

City Parking

As a regular user of Hobart's public and private parking, especially off-street, I find that I often experience difficulties in conveniently accessing spaces during peak periods of demand. Peak seasonal demand can be extraordinarily frustrating.

Part of this is due to traffic bottlenecks but there is also a demonstrable lack of spaces. On both counts, the solutions are far from easy; after all, the problems have been a long time in the making so solutions can be expected to take a little time to resolve.

Over the last 12 the Council has responded to City parking difficulties. The extension of the Centre Point car park and policy changes to better manage "employee" parking are definitively moves in the right direction. However, I doubt these initiatives will be a solution to the problems the City faces in the longer term.

Just in the last week or so there has been an announcement of reduced parking availability on the waterfront. As much as this initiative should be applauded and supported in the context of improving the casual and social appeal of the waterfront precinct, it will inevitably bring about additional pressure somewhere else in the City centre not to mention trader frustration on delivery and supply issues

I have closely followed the debate of car parking infrastructure verses the pros and cons of more park and ride options, improved public transport, more cycle friendly facilities etc.

However, central to my thinking in all this is the imperative that Hobart must have a strong and economically sustainable central business district.

At the beginning and end of the day, Hobart is Tasmania's capital City. Besides the facilities and services it provides to residents, it is focal point of the Tasmanian economy.

Frankly, I found it disturbing that Hydro Consulting chose to relocate to Cambridge Park recently. Well done to the Clarence Council for picking up additional rating revenue, but the City is the loser not because of income loss to the Council, but businesses both large and small lost several hundred daily customers.

Arguments to change commuter and shopper travel patterns into the City have merit, but we must be very careful that this is not to the detriment to the commercial sustainability of small and large businesses and to the advantage of regional shopping precincts in the greater Hobart area.

I am persuaded to the view that changes in City parking patterns cannot be forced or imposed; instead, they need to be the product of necessity and reason.

For these reasons I will be advocating that parking space numbers be increased and the efficiency of vehicular access to public car parks improved. However, I remain mindful that the City needs to be have longer-term goals to promote and facilitate alternative and better public transport travel services from the overall greater Hobart metropolitan area.

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