

Media Release



Victorian
Farmers
Federation

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Farmers declare country roads maintenance crisis

The Victorian Farmers Federation (VFF) is calling on both sides of politics to commit funding certainty for regional road maintenance declaring the terrible condition of country roads has reached crisis levels.

VFF President Emma Germano said years of neglect and underfunding has left Victoria's regional road network in a ruinous state and in desperate need of investment.

"Speak to anyone living in regional Victoria and they'll likely have one thing in common- their local roads are dodgy and dangerous."

"More than 50 per cent of all road fatalities occur in regional Victoria, despite it being home to 24 per cent of the State's population. We won't accept that," Ms Germano said.

As part of its 'Fair Go for Regional Victoria' campaign, the VFF has called for a minimum of \$2 billion over the next four years for targeted arterial road maintenance.

The plan has been supported by the State Opposition, but with less than two months until the Victorian State Election, regional communities are waiting to hear the Andrews Government's plan.

"The VFF welcomes the Opposition's commitment to guarantee maintenance funding over the next decade. Now it is time for the Andrews Government to offer country communities a plan to fix our roads. That's why I have written to the Roads Minister Ben Carroll seeking his Government's commitment to deliver funding certainty," Ms Germano said.

In addition to funding for arterial roads, Ms Germano called on both sides of politics to reintroduce the Fixing Country Roads Program to provide funding grants to rural and regional councils to undertake local road projects beyond regular road maintenance.

"We desperately need funding to help local governments maintain their road and bridge networks."

"Council roads make up 87 per cent of the State's road network and represent 10 per cent of local government expenditure. This is putting a disproportionate strain on rural councils that have large road networks, but a small rate base to help fund their upkeep."

Ms Germano concluded saying road maintenance is an important issue for regional communities and expects to see a plan from both sides of politics.

"It's time for our leaders to stand-up and put an end to the country road maintenance crisis. Driving on safe roads is a top priority for regional communities at this election and we need both sides of politics to deliver certainty," Ms Germano said.

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