

Fixing Country Roads Program

Frequently Asked Questions

What is the Fixing Country Roads Program?

The Fixing Country Roads Program is the Victorian Government's commitment to regional Victorians to improve the condition of regional local roads. The 2018-19 State Budget provided funding to establish the Fixing Country Roads Program to provide grants to rural and regional councils to undertake local road projects beyond regular road maintenance.

How much funding was provided for the Fixing Country Roads Program?

A total of \$100 million was allocated in the 2018-19 State Budget over two years.

Why was this program created?

The Fixing Country Roads Program was created to assist councils improve the condition of their local roads and support the connectivity, reliability and efficiency of travel for regional communities. The program complements the Victorian Government's significant investment in road infrastructure across the state, particularly in regional areas through an unprecedented investment in road maintenance and safety.

What roads can be considered for funding?

Local roads managed by rural and regional councils are eligible for applications to the Fixing Country Roads Program.

Applications will be considered from all rural and regional councils as listed in Schedule 2 of the Regional Development Victoria Act 2002, except for the Alpine Resorts.

Of these councils, only those that are participating in the Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning's Regional Council Transformation Program will be eligible to apply for funding in Round 2.

What kind of projects will be considered?

The Fixing Country Roads Program is targeted towards projects that are outside of 'business as usual' activities.

Such projects include:

- Projects that will improve road pavement quality including, pavement rehabilitations and sealing of gravel roads.
- Reconstructing damaged roads, with priority given to strategic transport links or connections to essential community services.
- Bridge improvement works including bridge strengthening/replacement on strategic routes.
- Capacity upgrades to promote better traffic flow and journey efficiency and reliability including intersection improvements.
- Local road intersection improvements.
- Safety upgrades on local roads.

What kind of projects will not be considered?

The following activities will not be eligible for funding:

- Business as usual road maintenance such as routine maintenance, pavement resurfacing, line marking replacement.
- Requests for retrospective funding where projects have been completed or have commenced (i.e. contracts entered into or construction has begun) prior to receiving funding approval.
- Ongoing operating costs or salary subsidies.
- Private sector projects undertaken as a result of a government contract.
- Projects primarily to meet regulatory requirements.
- The purchase of land.

What criteria will be used for assessing applications?

Applications that demonstrate consideration to the following criteria will be strongly considered:

- Demonstrated project feasibility and delivery.
- Increased road safety.
- Increased active transport use.
- Benefits to regional industries, including efficiency improvements.
- Alignment to state, regional or council transport plans and strategies.

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- Broad community/industry support, including consultation outcomes where applicable.
- Longer-term sustainability for the road network.

Who is managing the Fixing Country Roads Program?

The program and the administering of its funds is being managed by Regional Roads Victoria, a new division of VicRoads that is overseeing Victoria's regional road network.

How many rounds of funding are there?

The Fixing Country Roads Program has two rounds of funding, one for the delivery of projects in the 2018/19 financial year and the other for the 2019/20 financial year.

How much can councils apply for in Round 1?

Grants of up to \$500,000 will be funded in Round 1. This includes grants of up to \$15,000 which councils can use to develop projects for submission in Round 2.

Are additional funding contributions required in Round 1?

Recognising that not all councils have the same capacity to source co-contributions, this is not mandatory in round one, to ensure all eligible councils are able to deliver projects. In round one, councils that choose to fund projects beyond \$500,000, will be met with a co-contribution from the State Government on the Round 2 funding co-contribution basis. This co-contribution is limited up to the project cap of \$1.5 million.

How much can councils apply for in Round 2?

Grants of up to \$1.5 million will be funded in Round 2.

Are additional funding contributions required in Round 2?

Co-contribution is mandatory in round two and applicants are required to make a financial contribution or source third party funding for each submission. Recognising rural councils have a lower ratepayer base in comparison to the size of the network, a 2:1 State/ Council funding contribution will be offered to rural councils and a 1:1 funding contribution to regional councils.

The list of rural and regional councils can be found in the Fixing Country Roads Program Application Guidelines available on the Regional Roads Victoria website (regionalroads.vic.gov.au).

What happens if our project runs over or under budget?

In the event that a project runs over budget, it will be the responsibility of the council to fund the balance of the project. Should a project come under budget, the council must contact Regional Roads Victoria to discuss the best use of the remaining funds.

When do applications open?

Round 1 applications are now open and councils are able to submit their applications via regionalroads.vic.gov.au. Applications for Round 2 will open in early 2019.

When do applications for Round 1 close?

Applications for Round 1 close at 5:00pm on Monday 15 October 2018. Where a council may require additional time to prepare a submission, councils may seek agreement to an extension through Regional Roads Victoria.

When will successful applicants be announced?

Successful grant applications for Round 1 will be announced in late October 2018. Round 2 recipients will be notified in mid-2019.

When do the projects have to be completed?

Construction of projects funded in Round 1 must be completed by 30 June 2019 and Round 2 projects must be completed by 30 June 2020.

How do councils apply?

Applications can be lodged at regionalroads.vic.gov.au. In their applications, councils will need to describe their project by identifying the challenge or opportunity it is seeking to address, the objectives, the desired outcomes, the outputs to be delivered, and the infrastructure requirements. Further details can be found in the Application Guidelines available at regionalroads.vic.gov.au.

How can I find out more?

You can email us at fixingcountryroads@roads.vic.gov.au or visit our website at regionalroads.vic.gov.au.