

A better city

AS the State Government and the Hobart City Council are pressured to jam ever more cars into the city centre (*Mercury*, July 10), I invite everybody to walk around our major thoroughfares. Ignore the roar of the traffic and see Hobart as it really is — but with far fewer cars, parked or otherwise. Imagine the visual clutter of traffic lights, signs and parking meters gone. See the rows of magnificent and endlessly varied buildings that line our boulevards — equal to many in Europe. Imagine each cared-for facade facing the street with pride — as its designer intended. Look at our city as if it was an architect's drawing perhaps. Observe the street stalls with

their coloured umbrellas, see children playing cricket on the lawn outside the Town Hall in the broad expanse of Macquarie St — the place too for processions, meetings and parades. Photoshop it if you like. Admire the mosaic of trees and green spaces of St Davids Park overlooking the waterfront, where friends meet and bemused tourists watch street theatre and peruse the locally created artworks for sale. Smell the food and the coffee and listen to the quietness. Imagine you can hear human voices and your own footsteps as you stroll towards the intriguing Franklin Square fountain. See people arriving by foot, bicycle, taxi and light rail. Note the carparks on the margins of the city, not in the middle. Observe the bustling retail centre and quirky shops as people browse in comfort. An impossible fantasy? I lived in a city that underwent such a transformation — tourist mecca and university city Cambridge in the UK. There's no light rail, but they have so many bikes they probably don't need it.

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