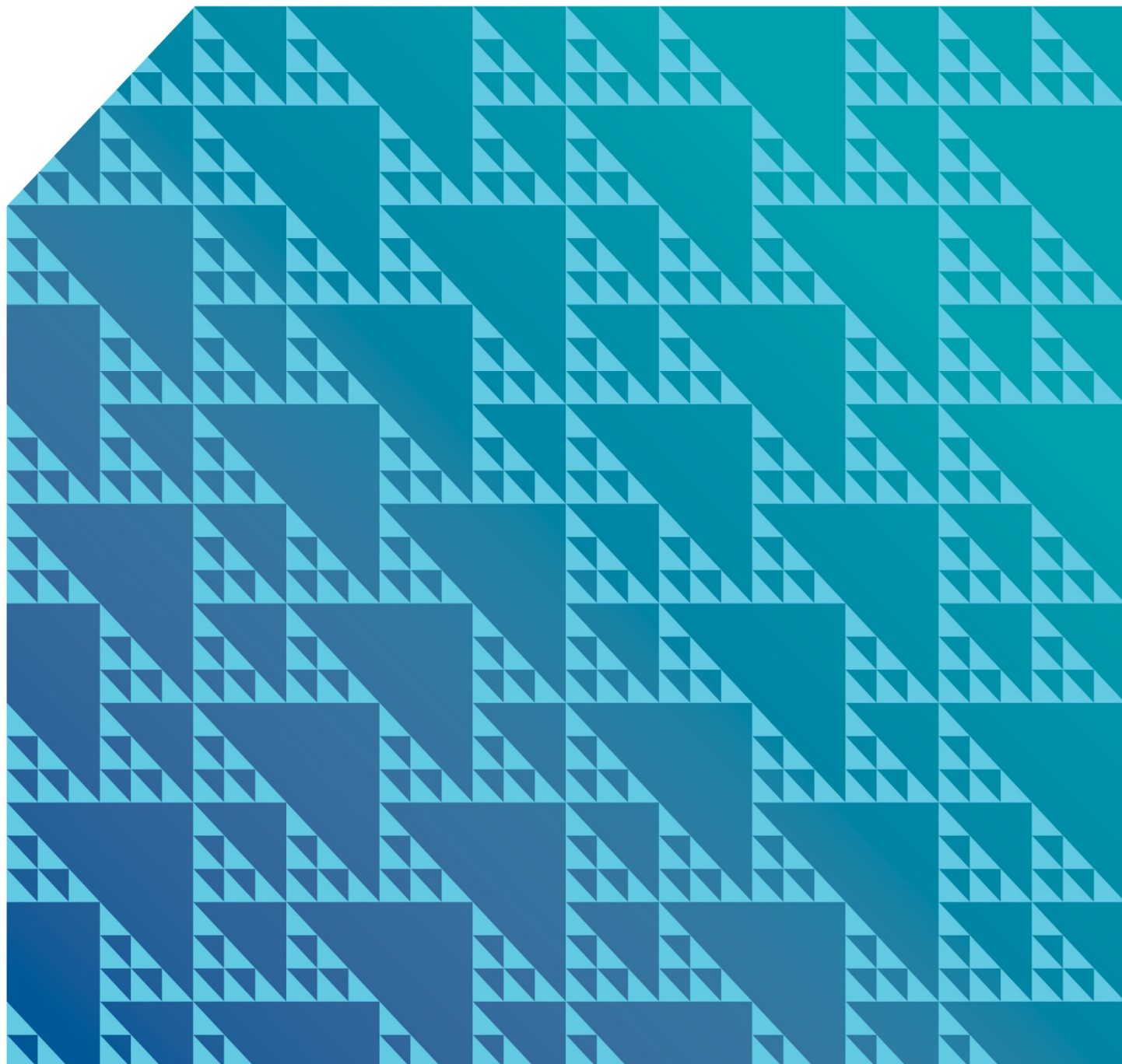


Northern Roads Package  
June 2021

# Community Consultation and Feedback Report



Australian Government

**BUILDING OUR FUTURE**



Tasmanian  
Government



## Contents

|                                                         |          |
|---------------------------------------------------------|----------|
| <b>Community Consultation and Feedback Report .....</b> | <b>1</b> |
| Executive Summary .....                                 | 1        |
| Project overview .....                                  | 2        |
| Consultation objectives .....                           | 3        |
| Considerations .....                                    | 3        |
| Consultation summary .....                              | 4        |
| Landowners .....                                        | 4        |
| Community .....                                         | 5        |
| Feedback summary .....                                  | 5        |
| Lessons learned .....                                   | 5        |
| Consultation outcomes and recommendations .....         | 6        |
| Timing .....                                            | 6        |
| Next steps .....                                        | 6        |



## Executive Summary

This report addresses the consultation and feedback undertaken in the design phase of the Northern Roads Package - Stage 2.

The major benefits to be delivered by the project include:

- A reduction in heavy vehicle traffic travelling through the Launceston Central Business District – a high level analysis of raw traffic data suggests the number of heavy vehicles using this route between the East Tamar Highway and Bass Highway could potentially be increased by 50 heavy vehicles per day, with a corresponding decrease in the heavy vehicle traffic travelling through the Launceston CBD.
- A reduction in crashes on Birralea Road, Frankford Road and the Batman Highway – Austroads research information indicates road authorities could expect an average crash reduction of approximately 40% through shoulder sealing, and 70% through pavement widening. High level Department of State Growth data analysis on a single site roughly aligns with the Austroads research data. As such, a crash reduction in the range of the Austroads research data would be expected as a result of the Project.

Consultation undertaken for Stage 2 of the Northern Roads package included a project introduction letter being sent to affected residents and face-to-face meetings with affected landowners along the Batman Highway.

A public information session was held at the Sidmouth Community Hall on Wednesday 31 March 2021 for Stage 2 and 3 of the Northern Roads package. The information session was held between the hours of 12.00 noon to 6.30 pm and was well attended by over 47 community members.

Project information was also on display at the West Tamar Council and Meander Valley Council from Monday 29 March to Friday 30 April.

The key themes raised during the consultation period in relation to the Batman Highway included:

- drainage issues, particularly in winter and the section just north of the shop
- safety concerns about the Rowella Road intersection
- the crest just north of the Sidmouth shop creates a blindspot
- overall landowners along the Batman Highway did not want an increase in heavy vehicles on the road
- overall community members thought the provision of formalised heavy vehicle rest areas would be an improvement.

## Project overview

Many heavy vehicle operators travelling between the Bass Highway and the industrial and port precinct of Bell Bay travel via Launceston, rather than the more direct route via Birralee Road (A1701), Frankford Road (A1044) and the Batman Highway (A0278).

Through industry consultation, the Department of State Growth determined this is primarily due to the safety concerns of operators travelling on these roads. The safety concerns arise from a number of factors including insufficient sealed pavement width, lack of overtaking opportunities or turn-out bays, and poor pavement quality.

The scoping phase identified appropriate upgrades along the corridor to address these safety concerns, such as a wider sealed cross section, pavement strengthening and localised curve widening as necessary to support the increased use by heavy vehicles.

The design for the Batman Highway section commenced in February 2020 whilst additional funds were sought to complete the designs for Frankford Road and Birralee Main Road. Funding for Frankford Road and Birralee Road was secured in May 2020.

The program for the project was staged to allow the design to progress so that upgrade of the Batman Highway, east of the Batman Bridge (Stage 1 package) could commence construction at the start of the construction season in October 2020. In parallel with construction of the Stage 1 package, the design for upgrade of the Batman Highway, west of the Batman Bridge (Stage 2) was finalised so that it could proceed to construction at the start of the construction season in 2021.

Stage 3 of the Northern Roads package will involve upgrading Frankford Road and Birralee Road.

The benefit of this approach is that construction can be commenced on the road with the highest freight volumes whilst the design of the remaining works is completed.

The Project Partners for the Northern Roads Package are the Australian and Tasmanian Governments.

The major benefits expected to be delivered by the project include:

- A reduction in heavy vehicle traffic travelling through the Launceston Central Business District – a high level analysis of raw traffic data suggests the number of heavy vehicles using this route between the East Tamar Highway and Bass Highway could potentially be increased by 50 heavy vehicles per day, with a corresponding decrease in the heavy vehicle traffic travelling through the Launceston CBD.
- A reduction in crashes on Birralee Road, Frankford Road and the Batman Highway – Austroads research information indicates road authorities could expect an average crash reduction of approximately 40% through shoulder sealing, and 70% through pavement widening. High level Department of State Growth data analysis on a single site roughly aligns with the Austroads research data. As such, a crash reduction in the range of the Austroads research data would be expected as a result of the Project.

## Consultation objectives

The level of engagement for the development phase of the project was 'consult' for adjacent landowners impacted by land acquisition, and 'inform' for the broader public. The consultation objectives were:

- To identify and engage productively with all impacted and interested stakeholders to design a fit for service product with understood and planned-for impacts.
- To explain to stakeholders the objectives of the engagement and the project.
- To provide regular updates to key stakeholders to maintain an open and ongoing relationship.
- To let stakeholders know how their input was considered in project decisions, including design.

## Considerations

The roads in the Northern Roads Package are in Tasmania's north, within the local government areas of West Tamar, George Town and Meander Valley.

The roads included in the Package all have a significant percentage of heavy vehicles in their daily traffic volumes.

The Tasmanian Integrated Freight Strategy released in 2016 identified the Batman – Frankford Road – Birralelee Road corridor as a key regional freight route. It is a strategic connection between the north east and north west of Tasmania.

In April 2019 the Australian Government committed \$24 million to upgrade Birralelee Road from the Roads of Strategic Importance (ROSI) initiative.

In order to maximise the benefit, and consistent with the 2016 Tasmanian Integrated Freight Strategy, the scope of the original Birralelee Road commitment was expanded to include the Batman Highway and a connecting section of Frankford Road. The project became known as the Northern Roads Package.

The project budget at P90 contingency is \$55M, 80% of this is sourced from the Australian Government's ROSI initiative, with the balance provided by the Tasmanian Government.

The lengths of identified roads for the project are 18.49km for Birralelee Road, 13.53 km for Frankford Road, and 10.87 km for the Batman Highway. The total road length of approximately 42.89 km is referred to as the Northern Roads Package.

In September 2020, a section of the Batman Highway (between Batman Bridge and the East Tamar Highway) was advertised for construction tender.

This allowed a re-prioritisation of staging, as follows:

Stage 1 – The Batman Highway east of Batman Bridge upgrade

Stage 2 – The Batman Highway west of Batman Bridge upgrade

Stage 3 – Birralelee and Frankford Road upgrades.

The map on the following page illustrates the geographical area of the Northern Roads Package project location.



## Consultation summary

During the development phase of Stage 2 of the Northern Roads project the following consultation was undertaken:

### Landowners

Landowners along the extent of the works were first notified of the upgrade to the Batman Highway (Stage 2) project by an introductory letter in September 2020.

Field investigation notifications and Permission to Enter Forms were distributed to identified landowners in February 2020 to accommodate project team investigations and surveying activities to inform the design of the project.



Individual face-to-face meetings were arranged and held with 20 landowners on the Batman Highway. The meetings were held over an eight month period between October 2020 and June 2021 to discuss the project and individual property impacts.

To plan for the construction of the design, Notice of Accommodation Works letters detailing individual changes required to privately owned properties were distributed in May 2021.

## Community

A public information session was held at the Sidmouth Community Hall on Wednesday 31 March 2021 for Stage 2 and 3 of the Northern Roads package. The information session was held between the hours of 12.00 noon to 6.30 pm and was well attended by over 47 community members.

Local residents were notified of the public display by an invitation sent in the post, two weeks before the day of the public display. Over 200 residents were sent the invitation

Project information was also on display at the West Tamar Council and Meander Valley Council from Monday 29 March to Friday 30 April. Feedback forms were provided at all venues for the community. Ten feedback forms were received.

## Feedback summary

Key topics raised during the consultation period between September 2020 to June 2021 in relation to the Batman Highway Stage 2 included:

- Water ingress and natural springs are an issue along the length of the highway, particularly in winter and the section just north of the shop.
- Safety concerns about the Rowella Road intersection.
- The crest just north of the Sidmouth shop creates a blindspot. People often try to overtake through there. It also makes it difficult for cars pulling out from the service station and community hall as they can't see if a car is coming over the rise.
- Overall landowners along the Batman Highway did not want an increase in heavy vehicles on the road.
- Overall community members thought the provision of formalised heavy vehicle rest areas would be an improvement.

## Lessons learned

Due to the scope of works for the project being clearly defined it was originally thought that a public display would not be beneficial. However, following the high level of interest from the community on Birralea and Frankford Roads after Permission to Enter forms were distributed for surveying works, it was decided that a public display was required.

The timing of this resulted in the public display being held when the design for stage 2 of the Batman Highway was very close to being finalised.

As such the feedback concerning Rowella Road will be addressed, but needs to be done outside of the original project scope and initial design. This was to ensure that the project was still able to meet the timeframes for going to tender.

The lesson learned was that although the scope of the project was clearly defined and the engagement level on the IAP2 spectrum was inform, the community raised feedback that needed to be considered in the design.

## Consultation outcomes and recommendations

- Following received community feedback, the Rowella Road intersection will be upgraded
- Drainage issues have been carefully considered during the design
- Changing the road levels to rectify the issue with the rise at Sidmouth remains outside the scope of this road widening project.

## Timing

Stage 2 of the Northern Roads package is currently out to tender with the start of works expected towards the end of 2021.

## Next steps

Discussions are continuing with landowners as a result of the Notice of Accommodation Works letters being issued to finalise impacts and remediation works.

Landowner discussions will commence for affected residents in Stage 3 of the Northern Roads package in the coming months.



Department of State Growth

4 Salamanca Place  
Hobart TAS 7000 Australia

Phone: 1800 030 688

Email: [info@stategrowth.tas.gov.au](mailto:info@stategrowth.tas.gov.au)

Web: [www.transport.tas.gov.au](http://www.transport.tas.gov.au)