

- 2026 ELECTION PRIORITY -

Roads Maintenance Package

Increased and sustained Victorian Government investment is needed to restore road quality, improve safety and strengthen the resilience of nationally and regionally significant transport routes and productivity.

Why investment in regional roads is needed

East Gippsland - a nationally significant food and freight region – has an arterial road network that is deteriorating due to sustained underinvestment and worsening weather events, with key routes affected by speed restrictions and poor surface conditions.

These roads are critical freight corridors and essential for daily travel, yet maintenance programs have failed to keep pace, leading to increased safety risks, reduced reliability and increased travel times to market.

Poor vegetation management is also increasing fire risk along road corridors.

Our community is asking for

- \$1.5 billion statewide regional roads funding package

This package combines a coordinated Victorian Government commitment to immediate maintenance reform with targeted capital upgrades to restore safety and improve freight efficiency of the East Gippsland road network.

Targeted investment will deliver:

- Replacement of prolonged speed restrictions with funded remediation programs
- Design and delivery funding for priority projects, including:
 - Princes Highway (Orbost to NSW border) surface improvements
 - Great Alpine Road shoulder widening and curve safety works
 - Benambra–Corryong Road upgrades
- Expansion of the arterial road maintenance program to enable systematic rehabilitation, replacing prolonged speed restrictions.
- Broader maintenance scope including shoulder sealing, curve realignment and safety treatments.
- Increased contribution to roadside vegetation management, reducing cost shifting to local government.
- Streetscape renewals, adding to the safety and economies of towns along the Princes Highway and other major arterial roads.

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The publication of clear, region-wide maintenance delivery schedules would improve certainty for councils, freight operators and communities.

State advocacy to the Commonwealth:

- Increased Roads to Recovery funding and a broadening of eligibility to include pathways and safety treatments for vulnerable road users, and innovation.
- Fully expend and publicly support the Princes Highway Corridor Plan (Round 1) and advocate for a second funding round, with clear a State co-contribution.
- Restore the 80:20 Federal–State funding model for major road safety works.
- Expanded access to the Roads of Strategic Importance Program.

Background

East Gippsland's road network has deteriorated to the point where it poses serious safety risks and ongoing delays for motorists, freight and emergency services. East Gippsland is a significant producer of produce to the south-east of Australia and requires safe and reliable access to market to feed both domestic and international markets.

Years of underinvestment, combined with worsening climatic conditions, have seen key routes such as the Princes Highway and Great Alpine Road fall into disrepair.

Current maintenance approaches are inadequate, with resurfacing programs failing to keep pace and long-term speed reductions increasingly used as a substitute for proper rehabilitation. Local government is also carrying a disproportionate burden for roadside vegetation management, including fire prevention and weed control.

- Repair work is being replaced with speed reductions in some instances, including the Princes Highway east of Orbost (under speed restriction for more than two years) and Paynesville Road, Bairnsdale.
- 2025-26 maintenance program was grossly inadequate, addressing less than 7km of road rehabilitation across Gippsland, and only 1km in East Gippsland.
- Council will spend over \$1.5 million on fire prevention slashing work in 2025/26 of which the Victorian Government's contribution is only \$70,000.

Current investment fails to address immediate safety risks, accelerates long-term degradation on freight routes, and undermines regional productivity and resilience.

More information

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