Dear whoever it may concern

I have been asked by the staff at Roma Britnalls office to write to you my concerns about our appalling road conditions in the Glenelg and Moyne Shires. I am a teacher and small cattle farmer and have lived on our farm for approx 30 years. In that time I have noticed a vast increase in trucks and heavy vehicle usage of our roads. Unfortunately only band aid type repairs have attempted to keep our roads opened but with dangerous consequences. Not only have we, my wife and I had to drive on the other side of the white lines repeatedly to avoid large deep pot holes that have formed on a regular basis but falling trees and branches are a common hazard to avoid after every storm, rain and windy weather. 100's of kangaroos, koalas, echidnas, birds and the occasional deer have been hit by traffic each year. It almost seems that we are encouraging our wild life to live beside our busiest roads by giving them the trees and shrubs to hide in. Then add to this the millions of dollars spent from our roads budgets on trimming and pruning trees along our roads, creating a false habitat that may give our wild life a false sense of security to live by. The greenies love to think that by creating corridors from forest to forest is a great idea, if only they could drive out of the cities to see the real damage to wild life. And in two years time the same trimming and pruning is repeated all over again. I'm sure that all road users will support me in saying that pot holes, safe road surfaces etc should come before gardening! Not that the present system is achieving anything positive.

I also live beside a road that has had no maintenance for 15 years or more. It is a public road that has been neglected by my shire and turned into a track without any consultation or feedback. It is disgraceful and dangerous especially when fire trucks cannot use it any more. I have contacted my local shire in Heywood, to no avail. My local CFA branch writes annually to the shire to have the road cleared and graded but this hasn't happened yet. Maybe I need to wait more than 15 years?

The Bessie-belle road is also extremely dangerous having large trucks using it daily. You just cross your fingers every time you drive off the road (bitumen) when an on coming truck is coming towards you, hoping that the deep pot holes you hit won't damage your tyres or axles on your vehicle. We live in the 21st century but our roads are worse than they have ever been. Yes we have our dirt road graded once a year, whether it needs it or not and the road surfaces between Heywood, Portland, Ettick road to Tyrendarra Mt. Gambier etc are just crumbling to pieces as I speak. Once again small parts of the roads are being patched up but nothing of any significance is being planned for the future to improve our roads. I certainly don't blame our Victorian Government for lack of funding in the South West as our seat has been in liberal hands for many decades.

I hope that your committee can come up with solutions apart from monetary ones as we are living well above our means as we speak. My solution is simple, direct the money being spent on trimming vegetation into our roads instead. Bulldoze all trees and vegetation beside our roads so that they cannot fall onto the roads or grow too close to our roads and encouraging our wild life to live in our Parks instead. By widening our roads for the future is not only safer for everyone but also for our wonderful wild life. Please consider my suggestions and thank you for reading my concerns.

Yours Sincerely,
Stephen Whitehead