

Tasmanian Government
2012 Transport Submission to
Infrastructure Australia

Bass Highway – Latrobe to Deloraine

August 2012

Proposal Summary

Initiative Name:	Burnie to Hobart Freight Corridor: Bass Highway Forward Planning – Latrobe to Deloraine
Location (State/Region(or City)/ Locality):	Latrobe to Deloraine, North West Tasmania
Name of Proponent Entity:	Tasmanian Department of Infrastructure, Energy and Resources
Contact (Name, Position, phone/e-mail):	David Spence, General Manager Infrastructure Strategy Department of Infrastructure, Energy and Resources Tel: (03) 6233 2089 Email: david.spence@dier.tas.gov.au
Executive summary	<p>The Bass Highway is a key facilitator of Tasmania’s economic growth, carrying over \$3.8 billion of freight in 2008/09. The Highway connects Burnie and Devonport Ports – Tasmania’s two highest volume ports – major agricultural, manufacturing and industrial areas, and is a key part of the corridor connecting the southern region to the northern ports.</p> <p>The Bass Highway, east of Burnie, carries the highest freight volumes on Tasmania’s transport network. Over the long term, this section of the Highway is projected to nearly double its freight volumes by 2029 to between 6.6 and 8.6 million tonnes. This growth will see the Highway remain as the highest volume land transport freight link in Tasmania.</p> <p>The Highway is part of the National Network, and has seen significant investment over the past two decades. Most adjacent towns have now been bypassed, with extensive sections of high standard dual carriageway and grade-separated interchanges. The majority of the Highway is at National Network standard, however the section between Latrobe and Deloraine (east of Devonport) requires major upgrade and is the key remaining section requiring investment. This section is a single carriageway rural highway, compared to adjacent dual carriageway sections, and is deficient in terms of alignment, lane and shoulder widths for both existing and future heavy vehicle configurations. Other issues include a low level of service (Level of Service D to E on sections east of Devonport); high crash risk and density; and multiple direct property accesses.</p> <p>Upgrade of the Bass Highway between Port Sorell Main Road and Deloraine was identified as a priority in the <i>Tasmanian AusLink Corridor Strategy 2007</i> due to a number of deficiencies: low level of service, high crash risk and density, multiple direct accesses, and narrow lanes and shoulder widths.</p> <p>The Tasmanian Government is seeking planning funding under National Building 2 to analyse efficiency and safety issues on the Highway; investigate and develop corridor options, including preliminary designs for key sections; review applicable regulatory requirements (planning, environmental, heritage); and undertake initial stakeholder engagement. The outcome would be a long-term, prioritised plan for upgrade of the corridor that supports improved freight efficiency and safety.</p> <p>The section of the Highway passing through Latrobe is an area of significant constraint from a freight transport and safety perspective. Planning for the Highway through Latrobe, including the appropriateness of a bypass at this location, would form a key focus of future planning.</p>
Is this a new submission?	Part of larger submission to IA in 2008
Estimated cost of problems?	To be determined as part of the planning phase
Estimated Capital Cost of Initiative by Proponent (\$M, nominal, undiscounted):	\$5 million for planning

Commonwealth contribution sought by Proponent (\$M, nominal, undiscounted):	\$5 million for planning
Other funding (source/amount/cash flow) (\$M, nominal, undiscounted):	To be determined in development phase
BCR by Proponent excluding Wider Economic Benefits	To be determined as part of the planning phase
Estimated program	Planning would commence in 2014/15 and be completed in 2015/16.

Goal Definition

The Bass Highway is a key facilitator of Tasmania's economic growth, carrying the highest freight tonnages of any section of Tasmania's land transport network, at an estimated value of over \$3.8 billion in 2008/09. The Highway connects Tasmania's two highest volume sea ports, major agricultural, processing and industrial areas, and is a key inter-regional link for freight and passengers.

Reflecting the strategic function of the Highway, the Tasmanian Government's objective in planning and managing this section of the Burnie to Hobart Freight Corridor is to:

- provide an efficient and safe road network, that supports improved productivity and efficiency between the northern export ports, freight generating areas and distribution centres, across regions; and
- deliver ongoing improvements to support freight productivity gains over the long term.

The **Bass Highway Forward Planning – Latrobe to Deloraine** initiative will develop an evidence-based, prioritised corridor plan that addresses current and future transport demands, consistent with overall corridor objectives.

Positive contribution to Infrastructure Australia's strategic priorities

The project aligns well with Infrastructure Australia's strategic objectives, including:

- ***Improving the efficiency of connections to major road and rail freight corridors to facilitate domestic trade and international exports*** – the Bass Highway is Tasmania's highest volume freight corridor, and the major National Network link to Tasmania's highest volume ports at Burnie and Devonport. The Highway moves an average of 3.6 million tonnes per year, and connects to major ports, agricultural and processing centres, and facilitates freight connectivity across regions. Addressing constraints on this section will deliver a consistent, high standard freight corridor along the Bass Highway from Burnie to Launceston.
- ***Achieving better utilisation of existing infrastructure*** – Significant investment has been made in the Bass Highway, reflecting its strategic function and high traffic volumes. Addressing existing deficiencies on the section between Latrobe and Deloraine will maximise outcomes from the investment already made in the corridor, by delivering a consistent, high standard and safe freight corridor capable of meeting forecast volumes and advances in freight vehicle productivity.

Alignment with State/regional strategic plans

The strategic importance of the Bass Highway is identified in Tasmania's strategic transport planning frameworks.

Tasmanian Infrastructure Strategy (www.infrastructure.tas.gov.au)

Targeted improvements to key freight supply chains are one of the key reforms listed in the *Tasmanian Infrastructure Strategy* (TIS), with upgrades for the Bass Highway, Deloraine and East Devonport/Port Sorell Main Road a priority in the first 3-5 years of the TIS.

The TIS, released in 2010, is Tasmania's integrated long-term strategy to guide future infrastructure projects and decision making. The TIS identifies the State's heavy economic

reliance on the ability of its transport system to move freight from producers to processors and on to markets – within Tasmania, nationally and internationally. The project aligns with the TIS stream for the integrated, efficient and safe movement of freight.

Tasmanian AusLink Corridor Strategy 2007

The Bass Highway between Port Sorell Main Road and Deloraine is identified as a priority project in the National Network due to its significant deficiencies: low level of service, high crash risk and density, multiple direct accesses, and narrow lanes and shoulder widths. The growth in traffic volumes on road sections with a high casualty crash rate including those with a low level of freight efficiency such as around Latrobe and Burnie, was assessed as one of the seven major challenges for Tasmania's National Network.

The *Tasmanian AusLink Corridor Strategy 2007* noted that the efficiency and productivity of the network was affected by older sections of highway with direct access points, which affect safety and efficiency. The Bass Highway between Latrobe and Deloraine is listed as an area where this is a particular issue.

The Tasmanian Government has already upgraded deficient sections on the Highway between Deloraine and Launceston and between Devonport and Burnie, identified as deficient within the Corridor Strategy.

Draft Tasmanian Transport Policy and Draft Tasmanian Freight Strategy

Strategic fit with the State's draft Transport Policy and Draft Freight Strategy is addressed in the Tasmanian Government Submission Overview.

Infrastructure Delivery Imperative

The Tasmanian Government has made significant investment in high volume sections of the Bass Highway between Burnie and Devonport and Devonport and Launceston to bring these sections up to National Network standard.

The Bass Highway between Latrobe and Deloraine is the key remaining section requiring upgrade. It is deficient in terms of alignment, lane and shoulder widths for both existing and future heavy vehicle configurations. Other issues include a low level of service (Level of Service D to E on sections east of Devonport); high crash risk and density; and multiple direct property accesses.

The Tasmanian Government is seeking planning funding now to support detailed investigation of issues and options, supporting future funding opportunities.

Problem identification, assessment and analysis

The Burnie to Hobart freight corridor is Tasmania's most significant freight corridor by tonnage, traffic volumes, and strategic land use connections. This corridor includes the Bass Highway, Midland Highway, Illawarra Main Road, Brooker Highway, and the north-south rail line, connecting major ports, the Brighton Transport Hub and key industrial and manufacturing centres in all three regions. It is Tasmania's key corridor for the movement of containerised freight.

The Bass Highway, east of Burnie, carries the highest freight volumes on Tasmania's land transport network. The Highway is part of the National Network, and has seen significant investment over the past two decades. Most adjacent towns have now been bypassed, with extensive sections of high standard dual carriageway and grade-separated interchanges.

High volumes through Burnie and Devonport ports; reliance by the southern region on the northern ports for export/import; and the significant agricultural, manufacturing and industrial activity on the north-west coast, contribute to this high freight activity.

The section of the highway directly adjacent to Burnie Port carried 4.4 million tonnes in 2008/09, with volumes along the Highway remaining consistently high (see Table 1). The estimated value of this freight in 2008/09 was over \$3.8 billion, highlighting the Highway's economic importance.

Table 1: Freight volumes, Bass Highway, 2008-09

Freight tonnages are forecast to double on the Highway to between 6.6 and 8.6 million tonnes by 2029 (see Map 1). The number of heavy vehicles is also forecast to double over the long-term. This growth will see the Highway remain as the highest volume land transport freight corridor in Tasmania.

The majority of the Bass Highway is at National Network standard, however the section between Latrobe and Deloraine (east of Devonport) requires major

Road Link	2008/09 tonnage (millions tonnes per annum)
Bass Highway, Edward Street	4.39
Bass Highway, Ulverstone	2.88
Bass Highway, Victoria Bridge	3.45
Bass Highway, Elizabeth Town	3.31
Bass Highway, at Birralee Road junction	3.56
Bass Highway, at Illawarra Road junction	2.70

Source: DIER Tasmanian Freight Survey 2008/09

upgrade and is the key remaining section requiring investment. This section is a single carriageway rural highway, compared to adjacent dual carriageway sections. It is deficient in terms of alignment, lane and shoulder widths for both existing and future heavy vehicle configurations. Other issues include a low level of service (Level of Service D to E on sections east of Devonport); high crash risk and density; and multiple direct property accesses.

Latrobe is an area of significant constraint from a freight productivity and safety perspective. Areas to be considered include the appropriateness of a bypass through this section, design standards for future heavy vehicle configurations and the resolution of safety issues. Planning around Latrobe would form a key part of this study.

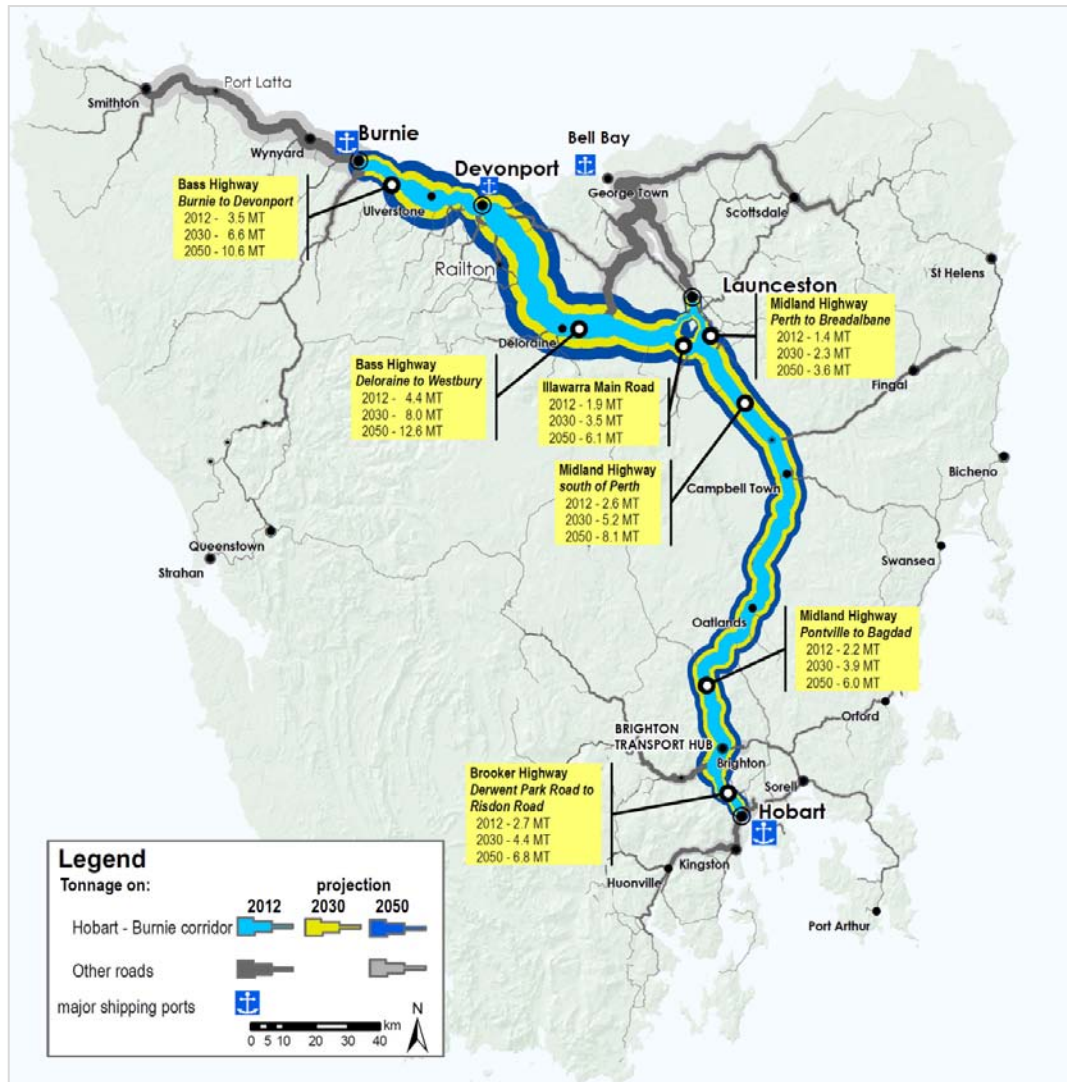
The Government is seeking \$5m in planning funding under National Building 2 to analyse efficiency and safety issues on the Highway; investigate and develop corridor options, including preliminary designs for key sections; review applicable regulatory requirements (planning, environmental, heritage); and undertake initial stakeholder engagement. The outcome will be a long-term, prioritised plan for upgrades that supports improved freight efficiency and safety on this section of the Bass Highway.

Option Generation and Assessment

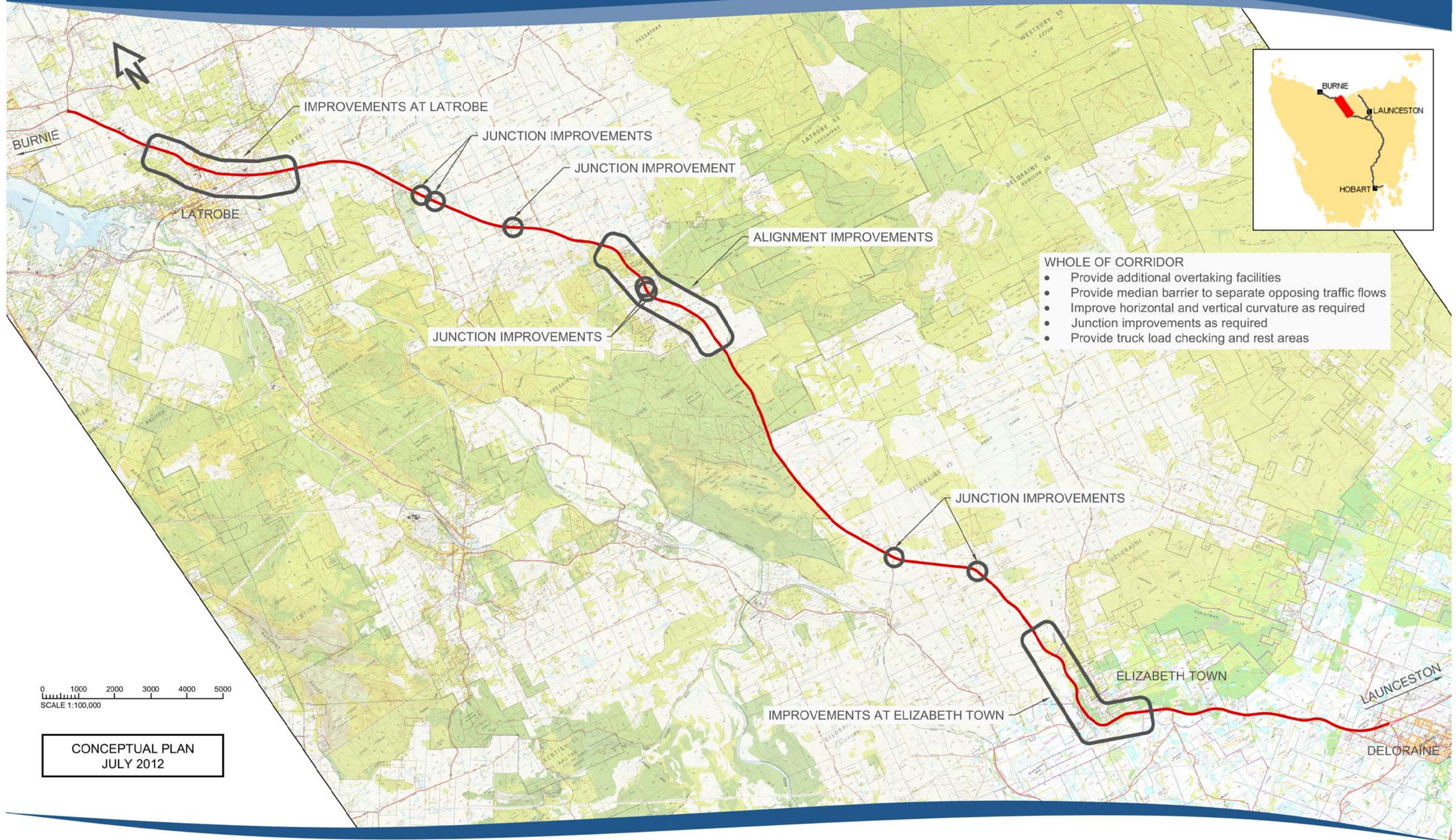
As noted above, achievement of enhanced freight productivity to meet Tasmania's future economic development needs is the key goal.

Use of rail to meet future productivity needs could be seen as an alternative to upgrading road infrastructure. However, as noted in the transport overview document, rail and road act in a complementary manner to meet Tasmania's freight needs. Rail has inherent advantages in the movement of bulk freight and some growth in the intermodal task is expected. However the majority of the freight task will continue to be moved by road, as the service characteristics of road are, in most cases, better suited to freight market needs. Consequently, road network upgrades will continue to be a priority in Tasmania.

Map 1: Current and forecast freight volumes, Burnie to Hobart Freight Corridor



BASS HIGHWAY Latrobe to Deloraine



CONCEPTUAL PLAN
JULY 2012