



# COMMUNIQUE

17 April 2026

## Regional Cities Victoria Roads Roundtable

Regional Cities Victoria (RCV) convened a regional roads roundtable in Geelong this week bringing together key stakeholders from across Victoria's transport, tourism, agriculture, freight and local government sectors.

The purpose of the roundtable was to outline RCV's advocacy for a \$2 billion regional roads package ahead of the 2026 Victorian State Election, and to facilitate a shared discussion on the condition, safety and economic importance of the regional road network.

Participants included representatives from the Victorian Tourism Industry Council, Rural Councils Victoria, Livestock and Rural Transporters Association, National Transport Research Organisation, Victorian Transport Association, Victorian Farmers Federation and Mayors and CEOs from Victoria's 10 largest regional cities.

Thursday's roundtable provided a forum to share perspectives, evidence and real-world experiences of regional road conditions, and to explore opportunities for coordinated advocacy toward greater investment in the network.

### Discussion highlights:

- Widespread concern about the declining condition of regional roads, with participants citing deteriorating surfaces, potholes and structural failures across key routes.
- Strong acknowledgement of the safety implications, particularly for heavy vehicle operators, emergency responders and vulnerable road users.
- Clear evidence that poor road conditions are impacting freight efficiency, agricultural supply chains and tourism access, with flow-on effects for regional economies.
- Recognition that regional roads are also vital social connectors, enabling people to access family, community networks, education and healthcare, and to participate in activities such as regional sport and recreation.
- Recognition that current maintenance levels are insufficient to keep pace with network deterioration, leading to a growing backlog of required works.
- Discussion of the compounding impacts of recent natural disasters and increased freight volumes, accelerating wear and tear on already strained assets.

### Points of consensus:

- Regional roads are critical economic and social infrastructure, supporting both productivity and community connection.
- There is an urgent need for increased and sustained investment to prevent further deterioration and escalating long-term costs.
- Safety outcomes on regional roads are unacceptable and require immediate intervention.
- Investment in regional roads delivers statewide benefits, including improved supply chains, stronger communities and more connected regions.



- A coordinated, cross-sector advocacy effort is required to ensure regional roads are prioritised in the lead-up to the state election.

**Shared commitments:**

- Participants agreed to support a unified advocacy approach calling for increased investment in regional roads.
- Stakeholders committed to sharing available data, case studies and evidence to strengthen the case for funding.
- Agreement to continue engagement and collaboration beyond the roundtable to maintain momentum.
- A shared intent to elevate community awareness of both the safety risks and the social and economic impacts of declining road conditions.

**Comments from RCV Chair Cr Ben Blain, Mayor of Warrnambool:**

“Regional roads are a safety and productivity issue – potholes and declining asset condition are putting lives at risk and impacting the economic drivers that underpin freight, agriculture and tourism.

This is also about regional people and connection – families, communities and local sport. For many regional Victorians, safe access to everyday life depends entirely on the roads they travel.

Right now, too many regional Victorians can’t rely on the roads they need to get to work, school or sport safely.

We heard loud and clear from industry, and our communities every other day, that the condition of our roads are dangerous and holding regional Victoria back.

A \$2 billion regional roads package over four years is an essential down payment on safety and connectivity for economic growth.

This is not just a regional issue – it’s a statewide economic imperative. Investing in regional roads means stronger supply chains, safer commutes and a more productive Victoria.

This roundtable showed there is strong alignment across sectors. We are united in calling for the investment needed to restore confidence in our regional road network.”