Country Roads

Your insights, our actions
Your feedback is now shaping the most significant period of planning, construction, maintenance and uplift of the regional road network since World War Two.

The senior leadership team at VicRoads has visited every part of Victoria this year, having frank conversations about the state of the roads and what can be done to better support regions to grow and thrive.

This has been the biggest public engagement that VicRoads has ever done in its 100 year history. Your insights are now helping us put sensible plans to government to support the future growth of regional Victoria.

With the population outside Melbourne expected to double to two million people within 20 years, now is the time to begin the modernisation of the road network for the next generation, to strengthen links between and around growing centres.

Country Roads sums up what we heard and saw and what is now being done to rebuild the regional road network to support a new era of regional prosperity.

You have told us plainly: fix the roads that need fixing because they are our lifelines; make it safer and easier for us to move around without hurting ourselves or damaging our goods; and help set our regions up for tourism and economic growth while giving people better connections to job opportunities and each other.

The desire for better links between regions, safer overtaking opportunities and investment in sealed shoulders were commonly raised, along with concerns about poor roadside drainage and pot-holes.

So what happens now?

Your feedback is shaping the most significant period of planning, construction, maintenance and uplift of the regional road network since World War Two. Work is ramping up across every region: from major highway duplications to improving signage, cycling paths and road safety treatments that will make it almost impossible to run off the road or hit another car head-on across all major interstate highways.

Alongside the doubling of road maintenance this year, planning is underway for improvements that will set regional Victoria up for continued growth. We will work much more closely with local regions to understand changing traffic volumes and regional economies, and we will partner with Visit Victoria to develop new tourist drives to attract more tourists to stay longer.

Not accepting that you’re four times more likely to die on country roads in Victoria than on metropolitan roads, we will explore a star road safety rating system to encourage travel on the safest routes and target road safety improvements.

We’ll also be making a much bigger effort to reduce our environmental impacts, from recycling a million tyres to re-vegetating roadsides.

Victorians told us they want much greater transparency about what is happening on their roads. VicRoads will produce a State of the Roads report to be clear about current road conditions and better inform future decisions by government.

And it won’t stop there. As part of Transport for Victoria’s development of an integrated regional roads strategy for medium and long-term improvements, your feedback will be considered by the Victorian Government as we prepare projects for funding consideration in the future.

Thanks to everyone for their invaluable feedback that is informing a sensible plan of action for country roads in Victoria.

John Merritt
Chief Executive, VicRoads
Where we went
Engaged with freight operators, transport industry, businesses, tourism operators, environmental and wildlife groups, cycling enthusiasts, motorcycle groups, government agencies, the Victorian Farmer’s Federation, RACV and Regional Development Victoria.
What you told us

**Grampians**
- Changing face of farming with bigger machinery
- Supporting more grain on to rail instead of road
- Better connections for freight into Melbourne
- Tourism growing through Silo Art Trail, the Grampians, Sea Lake
- Wind farm development
- Ballarat regional growth needs support
- Growing commuter traffic to Melbourne and other regional centres
- Bypasses along Western Highway
- Importance of protecting roadside native vegetation
- Growing horticulture
- Tourism potential of the Grampians

**Loddon Mallee**
- More river crossings
- Support for tourism in Charlton, Echuca and Wedderburn
- Alternative truck routes to avoid towns
- Safer cycling routes
- Protection of wildlife and native plant species
- Intensive farming of almonds, carrots and other produce has impacts
- Better connections for freight from Mildura to Melbourne
- More freight to be moved by rail
- Removing trucks from Mildura’s town centre
- Improve roads to keep pace with increased population, tourism and industry

**Hume**
- Significant intermodal freight opportunities
- Shepparton Bypass
- Road safety a critical concern
- More can be done to improve key tourism destinations
- Cycling safety along the Great Alpine Road
- New ways to inform drivers of unique weather conditions in the Alpine region
- Safety around schools and main streets on country highways
- Choke points in Wangaratta and Rutherglen

**Barwon South West**
- Major reconstruction of roads serving Port of Portland
- Keeping Great Ocean Road open for tourism
- Widening narrow seal roads used by freight, school buses and tourists
- Multilingual signage for international tourists
- Enormous residential, commuter and tourism growth
- Safer cycling opportunities
- More inland routes to relieve Great Ocean Road congestion

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Map not to scale
**Statewide feedback**

**Road maintenance**
You want better road maintenance including more shoulder grading, better surface repairs, more vegetation management and better quality long term fixes.

**Road safety**
You want sealed shoulders, smoother roads, widening of narrow roads, more safe overtaking opportunities and safer speeds around schools and shopping areas.

**Tourism**
Better support tourism by improved signage, more rest areas, use of technology to share tourist information, more road safety messages and upgrades to key tourism routes.

**Trucks**
You want trucks out of towns and wider shoulders where trucks, cars and bikes share the road. Strengthen bridges, upgrade intersections, add rest areas and provide more overtaking opportunities along key freight routes to enable bigger and more productive trucks.

**Regional economies**
Understand the changing face of farming with fewer and larger farms with bigger machinery on the roads and growing export demands, including more opportunities for rail freight.

**Environment**
You expressed concern about native plant species being lost and wildlife in danger. We need to do more to protect the environment by minimising impact on trees, revegetating the road reserve and use recycled materials in road works.

**Road safety barriers**
You want to know why so much money is being invested in them and how they save lives.

**Cycling**
You want more bike paths/lanes and better road maintenance for commuter and recreational cyclists.

**Connectivity**
Better road connections between regional centres including Geelong, Ballarat, Bendigo, Shepparton, Benalla, Mansfield and links in Gippsland.

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**Gippsland**

- Better north-south connections
- Alternative truck routes around growing towns
- Growing number of commuters across Gippsland
- Longer-stay tourism potential between Mt Baw Baw, Phillip Island, Wilson’s Promontory and East Gippsland
- Difficulty moving around Phillip Island
- Growing freight task with intensive agriculture
- Growing demand for cycling
- Dairy farms getting larger with oversized equipment on roads
- Sealing of gravel roads

*The VicRoads Country Roads engagement was based on Regional Development Victoria’s five Victorian Regions and nine Regional Partnerships.*
What you told us
region by region
Barwon South West

Aireys Inlet, Anglesea, Apollo Bay, Camperdown, Colac, Geelong, Hamilton, Lorne, Port Campbell, Port Fairy, Portland, Torquay and Warrnambool.

“We have school buses, we have tourists, we have parents taking their children to and from school and you combine it with logging trucks, it’s just a bad combination.”
– Leonie - Portland community forum

“Better signage is required for major tourist destinations. Too many times have there been incidences and near misses from travellers missing the turn for Bells Beach and still attempting to make the turn in a 100km/hr zone... Signs need to be well in advance of the turn.”
– comment on the Barwon online forum

“Reduce traffic on Great Ocean Rd by improving and sealing inland roads to Lorne and Wye River. Add slow turn out lanes and run advertising campaigns on their use.”
– Allen

“We recently returned from a caravanning holiday in South Australia and NSW ... we knew when we were back in Victoria because the first thing we encountered was one of those ‘Rough Surface’ signs that Victoria are famous for. We also found that there are many roads in Victoria where it is really dangerous to tow a caravan.”
– Trevor Brehaut

“Identify the worst roads in Victoria based on the state of the roads themselves and fix them.”
– comment on the Barwon online forum

“I am a 30-year resident of the Aire Valley... I/we are sick to death of the annual state of the roads between here and Colac, especially the eternally potholed and surface broken Ridge Rd, Lavers Hill to Beech Forest.”
– Pete Gee

“The Midland has twice the traffic between Bannockburn and Geelong as between Geelong and Colac – yet is often seen as the poor cousin to the Princes Highway West.”
– comment from a Bannockburn resident at the Ballarat forum

“When roads get upgraded, VicRoads need to also create paths along major arterials so people don’t have to drive everywhere and riders don’t have to mix with traffic.”
– Tony G

What you told us
region by region
Barwon South West
What we’re doing now

Major upgrades
1. $363m Princes Highway duplication, Waurn Ponds to Colac*
2. $109m Drysdale Bypass
3. $100m Great Ocean Road upgrade with road resurfacing, bridge strengthening and other targeted improvements*
4. $40m improvement works from Colac to South Australian border, safety upgrade, intersection improvements, more overtaking opportunities*
5. $40m upgrade of narrow roads*
6. $40m to strengthen and resurface four key roads servicing the Port of Portland (Green Triangle upgrade)*
7. $10m Forrest-Apollo Bay Road upgrade*
8. $10m Hamilton Highway upgrade*
9. $1.3m for an independent taskforce to boost tourism and improve coordination

$95m road maintenance and repair, including:
10. Barwon Heads Road
11. Otway Lighthouse Road
12. Fyans Street, Geelong
13. Geelong-Portarlington Road
14. Terang-Mortlake Road
15. Carlisle-Colac Road
16. Geelong-Ballan Road
17. Skipton Road
18. Rokewood-Skipton Road

Safety upgrades
19. $53m for safety improvements to Great Ocean Road to reduce the risk of landslides and make the road more resilient
20. $46m for safety improvements to 41 kilometres of Geelong-Bacchus Marsh Road, including central line safety barriers, overtaking lanes and new roundabouts
21. $17m Princes Highway, Laverton North to Waurn Ponds, safety barriers
22. $10m Hamilton Highway, key freight route to western Victoria
23. $12m Anglesea Road/Great Ocean Road, Bellbrae to Anglesea, new roundabouts, centre-line widening and intersection improvements
24. $4m Cape Otway, shoulder and barrier
25. $4m Barwon Heads, roundabout
26. $3m Geelong CBD, cycling and pedestrian upgrades
27. $3m Fyansford-Gheringhap Road, shoulder and barrier
28. $2m Lower Duneed Road shoulder, drainage and barrier
29. Deans Marsh-Lorne Road, improvements for motorcyclists
30. West Geelong and Warrnambool, improvements for pedestrians

$18m bridge strengthening and replacement
31. Great Ocean Road, Wye River
32. Cowies Creek and rail spur, North Geelong (four bridges)
33. Wye River
34. Moggs Creek

Planning underway
35. Princes Highway west, Colac to the South Australian border
36. Anglesea Road, Princes Highway west to Coombes Road duplication
37. Great South Coast High Productivity Freight Vehicle Planning
38. Barwon Heads Road, duplication
39. Grubb Road, Ocean Grove
40. Geelong Ring Road extension (Bellarine Link)

*Joint Federal and State funding
What you told us region by region

Grampians

Ararat, Avoca, Bacchus Marsh, Ballarat, Beaufort, Daylesford, Edenhope, Great Western, Hopetoun, Horsham, Kaniva, Nhill, St Arnaud, Stawell and Warracknabeal.

“One thing that’s come up is the Silo Art Trail and the number of tourists that we have coming up this way who aren’t familiar with the roads. We have farmers with large machinery that are on roads and people are just not expecting those things.”
– Debra Nelson, Mayor of Hindmarsh Shire Council

“The Midland Highway has a lot of commuter traffic so many school zones – it needs to become a regional ring road that links Geelong, Ballarat, Bendigo, Shepparton, Benalla and Mansfield.”
– Comment at Ballarat stakeholder forum

“I have travelled the Western Highway many times over my life and have always just loved the roadside vegetation...Roadsides have changed, which is sad for me, but we’re working with VicRoads to make sure that there’ll be trees and vegetation that is grown somewhere else.”
– Helen Lewers, environmental advocate at the Ararat community forum

“As a routine driver between Adelaide and Melbourne.... the state of the road surface, markings and alignment is seriously substandard.... the lack of bypasses is at the top of the list...”
– David Singe – online forum

“You get grain centres popping up on road networks that never used to be there and tourism’s obviously picked up a fair bit and now we have things like Silo Art Trails and Sea Lake becoming of international interest, which changes the dynamic of the whole area.”
– Kevin Erwin, Chair of the Wimmera Southern Mallee Transport Group.

“The proposed CVLX Saleyards development has only one entry point off Sunraysia Highway. There must be safe access for heavy vehicles into/out of the saleyards.”
– Marla Stone, Miner’s Rest – online forum

“VicRoads needs to focus on long lasting results rather than temporary repairs.”
– Wimmera Mallee stakeholder comment

“Speed limits are a key concern and there are mixed views as to how to respond. Some suggest reducing speed limits to increase road users’ and wildlife safety. Others suggest raising speed limits to increase traffic efficiency.”
– Wimmera Mallee stakeholder feedback
What we’re doing now

Major upgrades
1. $670m Western Highway duplication
2. $20m Western Highway
3. Western Highway, Kaniva to the South Australian border
4. $15m upgrade Halletts Way interchange, Bacchus Marsh*

$58m road maintenance and repair
5. Bacchus Marsh-Gisborne Road
6. Glenelg Highway
7. Pyrenees Highway
8. Sunraysia Highway
9. Wimmera Highway
10. Geelong-Bacchus Marsh Road
11. Daylesford-Malmsbury Road
12. Ballan-Daylesford Road
13. Bungaree Creswick Road
14. Borung Highway
15. Ballarat-Carnham Road
16. Western Highway/Freeway
17. Calder Highway

Safety upgrades
18. Western Freeway, M80 Ring Road to Ballarat, barriers both sides
19. Pykes Creek curve, road realignment
20. $12m Midland Highway upgrade from Ballarat to Creswick with flexible safety barriers, three new roundabouts at Millers Rd, Cummins Rd and Kennedys Rd, as well as new overtaking lanes and wider road shoulders.
21. $46m for safety improvements to 41 kilometres of Geelong-Bacchus Marsh Road, including centre-line safety barriers, overtaking lanes and new roundabouts
22. Ballarat CBD, cycling improvements
23. Western Freeway/Ballarat-Maryborough Road, intersection upgrade
24. Gisborne Road/Western Freeway, intersection upgrade
25. Midland Highway, Ballarat to Creswick
26. Daylesford-Trentham Road, Lancefield to Woodend, improvements for motorcyclists
27. Mt Macedon-Hanging Rock Road, Mt Macedon Road to Lancefield-Woodend Road, improvements for motorcyclists
28. Mt Macedon Road, Macedon-Woodend Road to Mt Macedon-Hanging Rock Road, improvements for motorcyclists

Bridge strengthening
29. Maryborough-St Arnaud Road
30. Western Freeway, Pykes Creek
31. Mortlake-Ararat Road

Planning underway
32. Midland Highway, Howitt Street to Coronet Street, Ballarat
33. Midland Highway, Castlemaine to Harcourt capacity improvements
34. Midland Highway, duplication of the roundabout at Docwra St intersection
35. Midland Highway/Hertford Street intersection upgrade
36. Western Highway/Ararat - Stawell
37. Ararat Bypass*
38. Beaufort Bypass*

*Joint Federal and State funding
All Victorians deserve rural roads that they can rely on. The poor road condition that users experience should be addressed.

– comment on Morwell forum

“The road from Stratford to Maffra was built probably 100 years ago, it’s just breaking up all the time.”

– George Haywood, Briagolong

“We would like speed limits reduced in Omeo, improved overtaking opportunities, better access for pulling off on the side of roads, and the drains must be cleaned more regularly.”

– Cate Spencer, Omeo community forum

“We get 10 million visitors a year predominantly by car or bus and so the road network is absolutely crucial... Something as simple as the signage and identifying key destinations, not just the next town, would allow visitors that aren’t familiar with the region to make a more informed journey and feel comfortable about where they’re heading.”

– Terry Robinson, Chief Executive Officer Destination Gippsland

“I’d love to see overtaking lanes on Maffra-Sale Road! The amount of idiots who can’t drive at the speed limit is infuriating!”

– Alannah Wallace, Facebook

“You can drop speed limits, you can fix roads, it won’t change a thing. The true cause of road accidents is dangerous drivers. We will only see improvements when people start to take care when driving and stop making excuses.”

– Josh Stuchbery – Facebook

“I’ve been in the industry for 40 years and I know what we’re on about, we’re on about the road conditions. The road conditions are poor. We’ve got a white line separates B-doubles, the roads aren’t wide enough.”

– Rick Ingram, B-double driver, Bairnsdale

“If we can close the distance between tourism attractions in Gippsland, getting people from Phillip Island Nature Park to Mt Baw Baw and the Gippsland Lakes, people won’t look at Gippsland as a one-day destination.”

– Mary Aldred, CEO of the Committee for Gippsland

“The coast road between Cape Patterson and Inverloch is a major tourist route and cycling route too.... This desperately needs a shoulder and/or bike lane.”

– D.t. poynton - online comment

“What’s most important for Gippsland’s roads is connectivity to support tourism, which is our economic future. So the network linkages that enable that to happen is going to be really critical to connect the Bass Coast area, down through South Gippsland and then out into the East.”

– comment at Morwell forum

Milk trucks, quarry trucks, the amount of heavy traffic has doubled. The roads don’t improve, they get worse.”

– John Benson - Stratford community forum

What you told us region by region
Gippsland

What we’re doing now

Major upgrades
1 $260m Princes Highway East duplication, Traralgon East, Nambrok and Fulham
2 $51.5m safety upgrades between Sale and Bairnsdale
3 $50m South Gippsland Highway upgrade, Koonwarra
4 $50m on Princes Highway, Bairnsdale to New South Wales border
5 $10.6m on two overtaking lanes at Thurga and Bellbird on Princes Highway
6 $10m on Monaro Highway
7 $10m on Hyland Highway
8 $7m Phillip Island Road, roundabout

$46m road maintenance and repair, including:
9 Tyers-Thompson Valley Road
10 Korumburra-Wonthaggi Road
11 Princes Highway East
12 Stratford-Maffra Road
13 Meeniyan-Promontory Road
14 Great Alpine Road
15 Bruthen-Nowa Nowa Road
16 Hyland Highway, Traralgon

Safety upgrades
17 Paynesville Road, Bairnsdale to Paynesville, centre-line widening and barriers
18 Princes Highway East, Sale to Bairnsdale, centre-line barriers
19 Maffra-Sale Road, Sale to Maffra, centre-line widening
20 Princes Highway East, Longwarry to Traralgon, barriers both sides
21 Princes Highway East, Traralgon to Sale
22 South Gippsland Highway, Leongatha to Meeniyan, centre-line barriers
23 Bass Highway, Lang Lang to San Remo
24 Shared bike path between Morwell and Traralgon

Freight upgrades
25 Princes Highway East, Lloyd Street off-ramp
26 Princes Highway East/Bank Street, traffic signals
27 Princes Highway East, roundabout improvement
28 Princes Highway East, truck rest area signage
29 Bass Highway/Korumburra-Wonthaggi Road, intersection signals
30 Moe West, new truck stop and freeway ramp upgrades
31 Bass Highway/Korumburra-Wonthaggi Road, traffic lights*
32 Great Alpine Road, Licola to Heyfield, improvements for motorcycle riders
33 Omeo Highway, Bogong High Plains Road to Anglers Rest, improvements for motorcyclists

Bridge strengthening and replacement
34 $8.6m on Tyers Road, Latrobe River bridge replacement
35 Princes Highway East, Little Moe River, Darnum
36 Princes Highway East, Morwell River floodplain, Hernes Oak
37 Princes Highway East, Loy Yang-Morwell Road, Morwell

Planning underway
38 $10m upgrade of the Great Alpine Road from Bruthen to Cobungra is being planned with communities and will include safety barriers, road widening and six slow-vehicle pullover areas.*
39 Princes Highway East - Traralgon Bypass
40 Warragul and Drouin network improvements
41 Bass Highway - Anderson to Leongatha (corridor planning)
42 Princes Highway east - Sale alternative truck route
43 Princes Highway East network improvements (Bairnsdale)
44 South Gippsland Highway, Korumburra

*Joint Federal and State funding
*Joint Federal and State funding, in conjunction with Bass Coast Shire Council

Connecting our communities / 11
What you told us region by region

Hume - Goulburn and Ovens Murray

Benalla, Beechworth, Bright, Corryong, Eildon, Euroa, Seymour, Shepparton, Mansfield, Wangaratta, Wodonga and Yarrawonga.

“Help people find their way! Get the interface working between VicRoads/Council/Parks.”
- Shepparton stakeholder forum

“Recognise the potential to work with councils after weather events to fix up the roads because we can end up with a patchwork quilt.”
- Wodonga stakeholder forum

“There is growing number of people with caravans and people movers that need to be better catered for – we had a 20% increase this Easter.”
- Mansfield stakeholder meeting

“It’s far quicker to get from Shepparton to Ballarat by going to Melbourne and out again. The Midland Highway route from Shepparton to Ballarat is not good.”
- Ballarat stakeholder meeting

“It’s really important to look at how bikes can be accommodated because if you come up here as a visitor and you want to cycle outside of town, you also want to come into town and visit the cafes and enjoy all the other wine and food experiences, but you want to do it on your bike and you want to do it safely.”
- Michelle Armstrong, Bright stakeholder forum

“There have been 13 landslips on Bogong High Plains Road... a lot more seepage and subsidence than the Great Ocean Road.”
- Alpine Shire Council

“Northern Highway, Pyalong is receiving an ever increasing amount of traffic, even more so during holiday periods. Many drivers are frustrated with the lack of ability to pass slow moving vehicles and are endangering themselves and others... More passing lanes...”
- Charleen – online forum

“I think the roads here are more than just a conduit to get you from A to B... they are really part of our tourism assets.”
- Michelle Armstrong, Bright stakeholder forum

“I think the roads here are more than just a conduit to get you from A to B. The roads here are really part of our tourism assets that link you, with most people coming up here want to experience the natural assets that we have...”
- Michelle Armstrong - Wangaratta resident and cyclist enthusiast

Melbourne is Victoria’s capital – not just inner Melbourne – country people need access to Melbourne too.”
- Bruce Robertson, Wangaratta community session
What we’re doing now

**Major upgrades**

1. $18m Great Alpine Road
2. $10m Shepparton Bypass, planning and pre-construction and intersection upgrades to the Ford Road, Wanganui Road and Goulburn Valley Highway
3. $20m Shepparton alternative route roundabouts

**$42m road maintenance and repair**

4. Hume Freeway, Wallan and Euroa
5. $8m Kiewa Valley Highway improvements from Wodonga to Mt Beauty* plus repairs to Kiewa East Road, Huon and Tangambalanga
6. Goulburn Valley Highway, Yea
7. Melba Highway, Castella
8. Glenrowan-Myrtleford Road, Whorouly
9. Whittlesea-Yea Road, Kinglake West and Flowerdale
10. Broadford - Flowerdale Road, Strath Creek
11. Katamite-Yarrawonga Road, Yarrawonga
12. Murray Valley Highway, Kotupna, Ebden and Cobram East
13. Murchison - Violet Town Road, Miepoli
14. Mount Buller Road, Mansfield
15. Wangaratta-Whitfield Road, Moyhu
16. Wangaratta Road, Bowser and Wangaratta, Wahgunyah-Wangaratta Road
17. Tatura-Undera Road, Gillieston and Undera
18. Benalia-Tocumwal Road, Katamite
19. Benalia-Yarrawonga Road, Benalla
20. Hume Link Highway, Wodonga
21. Midland Highway, Stewarton and Benalia
22. Goulburn Valley Highway, Cobram, Yarrowe and Shepparton

**Safety upgrades**

23. Midland Highway, Shepparton to Stanhope
24. Hume Freeway, M80 Ring Road to Albury/Wodonga
25. Goulburn Valley Highway, Yea to Cathkin
26. Goulburn Valley Highway, Molesworth to Cathkin, centre-line safety barriers
27. Beechworth-Wodonga Road, Beechworth to Yackandandah
28. Hume Freeway rest areas, Bentons Hill, Reef Hills and Balmattum
29. Shelley-Walwa Road, repair
30. Mansfield-Whitfield Road, Mansfield to Whitfield, improvements for motorcyclists

**Bridge strengthening**

31. Dookie-Nalinga Road

**Planning underway**

32. Northern Highway Upgrade Stage 1
33. A preferred project route for the $4 million Rutherglen alternative truck route is now being identified with construction expected to start in late 2018.*

*Joint Federal and State funding
What you told us region by region

Loddon Mallee


“Our rail is far from reliable here and we have no air service currently, so the road to Melbourne means a lot to everybody in town. With driverless cars, we’ll need to make sure that our roads keep up with the technology so we can get to destinations sooner and safer.”

- Matthew, local business director in Swan Hill

“It’d be great to get a ring road around Bendigo to reduce congestion and get trucks out of Bendigo, which would be better and safer all round.”

- Brendan Maher, from Maher’s Transport in Bendigo

“It’s really important in our community just to have roads that help lift the presentation of our many towns, particularly from a tourism point of view, as well as the local amenity. That really makes people feel like they’re thought about and cared for.”

- Darren Fuzzard, CEO of Mt Alexander Shire

“97% of people come to our region by road, so our roads are incredibly important for tourism and economic growth. I hadn’t really thought about safety barriers and flexible white posts and lots of things that VicRoads have introduced to improve safety. They haven’t communicated very well, so people don’t necessarily know what those rope barriers are for.”

- Win Scott, Chair of Mallee Regional Partnership

“If a pothole of bump occurs on the line of a road where cyclists normally ride, which is usually within a metre of the road edge, or in a bike lane, then it is not safe and it needs to be fixed and it doesn’t matter whether it fits within your maintenance standards or not.”

- Margaret Douglas, Bike Safe Macedon Ranges

“Our group is especially pleased … there will be a greater emphasis on pavement rehabilitation rather than just patching of pot-holes.”

- Cr Kevin Erwin, Chair of the Wimmera Southern Mallee Regional Transport Group

“There’s an issue with the crossroad in Manangatang and also the Sea Lake-Robinvale Road. For many years we’ve been trying to get some upgrading done. The road is very dangerous, especially with the amount of B-double trucks that are now using the road.”

- Greg Plant, Manangatang Victorian Farmers’ Federation

“The main issues that we’ve had in our area regard the typical Wimmera Wave, the way the road changes with the moisture and creates a real undulating surface…it makes it hard travelling with trucks and cars along the road - you tend to bounce all over the shop. So it’s a pretty tough fix, but something for the VicRoads guys to think about.”

- Luke Batters, resident of Guroke in St Arnaud district

“As the border to the desert we have a lot of opportunity for tourism and we just need to make it easier for people to travel here and enjoy it. So more rest stops with toilets and facilities to make it easy.”

- Ken Wakefield - Mildura stakeholder forum
What we’re doing now

Major upgrades
1 $280m Echuca-Moama Bridge Project
2 $86m Ravenswood Interchange Project
3 $42m Calder Highway, M80 Ring Road to Bendigo
4 $23m Regional Roads upgrade
5 Calder Highway intersection upgrades, overtaking and centre-line widening trial
6 Murray Valley Highway intersection upgrades
7 Strathfieldsaye Road/Tanner Lane traffic signals
8 Jock Comini truck rest area
9 Northern Hwy, Rochester to Echuca, overtaking lanes
10 Lockwood Crossing roundabout
11 Seymour-Tooborac roundabout
12 Napier Street, Bendigo duplication works

$57m road maintenance and repair, including:
13 Murray Valley Highway, Echuca and Kerang
14 Sunraysia Highway, Birchip
15 Echuca-Mooroopna Road, Wyuna
16 Heathcote- Kyneton Road, Edgcombe and Redesdale
17 Prairie-Rochester Road, Ballendella
18 Kilmore-Lancefield Road, Lancemore Hill
19 Lancaster-Moroopna Road, Lancaster

Safety upgrades
20 Melbourne-Lancefield Road, overtaking lanes, flexible safety barriers, widening and intersection upgrades
21 Pyrenees Highway
22 Murray Valley Highway/Warren Street, roundabout
23 Mildura CBD, pedestrian safety and roundabout improvements
24 Wimmera Highway, intersection improvements
25 Heathcote-Kyneton Road/Ennis Road, intersection improvements
26 Sunraysia Highway, intersection improvements
27 Lancefield-Woodend Road, Lancefield to Woodend, improvements for motorcyclists

28 Mt Macedon-Hanging Rock Road, Mt Macedon Road to Lancefield-Woodend Road, improvements for motorcyclists
29 Mt Macedon Road, Macedon-Woodend Road to Mt Macedon-Hanging Rock Road, improvements for motorcyclists
30 Delivery of $6.6m of Australian Blackspot funding in Greater Bendigo, Swan Hill, Campaspe, Mitchell and Macedon Ranges

Bridge strengthening
31 Murray Valley Highway, Patho
32 Kilmore Wallan Bypass - Stage 1
33 Hume Freeway/Wallan Whittlesea Rd
34 Station/Saunders Road intersection upgrade
35 Calder Park Drive, Calder Freeway
36 Marong Road Calder Highway Improvements
37 Barry Street/Main Road intersection upgrade, Bendigo

Connecting our communities / 15
Rebuilding country roads

The lives and livelihoods of people in country Victoria have changed considerably since the rural road network was first laid down 70 years ago.

We’re travelling longer distances to work in a growing services economy, where regional tourism employs nearly as many people as agriculture – one in six.

The numbers of people prepared to commute long distances to enjoy the lifestyle benefits of regional Victoria is growing by the day, with the 2016 census showing a record 76,210 Melburnians moved to regional Victoria in the last five years, making it one of the nation’s fastest growing regions.

The lure of rural lifestyles and more affordable housing in towns with good road and rail links to Melbourne is seeing significant population growth in major regional towns in an arc around Melbourne. Ballarat, Bendigo, Latrobe Valley and Wodonga are all planning for future populations of 200,000 or more and Geelong is already there.

The changing face of farming and the scale of agriculture is staggering. Trucks have grown in size and number, carrying goods for international markets on roads that were never designed to carry them – like the Port of Portland, which now has thousands of B-doubles a day carrying exports to the busiest timber port in the world.

Shipping containers of Victorian hay are now feeding Japan’s cows to quadruple milk production, while the almond produce from Mildura is eaten in one festive day of the year in India. Vegetables are now being grown under glasshouses in Gippsland and the Loddon Mallee that are 40 hectares in size.

The increase in visitation to regional Victoria is also impressive. Seeing tourists at Lake Tyrell taking pre-wedding Instagram shots, and recreational vehicles parked outside the world’s tallest canvasses on the Silo Art Trail helped us appreciate the potential to support the growing international and domestic tourism market.

This is all taking place on top of an aging road base and at a pace that will see the population outside Melbourne double to two million people within 20 years.

Significant investment is underway to support regional growth including major highway duplications, the Murray Basin Rail project and passenger rail investments and safety treatments that will make it almost impossible to run off the road or hit another car head on across all major interstate highways. But more can and will be done.

A major rebuild of the regional road network is underway.

The important groundwork to rebuild the country transport network for a new era of regional prosperity is underway.

The condition and maintenance of country roads was raised by many people throughout our engagement. Participants shared a need for VicRoads to “go beyond the reactive approach and ‘band-aid’ solutions, such as patching or reducing speeds, to fix and maintain the country roads”. The quality of road repairs was also raised and needs to be addressed.

The Victorian Budget 2017/18 allocates $556 million to double road maintenance investment, upgrade more bridges and construct new bypasses.

There is also $49 million for upgrades to 23 major country roads including the Calder, Bass, Sunraysia and Princes Highways, and $40 million for upgrades to 17 bridges.

More than 850 kilometres of deteriorating roads in regional Victoria will benefit from a $260 million maintenance boost for repair and resurfacing this year alone.

Significant future investment is also planned with $25 million to develop business cases for regional and rural projects.

However, it’s not only more investment that’s needed. We need to better respond to what is happening in regional communities and industries and align our efforts.
Some of the consistent feedback we’ve heard is around four key themes:

**Road safety**
How do we save lives and reduce trauma?

**Freight**
How can we make the network fit for purpose?

**Enhancing regional Victoria**
as a tourist destination, and
a great place to live and work
and do business.

**Road maintenance**
How do we best invest in the 19,000 kilometres of country arterials to make the whole network be better, safer and more productive?
The deaths and trauma happening on country roads is unacceptable. People in country Victoria are four times more likely to die or be seriously injured on country roads than on metropolitan roads.

Some of the consistent feedback we’ve heard is the need for more safe overtaking opportunities on highways. Pedestrian and cycling safety was raised in many places, with the north-east and Loddon Campaspe regions having significant concerns with cyclists mixing with traffic on fast moving single lane highways.

Some communities have unique challenges in reducing the road trauma. Mildura and Shepparton have high numbers of overseas workers who have limited experience of our road conditions, while communities along the Great Ocean Road and other international tourist destinations want much greater effort to educate international drivers on keeping to the left side of the road.

There were also calls for more sealing of shoulders for safety, especially for cyclists and separation from trucks. A lot of people questioned why we’re investing in road safety barriers – and we need to do a much better job of explaining how these treatments work to save lives.

Because they really do. In Seymour, one of the first areas along the Hume Highway to have safety barriers installed, State Emergency Service workers have already seen road accident callouts more than halved from 45-50 a year to 20. “The same amount of accidents are still occurring but due to the barriers they’re not as severe and people are more likely to walk away from a crash these days,” explained Seymour SES unit controller Christine Walsh to the Seymour Telegraph.

What we are doing now
The Victorian Government’s road safety strategy, Towards Zero, involves the biggest effort ever to close the gap between the number of people dying on country roads compared with city roads. More than $800 million is being invested in making regional roads more forgiving, including extensive safety barriers and rumble strips that have been shown to save lives.

From every major regional road into Melbourne, 1,700 kilometres of wire-rope safety barriers are being installed to make it almost impossible to have a head-on crash or to run off the road and hit a tree. The most dangerous duplicated highways will have safety barriers on the left and right hand sides, while single lane highways will have more safe overtaking opportunities, centre-line barriers and other safety treatments such as wide centre-lines.

A lot of work is underway to make the roads more forgiving for motorcyclists along 11 high risk regional routes with new rub-rail protective barriers, sealing of bell-mouts (where gravel roads connect with the main road) and better surfaces on approaches to corners.

By more than doubling road maintenance across regional Victoria this year, many sections of rough road will be rebuilt, including the Tyers-Thomson Valley Road in Gippsland, the Murray Valley Highway in Kotupna and sections of the Sunraysia, Glenelg and Wimmera highways.
What we will do next

We’re about to trial an innovative approach from New Zealand that has dramatically reduced fatal collisions at merges between high speed rural highways and low volume country roads. Electronic speed zones that trigger slower speeds for merging traffic will be trialled and evaluated at three locations in north-eastern Victoria.

We’re also going to make it much more obvious to everyone on the roads how safe they are through the introduction of a star-based safety assessment. A Star Rating System will be developed to demonstrate the safety benefits of new treatments and encourage driving to local conditions.

We will also:

- Tackle the most dangerous intersections right across Victoria from removing sharp bends, to installing raised platforms to prevent speeding through traffic lights
- Make intersections safer for cyclists and pedestrians including new shared paths in Geelong, Geelong West, Warrnambool, Mildura, Ballarat, Morwell and Traralgon, and installing a new pedestrian crossing and the first traffic lights in Wonthaggi
- Lower the risk to riders with a $2 million enhanced maintenance program to identify and fix small potholes and bumps that could be a hazard and remove loose material on bends at some 200 recognised motorcycle touring routes
- Support communities who want to develop their own road safety initiatives starting in Omeo, Stratford, Mildura, Shepparton and tourist destinations where there are high numbers of international drivers
- Support local behaviour change campaigns to make people more aware of the potential dangers on their local roads
- Reduce rough roads as part of a major uplift in regional road maintenance
- Construct a new truck stop and rest area in Moe to tackle fatigue-related crashes on the Princes Highway.
Seeing is believing with safety barriers

Truck driver Brian Somers has never had a high opinion of wire rope safety barriers being installed on the sides and centre of highways.

“I’d always smile to myself and wonder why VicRoads didn’t spend the money on something else as there was no way one of those would stop a big truck like mine,” Brian said.

But he has changed his view, as have his colleagues at Tanner Ridge Transport.

Late one afternoon in May, travelling along the South Gippsland Highway towards Grantville in his empty Kenworth semi, Brian’s front right steer tyre blew. The 15-tonne truck slammed into the wire rope safety barrier in the centre of the road and slid along for 100 metres.

When the truck finally stopped, Brian, who has been driving trucks for 20 years, couldn’t believe it. The barrier had worked.

“The steel rope got caught on the bumper and did a fair bit of damage to the truck but if it hadn’t been there, I would have headed straight into oncoming traffic. And if I hadn’t hit someone head on, it would have gone straight through a fence and into houses on the other side of the road.

“I hate to think what could have happened. The barrier definitely saved lives that day.”
The growth in cycling is everywhere: from the “local lycra” in Halls Gap, the major cycling tourism around in the north-east and families wanting to ride safely around and between towns.

While historically the road network wasn’t designed for cyclists and trucks to share narrow sealed roads, many people raised the need to plan ahead for shared paths and safer shoulders in future road upgrades.

That’s exactly what’s happening with major bike and pedestrian path upgrades in regional cities. $15.5 million has been dedicated to improve the cycling and pedestrian connections in the CBDs of Geelong, Warrnambool and Ballarat. A 11 kilometre bike path is now under construction to connect Latrobe Valley’s two largest cities, Morwell and Traralgon with an 11 kilometre shared path.

VicRoads’ maintenance crews will be much more mindful of the impacts of road conditions for cyclists and motorbike riders, sweeping approaches to curves to make roads more bike-friendly. A $2.2 million enhanced maintenance package funded from the Motorcycle Levy will make the most popular motorcycle routes safer. The need to sweep stones from the side of roads along popular routes, like Black Forest Drive in Macedon and the Cape Paterson to Inverloch tourist drive, were raised.

Michelle Armstrong, a passionate cyclist who moved from Sydney to Wangaratta for the mountains and lifestyle opportunities in the north-east explained at our Bright session that roads were much more than a conduit to get from A to B. “The roads here really are part of our tourism assets,” she said.

As well as attracting serious mountain riders, Michelle said many people wanted to be able to ride in to towns and visit cafes and experience the region’s food and wine. “You want to do it on your bike and you want to do it safely, so it’s important that the towns have those reassurances to people - that yes, we’re bike friendly.”

“Road-cycling is an increasingly popular activity, but with that comes some of the safety issues and it’s absolutely paramount to keep the roads well maintained. It’s a tourism product as well as an economic product and a transport product.”
Reducing collisions at high speed intersections

In the first trial of its kind in Victoria, three high-speed intersections in north-east Victoria will have electronic speed signs installed.

For every 100 km stretch of high speed, high volume road in Victoria, 17 people are killed or seriously injured every year. One of the danger points is where high speed rural highways intersect with narrow and low volume roads that are also high speed.

In the first trial of its kind in Victoria, three high-speed intersections in north-east Victoria will have electronic speed signs installed to raise awareness of approaching traffic on side-roads.

By triggering a slower speed on the highway only when an oncoming vehicle from the side road is approaching, safer merges should reduce the risk of fatal collisions. A long-term study of the New Zealand system showed an 89% reduction in fatal and serious injuries – a result we aim to replicate here.

Under the pilot, speeds will be electronically lowered on the Murray Valley and Goulburn Valley Highways in Warring, Barnawartha and Yalca when activated by a vehicle 300 metres away on the low volume side roads. The speed limit on the main highway will drop to 80km/h in 110km/h zones, and to 70km/h in a 100km/h zone.

The trial will be monitored and evaluated after three months with the intention of introducing to other locations if successful.
Freight access
How can we make the network fit for purpose?

Victoria is growing faster than any other state and it’s not confined to the boundaries of Melbourne.

Victoria’s road network was never designed for the uses it performs today. Most of Victoria’s rural road network was built more than 70 years ago – beyond the average lifespan of a road – out of low-cost local materials that is prone to wear from unplanned truck use.

Building a more resilient and reliable country road network is fundamental to Victoria’s future growth and prosperity. Whether it’s getting in to a critical port, terminal or road, there are a lot of first and last mile challenges in freight transport logistics that we learnt firsthand.

We spent time at the Dooen Intermodal Terminal, GrainCorp’s facilities in Warracknabeal, the Logic Centre in Wodonga, and toured the Port of Portland which is the world’s busiest forestry exporter. We also met with freight operators and drivers in every region, including at the East Gippsland Livestock Exchange, Shepparton, Korumburra, Ballarat and Bendigo.

A common theme we heard is the changing use of narrow roads, and the challenges of freight trucks, oversized farming machinery, tourists and cyclists all sharing the same roads.

The need for alternative routes and bypasses for freight was raised in many places, including Traralgon, Mildura, Bendigo and Shepparton. People understand the importance of good freight connections, but also want to improve the liveability and attractiveness of their towns.

The challenge of maintaining the condition of the aging country road network has grown over the last 20 years, with increases in the volume of traffic and the size of vehicles using roads, changing land use and growing communities.

One B-double truck has the same impacts on a road surface as 10,000 cars, so freight routes need to be strong enough to support the heavy-lifting of the state’s productivity.

Before 1980, the largest vehicle on our roads were single semi-trailers which could carry up to 40 tonnes. Today the most common truck on our roads is the B-double which has the capacity to legally carry 68.5. The introduction of heavier trucks has been the single greatest development to the freight industry and helps drive our healthy economy, but it has also accelerated the deterioration of our roads.

With freight volumes forecast to grow at a rate of 1.5% a year, Victoria is looking for new and more efficient ways to move goods to market, through projects like the Murray Basin Rail Project and bridge strengthening throughout the state.

A Grain Harvest Management Scheme is being trialled in Victoria in time for this year’s harvest, after farmers and grain operators raised the difficulty of accurately weighing grain loads during last year bumper harvest. A five percent loading concession will be allowed this harvest to boost productivity for an important part of the economy.

The Australian and Victorian Governments are investing in projects to connect the Port of Melbourne to major freight hubs and businesses. Rail’s ability to shift larger volumes of freight than trucks is being strongly supported with an $8.4 billion investment in the Inland Rail project connecting Brisbane and Melbourne.

What we will do next
• Work closely with Transport for Victoria on the development of a regional freight strategy and a regional roads strategy to investigate alternative freight routes and inter-modal opportunities
• Change the way we assess road projects by including the wider economic value of roads when planning road upgrades
• Introduce a rest area system so long-haul freight drivers can plan their rest stops ahead
• Assess the capacity limits on every highway from Melbourne to our state borders to prioritise upgrades in partnership with industry.
Regional freight route upgrades

1. Bass Highway/Korumburra-Wonthaggi Rd intersection signals
2. Shelley-Walwa Rd pavement sealing
3. Western Freeway/Ballarat-Maryborough Rd intersection upgrade
4. Hume Freeway rest areas - Bentons Hill, Reef Hills and Balmattum
5. Princes Highway East - Lloyd St off-ramp
6. Princes Highway East truck rest area signage
7. Princes Highway East roundabout improvement
8. Calder Highway wide centreline trial
9. Gisborne Rd/Western Freeway intersection upgrade
10. Princes Highway East/Bank St traffic signals
11. Barwon Heads roundabout
12. Fyansford-Gheringhap Rd shoulder and barrier
13. Lower Duneed Rd shoulder, drainage and barrier
14. Cape Otway shoulder and barrier
15. Wimmera Highway intersection improvements
16. Heathcote-Kyneton Rd/Ennis Rd intersection improvements
17. Sunraysia Highway intersection improvements
Another takeaway was the optimism around tourism and innovation. Instead of looking at roads or bridges in isolation, we are better understanding regional priorities to unlock jobs and local solutions. The opportunities to better connect all parts of Gippsland to the self-driving tourism market from Sydney to Melbourne was one important example.

Roads clearly underpin the tourism economy, with the Great Ocean Road Victoria's number one tourist attraction drawing seven million visitors a year. Phillip Island, the Great Alpine Road, central Victoria and the Grampians are among other significant iconic tourist routes with growing numbers of international and domestic tourists.

Every area of the state is going as hard as it can on attracting tourists – local and international, so basic issues about road signage and safety is fundamental. Whether it’s not enough signage for international drivers, or too many confusing signs, we’ll be taking a good look at signage right across the state.

We saw the enormous growth in tourism from the cycling economy in the north-east to the walking trails being developed through the Grampians. Our conversations with regional tourism authorities and Visit Victoria have uncovered so much potential to work together to support a growing tourism sector, which is on track to eclipse agriculture as a major employer.

What we are doing now
We’ve been speaking with regional tourism bodies and operators and Regional Partnerships to better understand the visitation economy.

The Victorian Budget 2017/18 includes significant tourism investments across the state including the development of a destination management plan for Gippsland, delivery of the next stage Riverfront Development in Swan Hill, cycling infrastructure in the Ovens Murray region and tourism infrastructure upgrades along the Great South Coast.

What we will do next
• Work closely with Transport for Victoria on improvements to the country road network, including better inter-regional links.
• Partner with Visit Victoria to develop tourism drives to attract international and domestic tourists to stay longer in our regions
• Map every region for its movement and place value, to better protect the heritage, environment and attractiveness of our regions, both as places to visit and live.
• Roll-out multilingual road signs on key routes for international tourists including the Great Ocean Road and Phillip Island as part of a statewide review of road signage.
• Reduce bottlenecks in towns during popular holiday periods and tourism events by changing green light flows on key tourist routes.
• Partner with the inaugural High Country Women's Cycling Festival to promote more women to enjoy the wonderland of downhill runs, cross country tracks and picturesque trails.
• Explore how we can better use technology to reach people who rely on GPS and smartphones for traffic information and way-finding.
The importance of protecting rural spaces and the environment that attract people to visit, move and live in regional Victoria was strongly voiced during the Country Roads engagement.

We heard from many passionate and knowledgeable community members who are dedicated to protecting the local environment along roadsides. People like Helen Lewers, who has been an active campaigner on the Western Highway project, and helped ensure we protected wildlife with overhead crossings, and better uses than firewood for the loss of trees. “There’s been many good things that have come out of this advocacy, including a reduction in tree loss numbers that was very important to us,” she said during the Country Roads community forum in Ararat. “The roadsides have changed, which is sad for me, but we’re working to make sure that there’ll be trees and vegetation that is grown somewhere else.”

More than a quarter of Victoria’s biodiversity is considered threatened with extinction, and roadsides are home to up to 30% of the remaining native vegetation in some landscapes. Given the scale of projects delivered by VicRoads, and the mass of land that adjoins our 19,000 kilometres of arterial roads in the country areas, we have a unique opportunity - and responsibility - to be better environmental stewards. This is a challenge that we intend to run towards.

What we are doing now
VicRoads is moving beyond environmental compliance to environmental leadership, by working closely with people like Judy Crocker, a LandCare facilitator who has volunteered her time extensively to help VicRoads technical staff on the Ravenswood project to save as much roadside vegetation as possible.

A state-wide community reference group has been formed and a training program will build staff awareness and appreciation of roadside biodiversity values.

What we will do next
Each year in Victoria almost 14 million tyres reach their end of life. If they are not reused, they are dumped or stockpiled. Across country Victoria over the next five years, our goal is to reuse one million tyres in road works annually and invest $1 million towards research to identify new opportunities to use recycled products.

We’ll also work with communities to plant 100,000 site-indigenous trees along our road reserves – which add up to Victoria’s longest linear public land reserves and in some regions, are the only remnants left of indigenous vegetation. Through the partnerships with our statewide community environment reference groups, we will achieve better outcomes for the environment and enhance our planning practices to minimise our impact when we deliver road projects.

Community members will have a greater voice in decisions affecting 80,000 hectares of roadside reserves in Victoria.
The state of our roads
We have heard a lot about the state of regional roads and people have told us plainly: fix the roads that need fixing because they are our lifelines; make it safer and easier for us to move around without hurting ourselves or damaging our goods; and give us better connections to employment, services and each other.

Dangerous intersections, narrow roads, poor drainage, slow and ineffective repairs, impacts on the maintenance costs of buses and trucks and the need for more overtaking lanes, cycling and pedestrian paths were among key concerns raised.

Whether there’s not enough signage for international drivers, or too many confusing signs, we also need to take a good look at signage right across the state.

Fundamentally, people told us they want honesty about the state of their roads and what can be done to fix them, in realistic timelines.

We haven’t done enough in the past to communicate why, how and what we are doing on Victorians’ behalf to improve the roads that people and industries rely on.

The natural life of a road with regular maintenance is around 60 years. With 19,000 kilometres of major rural roads and more than 4,000 bridges across the country – most of it built after World War Two – there are significant parts of the network in need of renewal.

A decade-long drought in Victoria stretched the longevity of many roads, but when we experienced once-in-100 year rainfall in the 2016 winter and spring, some roads gave way, including sections of the Great Ocean Road. Areas of high rainfall and high freight volumes were hard hit.

What we are doing
The Victorian Budget 2017/18 allocates $556 million to double road maintenance investment, upgrade more bridges and construct new bypasses.

An unprecedented investment of $800 million is also underway to make regional roads safer, while our maintenance program this year has a much stronger focus on pavement rehabilitation.

There is also $49 million for upgrades to 23 major country roads including the Calder, Bass, Sunraysia and Princes Highways, and $40 million for upgrades to 17 bridges.

Significant future investment is also planned with $25 million to develop business cases for 43 regional and rural road projects.

The Victorian Government also announced a special package of support for the south-west of the state to rebuild damaged roads and repair the Great Ocean Road.

What will we do next
The development of the first State of the Road Network – to be updated yearly – will allow everyone to see where the needs and opportunities are greatest, to support better decision-making. The report will give communities a clear line of sight to decisions being made on their behalf.

Over the next year we will:

• Produce a State of the Road Network report to better inform governments at all levels about road conditions and be transparent with communities about what can be done in realistic timelines.

• Involve more communities on panels to influence the everyday operational decisions of VicRoads, from road maintenance priorities to alternative approaches to vegetation management.

• Develop a new suite of road performance indicators, to be published on the VicRoads website, that reflect what community and industry value about their roads.

• Improve the quality of road construction in the contracting industry

• Meet regularly with Regional Cities Victoria, Regional Assemblies and other council and industry stakeholders to align our work with regional priorities

• Finalise a new pavement management approach that focuses on making the road network fit for future purposes that is informed by regional priorities.
Having more of a say on your roads

Every day of the week, VicRoads has assessors out on the roads, measuring the performance and safety of roads, from the depth of pot-holes to the impacts of heavy vehicles, to determine the best interventions to keep the network running well.

While legislative requirements mandate some roadwork above others, the importance of involving communities and industries in the operational decisions that affect their lives and livelihoods demands a fresh approach.

A recent pilot at our Geelong customer service centre highlighted that while our methodology is rigorous, too often we make assumptions about what our communities value most in the road maintenance space.

A survey of 400 customers and interviews with 90 people highlighted gaps between people’s expectations of road maintenance and our own maintenance priorities.

People care deeply about the maintenance of their roads, and they want the opportunity to influence our work that we traditionally saw as ‘operational’.

Similarly in East Gippsland, when communities were given insights into the costs of various road interventions to improve overtaking opportunities on the Princes Highway, a preference for more turn-outs and road shoulders was supported rather than fewer and more costly duplications.

VicRoads will continue to engage with communities, industries and councils about their road maintenance priorities to align our efforts.
Next Steps

As part of Transport for Victoria, we will be sharing the Country Roads feedback to help develop a long-term integrated regional transport strategy and action plan.

So, where to from here? We'll be reporting back to everyone who has engaged with us in recent months about what we've heard, and how it is making a difference to the way we plan, build and operate the network in the regions.

The first State of the Roads report will be produced in 2018, focusing on the condition of roads and bridges. It will be expanded in future years to include roadside vegetation, drainage, bike paths, electrical and other important roadside infrastructure.

As part of Transport for Victoria, we will be sharing the Country Roads feedback to help develop a long-term integrated regional transport strategy and action plan.

For now, our focus is firmly on what we can do to better manage the 19,000 kilometres of arterial country roads.

Our efforts will be re-doubled to reduce rural road trauma, and we’re taking up your suggestions for more locally relevant road safety approaches.

We will be much more sensitive to the environmental impacts of our projects, and have set a bold target to double the amount of tyre rubber we recycle in roads for a start.

We’ve heard consistently the need to better explain our work and involve communities and industries in operational decisions that affect you.

This is the first of many constructive conversations to come.
Connecting our communities