

Minister for State Growth
Minister for Infrastructure and Transport
Minister for Small Business
Minister for Science and Technology
Leader of the House



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Mr D.T. Pearce
Clerk of the Legislative Council
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Dear Mr Pearce

Final Report on Tasmania's North East Railway Corridor from Legislative Council – Government Administration Committee "B"

Thank you for your letter dated 7 August 2019, advising of the completion of the final report of the Legislative Council – Government Administration Committee "B" on its recent inquiry into the North East Railway Corridor (the Report).

I am pleased to provide this response on behalf of the Tasmanian Government.

The Government expresses its appreciation for the diligence of the Legislative Council – Government Administration Committee "B" in undertaking this inquiry, and commends the comprehensive and detailed nature of the Report.

The Government is pleased to note that the Report substantially supports the Tasmanian Government's compromise decision to support access to the North East Railway Corridor to both the rail trail proposal, as well as the tourist and heritage railway.

The Government can confirm that it is progressing with the establishment of strategic infrastructure corridors under the *Strategic Infrastructure Corridors (Strategic and Recreational Use) Act 2016* (the Act), to support both proposals such that:

- The section of the North East Line between Lilydale Falls and Tonganah is established as a strategic infrastructure corridor for the purpose of Dorset Council's rail trail; and
- The section of the North East Line between Turners Marsh and Lilydale is established as a strategic infrastructure corridor for the purpose of Launceston and North East Railway's (LNER) heritage rail operation, with a future second stage between Turners Marsh and Coldwater Creek.

I note the Report's recommendation supporting the establishment of LNER's rail operation originating in Launceston and connecting to the North East Line via the operational Bell Bay Line. The Tasmanian Government issued its Rail Access Framework Policy in 2018, which provides for parties to negotiate with TasRail for access to the operational lines of the Tasmanian Rail Network, which will support the advancement of this extension to the proposed route if desired by LNER.

The Government acknowledges the Report's recommendation to protect and preserve the railway infrastructure within the rail trail corridor wherever feasible, and is happy to advise that these protections are already enshrined in Sections 99, 100 and 101 of the Act. The Act also provides that where any rail infrastructure is removed from a corridor is first offered for use to persons interested in using it for purposes of the operation of a railway in Tasmania.

Finally, the Government acknowledges and endorses the Report's call for thorough community consultation with stakeholders in the future and for promoting greater collaboration.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Michael Ferguson', followed by a horizontal line.

Michael Ferguson MP
Minister for Infrastructure and Transport