Inquiry Name: Inquiry into VicRoads' Management of Country Roads

Mrs Tracey Potatau-Wright

SUBMISSION CONTENT:

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Please see attached file

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File1: 5a5b49b9f4239-The roads in the south west of Victoria are consistently in poor condition.docx

File2:

File3:
The roads in the south west of Victoria are consistently in poor condition, ripples, potholes, and sections that are being either torn up in only a few days from being 'fixed' to sections being pushed into dangerous 'hills' of bitumen. All of these, are things that people are trying to avoid, both because of damage to their own vehicles and also the risk of accidents occurring with other vehicles. Especially since it has been made known that the authorities involved are absolved from any responsibility for any damage or repair to people's vehicles and the injuries or deaths that have occurred due to these conditions.

Over the past few years the response to poor road conditions, both by VicRoads and local councils is to simply change the legal speed for the section in poor repair. A perfect example of this is the Pyrenees Highway (Glenthompson-Maroon Rd). In the 25 years I have lived in the district there has only been a handful of serious accidents between Glenthompson and Ararat. Recently there were 2 accidents within a couple of weeks and rather than do roadworks, the speed limit was dropped by 20kms over an area of a few kilometres either side of both accident sites.

We are seeing VicRoads and local council rushing out every year, near the end of the financial year, doing half-hearted patches to ensure the coming years funding. These ‘repairs’ are a total waste of money as they fall apart sometimes within days. VicRoads and local councils are seen to be doing roadworks day in day out, but the areas of ‘repair’ are far too often sections without any problems. They claim this is to prevent further damage but only a few metres down there is a section in need of serious repair that is totally ignored. As long as the road base is not being properly repaired, the roads will continue to deteriorate. It has become about doing everything as quickly as possible. Stop. Open the road up properly, leave it open for 6mths+, allowing vehicles to compact the road base effectively and then put the bitumen on top of that solidified base. Where this has been done it is often quite a few years between the road works and the first repair needing to be done. Instead, this rushed repair process is seeing ‘repairs’ fall apart in just days.

I have travelled extensively throughout Victoria and South Australia in recent months and have been shocked at the extent of damage in the south west of Victoria. In fact, it was obvious as soon as we had come into Victoria from South Australia simply by the damage to the road surface within only a few kilometres of the border.

It is about time that VicRoads, local councils and the contractors were held to account for the work they do or contract out to be done. If this situation was a one off, maybe it could be put down to a bad contractor, but that is not the case. These authorities need to be accountable not only for the poor workmanship, but the actual length of time the repairs are good for and any damage/accidents caused as a direct result of not meeting a better standard of repair.