Launceston and Tamar Valley Traffic Vision

A MAJORITY LIBERAL GOVERNMENT WILL:

- Address growing congestion issues in the Launceston and Tamar Valley road network
- Provide high productivity freight movement through the City of Launceston
- Commence planning, design and costing of a new Tamar River Bridge to improve transport productivity in Launceston and congestion on the West Tamar Highway
Investing a further $92.5 million in transport infrastructure in Launceston and Tamar Valley

Under a majority Hodgman Liberal Government the economy is booming with Tasmanian jobs growing at 3 per cent a year. There are now 2100 more jobs in the North as at late 2017 compared to the last year of the Labor Green Government.

Tasmania’s population is growing at its fastest annual rate in six years and the North is playing its part. The West Tamar, in particular, is seeing strong population growth, up 7 per cent in the 10 years to 2016. The West Tamar Council expects this growth to accelerate and is planning major new residential subdivisions, placing pressure on an increasingly congested road network.

With significant new commercial developments underway and planned in the Invermay area and the Learning City relocation of the UTAS campus, it is time to invest in the road infrastructure that will support growth.

Launceston and the Tamar Valley provide great places to live, work, raise a family and do business. A re-elected majority Hodgman Liberal Government will maintain the attractiveness of Launceston and the Tamar Valley by investing in infrastructure that better connects people to work, school and community, while providing our economy with efficient freight routes.

A series of major engineering studies into Launceston and Tamar Valley traffic management, including the latest by GHD (January 2014) have identified that constraints on the major traffic couplet through the city and a substantial choke-point at the Charles Street Bridge create challenges to an efficient road network.

A long-planned eastern ring road around Launceston will remain under review, with its cost-benefit ratio to be informed by future shifts in the freight task carried between road and rail.

Address growing congestion issues by the state assuming control of Launceston’s key road couplet of Wellington and Bathurst Streets.

A re-elected majority Hodgman Liberal Government will move to finalise a $1.5 million road swap deal with the Launceston City Council that will see the Tasmanian Government take over management of the central portion of Wellington Street and Bathurst Street and those sections of York and Brisbane Streets that connect that couplet to the State-owned Kings Bridge.

Relevant Targets

#34: Reduce the number of deaths and serious injuries on Tasmania’s roads to zero by 2050.

#40: Over the next four years, increase the long-term average investment in public infrastructure by 20 per cent.

#42: Bring all Tasmania’s primary freight and passenger roads up to a minimum three-star AusRAP safety rating by 2040.
Infrastructure for the 21st Century

This will allow the State Government to take a holistic regional view of traffic flow for public transport, light vehicles and heavy freight, with more efficient traffic movement to benefit all road users travelling through the city.

Traffic from the West Tamar, particularly that of Legana and areas north, would be able to access a new road alignment behind the busy schools on the West Tamar Highway which will lead to a new Tamar River crossing (likely a bridge, but could be a tunnel) which would connect with the major road network on the East Tamar Highway which enjoys relatively lower traffic counts than that of the West Tamar.

Expand capacity of Charles Street Bridge for through-traffic and redesign the local Invermay network to address congestion from major new commercial developments and construction of the new Learning City University project.

The Charles Street Bridge has long been identified as a choke point in various traffic studies and we will finally deal comprehensively with this issue either through a duplication of the Bridge or adding extra lanes, to be determined by expert engineering advice.

These works will integrate with a new intersection to deal with recent and planned developments in the Goderich Street area, including the Bunnings Warehouse, the Silo Hotel development and other projects in this fast-growing commercial precinct.

The relocation of the University of Tasmania campus from Newnham to Inveresk will be a significant economic driver in the short and long term for the city and the region, and we recognise that traffic solutions must keep pace with this positive change. A traffic planning study has shown that the Learning City University development at Inveresk will require a major upgrade of capacity at the Forster Street intersections with the construction of multiple turning lanes.

A re-elected majority Hodgman Liberal Government will provide $40 million over the next five years to deal with these major new traffic challenges in the Invermay/Inveresk precinct.
Commence planning, design, costing and stage 1 building for a new Tamar River crossing between Newnham and the West Tamar Highway, north of Cormiston Road.

A number of traffic studies (the most recent in January 2014), have pointed to the need for a second urban river crossing of the Tamar River, due in large part to the ongoing growth in traffic volumes on the West Tamar Highway. However, the previously suggested new crossing at Forster Street will not address growing West Tamar Road traffic congestion.

A re-elected majority Hodgman Liberal Government will address the arterial congestion problem on the West Tamar and create optionality and efficiency for road freight transport on both sides of the Tamar.

Under our plan, traffic from the West Tamar, particularly from Legana and areas north, could access a new road alignment on the lower side of the West Tamar Highway, avoiding four schools, leading to a new Tamar River crossing to connect with the East Tamar Highway road network, likely near University Way. We will conduct a feasibility study and engage fully with the local community through this process to determine the most appropriate linkage with the West Tamar Highway. This project will also be submitted to Infrastructure Australia and a joint funding request prepared with the Federal Government. It is expected the project will be fully completed within 10 years.

It is expected that this new crossing could halve the current traffic count on the West Tamar Highway between Cormiston Road and the Kings Bridge.

A re-elected majority Hodgman Liberal Government will commit $2.5 million towards feasibility, community consultation, geotechnical surveys and design parameters. We have also allocated $25 million in 2022-23 as an initial contribution towards construction of this transformational project with further funding to be committed over the following four years once design, cost and Federal contributions are finalised.
Infrastructure for the 21st Century

Batman Highway upgrade

The Batman Highway is a State-managed road built in 1980 as a two-lane rural link between the East Tamar and West Tamar Highways via the Batman Bridge. It currently provides the only crossing of the Tamar River north of the city of Launceston.

The Highway is used extensively by light vehicles and heavy freight traffic between the West Tamar and the Bell Bay Port and surrounding heavy industrial zone on the East Tamar. The Highway is also an important link for primary producers on either side of the Tamar, particularly wine-growers, livestock producers, orchardists and crop producers.

The Batman Highway is showing signs of wear due to heavy transport use and requires significant investment to improve safety and efficiency.

A re-elected majority Hodgman Liberal Government will invest $6 million in edge-widening, re-surfacing and safety works over the next four years.

Mowbray Connector Intersection

One of Northern Tasmania’s major road safety and traffic hazards will be addressed with an upgrade of the junction of the East Tamar Highway and Mowbray Connector.

We have committed $7 million in total ($5.5 million in addition to the current financial year contribution of $1.5 million) for works to address serious safety concerns at this major intersection, which is in the final stages of planning.

Over the past five years there have been 10 crashes at this site involving injuries and another seven involving damage to vehicles. Side-impact and front-to-rear collisions commonly occur at this intersection, which is frequently subject to lengthy queues.

The project will see a traffic solution introduced at the interchange to prevent road users being forced to turn right to cross the southbound, two-lane carriageway.
Infrastructure for the 21st Century

$12 million West Tamar Highway Package

A re-elected majority Hodgman Liberal Government will improve traffic flow and cater for future development along the West Tamar by investing $12 million for:

a) Reconstructing and widening the West Tamar Highway between the intersection with Gravelly Beach Road and the northern intersection with Rosevears Drive;

b) Reconstructing and widening the West Tamar Highway between the intersections with Atkinsons Road and Waldhorn Drive;

c) Improving overtaking opportunities between Exeter and the Batman Highway junction;

d) Resealing and widening the West Tamar Highway north of the Batman Highway intersection to Lightwood Hills Road;

e) Constructing a left-turn acceleration lane at the Motor Road / West Tamar Highway junction; and

f) Resealing and widening of road shoulders on the West Tamar Highway between the junction with Brisbane Street in the city through to the Legana Park Drive roundabout – providing improved surfaces for cyclists.

Easing speed restrictions along a 20km section of the East Tamar Highway

Between 2006 and 2010 the Australian Government invested $60 million on the East Tamar Highway in anticipation of major industrial activity around Bell Bay’s heavy industrial zone.

About 20 kilometres of the East Tamar Highway was largely reconstructed on a new alignment to the principles of the AusRap 3 Standard.

This Standard usually provides a safe speed limit of 110 kilometres per hour for all traffic. However, the previous Labor Government chose to set the speed limit at 100 kph.

A re-elected majority Hodgman Liberal Government will provide $80,000 for the Australian Road Research Board (ARRB) to conduct a study of the road design and architecture with a view to easing speed limit restrictions to allow full highway speeds of 110 kilometres per hour maximum.
A re-elected majority Hodgman Liberal Government will invest a further $92.5 million in transport infrastructure in Launceston and the Tamar Valley.

- $6 million to upgrade the Batman Highway - including edge-widening, resurfacing and safety works
- Easing speed restrictions along a 20 kilometre section of the East Tamar Highway
- $12 million West Tamar Highway Package to improve traffic flow and cater for future development along the West Tamar
- Commence planning, design, costing and Stage 1 building for a new Tamar River crossing between Newnham and the West Tamar Highway, north of Cormiston Road
- $7 million to address serious safety concerns at the Mowbray Connector intersection
- Extend capacity of the Charles Street Bridge for through-traffic and redesign the local Invermay Network

Address growing congestion issues by finalising a $1.5 million road swap deal with the LCC to take over management of Launceston’s key road couplet of Wellington and Bathurst Streets.