Brighton to Cambridge Freight Route

RACT submission to public consultation

September 2024

The Royal Automobile Club of Tasmania

More than 215,000 Tasmanians are RACT members. We are the largest and strongest member organisation in Tasmania and an award-winning Tasmanian owned insurance company.

Established in 1923, RACT is an apolitical and independent transport infrastructure, road safety and mobility advocate. We increasingly advocate on the impacts of a changing climate and supporting improved community resilience. We are committed to supporting and furthering the interests of Tasmanians and we do this through a comprehensive program of consultation, education, awareness and public advocacy.

RACT is represented by senior staff in a number of stakeholder reference organisations in Tasmania and undertakes structured liaison with government and other stakeholder groups.

Nationally, RACT is a constituent member of the Australian Automobile Association (AAA), which represents some eight million Australians, and is represented on the board of the Insurance Council of Australia (ICA).

RACT is a regular contributor to the committees and forums of the AAA and the ICA.

Internationally, RACT has joined with other Australian motoring organisations as a member of the Fédération Internationale de l'Automobile (FIA) to work on road safety and related issues at a global level.

RACT's advocacy and public policy activity is defined by a series of policy documents developed and endorsed by the RACT Board.

These policies have been informed by history, experience, research, statistical analysis, consultation, industry knowledge and most importantly, through regular engagement with our member community.

Our submission

RACT appreciates the opportunity to contribute to the ongoing dialogue on mobility across the Greater Hobart region through the Brighton to Cambridge Freight Route Study Community Consultation. As the key mobility advocate RACT supports the development of sustainable, safe, and efficient mobility solutions for all Tasmanians.

The dynamic nature of urban centres necessitates a comprehensive and forward-thinking approach to transportation planning. A holistic, network-wide mobility plan that considers and incorporates the current and future needs for freight is essential for a productive and efficient economy. Our transport network needs to ensure that the selected freight routes both serve freight traffic and address the needs of other road users, including local traffic and active transport users.

This submission emphasises the importance of a holistic planning perspective both in terms of road users and the wider road network to create safer, more efficient, and sustainable transport networks across Greater Hobart.

Key considerations

Road users (mixed vehicle use) and communities

While the proposed routes primarily aim to improve freight transport efficiency, they must also accommodate the significant volume of local, touristic, and commuter traffic that shares these roads. A holistic approach requires that all road users are considered, these approaches include:

- Safety

  RACT is committed to the safer systems approach to achieving road safety outcomes. Considerations for community interactions with the proposed routes as well as smaller vehicles, cyclists and pedestrians must be part of route selection and fully integrated into the route design and planning to ensure the safety of all users on these shared roads.
- Road width and capacity

  Route selection should consider available width to safely accommodate larger vehicle types, the ability to incorporate sufficient roadside runoff areas and the ability to facilitate additional lanes where necessary to ensure smooth traffic flow and provide safe egress.
- Community impact

  Fully understanding and addressing potential impacts on communities, including residential amenity, commercial zones and property access is a priority for next steps. Considerations should consider wider social and economic impacts on recreation, tourism and other community values.

Infrastructure needs

- Future demand planning

  Funding to undertake a whole of network demand planning study in order to understand potential impacts of options across the network to realise potential wider network benefits is an important next step.

- Rest areas:

  The infrastructure supporting these routes is a critical factor for both road safety and sustainability. Consideration as to the need for rest areas as part of the State-wide network is important and in compliance with AustRoads guidelines on heavy vehicle rest areas (HVRAs) is crucial for mitigating fatigue-related crashes. These guidelines are also endorsed by the Tasmanian Transport Association (TTA) and RACT's Heavy Vehicle Policy.

- Road Upgrades:

  Heavy vehicles contribute disproportionately to road wear and tear which impacts all road users. It is vital that design and funding models reflect this impact to ensure longer-term road safety, sustainability, and maintenance of the infrastructure.

- Speed Limits:

  Consideration should be given to setting appropriate speed limits on certain segments of these routes, particularly where they intersect with urban centres or residential zones. Ensuring heavy vehicle compliance with speed regulations is essential to maintaining safety for all users.

Opportunities for Active Transport and Reduced Congestion

- The implementation of a potential freight routes opens opportunities to rethink mobility options across adjacent arterial roads. A holistic planning perspective is key to leveraging these benefits. For instance, Route Option 1 could reduce traffic on the East Derwent Highway and Tasman Highway, while Option 2 could provide relief to the Brooker Highway and Midland Highway… etc. These traffic reductions will improve freight movement and may also reduce congestion for local road users.

- With reduced traffic on other major arteries, there is an opportunity to enhance active transport options such as bike lanes and pedestrian pathways, creating safer and more accessible routes for non-motorised road users. Furthermore, public transport enhancements can be integrated into these corridors, supporting more sustainable and diverse transport options in the Greater Hobart region.

It is important to consider a holistic approach in planning a potential Brighton to Cambridge Freight Route. While focused on freight efficiency there is a need consider the needs of all road users, infrastructure sustainability, and the potential for enhanced active transport options. A freight network that integrates these considerations will benefit both the economic and social mobility of Tasmania.

RACT remains committed to supporting the development of sustainable mobility solutions that serve all Tasmanians, and we look forward to working with the Tasmanian Government as these plans progress.