

Increase rural road funding

South Gippsland Shire Council is seeking increased funding to maintain its extensive local road network, stronger Victorian Government investment in arterial road maintenance and support for a planning study for Stage 2 of the Leongatha Heavy Vehicle Alternate Route.

South Gippsland Shire Council is responsible for maintaining over 2,100 kilometres of local roads—critical infrastructure that supports community connectivity, safety, and the region's \$1.3 billion economy. These roads underpin nationally significant agricultural production, including one of Australia's highest concentrations of dairy farms, as well as a thriving tourism sector.

However, rural councils like South Gippsland face a growing infrastructure burden. Limited rate revenue, rising construction costs, frequent severe weather events, and rate capping are widening the road asset renewal gap—making it increasingly difficult to maintain safe and reliable networks.

Leongatha, the region's primary service hub, sits at the intersection of three major highways and is experiencing rising freight volumes, safety risks, and congestion. This is being driven by the relocation of the Pakenham livestock exchange, growing tourism, and future demand from the offshore wind sector and port development at Barry Beach.

To address these challenges, Stage Two of the Leongatha Heavy Vehicle Alternate Route must be delivered as a priority. This project is critical to easing congestion, improving safety, and supporting South Gippsland's long-term economic growth. It is endorsed by One Gippsland and identified in the *Gippsland Freight Master Plan*.

Request

Victorian Government

Council calls on the Victorian Government to:

- Repair the South Gippsland Highway between Leongatha and Ruby so that the posted speed limit can be returned to 100km/h.
- Bass Highway Inverloch to Leongatha repair sections and improve to "B" road level of service.
- Rehabilitate sections of roads that are in poor condition, including:
 - o Inverloch Venus Bay Road between Pound Creek and Venus Bay
 - o Buffalo Tarwin Lower Road
 - o Waratah Road
 - o Lang Lang Poowong Road between Nyora and Poowong
 - o Korumburra Wonthaggi Road between Kongwak and Korumburra
 - o Meeniyan Promontory Road
 - o South Gippsland Highway between Toora and Welshpool
 - o Drouin Korumburra Road
- Improved roadside vegetation management including clearing drains and verges, managing noxious weeds, and trimming of overhanging and encroaching branches.
- To plan and implement (pre-disaster) betterment to protect road access to vulnerable coastal towns and hamlets.

Australian Government

Council calls on the Australian Government to:

- Commit to ongoing funding of \$500 million per year for the *Local Roads and Community Infrastructure* program.

Victorian or Australian Government

Council calls on Australian or Victorian Governments to:

- Provide \$2 million in funding to support the Department of Transport and Planning to conduct a detailed planning study for Stage 2 of the Leongatha Heavy Vehicle Alternate Route.