‘Data shows we have the worst roads in the state and the majority of calls to my office are about the condition of our roads,’ Ms Britnell said.

MY OBSERVATIONS

Our area is substandard to all other regions. I drive extensively throughout Australia.

The danger level is high due to pot holes, subsidence and breakaways at road shoulders. At night these are obscured by oncoming headlights. Driver concentration required at any time is enormous.

Travel is slow due to signage restricting speeds to 80ks, a ploy to evade liability for accidents. This adds to driver fatigue by increasing time on the roads.

THE INQUIRY WILL INVESTIGATE THE EFFECTIVENESS OF:

Current management arrangements.

Management arrangements are convoluted, removed from application areas and soak up funding destined for roads in layers of remote communications and logistics.

Vicroads’ road administration and application should be passed to local councils. Redundant Vicroads’ staff would be given the option of a ‘tree change’ to work in one of the rural cities. Employment opportunities for country people would increase.

Funding models. Funds from Federal and State should be combined.

A formula re kilometres, usage, terrain and road categories A B C should be applied.

Funds would then be forwarded to and administered by each council.

Many councils already have the required roadmaking machinery equipment.

Road repair priorities. Local councils are best placed to assess trouble spots, terrain and needs.

Community involvement. Local councils would interact in an accessible way with the community. They would ensure the most logistically efficient way of deploying equipment.

DECENTRALISATION! Government policy is to decentralise. Melbourne is crowded. All country towns are suffering from population drain. Affordable housing is available.

Many of our young people have the skills and desire to work on road construction. They would bring local awareness to the work. Rural teenagers drive tractors, do farm work and have intergenerational understanding of terrain.

As with the medical profession, civil engineering degree students should be required to spend placement in rural shires as part of their study. Some may stay or return.