

LOCAL ROADS AND COMMUNITY INFRASTRUCTURE POLICY



Local Roads and Community Infrastructure Policy

The continuance of the Local Road and Community Infrastructure (LRCI) Program was a very welcome and much required stimulus in regional Australia. This is particularly true at a time when the impacts of sustained weather events are creating a crisis for the maintenance of local roads.

The Need

The 2021 Infrastructure Australia Plan notes that for Smaller Cities and Regional Centres, quality, fit-for-purpose and adaptive social infrastructure, appropriate to the needs of each community, is central to their ability to attract and retain residents and businesses. Regional councils are best positioned to strategically plan for and prioritise appropriate social infrastructure, then sequence it according to local community need.

In this regard the Local Roads and Community Infrastructure Program will continue to support Australia's growing regional centres by enhancing local assets. It has helped to fund programs such as local road and footpath repairs and renewal, disability upgrades at community halls and centres, walking trail improvements, playgrounds, swimming pool and sporting facility upgrades as well as school crossing upgrades.

The program has delivered numerous direct and indirect benefits to regional communities and has allowed councils to invest in important road and community infrastructure that would have previously struggled to secure sufficient funding.

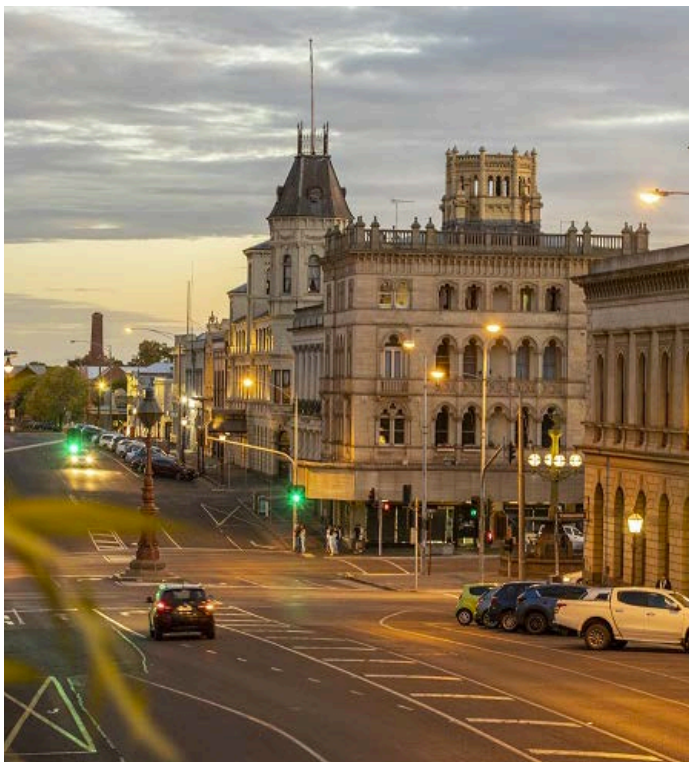
By removing the competitive element of the funding, significant burden has been taken off councils in having to prepare lengthy, expensive, and complex applications. Understanding the amount of money allocated to each council from the outset allows for better planning and prioritisation of projects.

Growing Maintenance Bill

RCA was pleased to see a decision for the scheme to continue with the Australian Government, announcing \$750 million for Phase 4 of the project in the 2022-23 budget.

RCA notes however that regional councils are experiencing a significant financial strain on the asset maintenance of roads due to the recent weather events across the nation and sustained periods of rain throughout 2021-22.

These events have severely impacted the local road network in our member cities creating unsafe driving conditions. Councils have little ability to address this issue in council budgets and as such RCA is recommending the Local Roads and Community Infrastructure Program be increased to assist in the task of addressing this challenge.



Recommendation

Increase Round 4 of the Local Roads and Community Infrastructure Program to \$1 billion (up from \$750 million) to support maintenance of the local road network across regional Australia.

