

Bridport Road – Freight Efficiency and Safety Improvements

Public Works Committee Submission



Draft re.0 to State Growth November 2024

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Introduction

This document forms a submission to the Tasmanian Parliamentary Standing Committee on Public Works (PWC) for its hearing into the Bridport Road – Freight Efficiency and Safety Improvements works, scheduled for 9 December 2025.

This submission has been developed by the works proponent, the Department of State Growth Tasmania.

The proposed works are located on Bridport Road between the East Tamar Highway and Weymouth Road as shown in Figure 1 and Figure 2.



Figure 1 Project location

Need for Works

Bridport Road is part of a key inter-regional freight link that supports the movement of freight from the greater northeast region to Bell Bay, and further on to the northwest and southern coast. Expected growth in tourism and agricultural production is predicted in this region due to the construction (and ongoing development) of several major irrigation schemes.

In 2022, Bridport Road had an average traffic volume of 1,057 vehicles per day, with heavy vehicles accounting for 31.5% of the total traffic.

In 2024, the department completed a corridor study for the Bridport Road between Bell Bay and Bridport. This corridor study identified several sections of Bridport Road which do not meet contemporary design standards. Key issues identified include:

- insufficient road width
- junction safety
- poor road condition
- poor road delineation.

These are discussed below.

Insufficient road width

Bridport Road generally has a lane width between 3.0 and 3.2 m, with very narrow or no shoulders (less than 0.6 m wide).

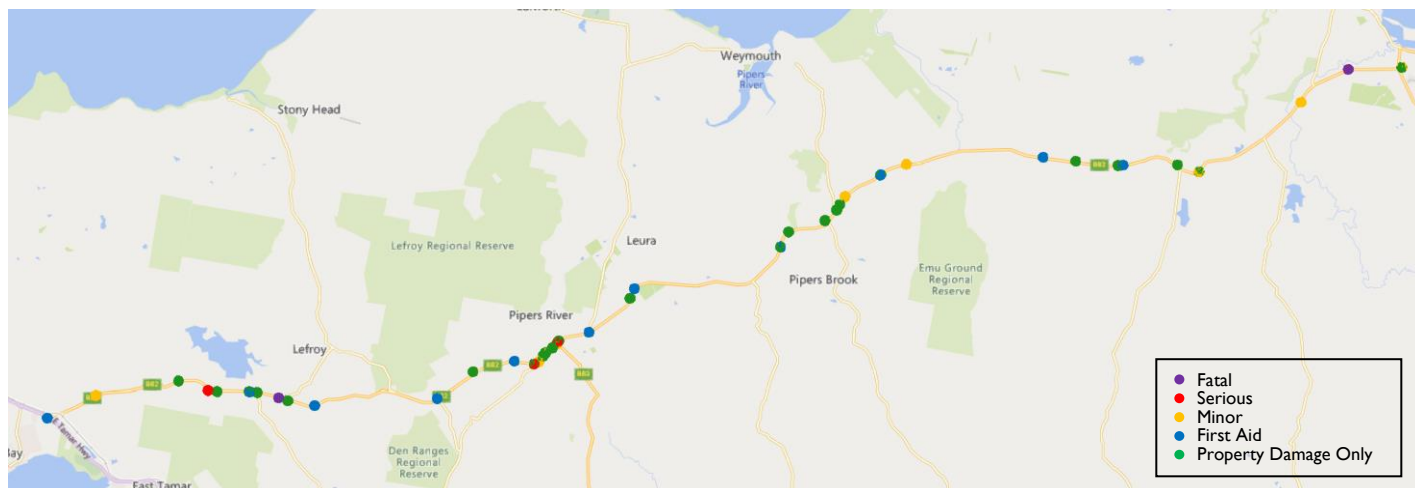
Based on the road classification, high proportion of heavy freight vehicles and traffic volumes, a target lane width of 3.5 m and sealed shoulder width of 1.0 m is desirable. An additional verge width of 0.5 m is also desirable to accommodate guideposts and safety barrier.

There are many locations next to Bridport Road with steep or high drop-offs, particularly in narrow sections. These areas, including at bridges and larger culverts, increase the potential severity of run-off road crashes.

Junction Safety

Junction safety has been identified in the historical crash locations and severity between as shown in **Error! Reference source not found.** below along Bridport Road between East Tamar Highway and Emily Street for the 5-year period September 2019 to August 2024.

Figure 2 Crash location and severity (September 2019 – August 2024)



In these locations, drivers turning onto side roads need to slow down to turn safely, creating potential conflict with through traffic. Drivers following the turning vehicles may not anticipate the sudden reduction in speed, increasing the risk of rear-end and loss of control crashes. The narrow traffic lanes, shoulders and absence of dedicated turn facilities, mean there are limited opportunities for drivers to correct or avoid collisions in these circumstances.

At some junction locations, the sight distance for drivers travelling along Bridport Road or turning onto Bridport Road, are also reduced due to embankments or vegetation.

Poor road delineation

Visibility and legibility for drivers using Bridport Road are impacted by faded or missing line marking and the lack of lighting at intersections. These deficiencies reduce the clarity of the road layout and is particularly problematic for tourists and first-time users.

Poor road condition

An uneven and deteriorating road condition at various locations on Bridport Road presents significant risks, including stability issues for freight vehicles and potential loss of vehicle control.

There are many locations along Bridport Road where steep or high drop-offs, particularly in narrow sections, increase the potential severity of run-off road crashes.

Considerations and improvements to be implemented include:

- **Freight considerations:** Improvements to the road to better accommodate heavy vehicle traffic, improving efficiency and safety for freight transport (all sites).
- **Road delineation improvements:** Improvements to signage and road markings (all sites).
- **Intersection upgrades:** The addition of new turn lanes at intersections (Site 1, Site 3 and Site 4).
- **Road widening:** Widening the road to provide 3.5m through lanes and 1.0m wide sealed shoulders (all sites).
- **Road condition improvements:** Improvements to the road surface and road camber (Site 2 and Site 5).

Related Works

Projects that have recently been completed or are currently being progressed by the department near to this project include:

1. Statewide Heavy Vehicle Rest Area Strategy: Construction of a new Heavy Vehicle Driver Rest Area near the junction of East Tamar Highway and Bridport Road (in development).
2. North East Freight Roads: Bridport Road – improved the road condition in two locations along Bridport Road.
 - Site 1: 1.75 km section immediately east of Dalrymple Road
 - Site 2: 1.6 km length, starting 2.6 km west of Dalrymple Road. This project also included curve improvements for an area with a history of truck roll-over.
3. Road Safety Program: Bridport Road – Weymouth Road and School Road junction upgrade (complete). Following construction, it was identified that additional work was needed to provide a left turn lane into Weymouth Road. This upgrade has been included as part of this Project.
4. Bridport Main Road: Bridge Barrier Safety Assessment (complete with recommendations being incorporated into locations coinciding with this project).

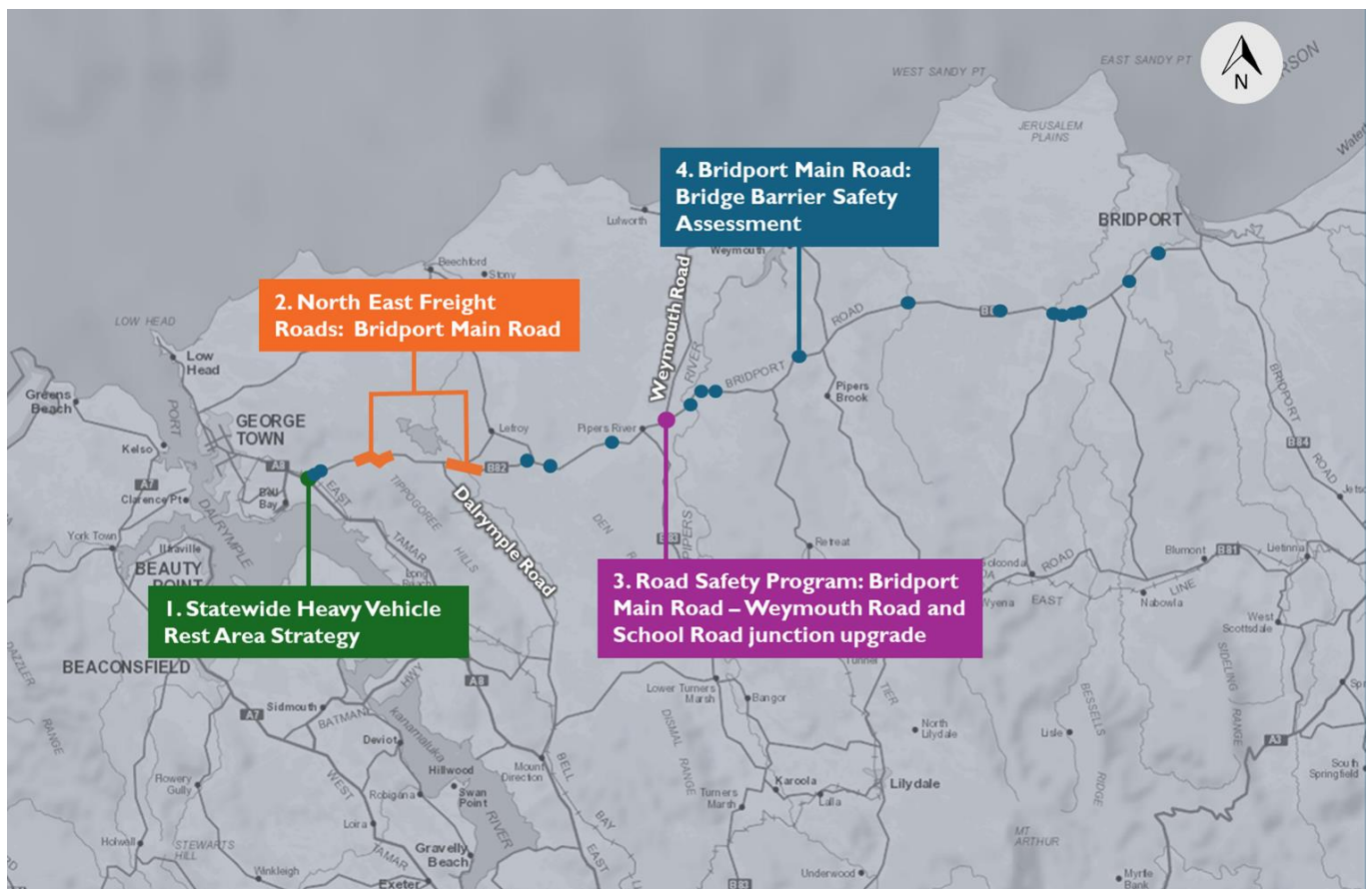


Figure 3 Current and completed works near this project

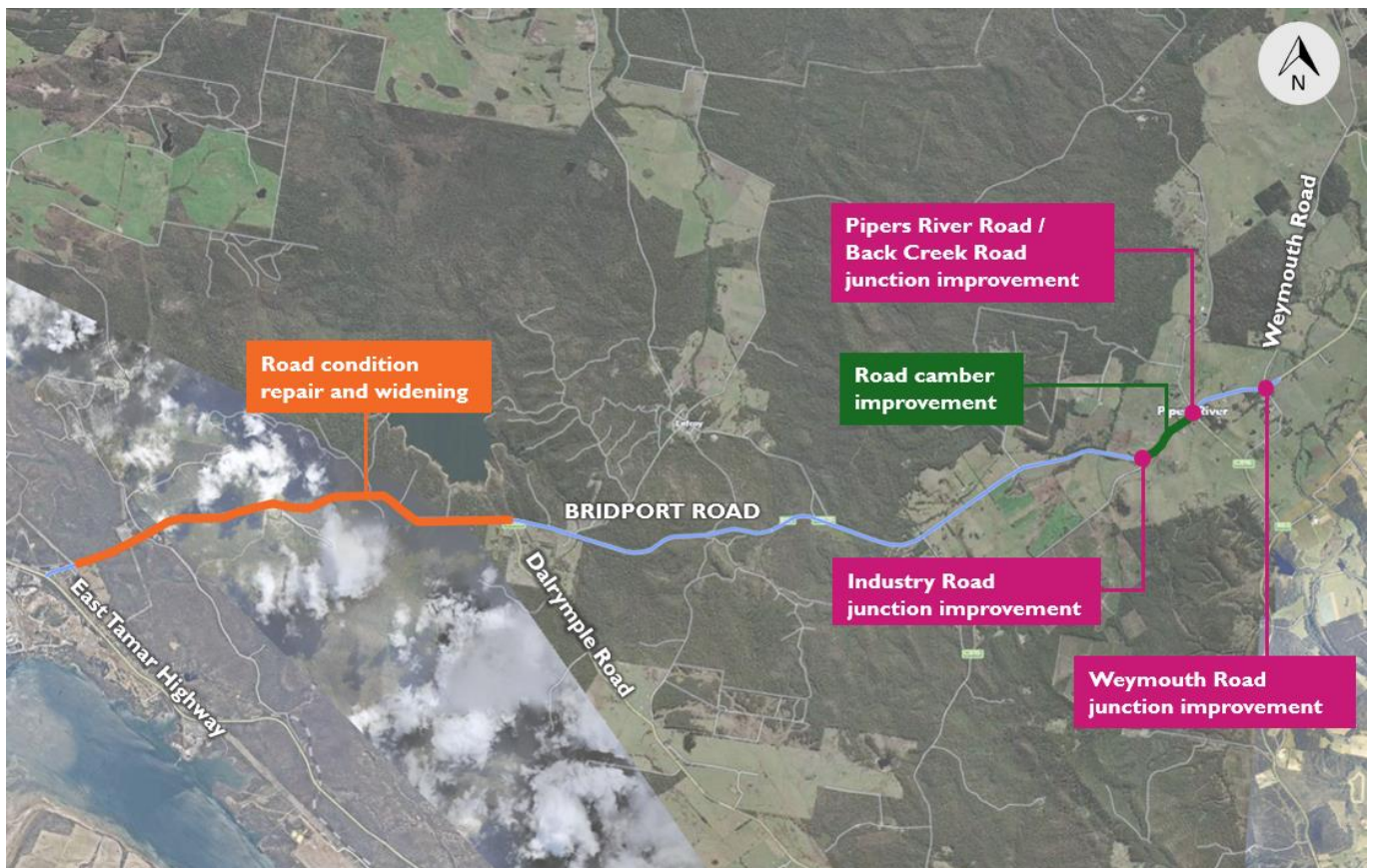
Proposed Works

Capital Works

The work proposed for this project includes:

- **East Tamar Highway to Dalrymple Road (Site 5)** – road widening and improvements to the uneven and deteriorated road surface along sections of the highway, between East Tamar Highway and Dalrymple Road.
- **Bridport Road / Industry Road junction (Site 1)** – road widening and installation of left and right turn lanes for Industry Road.
- **Industry Road to Pipers River Road (Site 2)** – improvements to the road camber along with road widening between Industry Road and Pipers River Road.
- **Bridport Road / Pipers River Road / Back Creek Road junction (Site 3)** – road widening and installation of left and right turn lanes for Pipers River Road, and a new right turn lane for Back Creek Road.
- **Bridport Road / Weymouth Road junction (Site 4)** – installation of a left turn lane for Weymouth Road.

These works are shown in Figure 4 below and the concept design drawings are included in Appendix A: Concept Design Drawings.



Options Evaluation

During the development of the Bridport Road – Bell Bay to Bridport Corridor Study, workshops were held with key stakeholders, followed by broader community consultation in August 2023.

Reflecting on the key themes arising from this consultation, together with a technical analysis, State Growth identified 39 improvement opportunities.

The 39 improvement opportunities were packaged into 11 projects, which were then prioritised based on stakeholder and community feedback, an engineering review of current and future demand, project benefits, value for money, and ease of construction.

The projects were prioritised into three categories: low, medium and high priority. This submission is for five high priority projects identified which can be delivered within the overall budget allocation.

Materials

The proposed works are substantially road construction.

The design of the road was completed in accordance with Austroads Guidelines with the road pavements designed for a service life of at least 40 years and the bitumen surfacing (sprayed seal or asphalt) for a service life of at least 15 years.

The majority of the materials for the road construction will be aggregates sourced from local quarries that have been certified in accordance with Transport Victoria specifications as adopted by the department. The aggregates include the crushed rock used to build the underpinning structure of the road (the pavement), as well as the stone used in bitumen surfacing (when mixed with bitumen) and in concrete elements (when mixed with cement and water).

All road construction must meet the department's road and bridge specifications which have been developed from the Transport Victoria specifications as amended to reflect Tasmanian conditions, industry products and construction methods. The quarries are certified under a Quality Assurance process administered by Transport Victoria which includes regular audits. The department decided some years ago to enter into an arrangement with Transport Victoria to use their specifications under licence, with appropriate modifications, rather than to divert substantial departmental resources into the professional maintenance and upkeep of these documents. This approach enables Tasmania to leverage off the depth of knowledge and resources available in a larger state.

Concrete structures, line marking, road barriers and other traffic furniture are likewise designed and constructed in accordance with Austroads Guidelines and sourced from local suppliers where available.

Concrete is manufactured in Tasmanian concrete plants from locally sourced stone and water with either locally produced or imported cement. Some concrete is poured on site (for example, bridge piers or bus stop bases), while other concrete products are manufactured offsite in casting yards elsewhere in Tasmania (drainage culverts for example).

Steel is commonly fabricated outside Tasmania, with some final detailing in Tasmania. For example, poles and sheet metal inputs for signage are imported into Tasmania with the final signs being printed and assembled locally. Metal barriers are typically manufactured on the Australian mainland or overseas and assembled in Tasmania.

Electronic components, where required, are imported into Tasmania as there is no local manufacturing base.

Benefits

An economic assessment has determined a Benefit Cost Ratio (BCR) of 0.33. This means every dollar spent on these works, there is \$0.33 benefit to the community.

While this is not a strong result, it is essential to consider the broader impact of these initiatives including:

- Improving safety for all road users will reduce the number and severity of crashes.
- Improving road safety facilitates more reliable freight operations, minimising disruptions caused by crashes, which is important for economic growth as demand increases.
- Smoothing out the uneven road surface, provides a more stable and predictable driving surface, improving safety for heavy freight and light vehicles.
- Reducing travel time for all road users, by providing sheltered turning lanes where the travel speed of vehicles is lowest.
- Addressing road safety shortcomings aligns with the needs expressed by community members.

Progress to Date

The works are currently at the detailed design stage. Completed activities include:

- Land survey
- Concept designs
- Highway road surface assessment
- Drainage condition assessment
- Submission of application for Australian Government funding
- Key stakeholders and the community were consulted with during the development of the Bridport Road – Bell Bay to Bridport Corridor Study. They will continue to be engaged through the delivery of this project.
- Environmental (flora and fauna) investigations
- Geotechnical investigations.

Activities underway currently include:

- Preliminary design
- Consultation with the general public, neighbouring landowners, George Town Council and freight operators.
- Public consultation including:
 - Online activities publicised via social media
 - Project specific webpage: [Bridport Road - Freight Efficiency and Safety Improvements – Transport Services](#)

Potential Impacts and Opportunities

Community

The stakeholder engagement undertaken to date has identified the following community impacts and opportunities, with actions to date and proposed.

Community impact	Involved parties	Actions implemented to date	Potential actions (to be resolved during design finalisation)	Notes
Property Accesses	Adjacent title holders		If potential impacts to properties are identified, engage with landowners to discuss these impacts including changes to accesses, fencing, or easements.	Minimal impacts to adjacent landowners have been identified to date.
Property Acquisition	Affected properties		Acquisition to be avoided or minimised as far as practical, while maintaining benefit of the works. Personal stakeholder engagement with impacted landowners will be implemented once the acquisition area has been identified.	It is expected that only minor land acquisition will be required for the projects.
Noise	Nearby properties	Final design is not anticipated to have any noise related impacts on the community or residents.	Construction specifications to nominate noise limits during construction.	

Community impact	Involved parties	Actions implemented to date	Potential actions (to be resolved during design finalisation)	Notes
Traffic Management during construction	Through traffic Local traffic Emergency services Tourism industry Transport groups		Location specific traffic management requirements to be developed for construction contract documents.	

Environmental and Heritage

The investigations undertaken to date have identified the following impacts and opportunities with actions to date and proposed.

Environmental / Heritage Topic	Potential Impact or Opportunity	Actions implemented to date	Potential actions (to be resolved during design finalisation)	Notes
Natural values	Significant flora and/or fauna could require design changes, impacting cost and timeframes.	<p>Desktop environmental (flora and fauna) assessment undertaken. From this:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Eagle nests identified within 5km of the project area. Threatened native vegetation species listed under the <i>Nature Conservation Act 2002</i>, identified close to project area. One potential threatened native vegetation species listed under the <i>Commonwealth EPCB Act</i>, 	<p>Undertake field survey to confirm presence of natural values.</p> <p>Impacts assessed during the development phase of the project with designs adjusted where appropriate.</p> <p>Communicate and discuss investigation findings with environmental groups.</p>	<p>State Growth Eagles and Raptor Management guidelines apply to all projects.</p> <p>Construction contract includes requirements for environmental management during construction.</p>

Environmental / Heritage Topic	Potential Impact or Opportunity	Actions implemented to date	Potential actions (to be resolved during design finalisation)	Notes
		<p>identified close to project area.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Records of suitable Tasmanian Devil habitats identified within 5km of the study area. 		
Natural values	Species listed as 'declared' weeds under the Tasmanian Weed Management Act 1999 have been identified		All projects require a Weed and Hygiene Management Plan to ensure best practice weed management and compliance with relevant legislation.	
Cultural Heritage	Discovery of artefacts could require design changes, impacting cost and timeframes.	<p>A desktop Aboriginal Heritage review was carried out with a registered Aboriginal relics site identified as potentially within the project area.</p> <p>No other State or locally listed heritage places, precincts, landscapes or potential archaeological sites in the project area were identified through a desktop assessment.</p>	<p>Subsurface investigations will be undertaken and investigation findings will be communicated and discussed with Aboriginal Heritage groups in areas of concern.</p> <p>Alternative road alignment, or no works in some areas may need to be considered.</p>	All projects require an Unanticipated Discovery Plan in the event that an item, site or object of Aboriginal Cultural Heritage is discovered that could not have otherwise been anticipated.

Funding and Cost

The works are funded under the Tasmanian Roads Package – Bridport Road Freight Efficiency and Safety Improvements. The project has a funding commitment of \$4 million from the Tasmanian Government and \$16 million from the Australian Government for a total of \$20 million.

The concept design cost estimate is summarised below.

Item	P50 estimate	P90 estimate	Notes
Base Estimate	\$15,000,000	\$15,000,000	Works including investigations, design, community engagement, approvals, project management and construction.
Contingency	\$2,500,000	\$3,500,000	Contingency 17% – 26% of base estimate. This level of contingency is considered reasonable for an estimate from a concept design, due to the nature of works being safety upgrades to an existing alignment only. As the design is refined, uncertainty will be reduced and the contingency allowance will be reduced also.
Escalation	\$1,400,000	\$1,500,000	Escalation 7% of base estimate. Refer below for discussion.
Total	\$19,000,000	\$20,000,000	

This demonstrates that the proposed work are currently forecast to be delivered on budget.

Contingency:

The contingency allowance provides for contingent events, that is events which may or may not occur. For this project, key contingent risk items include:

- tendered rates are unexpectantly higher
- extensive subgrade replacement is required
- discovery of latent conditions
- property acquisition is required
- service relocations are required.

Escalation:

The escalation allowance is a provision in costs for changes in economic and market conditions over time.

Estimates of escalation are not intended to be precise forecast of future prices; they are approximations intended to represent the average trends for a large group of projects in a broad region.

The escalation rate for projects which are part funded by the Australian Government is determined by the Australian Government and is included in the project cost estimates as part of funding submissions from the department to the Australian Government. The Australian Government commissions considerable economic investigation to provide state specific forecast escalation, and the department has not diverted resources into challenging these Australian Government requirements.

Timing

Past and current activities are described in the “Progress to Date” section above. Future activities include:

Activity	Timeline
Obtain PWC approval	May 2025
Package 1 (Sites 1 – 4)	
Detailed design	Mid 2025
Tender	Mid 2026 (subject to approvals, this may become possible for late 2025)
Commence construction	Late 2026
Package 2 (Site 5)	
Detailed design	Late 2025
Tender	Mid to late 2026 (subject to approvals, this may become possible for late 2025)
Commence construction	Late 2026

These works are being presented to the Public Works Committee at this time to allow necessary safety and freight efficiency improvement to be made to Bridport Road.

The project has been scoped successfully and adequate information is available to present the project intent to the Committee.

The preliminary design will be completed soon which will provide more certainty to the design and cost implication to the project.

Conclusion and Recommendation

The proposed Bridport Road – Freight Efficiency and Safety Improvements project works have been developed in response to improve road efficiency, address safety concerns and increase economic growth for all road users, including freight.

The proposed works comprise of upgrading junctions, road widening, and improving road conditions and camber. Key benefits of these works include:

- Improving safety for all road users will reduce the severity and frequency of crashes.
- Improving network efficiency by reducing travel time for all users, through rideability improvements and provision of sheltered turning lanes where the travel speed of vehicles is lowest.
- Improving the safety of road facilitates more reliable freight operations, which is important for supporting economic growth as demand increases.

The works are in the development phase and construction tenders are scheduled to be advertised mid-2025, subject to receipt of PWC and other relevant approvals.

The estimated cost of the works is \$20 million. The current cost estimate is considered reasonable for the scale and scope of works proposed.

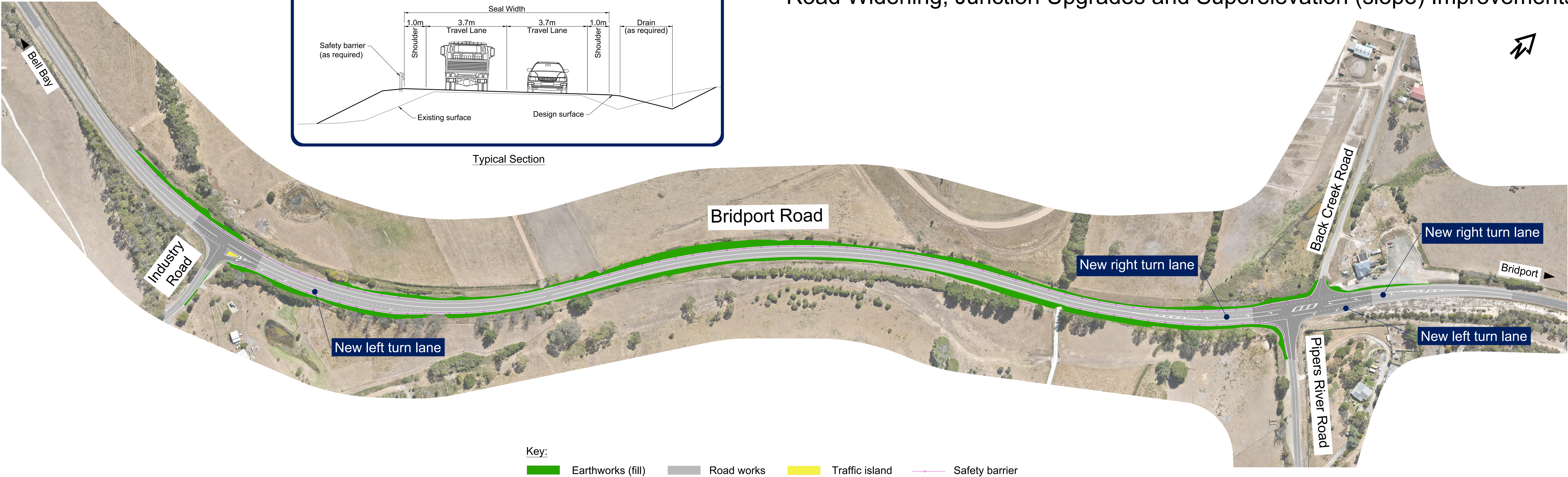
These Bridport Road – Freight Efficiency and Safety Improvements works are considered to be a fit for purpose and value for money solution to address the existing community need of improving safety and freight efficiency on Bridport Road.

Attachments

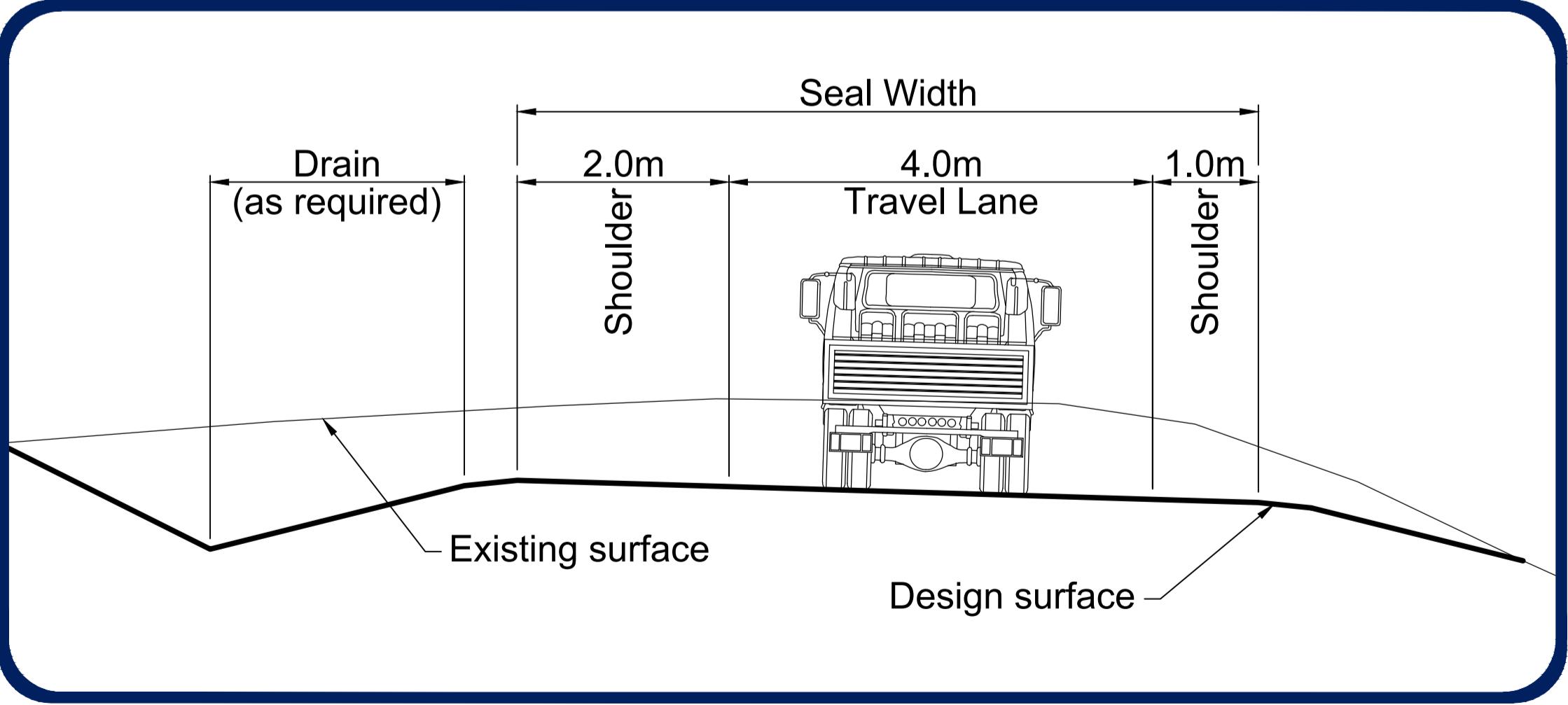
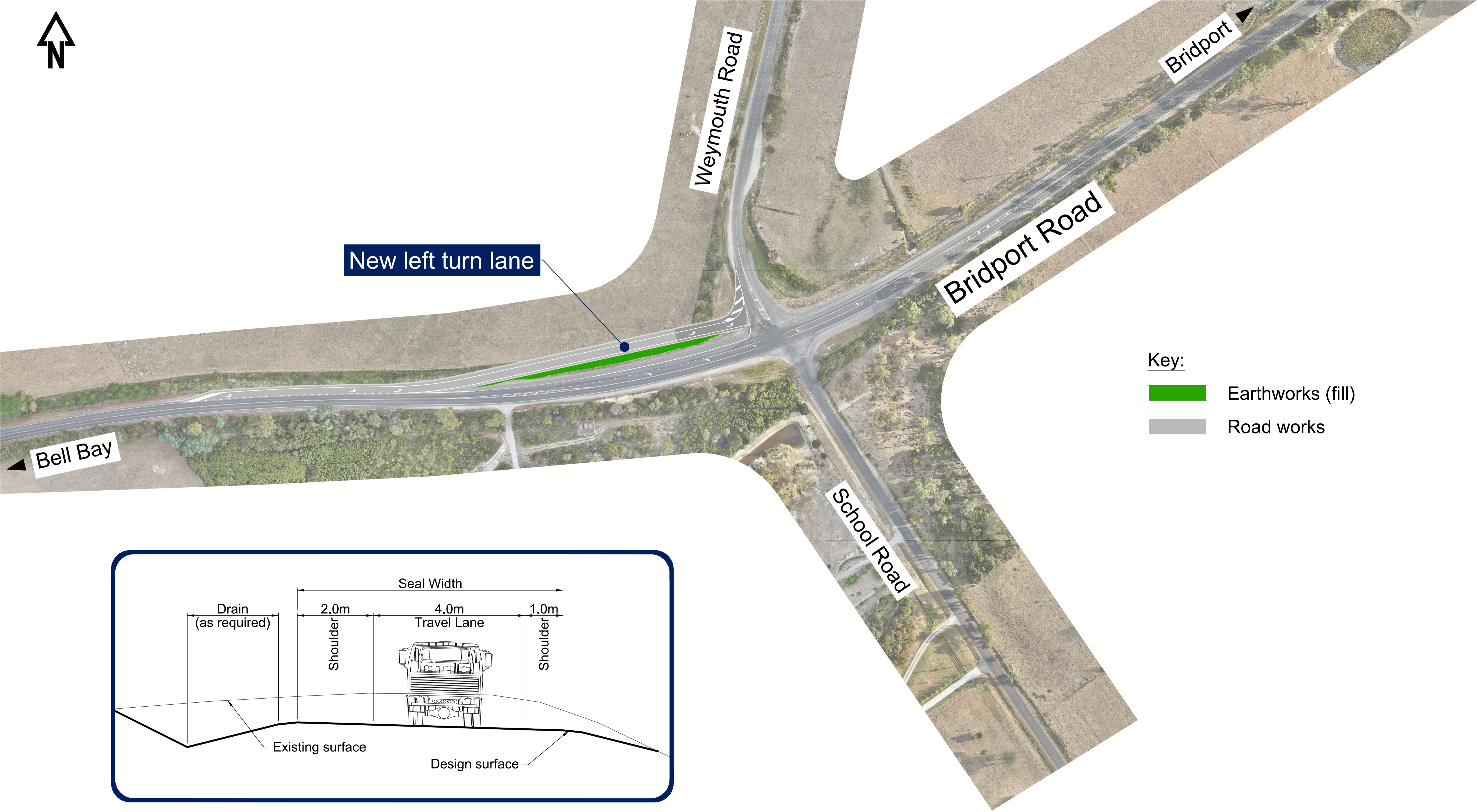
Attachment A Concept Design Drawings

Bridport Road - Industry Road to Back Creek Road

Road Widening, Junction Upgrades and Superelevation (slope) Improvements



Bridport Road - Weymouth Road Junction Upgrade

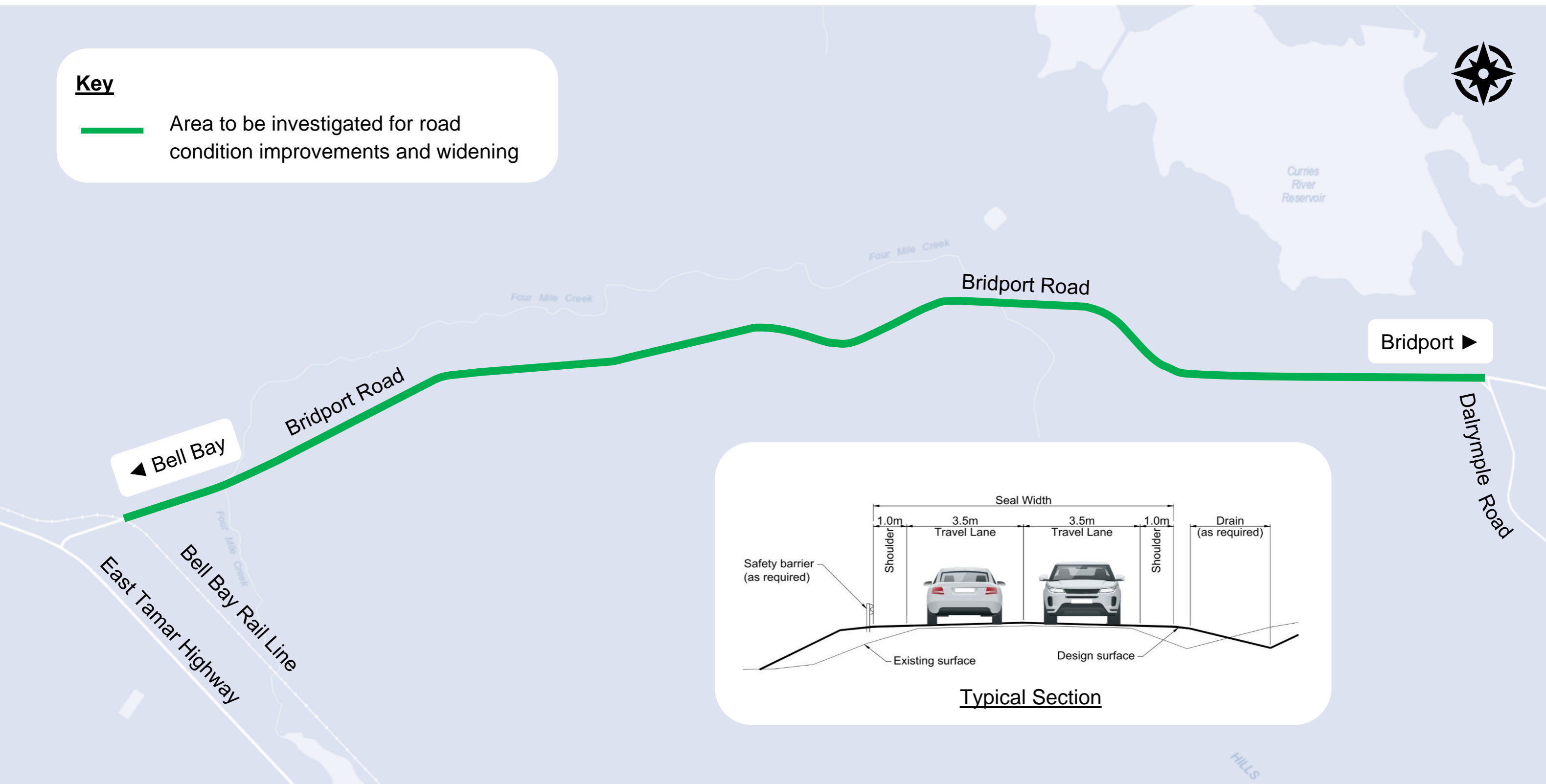


Typical Section

Bridport Road – Bell Bay Rail Line to Dalrymple Road

Key

- Area to be investigated for road condition improvements and widening



Attachment B Consultation Feedback Findings Summary



Consultation and Feedback Findings Summary

Bridport Road - Freight Efficiency and Safety Improvements

November 2024

Background

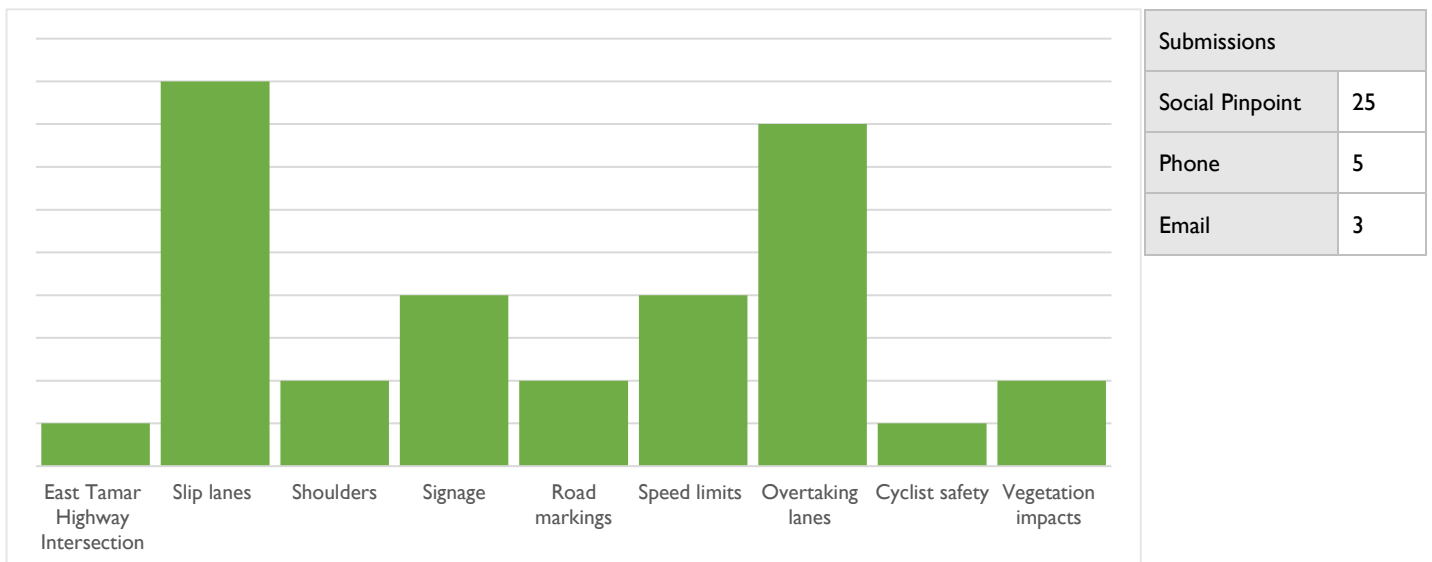
The Australian Government has committed \$16 million towards the Bridport Road - Freight Efficiency and Safety Improvements project between Bell Bay and Bridport, with an additional \$4 million in funding committed by the Tasmanian Government to support the upgrades.

Key stakeholders and community were invited to provide feedback about issues and concerns. Meetings and workshops were held with George Town Council, Dorset Council and the Tasmanian Transport Association in July and August 2023. Online community consultation was held between 7 August and 28 August 2023, through Social Pinpoint.

In addition, the Department of State Growth also carried out technical investigations and studies to identify a list of priority projects focussed on safety and freight upgrades to bring immediate benefit.

Feedback summary

The chart below shows a breakdown of key issues based on feedback received from community and stakeholders during consultation.



Submissions	
Social Pinpoint	25
Phone	5
Email	3

Issue	Community feedback summarised	State Growth response
Slip lanes	<p>Nine community members said they would like to see the addition of new or wider slip lanes for turning at the following intersections:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Industry Road • Pipers Brook Road • Bellingham road • Weymouth Road • Ada Street. 	<p>The safety of all intersections has been reviewed by the department and a list of priority projects have been identified.</p>
Overtaking lanes	<p>Eight community members said they would like to see overtaking lanes in each direction to allow for safer overtaking.</p> <p>These community members also noted they have seen near misses with oncoming traffic.</p> <p>This issue was also raised by key stakeholders.</p>	<p>The inclusion of overtaking lanes has been reviewed by the department. At this stage they have been deemed a lower priority for the current scope and budget.</p>
Adjustments to speed limits	<p>Six community members said that they would like to see reduced speed limits for turning off Bridport Main Road into intersections.</p> <p>Extending the 80 km/h speed limit from a point west of the Pipers River Shop and to east of the Weymouth Road/ Bridport Road intersection was highlighted</p> <p>There are 100 km/h speed limit areas along the corridor where driver's slowdown to turn off Bridport Main Road in conflict with heavy vehicles which use these areas to gain speed.</p>	<p>Speed limits for the road design and condition have been reviewed by the department and will not be considered as part of this project.</p> <p>Speed limits can be reviewed separately if deemed necessary, and crash history will be monitored. Any changed to speed limits require approval by the Tasmanian Commissioner for Transport based on a request made by the state road authority.</p>
Signage	<p>Four community members said they would like to see clear signage that indicates:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • when turning on to Bridport Main Road, you are turning on to a major road • there are school bus stops and buses in the area • that slow moving vehicles should pull over for other traffic enabling them to pass safely. 	<p>Road signage has been reviewed by the department and will be considered for future packages of works.</p>
Shoulders	<p>Two community members mentioned that they would like to see improvements to road shoulders.</p>	<p>Shoulder improvements have been noted by the department and will be implemented as part of the</p>

Issue	Community feedback summarised	State Growth response
	<p>There have been several heavy vehicle crashes or near misses over the years due to narrow shoulders and uneven road surfaces breaking up.</p> <p>There are quite a few narrow and unsealed shoulders which make the road potentially dangerous for road users especially heavy vehicles.</p>	<p>packages of works based on the road category.</p>
Road markings	<p>Two community members mentioned that there are areas where road markings are faded or non-existent.</p>	<p>A list of priority projects has been identified where improvements will be made along the corridor. Road markings will be updated in these specific locations.</p> <p>All other line marking renewals are managed as part of the department annual line marking program.</p>
Vegetation impacts	<p>Two community members said that there are areas along the corridor where unkempt vegetation impacts visibility.</p> <p>Trees such as poplars and silver birch at the Pipers Brook Vineyard entrance obscure the view of traffic travelling towards Bell Bay.</p> <p>There are areas along the corridor in which over hanging trees impact road users line of sight.</p>	<p>Vegetation impacts were noted and passed on to the department's maintenance team for action.</p>
East Tamar Highway intersection	<p>One community member said that the East Tamar Highway intersection is dangerous as the merging lane is too short, alternatively a roundabout would make the intersection safer.</p>	<p>The East Tamar Highway intersection has not been considered for upgrades in this package of works.</p> <p>A heavy vehicle driver rest area (HVDRA) is currently being developed in this location which will be incorporated into this intersection safely.</p> <p>The project team have been notified of concerns surrounding this intersection and will consider this as part of the HVDRA project.</p>
Cyclist safety	<p>One community member commented that Bridport Main Road is unsafe for cyclists.</p>	<p>Cyclist safety will be improved by widening of</p>

Issue	Community feedback summarised	State Growth response
		road shoulders at identified locations.

What's next?

The department used a combination of feedback received from the community along with engineering assessments, environmental and cultural impacts and cost estimates to determine a list of projects for specific locations and their priority for further work.

The department has grouped high priority projects together, generally based on location, into packages of work that are more cost-efficient to design and build. The department will continue to refine the packages to make sure the best value for money is achieved within funding commitments.

The department will invite the community to view and provide feedback on specific project designs as they are progressed prior to proceeding to tender and construction.

High priority projects that are unable to be accommodated within the available funding, will be developed to concept design stage, for consideration once additional funding becomes available in the future.

Contact

If you have any questions regarding this report, please contact the project team on 03 6210 0662 or at bridportroadsafety@stategrowth.tas.gov.au.

For more information on our projects, visit transport.tas.gov.au or scan the QR code.





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