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2018/19 Tasmanian Budget commitments watching brief: RACT

The RACT will be looking for key infrastructure improvement election promises of the Hodgman Liberal Government to be funded and implemented during the 2018/19 budget cycle.

In particular, the RACT will be looking for details on the timing for funding commitments to fix Hobart traffic congestion issues and to replace the Bridgewater Bridge when the Tasmanian budget is handed down next week.

Executive general manager Membership and Community Stacey Pennicott said while the government announced a number of initiatives during the election campaign to address Hobart's worsening traffic congestion, the proof will be in the funding commitments contained in the budget to be released next week.

"While we welcome announcements about consultation for a fifth lane on the Southern Outlet and support a study into a Derwent River ferry service, it is time to develop and implement a workable strategy," she said.

"The only way to do this is to ensure there is to funding available within appropriate timeframes.

"The government needs to address Hobart's congestion issues through the implementation of a Greater Hobart 10-Year Plan, funded within the pending Tasmanian budget."

Mrs Pennicott said for a city with a population of 300,000, the level of traffic congestion in Hobart was unacceptable.

"A steady growth in visitor numbers means the issue will just get worse unless an appropriate plan is developed and funded as soon as practical," she said.

Mrs Pennicott said the Bridgewater Bridge was a critical piece of infrastructure that supported freight transportation and improved travel times between Hobart and Launceston.

“We believe not replacing the bridge creates the potential for it to be the major point of failure in the Hobart to Launceston road network,” she said.

“Replacing the bridge is even more critical when you consider the significant work that has been done on or is planned for the Midland Highway.”

Mrs Pennicott said the RACT had estimated that \$600 million would be required to replace the bridge and supporting infrastructure.

“The Tasmanian Government has promised \$115 million, but funding timing is critical,” she said.

Other election promises that featured in the RACT’s budget submission and that the organisation will keep a watching brief on include:

- Safety upgrades for the Bass Highway (between Latrobe and Deloraine and Wynyard to Marrawah), including firmer details on what this funding will deliver.
- Investment in Tasmanian tourist roads (Hastings Cave Road, Arthur Highway at Eaglehawk Neck and Bruny Island).
- Road safety upgrades (West Tamar Highway).

Released by:

Nicolas Turner

Tel: 6210 5206 or 0418 538 865