



TASSO SUBMISSION

Greater Hobart Bus Network Review

We're in this together.

***We speak as a proud voice for families within the
Tasmanian State School community to
make sure their needs and ideas are heard.***

Acknowledgements

Acknowledgement of Country

Tasmanian Association of State School Organisations pays respect to the Palawa people as the Traditional Custodians and first educators of the land in beautiful Lutruwita.

We pay respect to elders past, present, and emerging and acknowledge their deep connection to country.

We also express our gratitude that we share this land today, our sorrow for some of the costs of that sharing, and our hope and belief that we move to a place of equity, justice, and partnership together.

Acknowledging Parents

TASSO acknowledges parents and caregivers as the first educators in their child's life. We celebrate and honour the diversity of families and recognise the vital role family and community play in supporting children and young people throughout their learning journeys.

TASSO prepared this submission with consideration of feedback provided by Tasmanian parents and caregivers. We extend our appreciation to all who have shared their experiences and engaged with our Organisation.

Acknowledging Funding

TASSO is supported by funding provided by the Department for Children and Young People (DECYP).

Background

Who is TASSO?

The Tasmanian Association of State School Organisations (TASSO) is the peak body representing the parents and community who form School Association within Tasmanian public schools.

We work to empower the heart of Tasmanian state schools – their community – by supporting School Associations through their committee.

Our work includes providing essential training, resources, and support to school committees. Most importantly, we help them meet their constitutional requirements, support office-bearers in their roles and facilitate valuable networking opportunities, so together the School Association can do great things.

We represent the School Association Committees from within Tasmania's 125 Primary Schools (Kindergarten to Year 6), 29 High Schools (Year 7 – 12), 25 District Schools (Kindergarten to Year 12), 8 Colleges (Year 11 and 12) and 3 Support Schools.

At TASSO, we believe in the value of government education. We are committed to making sure that state school education in Tasmania delivers the best possible education for Tassie kids. We speak as a proud voice for families to make sure their needs and ideas are heard.

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Introduction

The Tasmanian Association of State School Organisations (TASSO) welcomes the opportunity to contribute to the Greater Hobart Bus Network Review.

Reliable, safe, and accessible transport plays a vital role in helping students get to school every day. Public transport should support learning, not stand in the way of it.

Any changes to the bus network must put student needs first. Every student deserves a fair chance to attend school, no matter where they live or their family's circumstances.

What We Heard from Families and Schools

TASSO shared the Department of State Growth's survey with School Association Chairs across Greater Hobart, encouraging schools to raise local issues directly. We also spoke with Chairs, drew on earlier conversations, and revisited concerns raised in our previous submission to the parliamentary hearings into [Metro Tasmania](#).

What came through clearly was this: the current public bus network isn't working well for many students. Families consistently raised concerns about access, reliability, and safety.

Why Transport Matters

When transport doesn't work, students miss school. It's that simple.

We know regular attendance is tied to better learning, wellbeing, and connection to school, but if a bus is full, doesn't turn up, or doesn't go where it's needed, students are left behind.

In Greater Hobart, many government schools don't have dedicated school buses. Even where they do, services often don't meet demand either due to limited routes, capacity, or scheduling issues, resulting in the need for many students to rely on public buses.

There's often no backup when something goes wrong. If a student misses their bus, or it's too full, they're stuck. This hits hardest for students who travel out-of-area for school, or who stay late for sport, music, or tutoring.

We need a system that's built for students. That means being reliable, flexible, and designed to meet the realities of school life with a system to alert students to delays or route issues.

Recommendations

TASSO requests the following priorities for the bus network to better support students be considered as part of this review:

- Reliable and frequent public bus access at/near all schools:
 - With at least one service arriving to all schools within 20–30 minutes before the start of school to support typical student arrival expectations (e.g. during supervision "duty of care" at the school).
 - With multiple services in the period prior, to allow for participation in early extracurricular activities, such as choirs, band and chess clubs.
 - Arriving in the period after the school start time to provide a fallback for late arrivals without resorting to absenteeism, and to support onward travel for parents who are accompanying younger children to school.
 - Regular services during school hours, particularly supporting students with additional transport requirements during the day, such as part-time enrolment, students with dual-enrolment (e.g. Year 10-12s in a High School doing courses at a 'partner' College), Year 11-12 'free lines', and Year 12 students undertaking split College-University programs.
 - Departures at staggered intervals to account for dismissal time and after-school activities (such as sports practice and tutorials).
 - That enables students with after school employment to access and attend these jobs in a timely manner.
 - With appropriate location of bus stops and time for students to reach stops reliably and safely.

- Network connectivity to/from all schools:
 - Connecting to/from key bus interchange hubs (e.g. Hobart CBD, Glenorchy, Rosny Park, Kingston, Brighton) from all schools.
 - Bus routes covering the school's catchment to allow for an age-appropriate walk combined with a bus journey to be feasible for most students, particularly in areas with challenging terrain, poor pedestrian connections, or no dedicated school bus services. Such is expected to support greater use of active/public transport in these school areas.
 - With alignment of timetables to allow for multi-leg student travel (e.g. a student in Glenorchy to feasibly travel to a school in Kingston).
 - The requirement for ticketing which supports a single payment method and transfers – such as Green Card or the introduction of universal free transport for student, similar to the [model recently adopted in Victoria](#).

- Bus stops:
 - Should ideally provide shelter, adequate capacity for student demand and ideally be close to and ‘visible’ from schools to ensure adequate safeguarding measures.
 - Express services, where applicable, should stop at bus stops near schools – ideally with a “request to stop” mechanism to supplement students signalling the driver.
 - Visible and accurate printed timetables and route maps should be posted at bus stops at/near schools, for both Metro and regional/non-Metro services, and incorporating School Services, to allow for students to make the most optimal ‘alternate’ or ‘infrequent’ journey if required.

Specific Feedback

TASSO has encouraged individual school associations to provide their own detailed submissions or "map pins", however we note the following issues have been raised generally:

- Some primary school associations consider their school does not have practical public transport options before or after school, requiring students to either walk to distant bus stops, arrive significantly early before school and/or wait for an extended period after school, or for students to traverse “major” roads.
- Some schools have significant localised traffic issues that they consider to be due to a necessary reliance on cars, due to a lack of frequent and reliable bus services with appropriate routes.
- Feedback that highway services frequently bypass waiting students without stopping – this is often due to the short time for a bus to be visible, unpredictable arrival time, and the requirement to signal.
- Feedback that multiple morning city-bound buses often reach capacity and bypass student passengers, resulting in students missing class.
- The timing and alignment of bus routes through the city between opposite sides of the mall means that students transferring across the city often miss connections.

TASSO strongly urges the Department to place student transport equity at the heart of the Greater Hobart bus network design. Reliable, safe, and timely bus services are not a luxury; they are a fundamental enabler of equitable access to education. Without them, many Tasmanian students face unnecessary barriers to attendance, participation, and educational success. Ensuring fair and inclusive transport is essential to the wellbeing and future of our young people and must be treated as a core priority.