

28 January 2026

Dr Jenny Gordon and Mr David Parmeter
C/-Department of Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development,
Communications, Sport and the Arts
GPO Box 594
CANBERRA ACT 2601

via email: TasmanianTransportSchemesReview@infrastructure.gov.au

Dear Dr Gordon and Mr Parmeter

Tasmanian Transport Schemes Review

The Australian Small Business and Family Enterprise Ombudsman (ASBFEO) welcomes the opportunity to contribute to the Tasmanian Transport Schemes Review.

Small business is a vibrant, fast-growing and dynamic sector that enables enterprising Australians to pursue their ambitions and livelihoods. It accounts for 32% of Australia's GDP and employs 5.2 million people—39% of the private-sector workforce. We estimate there are approximately 7,000 small business domiciled in Tasmania that are active in the agriculture, fishing, forestry, manufacturing and mining sectors and therefore may be eligible for support under the Tasmanian Freight Equalisation Scheme (TFES).

We note the statements in the issues paper that there is often a great deal of frustration with the TFES, particularly associated with: a) the complexity and cost of lodging a claim(s), b) uncertainty whether a claim will be paid and, if so, c) the level of remuneration.¹ Small businesses are typically time poor, with little to no dedicated resources for compliance and it is often the owner, late at night, grappling with paperwork after they have been running their business all day, surrendering their time with family. We would therefore encourage you to examine ways in which the complexity – e.g. gathering the required evidence to file a claim for small or irregular volumes, and/or unique input purchases –and uncertainty associated with the TFES could be reduced.

Tasmanian small and family businesses have also raised with me the operational impediments they confront in seeking to benefit from the scheme. Infrequent and unsuitable shipping options for specific products, route limitations and the routine requirement to freight goods to the Port of Melbourne for on-forwarding presents unavoidable further cost and service obstacles not adequately addressed by the scheme. The 'equalisation' objective is undermined by this 'transit' requirement that incurs additional freight handling costs, port fees and channel levies.

If you would like to discuss any of the issues raised in this submission or require further information, or clarification, please contact ASBFEO via email at advocacy@asbfeo.gov.au.

Yours sincerely



The Hon Bruce Billson
Australian Small Business and Family Enterprise Ombudsman

¹ J Gordon & D Parmeter, *Independent Review of the Tasmanian Transport Schemes – Issues Paper*, Department of Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development, Communications, Sport and the Arts, December 2025, p10.