



Barnaby Heaton

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30th May 2020

To: The Right Honourable the Lord Mayor of Hobart, Councillor Anna Reynolds

Re: An innovative way to build Tasmania out of the COVID Recession

Dear Lord Mayor.

The impact of COVID-19 and its associated economic fallout will be felt for generations to come. I agree with the Premier, Tasmania does need to build its way out of recession. My hope is we are grasping the once in a generational opportunity in front of us, to build the future we want, not simply more of the same?

Just prior to the outbreak of the virus, the Australian Federal Government released a \$500 million National Hydrogen Strategy which slated Tasmania as a potential "Green Hydrogen Superpower" of the future. A few months later, the same Government has established an economic committee packed to the rafters with fossil fuel insiders recommending the Government abolish State fracking moratoria, to turbo charge an Australian fossil fuelled future. Fracked methane is a GHG 23 times more powerful than CO₂, so as the devastating bushfires of 2019/20 still smoulder, all I see is a Federal Government backing away from their previous bold vision, to add fuel to future fires.

Churchill's exhortation to "never waste a good crisis" cuts both ways. Can Tasmania please push back on Canberra's cynicism and build the foundations for Tasmania's next 100 years? Can we use Canberra's own money to do it?

My suggestion is to combine the Greater Hobart City Deal and the National Hydrogen Strategy and build a hydrogen-powered, mass public transit system, following the route of the Northern Light Rail from Macquarie Point to Brighton. I believe within five years, Tasmania would have the foundation of world-leading, human-centric, community-based and, environmentally friendly service, offered free of charge to the public. The service would utilise a fleet of vehicles manufactured in Tasmania. Vehicles running on green hydrogen generated in Tasmania. This would align the proposal with the National Hydrogen Strategy's call to create supply and demand side projects qualifying it to receive federal funding.

This project would produce thousands of jobs during its construction AND create a string of new business ventures required to deliver and maintain the service over the next 100 years. Those businesses could easily pay back any initial public investment, making the proposal ultimately cost-neutral.

The project would put Tasmania at the front of the coming hydrogen wave in Australia.

Beyond the direct returns the service would quickly begin to stimulate the economies north of Hobart. This would then create a second wave of new business opportunities and yet more new jobs post the initial wave generated during construction. Greater economic activity would improve the 'liveability' of Hobart's north, motivating a demographic shift northward, alleviating the chronic housing stress in Central Hobart and improving social equity and economic outcomes. These benefits would roll on for decades beyond the project's completion and these are just a few of the big ticket "wins" I can see arising from the project.

Therefore, I humbly ask that this proposal be genuinely considered and independently evaluated, as a way for Tasmania to build out of recession and set itself up for an amazing future beyond.

Kind Regards

Barnaby Heaton