

Media release Wednesday, 12 May 2021

RACT calls for immediate action on road commitments

The Federal Government must work with its local counterparts to ensure the latest cash splash for Tasmanian roads are delivered on time, the RACT says.

The Federal Budget papers show that the Government will provide \$322.6 million from 2021-22 for priority road projects in Tasmania.

This includes \$113.4 million for the ongoing Midland Highway upgrades, \$80 million for the Bass Highway between Launceston and Devonport, \$48 million for the Algona Road grade separation and Kingston Bypass duplication, \$44 million for the Rokeby Road to South Arm Road upgrades and \$13.2 million for the Huon Link Road.

“While we welcome this road infrastructure funding, we’re concerned about the lack of clarity around what funding has been committed to allow for immediate action on key road projects,” RACT Chief Advocacy Officer Garry Bailey said.

“This is particularly the case for the \$80 million allocation to the Bass Highway.”

He said the 2020-21 State Budget contained \$147 million in co-funding 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).

“It’s been confirmed that the Federal Government’s \$80 million Bass Highway commitment will be for the Launceston to Devonport section, so there has clearly been an increase in cost for this corridor,” Mr Bailey said.

“The Department of State Growth has commenced work on a corridor strategy for this section of road to inform projects to improve the highway, meaning this funding won’t be spent any time soon.

“It’s important to note here 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.

“We want to see a holistic plan that considers existing corridor studies, including those for Wynyard to Marrawah, Cooee to Wynyard and the in-train Launceston to Devonport strategy.”

Mr Bailey said this 10-year plan must address 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 called for the urgent delivery of the following transport commitments for Tasmania, as outlined in the Budget over the next five years:

- \$199 million for local government roads
- \$38 million for Urban Congestion Fund projects
- \$15 million for the Black Spot Program