

Plan for underpass, lifts and escalators to link central Hobart to the waterfront

A NEW \$7 million plan for a tunnel, lifts and escalators to carry pedestrians from the CBD to the waterfront has been put to the Hobart City Council.

JENNIFER CRAWLEY, Tourism Reporter, Mercury

Subscriber only | June 20, 2017 12:00am



An artist's impression of the proposed underpass between Franklin Square and Brooke St on the Hobart waterfront.

A NEW \$7 million plan for a tunnel, lifts and escalators to carry pedestrians from the CBD to the waterfront has been put to the Hobart City Council.

The “City to Cove” report, by Terroir Architects, was commissioned by the council to devise a link from the CBD to the waterfront and improve pedestrian crossings at Macquarie and Davey streets.

The group, under the leadership of architect Scott Balmforth, has recommended widening the footpath and narrowing the road along Elizabeth St between Collins St and Franklin Wharf.

It would use escalators, stairs, ramps, a lift and a tunnel under Davey St to build a link between Brooke St and Franklin Square. The council’s infrastructure committee chair Alderman Helen Burnet said the plan took her by surprise.

“I’m not one that necessarily favours tunnels or going underground but this is a brilliant approach,” Ald Burnet said.

“It is a really exciting approach that not only links the city to the cove but activates Franklin Square and links the city to the ferry terminus.

“It’s really good for Mona users and a great opportunity — it’s really ‘left of field’ thinking.

“It has a significant price tag but it is something for us to consider.”



An artist's impression of the exit of the underpass under Davey St from Franklin Square to Brooke St.

A recent background council report showed that pedestrian crossings on Macquarie and Davey streets, at Elizabeth and Murray streets, were under extreme pressure, especially during peak hours, when pedestrians waited longer to cross the road or were often seen running.

Some crossings suffered more pressure from turning vehicles, because of quickly changing green lights and no countdown provider.

The pressures have been exacerbated by the growth of festivals and cruise ship visits to Hobart occurring at the same time.

Council officers have recommended more detailed work and public consultation on the Terroir underground plan.



An artist's impression of the Franklin Square entry to the underpass.

Council officers have also recommended that footpath widening be considered with changes proposed for the upgrade to Elizabeth Bus Mall.

A council spokeswoman said the council was working with Metro and the Department of State Growth to find a design solution for the bus mall “that all stakeholders can accept”.

“It is hoped that this will be resolved in the next 12 months,” she said.

The council’s city infrastructure committee will vote on the Terroir report tomorrow night.