

Submission on the City of Hobart  
Transport Strategy 2018–30

Consultation Paper 4: Local Area Traffic  
Management



31 August 2017

## **Submission on the City of Hobart Transport Strategy 2018–30 Consultation Paper 4: Local Area Traffic Management**

### **Context**

The Heart Foundation contends that local area traffic management that encourages and supports active travel is fundamental to our health and wellbeing and to developing a strong relationship between health and the built environment. The Heart Foundation's advocacy for health and wellbeing through improvements to the built environment, particularly in relation to the importance for active travel, is evidence based<sup>1</sup>.

This submission, on Consultation Paper 4, adds to the Heart Foundation's earlier submissions on Consultation Papers 2 and 3.<sup>2</sup>

### **Policy**

Statements in Consultation Paper 4 that are supported and we submit should set the policy framework for local area traffic management:

*'For the City of Hobart, local area traffic management emphasises the safety, walkability and livability of a suburban area and its local road network, rather than focussing on its capacity and efficiency.'* (p13)

*'Local area traffic management plays an important role in shaping our urban environments and the places where we live. It is how local government can safely provide for the movement of pedestrians, cyclists, public transport and cars within precincts or suburbs, with a high level of amenity.'* (p14)

*'... the design of our streets can influence the health, wellbeing and safety of communities, promote sustainable local economies, enhance a sense of place, and improve our urban ecosystems.'* (p25)

*'When residents feel socially connected to their neighbourhoods and part of a strong community, they are more likely to walk and spend time in the street.'* (p36)

### **Heart Foundation responses to Consultation Paper 4**

The Heart Foundation submits:

1. The street, as the critical element of the built environment, is the basis for improving community health and wellbeing.
2. The emphasis should be on streets rather than roads. How this is expressed needs to be determined in the Transport Strategy, i.e. is a street a subcategory for road or are they one and the same. We contend streets and roads should be viewed differently for urban areas and support the case for *'complete streets'* as used in Consultation Paper 4.

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<sup>1</sup> See [Blueprint for an Active Australia second edition](#) and [Healthy Active by Design](#)

<sup>2</sup> [Heart Foundation submission on the City of Hobart Transport Strategy 2018-30, Consultation Paper 2;](#) [Heart Foundation submission to City of Hobart Transport Strategy 2018-30 Consultation Paper 3](#)

3. When planning and renovating streets, we are concerned with the ability to travel to our destinations. This however needs to be in the context of equity in travel modes – walking, cycling and public transport as well as private cars.
4. Streets are ‘places’ and form the major part of the public realm in cities<sup>3</sup>. Streets are where we do most of our recreating, socialising, shopping etc.
5. Streets must not be considered in isolation to other components of the built environment. Unfortunately, the State Planning Provisions<sup>4</sup> are confused on the notion of streets in terms of exempt development, references to streets and the disconnect between streets and roads.
6. The Hobart City Council website refers applicants for planning permits to the Tasmanian Division of the Institute of Public Works Engineering Australasia’s (IPWEA)<sup>5</sup> [Tasmanian Subdivision Guidelines: An engineering design and construction resource](#). The difficulty with such guidelines is that:
  - i. they are described as guidance documents but too readily take the form of standards as part of the permit assessment process;
  - ii. they mix urban design features with construction standards;
  - iii. they can be contrary to developing *complete streets* in terms of width and location of footpaths, rounding of street corners and provision for cycling; and
  - iv. they can lead to a street design that promotes vehicle speed beyond posted speed limits, requiring later traffic management devices.<sup>6</sup>
7. Whilst Consultation Paper 4 mainly concerns existing streets, nevertheless new streets are being developed in Council’s area. New streets must be designed to add to the network of *complete streets* for local area traffic management to be improved over time reducing the need for later retrofitting.
8. Consultation Paper 4 touches on the importance of local retail precincts and the contradictory relationship between through traffic and improving pedestrian amenity. The Heart Foundation’s Good for Business<sup>7</sup> examines the costs and benefits to the local economy from making streets more walking and cycling friendly.
9. When considering local area traffic management, the opportunity to improve existing laneways and open-up new laneways to improve mid-block permeability and to establish pedestrian links for accessibility across cul de sac heads should be required. Laneways need to be public spaces and not simply part of a development that is closed to pedestrians during non-trading hours.
10. Consultation Paper 4 includes ‘*Table 1 Tasmanian local government road hierarchy*’ and states that Council uses the hierarchy (p26). The road hierarchy is based on vehicle access and vehicle movement (vehicle numbers and heavy vehicles), that is oriented to ‘vehicle connectivity’, not ‘all user connectivity’. As contended in Consultation Paper 4 (p29) the limitation of the road hierarchy is through its lack of sensitivity to the needs of

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<sup>3</sup> All streets are public spaces and typically 80% of the overall public realm in cities and towns. See [Streets for People Compendium for South Australian Practice, Government of South Australia and Heart Foundation](#)

<sup>4</sup> See [http://www.justice.tas.gov.au/\\_data/assets/pdf\\_file/0007/370294/State\\_Planning\\_Provisions.PDF](http://www.justice.tas.gov.au/_data/assets/pdf_file/0007/370294/State_Planning_Provisions.PDF)

<sup>5</sup> [Tasmanian Subdivision Guidelines: An engineering design and construction resource](#)

<sup>6</sup> Consultation Paper 4 uses the term ‘vertical deflection devices’

<sup>7</sup> [Good-for-Business, Heart Foundation 2011](#)

all road users. This is particularly the case when promoting concepts identified in the paper such as ‘smart roads’, ‘complete streets’ and ‘link and place frameworks’. The Transport Strategy needs to set a road and street hierarchy that is inclusive of, and sensitive to all users.

11. Further, for ‘local access’ and ‘minor access’ in the road hierarchy, it is relatively easy to provide amenity and safety for all users, such as pedestrians and cyclists on low traffic volume streets. So, it is refreshing for Consultation Paper 4 to recognise that for higher order roads in the hierarchy the challenge is to enhance liveability while minimising the impacts on the major movement function they perform.
12. In recognition of the relationship between streets and adjoining properties Consultation Paper 4 talks about:

*‘front yards that are maintained as ‘semi-public’ spaces with visual interest and opportunities for social interaction can provide cues to traffic moving through the area that it is a public space (a street) rather than just a road which is for moving traffic efficiently.’ (p36)*

This points to the need for the planning scheme to continue to enable variable front setbacks including nil setback and to regulate the height or openness of front fences.

13. Consultation Paper 4 under the heading ‘Walking, Cycling, Access Issues and Healthy by Design’ refers to concepts of ‘Healthy by Design’, the importance of walkability and supporting good infrastructure, which, of course, we support. The references on page 47 include the Tasmanian Healthy by Design report. For your information, ‘Healthy by Design’ is evolving into an expanded national resource on health and the built environment by the Heart Foundation. This website is [Healthy Active by Design](#). The Heart Foundation in Tasmania is in the process of adding Tasmanian content to the national website. We encourage the reference to be changed to *Healthy Active by Design*.

## **Co-advocacy**

The Heart Foundation has documented the amendments required for explicit consideration to be given to streets in the State Planning Provisions<sup>8</sup>. The Heart Foundation’s draft provisions include the framework and embryonic standards for a Liveable Streets Code.

The Heart Foundation invites Council to support its advocacy for streets to be an explicit consideration in the State Planning Provisions and consequently in the Tasmanian Planning Scheme.

## **Conclusion**

Local area traffic management that delivers on street design that facilitates active travel, influences the health, wellbeing and safety of communities, promotes sustainable local economies, enhances a sense of place, and improves our urban ecosystems is to be applauded as key to the City’s Transport Strategy for 2018–30.

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<sup>8</sup> [Heart Foundation submission regarding the State Planning Provisions](#)

## Recommendations

1. The Heart Foundation recommends that the Transport Strategy 2018–30 incorporates strategies for local area traffic management that:
  - a) emphasise equity of travel modes and the safety and liveability of neighbourhoods;
  - b) focus on the design of streets that will promote the health, wellbeing and safety of communities and that encourage sustainable local economies, enhance a sense of place, and improve our urban ecosystems;
  - c) modify the Tasmanian local government road hierarchy as it applies to Hobart streets to properly reflect a ‘road user hierarchy’ (all road users) instead of a hierarchy that is just motor vehicle focused;
  - d) recognise the importance for active travel and liveability for properties adjoining streets/roads with high traffic volumes; and
  - e) pursues opportunities for the provision of pedestrian oriented public laneways and linked-up cul de sac heads to improve walking and cycling accessibility and permeability in all parts of the city.
2. Within the context of the Transport Strategy 2018–30, the Heart Foundation recommends:
  - a) Council ensures that the regulations for the construction of streets is consistent with strategies for local area traffic management and local area planning, to ensure that regulations promote and not discourage concepts of *smart roads*, *complete streets* and *link and place frameworks*.
  - b) Council advocates for the improvement of contemporary engineering guidelines and standard drawings for subdivisions, either by advocating for the improvement of the IPWEA documentation<sup>5</sup>, or through the development of substitute guidelines that will lead to better street design.
  - c) Council advocates for and supports the Heart Foundation’s advocacy for amendments to the provisions and standards in the State Planning Provisions that support strategies for local area management, particularly that will promote the concepts of *smart roads*, *complete streets* and *link and place frameworks*, and the inclusion of a Liveable Streets Code.
3. The Heart Foundation requests that where there is reference to health and the built environment issues, the reference to the Heart Foundation’s Tasmanian *Healthy by Design* publication be changed to identify the website [Healthy Active by Design](#).

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