

Maintain the Momentum on Road Maintenance

In line with its [Pre-Budget Submission](#), the South Australian Chamber of Mines & Energy (SACOME) reiterates its calls for the State Government to prioritise funding of road maintenance works critical to the operation of South Australian resources projects.

SACOME continues to advocate for increased funding to resolve regional and remote road maintenance backlogs, noting the importance of these roads to the efficient and safe transport of mineral and petroleum products.

The 2019 Australian Infrastructure Audit found that the total backlog of priority road maintenance works was estimated at \$750m, resulting in higher vehicle operating costs, travel times and safety risks for road users.

SACOME's advocacy efforts in partnership with the South Australian Freight Council and the RAA have helped to secure Commonwealth and State funding for:

- The duplication of the Joy Baluch AM Bridge duplication (\$200 million).
- The sealing of the Strzelecki Track (\$200 million).
- Stage 1 of the Augusta Highway duplication (\$80 million).
- Stage 2 of the Augusta Highway (\$148 million Commonwealth commitment).
- Increased road maintenance funding in the 2020-21 State Budget of \$144m, up from \$110m in 2019-20.

In addition, this advocacy has resulted in a greater focus on road maintenance by the South Australian Government in administrative terms, with the Department of Infrastructure & Transport (DIT) establishing the Road Network Maintenance Division in 2020.

SACOME acknowledges the positive steps made toward resolving significant road maintenance backlogs by both State and Commonwealth Government's in recent years.

The inclusion of the 'South Australian road network maintenance' as high-priority initiative on the Infrastructure Australia (IA) Priority List in February 2021 is both timely and welcome. This initiative is complementary to the 'National road maintenance strategy' listed on the IA Priority List.

Greater levels of strategic planning and coordination are key to reducing the exponential growth of the road maintenance backlog and safeguarding economically critical transport routes.

While recognising the steps undertaken by the South Australian Government to date, maintenance backlogs will require ongoing funding commitments to resolve.

Chief Executive Rebecca Knol said:

“The South Australian road network is critical to the efficient, safe operation of the resources sector. Maintenance of this 10,000 km network must be undertaken in a strategic manner that reflects its economic importance to the State.”

“SACOME, alongside the South Australian Freight Council and the RAA, continue to call for the prioritisation of road maintenance funding in the State Budget recognising that concerted effort is required to address the maintenance backlog.”

“SACOME’s [Economic Contribution Study](#) highlighted that 12 SACOME member companies contributed \$5.9 billion to the South Australian economy in 2019-20. This is the equivalent to 5.3% of South Australia’s Gross State Product (GSP), or \$1 in every \$20 in the South Australia economy”.

“This economic contribution is dependent upon well-maintained transport routes to facilitate the movement of people and commodities.

“SACOME calls upon the State Government to maintain both its funding momentum and its road maintenance efforts in the upcoming State Budget”.

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About SACOME

The South Australian Chamber of Mines and Energy is the peak industry association representing companies with interests and connections to the South Australian resources and energy sector.