

# **OUR CURRENT BUSINESS-AS-USUAL APPROACH TO NET-ZERO TRANSPORT SIMPLY WON'T GET US WHERE WE NEED TO GO**

**TASMANIA NEEDS A BOLDER TRANSPORT PLAN  
TO ACHIEVE ITS CLIMATE TARGETS, WRITE MEG  
LANGRIDGE, LACHIE JOHNSON AND SARAH  
HYSLOP**

The climate emergency we are facing makes the need for a rapid transition towards a cleaner, more accessible and safer future for Tasmanian transport all the more urgent.

Tasmania's transport system is carbon-intensive, unhealthy, inequitable, and unsafe.

We drive the oldest and most polluting vehicles of any state or territory in Australia. We also own more of them and use them more intensively due to our low uptake of public and active transport options.

Consultation on the state government's draft Emissions Reduction and Resilience Plan for the transport sector has just closed. While the draft plan includes many worthwhile opportunities, it does not go far enough.

Tasmania needs a bolder and more strategic plan to deliver significant emissions reduction in the shortest possible time, while also creating a more resilient transport system for the future. Our emissions reduction efforts are falling behind other states, and business as usual simply won't get us where we need to go.

Tasmanians want and expect more ambitious emissions reduction in the transport sector. Our recent community survey, conducted in partnership with RACT and the Mercury, shows most Tasmanians (62 per cent) support the establishment of a state-level transport emissions reduction target.

The state government must listen to Tasmanians and set credible, timebound targets to guide action and measure progress.

Of the numerous options for cutting transport emissions, we have identified a small number of priority actions to be put into place immediately which should be central elements of Tasmania's transport ERRP given their potential to promote ZEV (zero-emissions vehicle) uptake and increase the use of active and public transport.

The majority of new vehicles in Tasmania are purchased by government departments, businesses and other organisations, creating a huge opportunity to use fleet purchases to drive ZEV uptake. This will stimulate the second-hand ZEV market, which is important given that price is one of the main barriers to Tasmanians purchasing a ZEV.

The state government has made a step in this direction through a commitment to convert its fleet to EVs where possible by 2030, but it can go further. For example, Tasmania should follow South Australia and establish a campaign where other businesses and organisations pledge to electrify their vehicle fleets.

Senior public servants should also lead by example, choosing ZEVs for their salary-packaged cars wherever possible.

Charging infrastructure will also need to be scaled up quickly and systematically to limit both range and queue anxiety, ensuring there are enough chargers as demand rapidly increases over the next five years.

However, vehicle electrification is not going to be enough on its own to drive the emissions reductions needed to meet Tasmanian and Australian 2030 climate goals.

Given the decarbonisation of our vehicle stock will take decades, an almost immediate and significant decrease in carbon emissions will occur as a result of a large-scale shift to public and active transport, for those for whom this is possible.

Our survey found the majority of Tasmanians (58 per cent) want to increase their use of public and/or active transport on a regular basis, but that fundamental structural barriers stand in their way.

It is well known our public transport system is in crisis and many Tasmanians are deterred by unreliable services, long travel and waiting times and a lack of suitable routes. The state government must take more drastic action to improve the quality and accessibility of public transport, alongside taking decisive action on moving to a zero-emissions bus network.

Future investment in transport infrastructure should be planned around walking and cycling and not just cars. Safety concerns are the biggest barrier to active transport use in Tasmania, according to our survey, alongside lack of access to and poor-quality infrastructure.

While the state government has introduced a new rebate program to support Tasmanians to purchase e-bikes and e-mobility devices, increased access to safe, continuous and connected cycling and pedestrian lanes must be a priority. Pop-up bike lane trials could be considered in the short-term, as have been rolled out in Victoria.

As our colleagues at the Tasmanian Behavioural Lab have argued, structural changes should be supported with behavioural interventions to address the cognitive barriers that prevent people from shifting to public and active transport.

In the medium to long-term, decarbonising heavy transport and ensuring the transport sector is resilient and ready for the future will also be critical. Targeted solutions need to be designed for Tasmanians living in the regions and for those who are older, disabled or have limited mobility. Engagement and consultation with these groups is essential to co-designing effective and accessible transport decarbonisation options that suit their needs.

Our overarching aim should be to lead Australia on emissions reduction in the transport sector and ensure we retain our current net-negative emissions status to 2030 and beyond.

Unfortunately, as it stands, Tasmania's draft ERRP is unlikely to contribute to this important goal.

The Tasmanian Policy Exchange's submission to the Tasmanian Transport ERRP can be found at [utas.edu.au/tpe/netzerotransport](https://utas.edu.au/tpe/netzerotransport)

**Meg Langridge, Lachie Johnson and Sarah Hyslop are researchers at the Tasmanian Policy Exchange at the University of Tasmania**