



### **A MESSAGE from Brighton Mayor, Tony Foster**

THE traffic issues confronting the greater Hobart region have been in the news in recent times and it seems the situation is rapidly getting worse, not better.

This is to be expected, with areas such as Brighton, Kingborough and Sorell experiencing rapid growth, while little has been done to expand the major arterial road network or introduce alternatives such as light rail and river ferries, beyond studies and yet to be realised promises.

For the Brighton Municipality, the construction of the replacement Bridgewater Bridge is a positive, and while it is still some years away its major benefit will be to facilitate north-south transport movements. While it will ease congestion in Brighton and Bridgewater, speeding up our river crossing, it may mean that vehicles will only get to the Hobart traffic snarl a little quicker and exacerbate the problem in Hobart city.

As well as major road improvements, the solution lies in better public transport services. This can comprise more frequent bus services travelling in dedicated bus and taxi lanes, as is the case interstate, and the introduction of the aforementioned light rail and ferry services.

Light rail is an interesting one. There is a strong push for this from Glenorchy, but the reality is that the economics must stack up and that will be a real challenge if it is not extended to Brighton. The service will require extensive and expensive infrastructure such as stations and parking facilities and the rail line, essentially along the river edge, will struggle to attract commuters from the outer and hillier suburbs of the Glenorchy Municipality.

Brighton is a major growth region, with our population expected to double over the next 30 years and it is this growth of potential passengers that could help make a northern suburbs light rail service a viable proposition.

I have consistently called for the design of the new Bridgewater Bridge to include a provision for light rail and the Commonwealth and State Governments have said that it should not preclude future use of the existing rail corridor. It certainly should be firmly in the mix of our future transport options.

Ferry transport is another option worthy of serious consideration for the future. A trial service between Bellerive and Hobart is in the wind and if this proves popular, undoubtedly pressure will be on to extend this. While the eastern shore will be the major market, we should not rule out extending ferry transport south to Kingston and north to Montrose and Bridgewater.

Again, significant infrastructure will be required. Jetties and terminals will have to be provided and parking facilities developed, but the payoff in reducing road traffic congestion could be substantial.

Resolution of the current road traffic problems plaguing greater Hobart will not be solved overnight and will require detailed strategic planning and major investment on the part of government, both State and Federal.

But this should be done on an overall regional basis, covering the area from Kingborough in the south, Sorell in the east and Brighton in the north and not piecemeal based on which Council or lobby group shouts the loudest.

With State and Federal elections scheduled in the next 12 months or so, it will be interesting to see how our political leaders respond to this challenge.

**Tony Foster AM OAM JP**  
**Mayor**