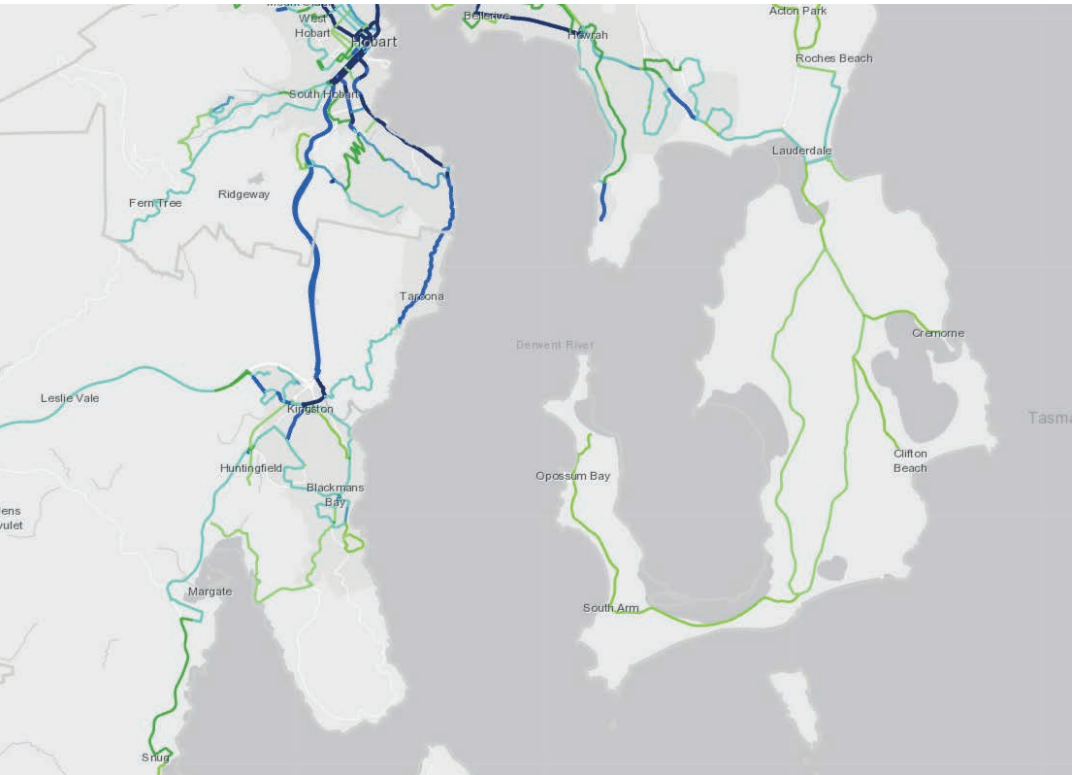


Figure 10: Southern metropolitan bus routes and frequency

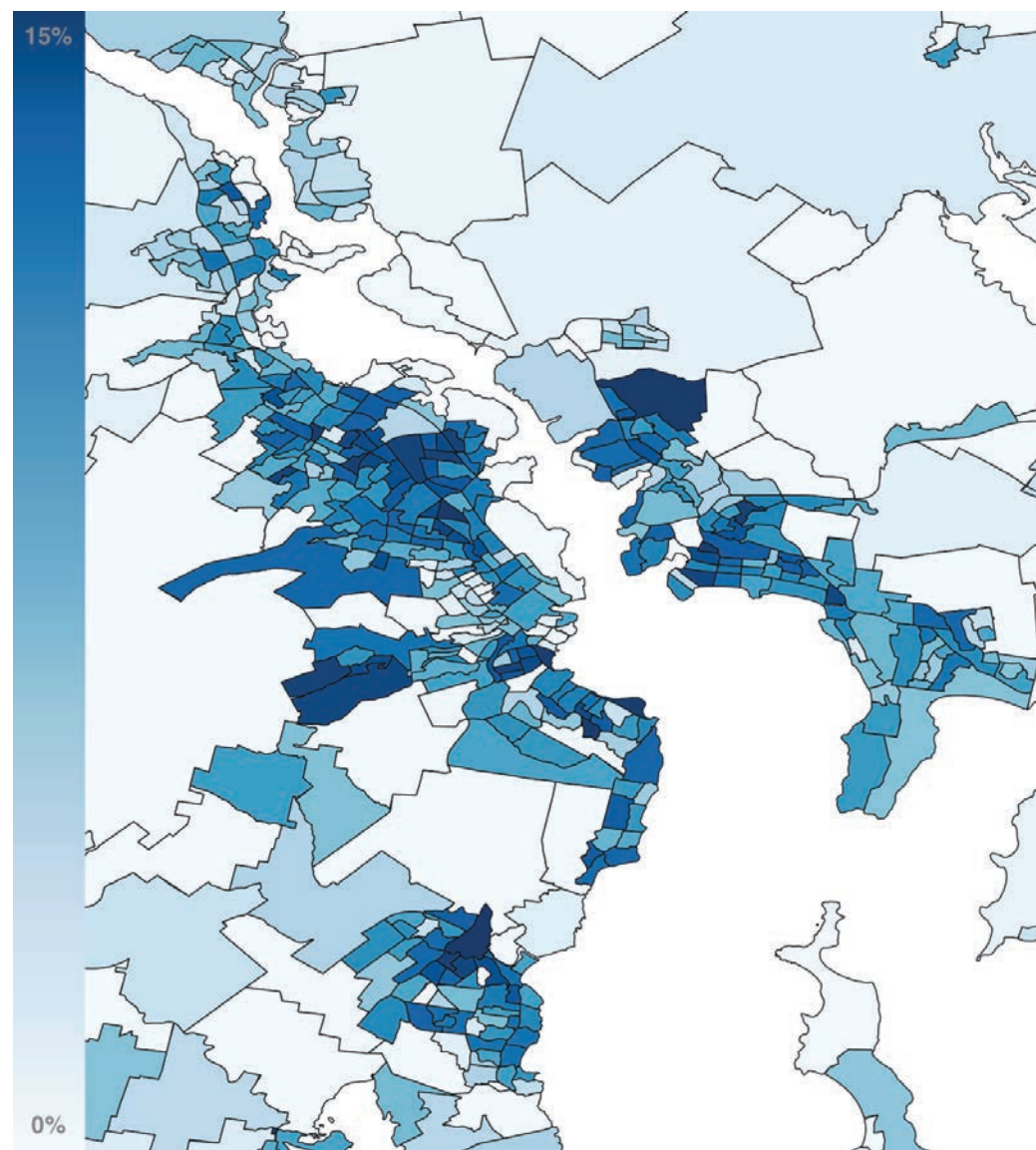


Source: Department of State Growth⁴²

At first glance, the MetroTas bus network appears to provide broad and consistent coverage through key transport arteries into Hobart's population centres, with services gradually becoming less frequent for outer suburbs and adjacent towns.

In the context of Hobart, public transport coverage is a strong predictor of public transport use. The strength of coverage in Hobart based on the maps presented above is a strong predictor the proportion of residents who use public transport in a given area. Figures 9, 10 and 11 show a clear positive relationship between the proportion of residents that use public transport, and the proximity and frequency of such areas to key public transport arteries.

Figure 11: Proportion of residents that use public transport



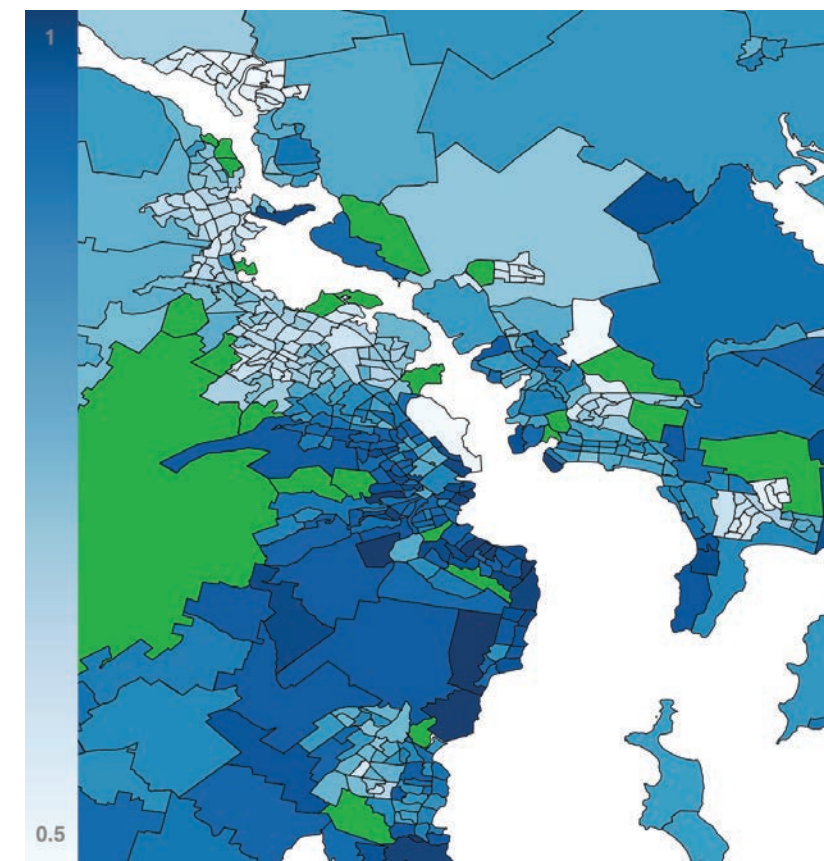
Source: Source: ABS⁴³

But allowing service coverage to dictate demand overlooks crucial demographic differences between areas within Hobart. Equitable public transport planning is an important tool for rectifying existing socioeconomic disparities *within* cities.⁴⁴ Such an approach recognises that areas in greatest need will benefit most from public transport access, and should be prioritised accordingly.

Hobart is characterised by significant variations in socioeconomic status as measured by the Index of Relative Socio-Economic Advantage and Disadvantage (**IRSAD**) indicators. The IRSAD index weights and standardises various measures relating to income, education, disability, family structure and housing costs.

In Figure 12, areas of relative advantage according to IRSAD within Hobart are coloured in a darker blue. The lightest shaded figures have IRSAD scores roughly half that of Hobart's most advantages areas. There is no data available for areas coded green. Hobart's most advantaged areas concentrate in the City of Hobart itself, into the southern suburbs of Sandy Bay and the Kingborough area more broadly, as well as the inner eastern suburbs. Areas of relative disadvantage are concentrated in the inner and outer northern areas of Glenorchy and Brighton.

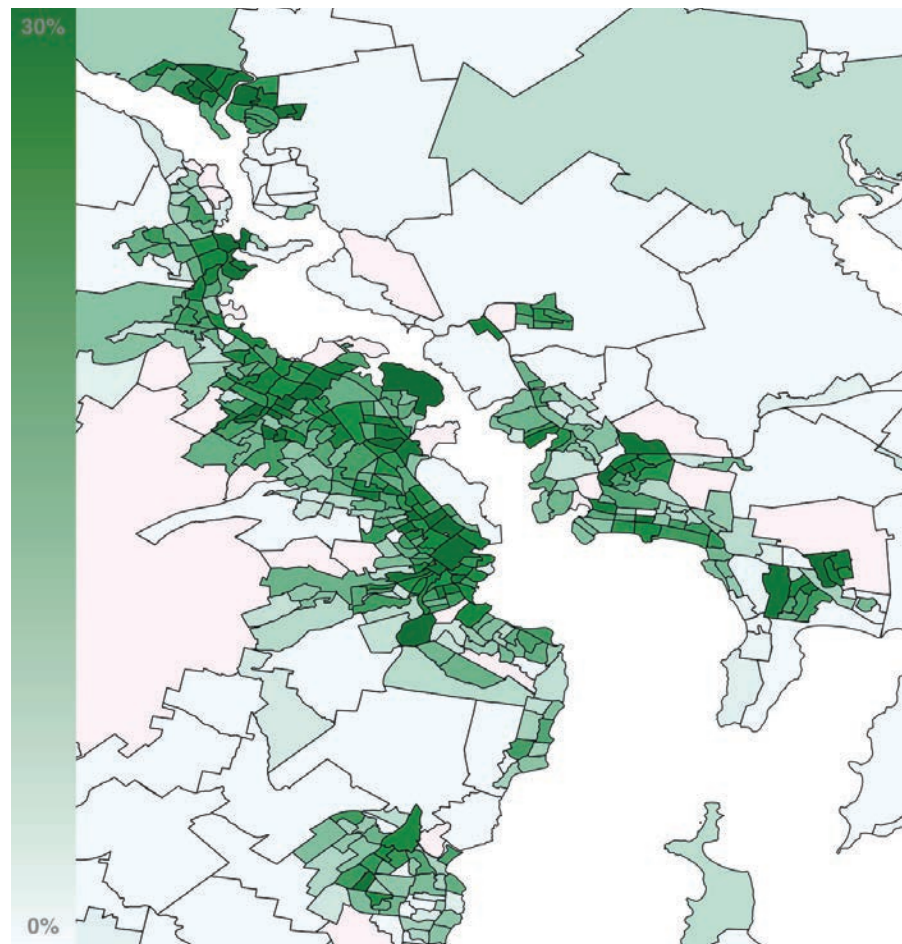
Figure 12: Intra-Hobart relative IRSAD scores in 2021



Source: : ABS⁴⁵

As depicted by darker shaded areas in Figure 13, Lower intra-Hobart relative IRSAD scores are correlated with higher incidences of households with *no access to a motor vehicle*.

Figure 13: Proportion of households with no access to a motor vehicle

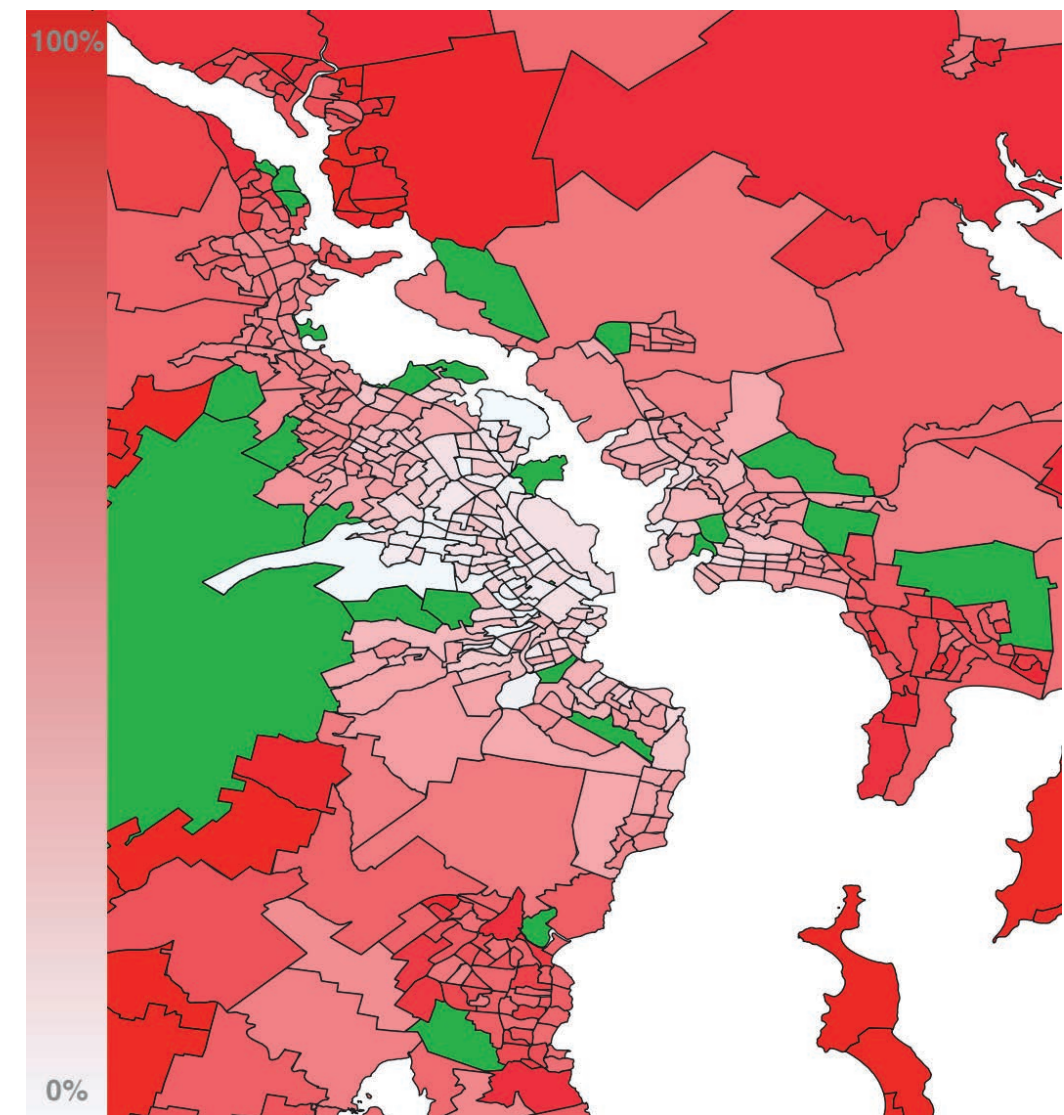


Source: : ABS⁴⁶

In the darkest shaded areas, at least 13 per cent, and up to 31 per cent of households *have no access at all to a motor vehicle*. This incidence is particularly striking in the far-north LGA of Bridgewater which sits approximately 23 kilometres from the Hobart central business district.

The low incidence of car ownership in the City of Hobart is inflated relative to its otherwise relatively high IRSAD scores. But as shown in Figure 14, this is likely explained by the fact that almost all residents of the City of Hobart live relatively close to their place of work, unlike residents of areas with relatively low IRSAD scores in the north, far-north, and west of Hobart who have significantly longer commutes.

Figure 14: Proportions of residents who must travel more than 10 kilometres to work



Source: : ABS⁴⁷

As the above figures have shown, Hobart's bus network is inattentive to the city's socioeconomic divide. This inattentiveness manifests in the provision of broadly similar levels of service between more affluent southern suburbs, and the the relatively disadvantaged northern suburbs where residents are much less likely to own a car.

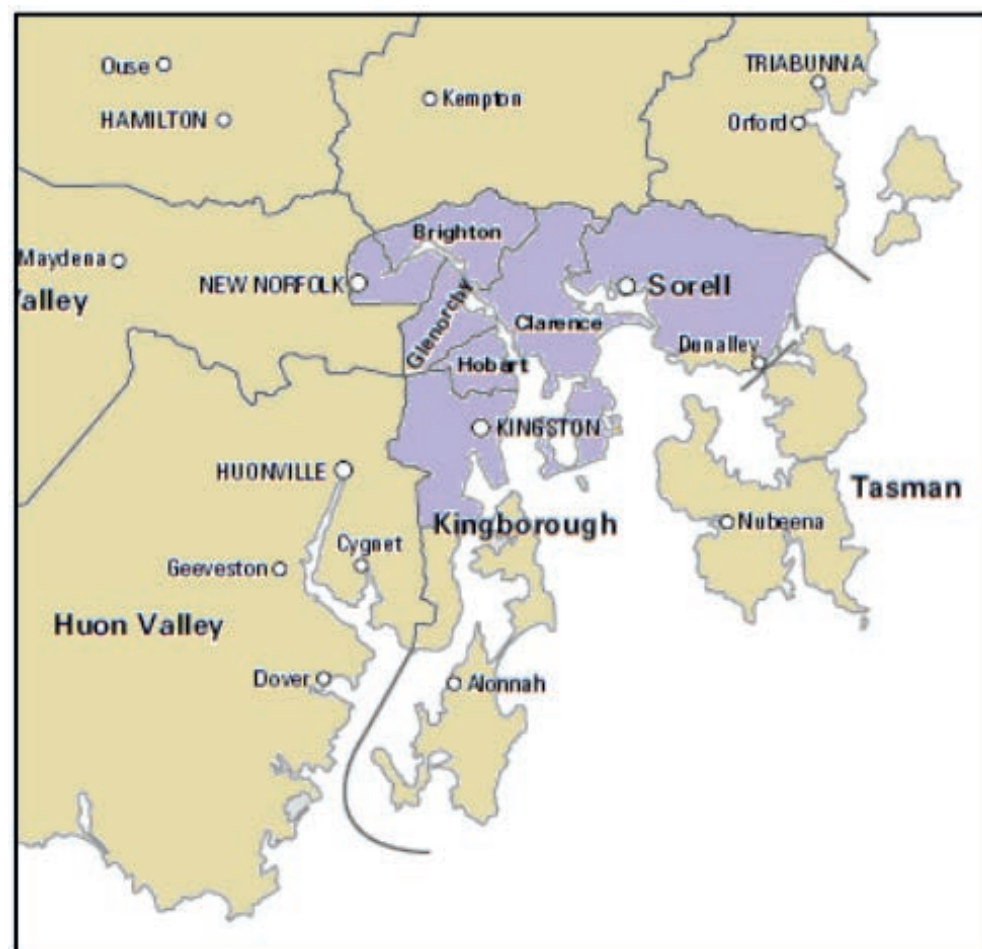
Equal service is not equitable service. Some areas, by virtue of their disadvantage and geography, and the potentially transformative effects of public transport access, ought to have greater access than other more affluent communities.

One of Hobart's most disadvantaged LGAs, Glenorchy, is an illustrative case study.

The case of Glenorchy

Glenorchy is one of six LGAs comprising greater Hobart (the other five being Sorell, Kingborough, Brighton, Clarence and the City of Hobart).

Figure 15: LGAs of Hobart



Source: : Greater Hobart Committee⁴⁸

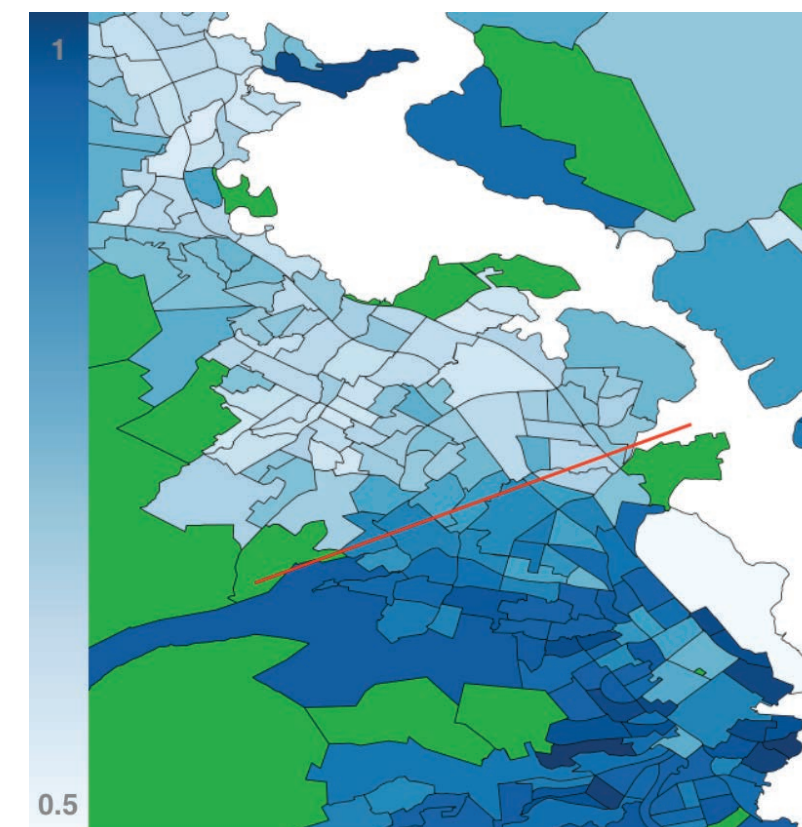
At the 2021 census Glenorchy had a population of 50,411—approximately 20 per cent of the population of greater Hobart.

Glenorchy is, by a significant margin, the most disadvantaged LGA in Hobart. Despite being closer to the City of Hobart than Brighton, Clarence or Sorell, it maintains the lowest median household income of any Hobart LGA – being 28 per cent lower than incomes in the City of Hobart to its south.

It also maintains, as of 2021, the highest unemployment rate (7.2 per cent),⁴ and second highest proportion of households with no access to a motor vehicle (9.5 per cent).

While its immediate southern neighbour, the City of Hobart, has the highest IRSAD score of any LGA area in Tasmania, Glenorchy is ranked 19th of the 29 LGAs in Tasmania. Of all Australian LGAs, Glenorchy is among the poorest quintile. As depicted in Figure 16, the drop in relative IRSAD scores between Hobart and Glenorchy is almost immediate.

Figure 16: Hobart-relative IRSAD scores between Glenorchy and the City of Hobart



Source: ABS⁴⁹

Glenorchy is topographically distinct from the other LGAs serviced by MetroTas. From the New Town 'pinch point', it becomes much wider and less streamlined than the bus routes within the City of Hobart or to Kingborough along Sandy Bay Road.

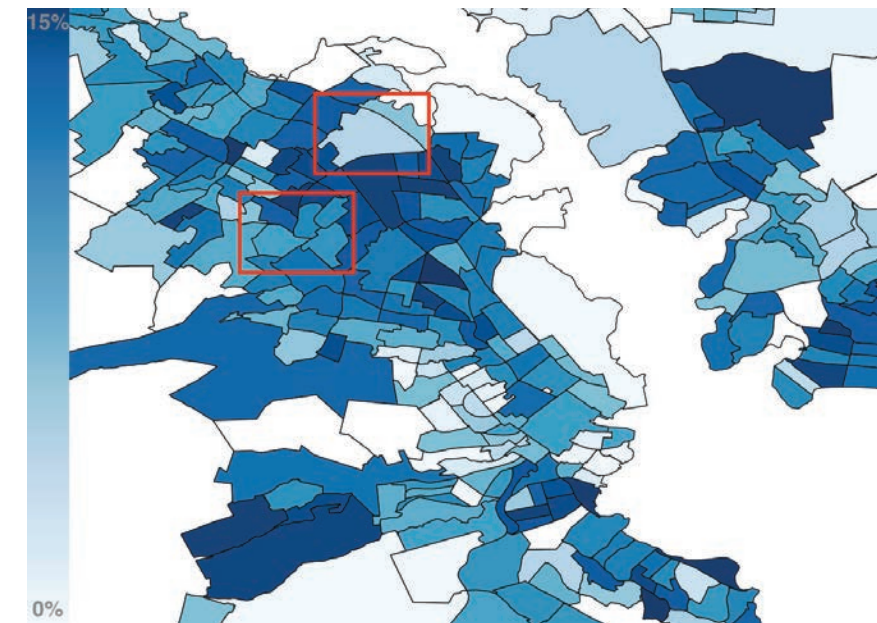
4. Given the labour market conditions at the time of writing it is likely that the rate in 2024 is much lower in absolute terms. However it is likely that the 2024 rate is elevated compared to surrounding suburbs and LGAs.

Figure 17: Lower Glenorchy route frequency

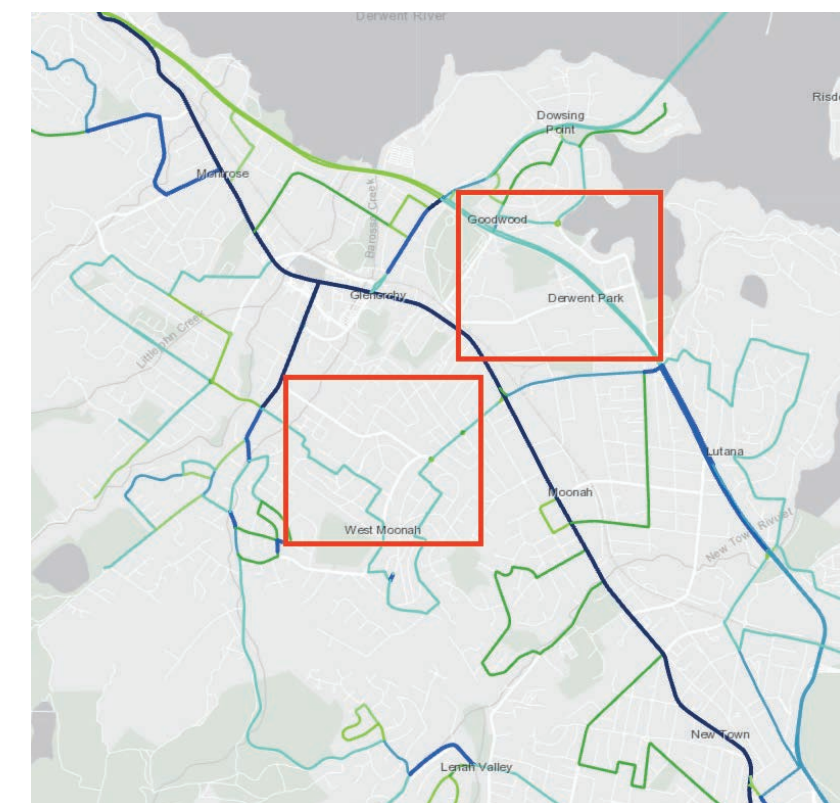
Source: Department of State Growth

Glenorchy is primarily serviced by the Main Road artery denoted by the dark blue line on Figure 17, with much less frequent services extending either side of Main Road into the suburbs of Derwent Park and West Moonah.

The low frequency and numerous gaps in services in the Glenorchy LGA are strongly correlated with a decreased proportion of bus users in the area.

Figure 18: Proportion of bus users in Glenorchy by SA1

Source: ABS⁵⁰

Figure 19: Derwent Park and West Moonah

Source: Department of State Growth⁵¹

For example, West Moonah is only serviced by 27 trips per day, and Derwent Park by 34 trips per day, neither of which fully penetrate the suburb despite viable routes to reconnect to the arterial roads. By contrast, the service along Main Road between West Moonah and Derwent Park sees over 200 trips per day.

The relationship transport inaccessibility and social disadvantage is well established in the Australian context⁵² The fact that such disadvantaged areas of Glenorchy, situated so close to the metropolitan centre, receive highly limited services with clearly visible gaps is inexplicable. It risks deepening existing inequalities within Hobart. This makes it more difficult for many to attend job interviews, access educational opportunities and get to medical appointments.

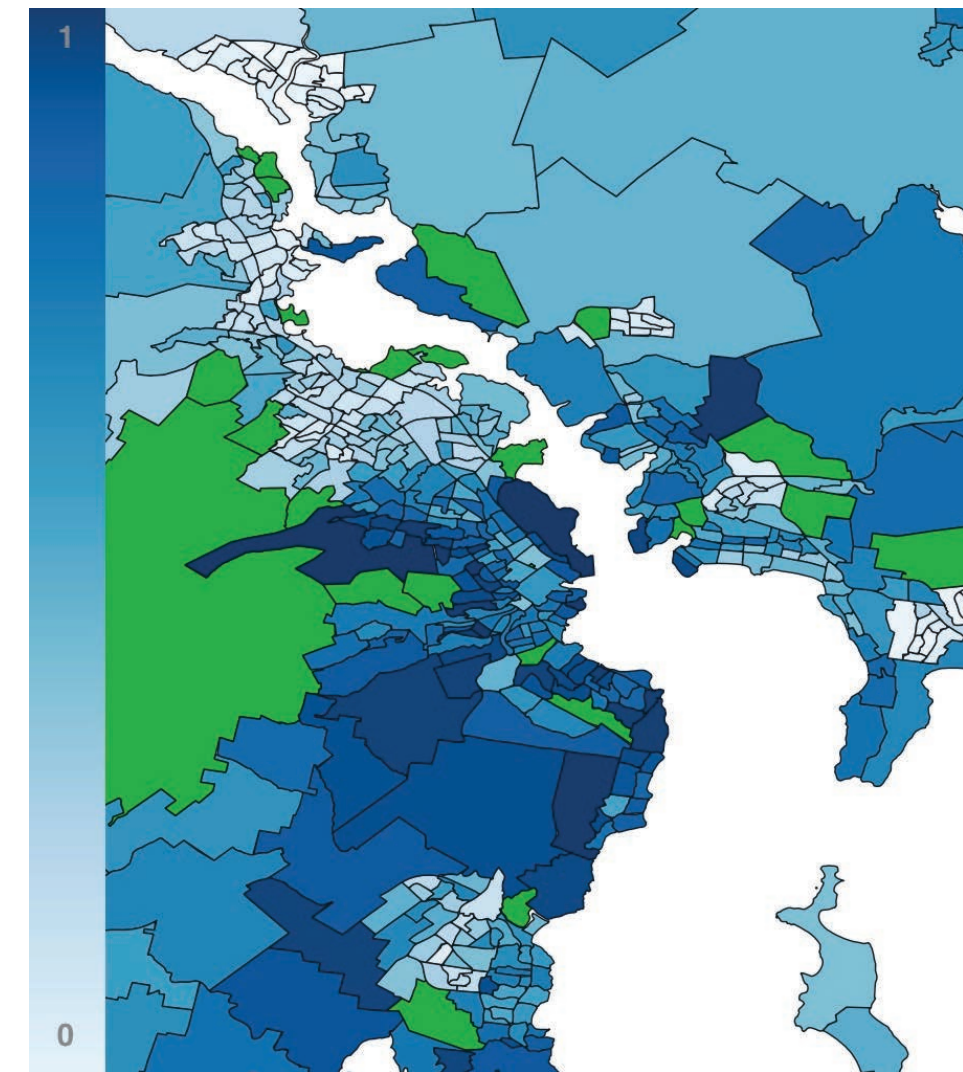
Other Tasmanian communities merit further investigation

Though this paper has focused on the Glenorchy LGA's socioeconomic profile and challenges in transport access, there are other communities across Tasmania (in both Hobart and Launceston) which should be of interest to planners and policymakers.

Based on a ranking of AS1 statistical areas on IRSAD scores, travel distance to work, and access to a motor vehicle, it is possible to devise a predictor for where public transport would be most needed by Tasmanian urban communities.

Figure 20 maps this demand measure across Greater Hobart. According to the metric, areas shaded in the lightest blue are in most need of public transport services

Figure 20: Forecasted Greater Hobart public transport demand

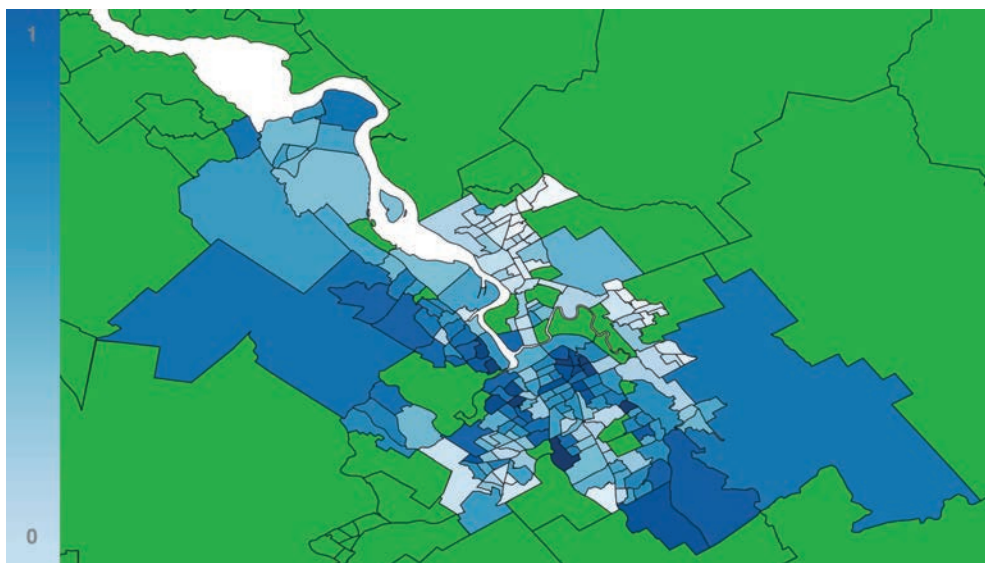


Source: ABS⁵³

In addition to Glenorchy, the measure predicts that areas of Bridgewater in the far north, Mornington and Lauderdale on the east side of the Derwent, and some southern suburbs of Blackman's Bay stand in most need of public transport services.

A similar exercise can be repeated on Greater Launceston. Figure 21 finds that the suburbs of Newnham and Mayfield in the north, Ravenswood in the inner east, and Prospect Vale in the south west are in most need public transport.

Figure 21: Forecasted Greater Launceston public transport demand



Source: ABS⁵⁴

While poor planning and frequency of services—particularly to the most disadvantaged communities—is the main manifestation of a neglected public transport system, it is not the only one. An inability to retain drivers, poorly adapted road infrastructure, and the contract structure of MetroTas are significantly detracting from the quality, efficacy and equity of Hobart's bus services.

The viability of Tasmanian public transport is facing significant challenges

Notwithstanding a lack of spending, investment, and patronage, as well as poorly planned and inequitable routes, public transport in Tasmania faces several pressing challenges which threaten to derail the long term viability of public transport. These are driver turnover, road congestion, and the nature of contracting between the Tasmanian Government and MetroTas.

Hobart's bus system is being undermined by high driver turnover

Bus services cannot operate without dedicated and dependable drivers.

In August 2023, MetroTas cut 177 services in Hobart, after increasing reports of late term cancellations and 'no show' buses, in order to focus on certainty and reliability on core routes.⁵⁵

These cancellations and no shows, and the consequential reigning in of services, were by and large caused by an inability to recruit and retain drivers.

For years, reports have surfaced of poor management, questionable treatment of drivers by both MetroTas and patrons, and poor general working conditions – all leading to increasingly high rates of turnover.

Some commuters in Hobart have been regularly directing their frustrations at drivers in the form of physical and verbal abuse.⁵⁶ Many disgruntled employees have spoken anecdotally of poor management and of inconsistent and unpredictable rostering systems.⁵⁷

In this regard, the Tasmanian Government's September 2023 decision to inject \$8.1 million into driver pay, security screens, additional transit officers and new rostering systems is commendable.⁵⁸ However, this increase to driver pay is merely temporary, and exists outside of the current enterprise agreement. Enduring and competitive pay rates for Tasmanian bus drivers will therefore need to be negotiated in the next Enterprise Agreement.

But we will not know whether it is enough until working conditions improve on the ground, and MetroTas' Hobart services are once again up and running at their previous capacity.

Increased congestion threatens the current network's long term viability

Hobart is becoming increasingly congested.⁵⁹ Lodged between the Derwent River and Mount Wellington, it faces unique topographical challenges which affect its ability to deliver, maintain and upgrade its road infrastructure. This inability to maintain and upgrade its infrastructure, coupled with a growing population, has contributed to increasing levels of congestion.

The Legislative Council of the Parliament of Tasmania acknowledged the growing problem of urban congestion in their 2021 *Final Report on Greater Hobart Traffic Congestion*.⁶⁰

The Report found that there is congestion on every major arterial road leading into the City of Hobart,⁶¹ and that congestion poses significant challenges to the community through increased travel time, decreased productivity and reduced access to services.⁶²

The Report also noted that public transport 'does not adequately meet the needs of all patrons which discourages its use and adds to congestion'.⁶³ It found that congestion itself detracts from delivery of timely services, and that this contributed significantly to reported negative MetroTas customer feedback.⁶⁴

Given that buses must share roads with other vehicles, they are equally subject to the impacts of congestion. This reduces their overall appeal for individual commuters. At its core, this is a collective action problem. While there would be a net decrease in congestion if each single commuter used the bus, but there are few incentives to use buses as compared to personal vehicles for individual commuters.

The Tasmanian Government has attempted to remedy this with the addition of a 'T3' transit lane southward between Olinda Grove and Macquarie Street for exclusive use of private vehicles carrying three or more people, as well as buses, taxis, motorbikes and emergency vehicle services.⁶⁵

While the T3 transit lane is a start, a single lane on a single road will not be sufficient to shift Hobart's commuters' preferences away from personal vehicles towards public transport—especially given the endemic problems discussed throughout this paper. In this regard, a more concerted, city-wide and long-term approach is needed to ensure that public transport becomes a more preferable method of transport for Hobart residents.

Service provision and direction is limited by MetroTas' contract structure

MetroTas is a state-owned enterprise. Its only shareholders are the Treasurer and the Minister for Infrastructure and Transport.⁶⁶

It is operated by a board of directors independent of the government,⁶⁷ and is required by its enabling statute to 'provide passenger transport services in Tasmania .. and to operate those services in a manner consistent with sound commercial practice'.⁶⁸

MetroTas primary revenue source is service contracts from the Department of State Growth. These effectively function as direct public transport subsidies, and represented 82 per cent of MetroTas' total revenue in 2021–22, with the other bulk of revenue coming from ticket sales.⁶⁹

Even though MetroTas is a creature of the Tasmanian Parliament, the only lever which the Tasmanian Government can control service provision is by stipulating terms in the service contracts with MetroTas. As the Legislative Council of Tasmania noted in their above congestion report, '[g]overnment-imposed constraints in Metro's contracts shapes the services it provides'.⁷⁰

In 2019, the then-Chair of MetroTas, Tim Gardner said:

'In terms of Metro's constraints ... we are fundamentally constrained by our contract obligations. *Our contracts define exactly where and when we will run, what vehicles we will have on the road and the timetables by which we will operate.* It is a decision in relation to the contracts we provide that then shapes the way we can operate on the ground.'⁷¹

The fact that the provision of an essential public service is wholly mediated and governed by a contract between the Tasmanian Government and a state-owned entity is striking. The Tasmanian Government has effectively ceded control of its public transport operations to an entity it *wholly owns*, and then contracted with that entity to provide the service it previously provided.

This structuring of public transport service provision has two important implications.

Firstly, it changes the way public transport is seen and spoken about. It means that service contracts become seen as a 'cost' which is paid to some other entity, rather than the provision of an essential public service by a publicly owned entity.

Secondly, it grants MetroTas a broader discretion over the frequency and destination of bus services. While we are not privy to the service contracts between the Tasmanian Government and MetroTas, it is likely that MetroTas retain a broad ability to direct and prioritise services without government (and therefore public) input.

This lack of control is evident in the slashing of 177 services across Hobart from late August 2023.⁷² The contract between MetroTas and the government was likely completely silent on how cancellations should be prioritised, and what should be taken into account when deciding which services are to be cancelled. Given the ability of cancelled services to disproportionately affect the most vulnerable, a lack of direct control is no doubt undesirable.



PART 3:

WHY SHOULD WE CARE?

Part 2 has detailed how far behind Tasmania, and Hobart specifically, have fallen with respect to public transport routine spending, investment and access, particularly for the most vulnerable, and details the growing challenges of driver turnover, congestion, and contract structuring.

But this neglect is only of interest if we believe that *public transport itself is important*. Part 2, therefore, must be understood within the context of the well-documented and multifaceted benefits of public transport for individuals, their communities, and their economies.

Public transport is crucial to individuals, communities, and economies

Mobility

Public transport creates significant **mobility benefits**. While rarely used by the most affluent communities, the trips served by public transport tend to be of high value to those who are transport disadvantaged. For many, access to public transport is crucial for seeking and retaining employment.

Indeed, academic studies have suggested that those who live closer to public transport services are more likely to work more days per year than those who live further afield.⁷³ This has indirect flow on effects which have been found to reduce welfare dependency and unemployment. These mobility benefits are most pronounced for those who are economically, physically and socially disadvantaged.⁷⁴ For example, improvements to public transport infrastructure have been shown to improve access to healthcare by low-income earners and reduce no-show medical appointments.⁷⁵

Access to public transport reduces barriers to community involvement, increases individual autonomy, and supports economic participation. It is disproportionately used by the most vulnerable. A 2011 Melbourne study found that 55 per cent of the city's unemployed, 38 per cent of those not in the labor force, and 44 per cent of part time workers had used public transport in the past month.⁷⁶

Efficiency

There are also **efficiency gains** to be had from substituting automobile travel for public transport. The costs of owning, operating and maintaining a car can be significant. Individuals are likely to spend less on transport generally when there are more public transport options, reducing pressure on household budgets. A national study conducted in November 2013 found that an average commuter in a large Australian city could save more than \$5490 per year by commuting to work on public transport.⁷⁷

As early as 2013, congestion was said to be 'undermining national productivity'.⁷⁸ Substitution of personal vehicles in favour of public transport reduces congestion and the associated costs of delay, stress, pollution and vehicle operating costs. Minor reductions in road traffic congestion of 5 per cent can decrease delay by over 20 per cent.⁷⁹ Expansions in rail networks have been empirically shown to decrease congestion,⁸⁰ and so too have specific parallel 'bus lanes'.⁸¹ Ultimately, these all serve to decrease travel time for commuters.

Health, safety and security

Public transport also has significant **health, safety and security impacts**. Public transport users experience fatality rates approximately ten times lower than car users.⁸² Even residents of communities with broad public transport coverage have been found to experience lower fatality rates than residents from car-dependent communities.⁸³ A study of 100 cities in the United States over 29 years found a 10 per cent increase in public transport's share of urban passenger travel to be associated with a 1.5 per cent decreased in motor vehicle fatalities.⁸⁴

Reduced fatalities notwithstanding, there are active benefits to health from increased use of public transport. Most, if not all, public transport trips require walking links. As such, public transport users have been found to walk up to three times as much as those that rely on car transport.⁸⁵ In the Australian context, public transport users average five times more walking per day than those who travel entirely by car.⁸⁶

Community cohesion is also greater in neighbourhoods with greater reliance on public transport. A study of Brisbane in 2014 found that those living in public transport-oriented developments experienced higher levels of social connection and trust with their communities.⁸⁷

Environment and land use

As Australia confronts the climate crisis and energy transition becomes ever more salient, public transport has a critical role to play in **reducing carbon emissions**. It has been estimated that urban public transport consumes up to 50 per cent less carbon dioxide per passenger mile compared to cars.⁸⁸ Others estimate that during peak traffic periods, bus and rail services are up to six times less greenhouse gas intensive per passenger kilometre.⁸⁹

There are also significant land use and planning benefits to public transport. It can reduce the amount of land required for road and parking facilities and free up land for more compact urban development.

Economic development and productivity

Finally, public transport has a significant effect on **economic development**. Direct investment in public transport infrastructure development produces better employment outcomes compared to other infrastructure assets.⁹⁰ Investment in public transport also frees up consumer income which would otherwise be spent on much more costly automotive transport.

What is more, public transport can increase economic productivity. It improves access to education and employment,⁹¹ stimulates more efficient land use and compact development, and creates important agglomeration effects. Indeed, the Parliament of Australia have noted that effective public transport 'has a direct impact on national productivity, global competitiveness and quality of life'.⁹²

Indeed, some see public transport investment as crucial to kick-starting Australia's perennially low productivity growth. It has been estimated that for every \$100 million invested in public transport in Australia there is a knock-on direct and indirect benefit of almost \$1 billion.⁹³ A 2011 study suggested that by failing to keep up aggregate public transport investments at 1984 levels, Australia 'lost' approximately \$48 billion from uneventuated productivity gains.⁹⁴

Social connectivity

But it would be misguided to view the benefits of public transport through a solely economic lens. While, of course, best-practice planning requires that 'public transport ... be considered as nationally-significant infrastructure',⁹⁵

there is more at stake. As the Parliament of Australia noted in 2013 in their inquiry into the Role of Public Transport in Delivering Productivity Outcomes:

[W]ider economic costs and benefits, including **social and economic connectivity**, environmental factors, active lifestyle benefits, safety factors and avoided costs and benefits [should] be factored into transport project analysis.⁹⁶

Traditional public transport research has historically neglected the importance of social connectivity. Recent research accounting for complex social variables such as household income, employment status, social support, community participation, and political activity has found that providing broad and accessible public transport to at-risk communities can be a significantly more fruitful investment than heavier, less expansive infrastructure investments to communities which are already serviced.⁹⁷ These social connectivity benefits are particularly salient in the context of the Glenorchy example explored in Part 2.

But reaping the social, economic, and environmental benefits of public transport requires concerted action from government to make it safe, available and the preferable choice for commuters.

Tasmania has much to gain from public transport infrastructure investment

Low levels of investment, particularly in transport, risk leaving Tasmania further behind economically. As mentioned in above, public transport investment can increase productivity and generate substantial economic returns. In December 2023, as the Australian economy continues to slow, ⁹⁸ prudent, targeted and future-oriented investments are increasingly crucial for long-term growth both in Tasmania and Australia more broadly.

Yet, as detailed above, Tasmania’s investment in public transport infrastructure has been minimal compared to mainland jurisdictions. Even at a general level, Tasmanian state and local public investment per capita is among the lowest in the country.

Infrastructure funding responsibility is often shared with the Commonwealth, which has recently sought to provide significant investment in Hobart. In the 2023–24 Budget, the Commonwealth Labor government committed \$305 million to ‘deliver urban renewal projects in Hobart and Launceston’, with \$240 million to ‘unlock the potential of the Macquarie Point precinct in

Figure 22: Annual per capita public state and local government investment by jurisdiction: 2016-17 – 2020-21

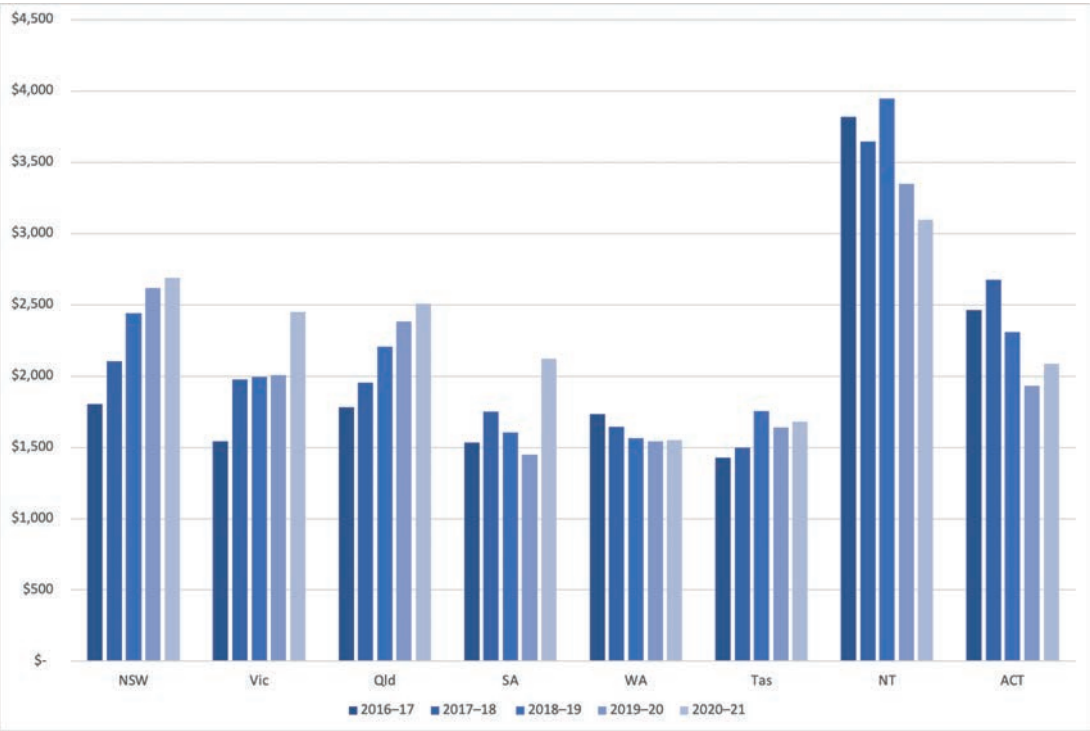


Table 6: Annual per capita public state and local government investment by jurisdiction: 2020-21

Tasmania	South Australia	Victoria	Western Australia	Queensland	Northern Territory	Australian Capital Territory
\$1,679	\$2,122	\$2,450	\$1,549	\$2,509	\$3,097	\$2,086

Source: ABS⁹⁹

Hobart’.¹⁰⁰ Despite such commitmentments, it remains unclear how exactly such funds will be deployed.¹⁰¹

Recent feasibility studies have also recommended heavier investment in Hobart’s public transport infrastructure, particularly in Hobart’s northern corridor.¹⁰² But as detailed in Part 1, such proposals have not yet prompted any meaningful investment from any layer of government.

Other socioeconomic and demographic indicators suggest that responsible

investment in Hobart's public transport infrastructure at a general level is crucial.

Tasmania currently maintains the lowest gross state product (**GSP**) of any jurisdiction in Australia.¹⁰³ Hobart itself has the second oldest population of any capital city in Australia,¹⁰⁴ which, when compounded by its low population, presents considerable economic challenges. It has the lowest weekly family income of all capital cities, the highest proportion of households in rental stress, and the second lowest labour force participation.¹⁰⁵

Hobart residents' distinct preference for building 'out' rather than 'up' also dampens economic agglomeration effects and presents challenges for public service provision.¹⁰⁶ This has led to Hobart, despite its relatively small size, having the second lowest amount of economic activity per square kilometre of all of Australia's capital cities.¹⁰⁷

But recent data suggests that Tasmania, and Hobart specifically, are slowly on their way to catching up with the rest of the country. Buoyed by agriculture, construction, and health care, Tasmania's 2022–23 GSP per capita growth of 4.5 per cent outperformed New South Wales, Queensland, Western Australia and the ACT.¹⁰⁸

Further, between 2001 and 2021, the City of Hobart experienced a strong average gross regional product growth rate of 3.3 per cent—with particularly robust growth between 2018 and 2021.¹⁰⁹

While progress is certainly being made, Hobart still has catching up to do.

And though determining the feasibility and desirability of various large public transport investments is beyond the scope of this paper, it is abundantly clear that Hobart (and Tasmania) would benefit economically from general public transport investment and its concomitant benefits discussed in Part 2.

In fact, given the state of public transport in Tasmania, the state's relative economic performance, the potentially transformative effects of public transport investment, and the fact that, in the Commonwealth's own words, it seeks to 'ensure that each State has the same fiscal capacity to deliver services' – *it is an imperative* that there be additional investment in public transport.¹¹⁰ Even the Parliament of Tasmania has acknowledged that '[i]mproved transport options could lead to greater economic development' in Hobart.¹¹¹

PART 4:

THE WAY FORWARD

Hobart was once a leader in the provision of public transport in the southern hemisphere. It is now arguably the worst performer in Australia alone.

Successive years of low spending, investment, patronage and a notable lack of vision have left an inequitable and unreliable bus system incapable of meeting the city's basic transport needs.

Of Australian jurisdictions, the Tasmanian Government spends the lowest amount per capita on public transport, and the second lowest proportion of their state budget. Unlike almost all other Australian capital cities, the proportion of transport kilometres on public transport has decreased over the past 40 years—almost halving in Tasmania relative to increases in Sydney, Melbourne, Perth, Adelaide and Darwin.

Crucially, this neglect also overlooks the well-documented economic effects of public transport investment and service provision, and its broader effects on the environment, public health and social cohesion.

There are several meaningful reforms which can be made to the current system to improve reliability of services, staffing retention, ensure a more equitable service provision, and to recentre public transport in Hobart and Tasmania more broadly.

Firstly, the Tasmanian Government should seek to structurally adjust its budget towards greater spending on public transport services. Per capita, the current level of funding is the lowest in the Commonwealth. As a proportion of the budget, it is the second lowest.

Previous bespoke initiatives aimed at bolstering public transport in Tasmania have failed. The partnership between the Tasmanian Government and the Commonwealth under the 'Hobart City Deal' made negligible impacts on the bus network.

For too long has public transport been neglected in Hobart specifically, and Tasmania more broadly. Accordingly, the Tasmanian Government should

seek to elevate its long-term level of funding for public transport to that seen in jurisdictions of comparable economic development, such as South Australia, or jurisdictions with similarly sized capital cities, such as the Australian Capital Territory.

Secondly, the Tasmanian Government should seek to plan more frequent bus services based on areas of greatest disadvantage. This paper's analysis of bus frequency and disadvantage in Hobart revealed that its most socioeconomically disadvantaged areas in Glenorchy, even those close to the wealthy City of Hobart, were seeing comparable levels of service to the wealthier suburbs with much higher incidences of car ownership.

These more frequent services should be sure to penetrate suburbs in greatest need, rather than run routinely along the transport arteries. For example, some of the most disadvantaged Glenorchy LGA suburbs of Derwent Park and West Moonah see very few penetrating services despite their proximity to the major transport artery on Main Road.

Additional services to Hobart's inner northern suburbs would be an important start. But other areas of need in Hobart (such as Bridgewater) and Launceston (such as Newnham and Mayfield) highlighted in Part 2 should be considered by planners and policymakers.

Thirdly, the Tasmanian Parliament should create a specific offence for intimidating, abusing or harassing bus drivers or other transport workers. While the Tasmanian Government recently announced the introduction of security screens and additional transit officers, there remains more to be done.

South Australia and New South Wales have specific offences relating to similar behaviour towards retail staff which could easily be extended to transport workers to deter would-be offenders.

Fourthly, the Tasmanian Government should prioritise active investment in public transport infrastructure such as additional bus lanes, 'bus rapid transit' and/or light rail. Hobart's road infrastructure is buckling under the weight of its population growth, and the problem of congestion has become particularly acute in recent years.

This congestion is problematic for both buses and personal vehicles, and means that buses provide no relative reduction in commute time. Investment in additional bus lanes would raise the profile of Hobart's bus

system and, in turn, induce substitution away from personal vehicles.

But it is also clear that buses alone will not be able to service the transport needs of Hobart into the future. Successive governments have proposed various large investments in 'bus rapid transit' and the 'Riverline' light rail, but no proposal has yet eventuated. It is recommended that the Tasmanian Government proceed with some additional form of non-bus public transport infrastructure.

While the current government has proposed an uncoded 'bus rapid transit', their model is undesirable. It proposes using existing road infrastructure which would simply add to existing congestion. They have also suggested that the network would be privately operated which, for reasons in the final recommendation, would undermine both its efficacy and public character.

Finally, the Tasmanian Government should consider a number of changes to its administration of the public transport system. The current contract system is entirely opaque, and appears to grant MetroTas a broad discretion over an essential public service.

Possible changes could include making MetroTas entirely public, amending the Metro Tasmania Act 1997 to include mandatory considerations for service provision/cancellations relating to socioeconomic disadvantage, or making the service contracts freely available to give the public a better idea of how and why key service decisions are being made.

HOBART WAS ONCE
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PROVISION OF
PUBLIC TRANSPORT
IN THE SOUTHERN
HEMISPHERE. IT IS
NOW ARGUABLY THE
WORST PERFORMER
IN AUSTRALIA
ALONE.

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