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Clarity on Bass Highway funding required

The RACT has called for clarity on how \$80 million in Federal Government funding will be spent on upgrades to the Bass Highway.

The Federal Government has released details of road infrastructure spending in Tasmania ahead of tomorrow's 2021-22 Budget. It includes \$80 million towards a \$100 million upgrade of the safety and freight efficiency of the Bass Highway under the existing Tasmanian Roads Package.

In the 2020-21 State Budget, \$147 million in co-funding was allocated over forward estimates to upgrade the Bass Highway between Deloraine and Marrawah, as part of a \$200 million pledge from the State and Federal governments.

This includes co-funding for the Wynyard to Marrawah Corridor (\$100 million), Cooee to Wynyard (\$50 million) and Deloraine to Devonport (\$50 million).

“While the \$80 million commitment is welcome, the Federal Government needs to reveal when the funding will be spent and on which sections of the Bass Highway,” RACT Chief Advocacy Officer Garry Bailey said. “This money will greatly improve safety on the highway, but we need to know how it will be spent.”

Mr Bailey added that all major parties committed to a 10-year plan for the Bass Highway during the recent State Election, which will help inform planning and spending on the highway.

“It's important that this plan addresses funding and gives Tasmanians a clear outline of upgrades. This will allow the state service and civil construction sector to plan for works on the Bass Highway.

“The State Government must urgently examine and build the capacity, skills and resources of the state service and civil construction sector to ensure they can rollout these upgrades.”

RACT also welcomed Federal funding for the Midland Highway, the Algona Road interchange and duplication of the Kingston Bypass, as well as the Rokeby Road to South Arm Road upgrades and Huon Link Road.