



MEDIA RELEASE

4 September 2026

RCV welcomes pledge for country roads and bridges

Regional Cities Victoria (RCV) has welcomed the Coalition's commitment to reinstate the Country Roads and Bridges Program, saying it restores a proven model that trusts regional councils to identify local road priorities and get on with fixing them.

Under the commitment, eligible rural and regional councils receive \$1.5 million annually to invest in local roads and bridges.

RCV Chair Cr Ben Blain said the Country Roads and Bridges Program worked because it trusted local councils to identify local problems and get on with fixing them.

"Dangerous intersections, ageing bridges and deteriorating roads could be addressed quickly and practically because the people making the decisions were the people who use those roads every day and know what needs to be done," Cr Blain said.

"Local communities know their priorities better than anyone sitting behind a desk in Melbourne.

"What's needed in Mildura isn't necessarily what's needed in Geelong, Warrnambool or Wodonga. A dedicated funding stream gives councils the ability to put the money where it will make the biggest difference in their community.

"That is why RCV has consistently called for the Country Roads and Bridges Program to be reinstated, and we welcome the Coalition committing to bring it back.

"If we're serious about rebuilding our regional road network, programs that empower local action have to be part of the solution.

Cr Blain said the program should complement, rather than replace, the significant additional investment required in Victoria's state-managed regional road network.

"Councils can fix the local roads and bridges they manage, but they can't fix the highways and arterial roads that are the State Government's responsibility. That's why RCV is continuing to call for an additional \$2 billion over four years for regional road maintenance and upgrades, above existing road maintenance funding."

Cr Blain said regional Victoria needs both sustained investment in our state road network and direct funding that empowers councils to fix the local roads and bridges their communities rely on every day.

"RCV welcomes this commitment and wants to see all parties recognise that rebuilding regional Victoria's road network requires long-term, dedicated investment informed by local advice."