

Free, Frequent, and Reliable Public Transport

A quality public transport system is the cornerstone of communities that work for people. It is a necessity for many to access education, work, personal commitments, and recreation. Widespread use of public transport reduces congestion on our roads and reduces our greenhouse gas emissions. Making public transport free, frequent and reliable will reduce the cost of living, allow more people to connect with work, education, and other people, and reduce emissions.

Free Public Transport

Making public transport free increases patronage,¹ reduces congestion, lowers per passenger subsidy,² creates more efficient and punctual services,³ and reduces driver and passenger conflict.^{4,5} This generates economic benefits far in excess of costs.⁶

A study of public transit systems in the United States found that out of 39 systems, when fare-free travel was introduced the smallest increase in ridership was 21%.⁷

The study found that in almost every location where fare-free policies exist, bus operators are supportive, and express pride in their contributions to liveability, clean air, reduced emissions, and reduced traffic congestion.⁸

Public transport can also be a significant schooling cost. Unless a school has a free bus

service, a year's worth of public transport will cost at least \$600 per child.⁹

Although the cost to the Government would be higher – the benefits per dollar spent – in terms of transported passengers, reduced vehicle emissions and congestion, increased economic activity, and improved quality of life, would be considerably higher.

During Metro Tasmania's fare-free trial in 2022, the lack of fare collection reduced conflict between drivers and passengers about fares.¹⁰ This conflict has been a contributor to the driver shortage.¹¹ Making public transport free is one of the things we can do to help retain bus drivers.

The Greens will fight for a free public transport system (including buses, ferries, and light rail) across Tasmania – including in all rural, regional, and urban areas.

¹ Volinski, J, [Implementation and Outcomes of Fare-Free Transit Systems](#), United States Transportation Research Board, 2012.

² Ibid.

³ Ibid.

⁴ Ibid.

⁵ Podwinski, I, [Tasmania's free public buses deemed a success, despite hundreds of route cancellations and driver shortages](#), ABC News, April 2022.

⁶ Knight, B, [All aboard! Should public transport be free for everyone?](#), UNSW Newsroom, March 2023.

⁷ Volinski, J, [Implementation and Outcomes of Fare-Free Transit Systems](#), United States Transportation Research Board, 2012.

⁸ Ibid.

⁹ Based on \$1.60 discounted Metro fare and 189 school days in the 2024 school year.

¹⁰ Podwinski, I, [Tasmania's free public buses deemed a success, despite hundreds of route cancellations and driver shortages](#), ABC News, April 2022.

¹¹ Rojahn, M, [Metro Tasmania drivers report abuse and low morale, as spike in crashes blamed on inexperienced staff](#), ABC News, January 2023.

Frequent and Reliable Services

In 2023 Metro Tasmania cut 180 Hobart services, a cut that was rebranded at the last minute as a ‘temporary service adjustment’.¹² This ‘temporary’ adjustment is still in place.

Tasmania has the lowest per capita spend of any state or territory on public transport.¹³ Increasing investment in services will make buses more frequent and reliable, making public transport more convenient and encouraging passenger uptake.

The Greens will fight for a 10% increase in bus services across rural, regional, and urban areas, to make services more frequent and reliable.

Transport Planning

When homes have good access to public transport, people can access over half the jobs within a 60-minute commute.¹⁴

Including active and public transport in new housing developments can also reduce road trauma and improve public health.¹⁵

The Greens will fight to make transport options part of the planning for new homes so that everyone is close to public and alternate transport.

Linking Active and Passenger Transport

While Hobart-based park and ride facilities have bike cages, there are no security measures.

App-activated locking-docks and e-bike charging infrastructure will make mixed-modal transport options more accessible and attractive, and encourage uptake of public transport use from those who would travel part-way via cycling.¹⁶

The Greens will fight for investment in secure bike and scooter parking, with e-bike charging options, at bus stop hubs on high frequency routes and ferry terminals.

Budget (\$m)

	(\$m)	2025-26	2026-27	2027-28	2028-29	Total
Free Transport		26.36	27.02	27.70	28.39	109.47
More Services		27.41	8.47	8.66	8.48	53.02
Transport Planning		0.41	0.42	0.43	0.44	1.70
Active Transport		0.20	0.20	0.20	0.20	0.80
Total		54.38	36.11	36.99	37.51	164.99

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¹² Beavis, L, [Commuters react to news Metro will cut bus services to deal with driver shortage](#), ABC News, August 2023.

¹³ Douglass, M, [Rockcliffe & White must commit to end Tasmania’s era of public transport neglect](#), Mckell Institute, February 2024.

¹⁴ Australian Housing and Urban Research Institute, [How linking housing, infrastructure and transport policies can improve Australia’s urban productivity](#), October 2022.

¹⁵ Australasian College of Road Safety, [ACRS Calls for Active Travel Infrastructure and Public Transport in New Housing Developments](#), April 2025.

¹⁶ European Commission, Directorate-General for Mobility and Transport, [Give Cycling a Push – Implementation Fact Sheet: Cycling Facilities at Interchanges](#), PRESTO, Intelligent Energy Europe, December 2018.