

**Bass Highway – Launceston to
Devonport Corridor Strategy**

June 2022

Consultation and Feedback Findings Summary



Summary

The Bass Highway Corridor Strategy will assess the section of the Bass Highway between the two existing dual carriageway sections from Hadspen, on the outskirts of greater Launceston, to Devonport. It is 82km of the 272km long highway that links Launceston to Marrawah in the north and north-west of Tasmania. The project aims to identify the existing road environment and detail where sections of the highway could be improved for the existing and future road use between Launceston and Devonport. The project objectives are to:

- improve safety outcomes for all users,
- improve efficiency, reliability, and resilience of road network; and
- enable economic growth and development.

The Department of State Growth (the Department) invited the community and stakeholders to provide feedback on the Bass Highway between Launceston and Devonport from 12 July 2021 to 14 August 2021. The community and stakeholders provided feedback through several channels, including the online interactive engagement map, Social Pinpoint, RoadsTas Facebook page, hard copy feedback forms at the Latrobe and Meander Valley council offices, project email and a dedicated project phone line. Some feedback was also directed to the Department from Meander Valley Council and from the office of the Minister for Transport and Infrastructure. During the consultation period a total of 347 pieces of feedback relating to the Strategy were received.

The Department thanks all community and stakeholders for their contributions.

Project overview

The Bass Highway – Launceston to Devonport Corridor Strategy (the Corridor Strategy) aims to assess the existing road corridor and develop a long-term view of potential road infrastructure upgrades and a prioritisation plan for those upgrades to meet the road user needs of the future. The corridor strategy and implementation plan will assess the section of the Bass Highway between the two existing dual carriage way sections from Hadspen, on the outskirts of greater Launceston, to Devonport. It is 82km of the 272km long highway that links Launceston to Marrawah in the north and north-west of Tasmania.

Upgrades across the Bass Highway aim to improve safety, productivity, and efficiency on this key freight network, providing better connections between agricultural regions and ports, airports and other transport hubs and better access for tourism, mining, and other sectors.

The objectives of the future upgrades through this corridor are to enable the Department of State Growth (the Department) to meet the strategic commitments to deliver safe and sustainable road infrastructure with appropriate levels of service for all road users.

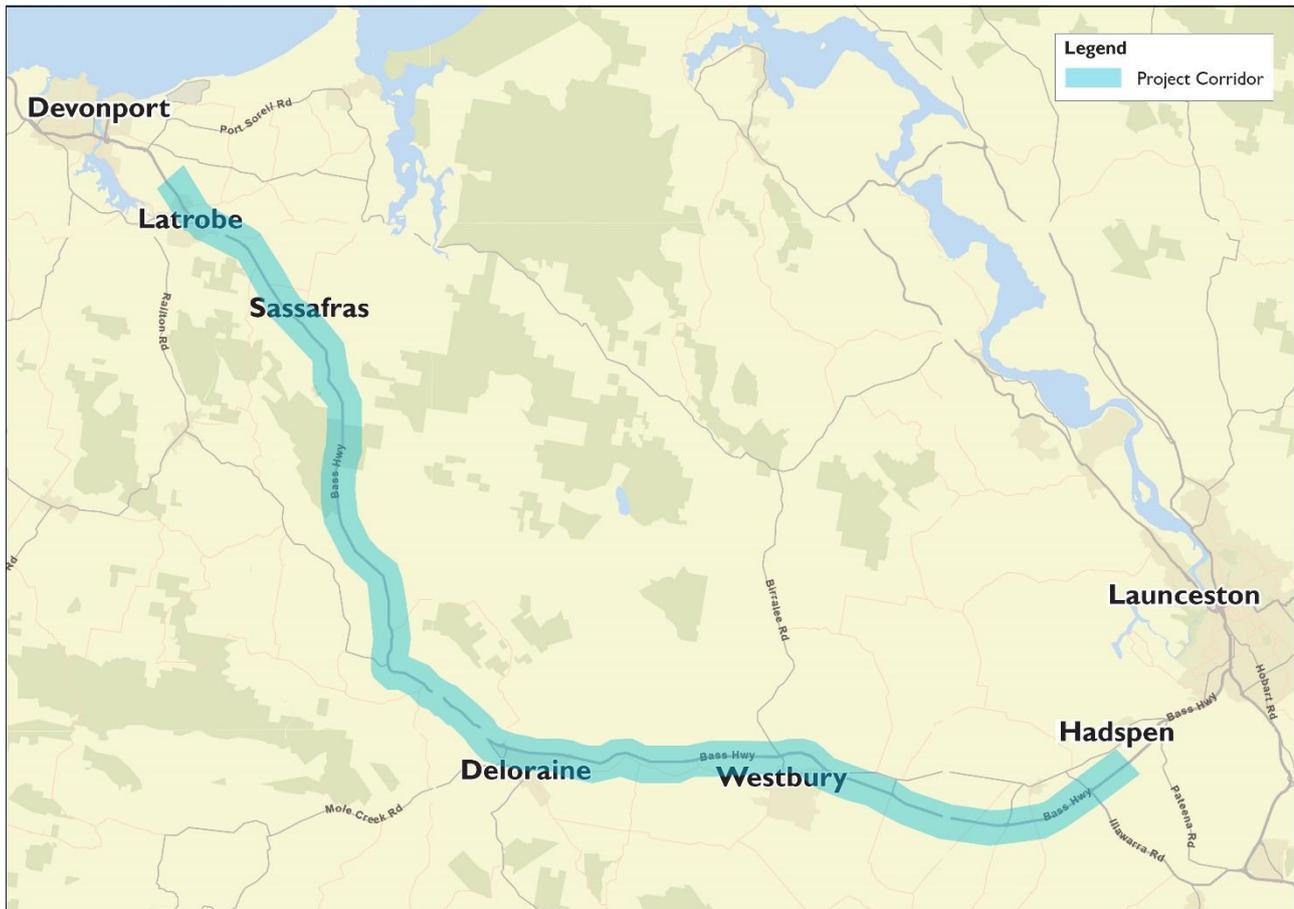


Figure 1 Bass Highway Launceston to Devonport - Corridor Map

Consultation

Consultation for this strategy included a number of forums:

- Bass Highway Corridor Strategy – Launceston to Devonport Working Group and Investment Logic Mapping Workshop; and
- Community consultation - included opportunities to engage in dialogue about issues, challenges, and opportunities and to provide feedback to be considered, on balance, as part of the decision-making process.

The community consultation period took place from 12 July 2021 to 14 August 2021. The Department promoted the opportunity for the community to provide feedback through a dedicated project website, informing the public by advertising in local newspapers, posting on the RoadsTas Facebook page and displaying collateral at Latrobe and Meander Valley council offices. Other organisations such as RACT and Roads Australia also promoted the opportunity to provide feedback on their Facebook Pages and monthly newsletters.

The table below outlines the formal consultation activities.

Date	Consultation Activity
11 May 2021	ILM Working group – Session One
25 May 2021	ILM Working group – Session Two
26 May 2021	ILM Working group – Session Three
12 July 2021 to 14 August 2021	Community engagement period
	Project's Interactive Engagement Map, Social Pinpoint, active for community feedback: https://stategrowthtas.mysocialpinpoint.com/launceston-to-devonport
	Feedback forms available with ballot boxes and project posters on display at Meander Valley and Latrobe Council offices.
	Dedicated Project 1800 phonenumber active.
12 July 2021	Dedicate project website launched: https://www.transport.tas.gov.au/projectsplanning/road_projects/north_west_road_projects/bass_highway_-_launceston_to_devonport
	Consultation advertised in local papers.
	RoadsTas Facebook Page posted promoting the project's interactive engagement map, Social Pinpoint (187 comments, 48 reactions).
14 July 2021	Email sent to working group notifying them of community consultation period going live and encouraging working group to promote feedback opportunity to friends and colleagues.
15 July 2021	Roads Australia promoted the project's interactive engagement map, Social Pinpoint in its monthly newsletter.
17 July 2021	Project consultation opportunities advertised in local papers.
19 July 2021	The Department met with RACT representatives to discuss the ILM process and request written submission from RACT on the Bass Highway.
24 July 2021	Project consultation opportunities advertised in local papers.
26 July 2021	Project emailed representatives of the SES requesting promoting feedback opportunities for the project.
31 July 2021	Project consultation opportunities advertised in local papers.
5 August 2021	Tas Roads Facebook Page posted promoting the project's interactive engagement map, Social Pinpoint (198 comments, 81 reactions).
7 August 2021	Project consultation opportunities advertised in local papers.

Feedback summary

During the consultation period a total of 347 pieces of feedback relating to the Strategy were received through the following channels:

- 205 comments from 98 unique stakeholders via Social Pinpoint
- 12 feedback forms (six via the post and three from each council office ballot box)
- Four phone conversations via the dedicated project phone line
- 13 formal submissions via email from the community and key stakeholders via email

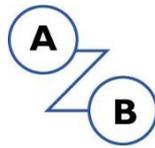
- RoadsTas Facebook posts 113 comments related directly to the Bass Highway corridor, 15 comments related to other roads and the remaining comments were not relevant. 385 comments on the State Road Facebook posts in total.

Feedback themes

Drawing upon the key challenges for the highway established in the ILM workshops, the community feedback was analysed and categorised into four key themes:



Safety



Efficiency



Durability & maintenance

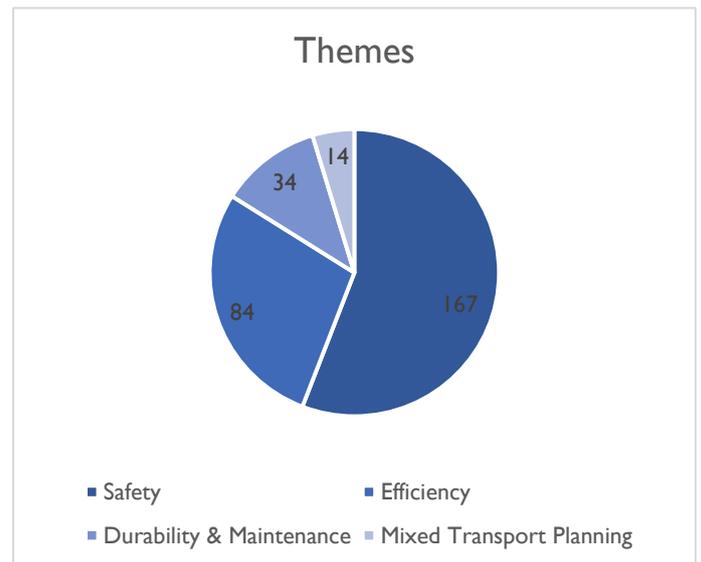


Mixed transport planning

The community consistently expressed a concern for road user safety and travel efficiency along the whole highway. These concerns were generally linked to factors such as:

- a lack of overtaking opportunities leading to dangerous overtaking actions and congestion
- dangerous junctions with private properties and towns creating near misses and congestion
- a lack of separation between lanes running in opposite directions causing confusion and near misses

Community feedback also featured a serious frustration about road durability and maintenance issues due to poor road surface conditions at specific points along the highway north of Deloraine.



A more detailed descriptions of the feedback received and the Departments response to those comments can be found in Table 3 of the *Bass Highway Launceston to Devonport Corridor Strategy Community and Stakeholder Consultation and Feedback Report, October 2021*.

To develop key feedback responses and findings, the feedback was divided into section of the highway. A map displaying the road section is displayed in Figure 2.



Figure 2 Bass Highway Corridor Section

The key findings for specific locations are outlined in Table I of the *Bass Highway Launceston to Devonport Corridor Strategy Community and Stakeholder Consultation and Feedback Report, October 2021*.

Public Consultation Feedback

Findings are based on the number of comments referring to specific themes and issues per section. Comments often referred to multiple issues and were not restricted to one theme during the data analysis process.

Table 1 Consultation feedback responses

Feedback	The Department's Response
Dual Lanes and overtaking opportunities	
<p>Section 0 – Whole of Highway</p> <p><i>It's simple, stop spot repairs and make the entire journey between Devonport & Launceston a dual lane highway. It's the national highway after all not a country road. The continual changing from one lane to two as on the Midlands causes nothing but frustration to ALL users. Make it 4 lanes all the way, there is no other answer.</i></p>	<p>The Department is investigating an upgrade to a dual lane separated highway across a number of the 11 sections as the long-term solution to address future growth along the corridor.</p>
<p>Section 3 - Dual Carriageway to Emu Bay Road</p> <p><i>Basically, any patch of road that is only single lane needs to be improved. Ideally double lanes the entire way (like the Latrobe-Burnie patch of the highway) or at the very least some barriers to prevent head on collisions between cars going 110-120kms. A main highway that is just single lane without even any signs indicating this is just mind blowing for us Tasmanian residents, let alone mainland visitors!</i></p>	<p>Upgrade projects will investigate the options for dual separated highway or overtaking opportunities at appropriate locations along the corridor to provide better efficiency and travel experience.</p>
<p>Section 6 – North of Parkham Road to Gannons Hill Road</p> <p><i>The road needs to be two lanes at all time. because if there's an L plater in front of a full license, the full license is having to slow down like 30km because an over taking lane is nowhere near, and the same with trucks. Two lanes would make it much smoother travel</i></p>	
<p>Section 10 – Sassafras to Latrobe</p> <p><i>The entire area just needs the investment in dual lanes to keep up with growing movement between Launceston and Devonport.</i></p>	
Overtaking Lanes	

<p>Section 1 – Hadspen at the start of corridor to start of dual carriageway</p> <p><i>The section of Bass Highway between greater Launceston and Westbury only has one short overtaking lane. Limited opportunities to pass trucks and caravans lead to people making risky and dangerous decisions where drivers overtake in dangerous locations. I travel this section of Bass Highway nearly every day and have witnessed many poor overtaking manoeuvres.</i></p>	<p>The initial assessment conducted for the Corridor Strategy has identified additional opportunities for overtaking lanes, including using safety barriers to improve road safety in the area.</p>
<p>Section 7 – Gannons Hill Road to Long Hill Road</p> <p><i>Overtaking lanes which end on a bend are less than ideal, could this be avoided? A troublesome eastbound overtaking lane ends approximately here on the map, traffic which is merging, overtaking plus a bend are not good driving conditions.</i></p>	
<p>Section 9 – Conservatory Road to Sassafras</p> <p><i>The start of this overtaking lane heading north tapers out to form the overtaking lane much too slowly and I've seen some near misses here as a result. Cars trying to overtake start to do so much too early and sometimes end up partially in the lane against oncoming traffic</i></p>	
<p>Lane division / safety barriers</p>	
<p>Section 2 – Dual Carriageway</p> <p><i>That part of the road is actually pretty good comparing to the rest: four lanes and separated in the middle. However, that separation actually creates a problem for first responders (I'm a Volunteer Firefighter) as there is no way to turn around if the accident on the other side of the highway. We must drive till it becomes 2 lanes only to be able to make a U-turn</i></p>	<p>Sufficient opportunities for U-turns for emergency service vehicles will be considered in upgrades.</p>
<p>Section 3 – Dual Carriageway to Emu Bay Road</p> <p><i>This corner directly west of Porters Bridge Road is dangerous. A long sweeping bend with no fencing in the middle. At the very least this needs wire rope fencing between traffic. The fact it is also a blind turn makes it even more dangerous when people decide to overtake despite the lines.</i></p>	<p>The Department undertook a road safety audit as part of the Corridor Strategy and high-risk areas have been addressed in the Corridor Strategy and prioritised.</p>
<p>Section 6 - North of Parkham Road to Gannons Hill Road</p> <p><i>Dangerous corner taken at speed (200m north of Parkham Road). Needs wire rope barriers before more deaths occur here.</i></p>	

<p>Section 3 – Dual Carriageway to Emu Bay Road</p> <p><i>Do not repeat the mistakes of the Midland Highway by putting wire rope everywhere and not adding enough overtaking opportunities to compensate. Midland Highway is safer yes but also slower with not many places to overtake. Priority should be lowering congestion and travel times too.</i></p>	<p>Additional overtaking opportunities have been identified along the length of the corridor. However, where there is higher incidence of head on collisions additional measure such as wire rope separation may be required.</p>
<p>Signage and lane markings</p>	
<p>Section 0 – Whole of Highway</p> <p><i>There are stretches of the subject highway where we are conscious of confusion in whether we are on a two lane, or one way of a four-lane highway. We find we discuss it each time we travel, because there are moments when we are not sure. I have planned to overtake, but consciously considered where I am before doing so. That is a direct result of having a highway that changes several times from two to four lane. A normal two lane highway does not create that confusion.</i></p> <p><i>Directional arrows painted on the road seem to be a very low cost risk reduction for visitors and locals, given how many of the accidents involve vehicles travelling in opposite directions. It won't solve the safety issues, but it seems reasonable to assume it will reduce them.</i></p>	<p>A signage strategy will be developed to identify areas that need better guidance and reassurance for drivers. This strategy will improve the existing line markings and road signage along the corridor. This is the first step in a larger program of upgrade works such as widening, overtaking lanes and intersection upgrades that will take longer to deliver.</p>
<p>Section 4 - Emu Bay Road to Bengeo Road</p> <p><i>There should be variable speed indicators on the approach to Launceston and or an icy road sign that lights up with a sensor as I notice that this road gets very icy and people still speed along it</i></p>	
<p>Section 9 – Conservatory Road to Sassafra</p> <p><i>While there are right-turn approach lanes towards Keens Road and Eversons Road are good, there is no proper signage to tell drivers about them. Bass Highway by Rocky Cape has such signs (for example, the turn into Pollards Road). Most T-intersections should have this arrangement and the signage to aid it.</i></p>	
<p>Need for public transport</p>	

<p>Section 0 – Whole of Highway</p> <p><i>Let's go back to the future and have public trains in Tasmania - get the cars off the road, have reliable frequent public trains. Surely a public train service would cost a lot less than the duplication required to make the Bass Highway (A National Highway) 4 lanes all the way. Think outside the square, surely there are some learnings to be found and shared.</i></p>	<p>Public rail connection and service is a much larger public policy question and is out of the scope of this highway planning study.</p>
<p>Section 0 – Whole of Highway</p> <p><i>Some genuine public transport between the towns and Launceston would be great. This means regular, reliable, and affordable busses providing a meaningful alternative to private vehicle use. All towns between Deloraine and Launceston, that are within a reasonable distance from the highway, should be considered. If this means utilising Meander Valley Road, then MVR needs to be upgraded also to better accommodate buses.</i></p>	<p>The improvement of bus services is outside the scope of this project. Feedback related to public transport is being provided to the Public Transport Branch of the Department to consider as part of any future changes or upgrades to services. In addition, existing bus stop infrastructure upgrades have been included as part of the road infrastructure upgrade projects</p>
<p>Freight infrastructure</p>	
<p>Section 0 – Whole of Highway</p> <p><i>A few more truck stops are needed along the highway, not only trucks use them, often I see cars parked on the side of a 110km stretch of highway with not much room between them and traffic. More rest stops make the whole road safer.</i></p>	<p>Recommendations in the <i>Tasmanian Heavy Vehicle Driver Rest Area Strategy (2020)</i> have been included in the Bass Highway Corridor Strategy and Implementation Plan. There will be upgrades made to a number of heavy vehicle rest areas.</p>
<p>Highway entrances and exits</p>	
<p>Section 1 – Hadspen at the start of corridor to start of dual carriageway</p> <p><i>Due to the tight radius of the eastbound Illawarra Road off ramp, vehicles slow on the highway before exiting into the deceleration lane, causing unnecessary delay and friction to through traffic.</i></p>	<p>The upgrade of all interchange on and off-ramps (acceleration and deceleration lanes) will be included in the corridor upgrade projects.</p>

<p>Section 3 - Dual Carriageway to Emu Bay Road</p> <p>At the Mole Creek Road junction, the way that the on-ramp forms the left lane of the eastbound overtaking lanes quite often results in slower vehicles failing to merge left to allow vehicles to overtake. The length of the overtaking lane is already too short.</p>	
<p>Dangerous junctions</p>	
<p>Section 4 - Emu Bay Road to Bengeo Road</p> <p><i>The Christmas Hills Raspberry Farm is very popular. There needs to be a safer entry and exit to Christmas Hills Rd as the number of tourists that use this intersection is high. It's only a matter of time before a nasty crash occurs here. Many have witnessed near misses at this location. Coming from the mainland where the majority of speed limits are 100km/h people underestimate how fast vehicles are travelling on the Bass Highway and regularly pull out in front of vehicles travelling in excess of 110km/h.</i></p>	<p>The Christmas Hills Road junction has been prioritised for upgrade.</p>
<p>Section 5 – Bengeo Road North of Parkham Rd (Elizabeth Town)</p> <p><i>Conflict between through traffic, vehicles exiting museum. Limited line of sight in both directions. Consider extending 90 zone to Bengeo Road intersection to allow safer right turns from Bengeo Rd.</i></p>	<p>The Department undertook a road safety audit as part of the Corridor Strategy and identified accesses and intersections that require improvement. As a result, a short-term priority identified in the Corridor Strategy is to prioritise intersection and access arrangements based on their level of safety and efficiency.</p>
<p>Section 8 - Long Hill Road Conservatory Road</p> <p><i>There needs to be a better intersection where the road from Huon agriculture meets the Bass Highway. When travelling west on the Bass Highway and you are passing that intersection, car, b-double's etc use the lane designated to turn right to go to Huon Agriculture as another lane to head west to paramatta creek</i></p>	
<p>Section 10 - Sassafras to Latrobe</p> <p><i>On my regular travels I have often seen some very dangerous road usage with people entering and exiting the United petrol station (Westbound side of the Highway.)</i></p>	
<p>Section 11 – Latrobe</p>	

<p><i>The turnout lane to enter the Latrobe Caltex servo needs to be longer. Trucks coming down hill loaded need a long distance to slow safely. The current turn out is too short, meaning trucks are slowing to well below 90 before they are on the turn out.</i></p> <p><i>I've witnessed multiply near misses of cars exiting Anvers Chocolates and turning south towards Latrobe. When traffic is heavy people rush to get out of Anvers to seize a gap and crossing two lanes of a highway, even in a 80klm zone, is risking an accident.</i></p>	
<p>Road Design and Geometry</p>	
<p>Section 5 – Bengeo Road North of Parkham Rd (Elizabeth Town)</p> <p><i>The alignment between Deloraine and Elizabeth Town is particularly poor. Geometric improvements should be considered.</i></p>	<p>State Growth identified several upgrade opportunities for this section of the corridor to improve safety and efficiency.</p>
<p>Town Bypass</p>	
<p>Section 5 – Bengeo Road North of Parkham Rd (Elizabeth Town)</p> <p><i>The slowing down of traffic to go through a built-up area shouldn't be necessary for a highway of high importance. While I would love to see a bypass around Elizabeth Town, I can't see a way of doing it without purchasing land. A bypass on the west side would be the most ideal in terms of land topography but where the bypass joins the existing highway on either side is something I'm unsure of. Thoughts?</i></p>	<p>Options for bypasses are a long-term consideration and limited by topography and land utilisation impacts.</p> <p>Town bypasses are not currently being considered. Upgrades will aim to improve safety and efficiency within the existing road corridor.</p>
<p>Section 8 – Long Hill Road Conservatory Road</p> <p>An idea would be to bypass this section of Sassafras entirely between Smith and Others Road and Flemings Road, rounding the Huon factory and going through STT forest.</p>	
<p>Speed limit</p>	
<p>Section 5 – Bengeo Road North of Parkham Rd (Elizabeth Town)</p> <p><i>There have been several deaths and many accidents on the highway between Railton Road and Samuel Street junctions. This section of the highway should have the speed limit reduced to 70 km/h</i></p>	<p>All options will be considered to address safety issues. If deemed necessary, all changes to speed limits will be referred to the Transport Commissioner for consideration.</p>
<p>Road condition and maintenance</p>	

<p>Section 7 – Gannons Hill Road to Long Hill Road</p> <p><i>Condition of the road is shocking and dangerous as vehicles swerve to avoid huge craters. Need more guard rails throughout Tasmania to avoid oncoming traffic (recent fatalities).</i></p>	<p>A package of proposed upgrades is being prepared to address many issues through the Parramatta Creek and Sassafras areas. The measures include improving road condition and addressing other safety and efficiency issues.</p> <p>Temporary maintenance works have recently been undertaken on this section until longer-term rehabilitation measures can be implemented.</p>
<p>Section 8 – Long Hill Road Conservatory Road</p> <p><i>This particular section of road would have to be in the worst condition, I drive a truck almost every single day in both directions and without fail the road its self can pull the truck around on the road depending where you pick your line. It's almost safer to drive bang on the middle of the road</i></p>	
<p>Section 10 – Sassafras to Latrobe</p> <p><i>This section of road has been in a constant state of repairs for the last five years. This section of road should have the surrounding trees removed, as I believe this plus rain to be the culprit of such poor road surface.</i></p>	
<p>Section 11 – Latrobe</p> <p><i>There is extremely poor road surface heading towards Latrobe between the double lanes ending and the entrance to Anvers.</i></p>	
<p>Other themes</p>	
<p><i>Need rumble strips on the Oaks Road slip lane to make cars slow down and give way to cars already on Oaks Road, sick of people just pulling out in front of me on Oaks Road and arrows as people turning towards Carrick still use the left turn lane.</i></p>	<p>This sits outside the of Strategy's scope. The relevant State Roads Traffic Engineering team will be informed of the adjoining traffic/road safety issues.</p>
<p><i>Where the Bass Highway offramp joins the "Bowerbank link" it is not easy to see other vehicles travelling along Bowerbank. The trees, shape of intersection make it all substandard. Suggest at minimum removal of trees and reduction of speed limit on Bowerbank.</i></p>	

Response

The feedback captured in the *Bass Highway Launceston to Devonport Corridor Strategy Community and Stakeholder Consultation and Feedback Report, October 2021* details how the Department intends to address the feedback received through the development of the corridor strategy and a long term implementation plan to deliver the necessary upgrades as a priority over the coming 10-20 years.

Due to the volume of comments and extent of the Bass Highway Corridor between Launceston and Devonport, a full description of responses to individual feedback can be found in the *Bass Highway Launceston to Devonport Corridor Strategy Community and Stakeholder Consultation and Feedback Report, October 2021*.

The *Bass Highway Launceston to Devonport Corridor Strategy* is expected to be completed in coming months and will address the current and future needs for upgrade along the corridor.

Timing

The timeline for the Strategy's development and implementation is outlined below.



Next Steps

The feedback received has been used alongside the results of the technical design assessment of the road corridor and we are finalising the development of the Corridor Strategy and Implementation Plan. The Corridor Strategy will identify safety and efficiency upgrade opportunities and prioritise sections of the corridor for upgrades. The Corridor Strategy will include an Implementation Plan that will priorities the upgrade opportunities for the corridor.

The upgrade works required across the corridor are expected to include road widening including the provision of overtaking opportunities and increased separation between traffic lanes, intersection upgrades, pavement works, new signage as well as improved vehicle rest stops to improve safety and bring the alignment up to the Australian Road Assessment Program 3-star standard. The works will provide a safer and more efficient route for road users travelling between Launceston and Devonport.



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