

Response to Tasmanian Government's Submission
By Peter Brohier

Tasmania is a state of the Commonwealth. It is not remote and its industries are not disadvantaged. It is a state closest to the largest population and industrial corridor in this country.

The state of Tasmania is just not connected by comprehensive highway equivalence for freight, vehicles and people. It ought to be and has every justification for that connection.

If the air connection offers a level playing field, why not offer a level playing field by a surface (ferry) connection?

The day of governments deciding that some industries are "disadvantaged" should pass. As service industries and the critical importance of the movement of people grow, TFES and the BSPVES need to change. Large industry should have access to Auslink, as on any other inter-capital route. Also, for international exports, regardless of state.

An Auslink connection is the only way to deliver objective connectivity for the whole nation. All industries and people should have access to an effective interstate Auslink link.

The retail, service and consumer sector could then benefit. Tasmanian international exports sent via Melbourne may not be an export subsidy if part of a comprehensive Auslink connection. Other Auslink links are not regarded as subsidies, why this one?

Just place both the BSPVES and TFES out to tender to deliver highway equivalence and all operators can participate. This will eliminate administrative complexity in service delivery. Also other states do not surrender Auslink connections to attract international shipping. Tasmania should be no different.

It would be excellent if Tasmania supported Victoria in its quest of an Auslink connection. This approach is consistent with National Highway links supported in 1996 by the Tasmanian electorate.

If any study is undertaken by Monash and commissioned by the Productivity Commission or Tasmania, it needs to cover, if it can, the full impact of a comprehensive Auslink connection between Victoria and Tasmania and the impact on the whole South-East Australia, not just continuation of the status quo. The impact would be just as though the Hume Highway were continued through Melbourne to Tasmania.

As the Tasmanian economy reaches critical mass and its economy can be transformed. General freight volumes would increase.

A general freight "transport pricing" map shows it is currently the same cost to send consumables to Hobart from Melbourne as it does to the capital city of Perth! \$9.95 to other capitals, \$22.25 to Hobart and Perth.