Greetings

I have lived nearly all of my 58 year life in the western half of Victoria. The condition of the main roads in South West Victoria in recent years has been appalling. At one time about two years ago all of the highways in our area had speed restrictions on them due to unsafe sections of road. This applied to the Princes Hwy, Henty Hwy, Hopkins Hwy, Glenelg Hwy and Hamilton Hwy. Some highways had multiple areas of failure so bad as to need speed restrictions. At no other time in my life have I ever seen such dilapidated roads. Nor have I seen anything like it in other parts of country Victoria or Melbourne or Geelong or New South Wales or Queensland or South Australia or Northern Territory, ever. When travelling away from home ones gets to see the standard of infrastructure that other parts of Australia enjoy and when we get home we think that we are being treated like second rubbish.

Apart from pot holes, the road formations continue to be deformed in many locations. This is particularly dangerous during rain when the deformed pavement fills with water.

There has been a lot of work done on the Hopkins Hwy over the past two years. The condition of the road is no longer appalling but it is definitely still poor in some places. This kind of problem has not happened overnight. I must be the result of inadequate maintenance over a prolonged period of time.

Road damage is caused by trucks. Trucks are industry. Industry generates income. This part of Australia produces plantation timber, milk, butter, cheese, wool, beef, fat lambs, wheat, canola and more. A lot of this product is for the export market. Neglect of the roads in this area shows neglect for the industries that bring us income.

They talk of the Princes Hwy being a route of national significance. The truth is that the best route between Portland/Mt Gambier in the west to Geelong/Melbourne in the east is not the Princes Hwy. It is Princes Hwy - Hopkins Hwy - Hamilton Hwy. They can upgrade the Princes Hwy all they like but as long as the Princes Hwy goes through Colac, Camperdown, Terang and Warrnambool it will not be the preferred route. So the trucks and other traffic leave the Princes Hwy west of Warrnambool to switch to the Hopkins Hwy and then to the Hamilton Hwy. The link roads from the Princes Hwy to the Hopkins Hwy are completely unsuited for the purpose. Bridge Road Woodford acts as the unofficial Warrnambool by-pass; B-Doubles and the works. (Vicroads sanctioned.) But it is not a safe enough road for this purpose. In a 2 km strip I could easily identify at least 10 safety issues. Here is one. The west bound school bus stops at Mill St to pick up kids. When I say it stops at Mill St I mean it stops in the middle of the intersection with half of the bus still in the Bridge Road traffic lane. The road has a continuous white line so in theory that means the stationary bus cannot be overtaken legally. That might be OK for a quiet country road but this is the unofficial Warrnambool by-pass with B-Doubles roaring through and inadequate sight distances. There have been times when someone in our church prayer meeting has petitioned in prayer that nobody has to die on Bridge Rd.

The use of Bridge Rd Woodford as the unofficial Warrnambool by-pass is simply not ethical. If it is so difficult to fix a pot hole, then it is a forlorn hope that this inadequate road network will ever be
resolved.

It seems from this perspective that funding for public facilities such as roads has not been fairly distributed.