



## **Roads Congress 2025 Bendigo – Communique**

Over 220 local government leaders, industry experts, and stakeholders from across Australia gathered at the 2025 National Local Roads, Transport & Infrastructure Congress in Bendigo Victoria, to discuss the challenges and opportunities facing Australia's local road networks and infrastructure.

We acknowledged the traditional custodians of the lands, the Dja Dja Wurrung and Taungurung people, on which we met, paying respects to their elders past, present, and emerging.

This year's Congress focused on *Driving National Productivity*, with a strong emphasis on local roads funding, maintenance, and infrastructure and the vital role councils play in supporting the national productivity agenda.

The Congress remained committed to a strong call for the return of 1% of Financial Assistance Grants to support the urgent need for Road and Infrastructure maintenance and development to support our communities' needs. The panel of Local Government Association Presidents reinforced this strongly in their presentations.

The message was reiterated to both the Government and Opposition representatives at the conference. The Hon. Catherine King, Minister for Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development and Local Government, and the Shadow Assistant Minister for Infrastructure, Senator Matt O'Sullivan provided updates and positions on Australia's infrastructure future.

Minister King spoke to the reinstatement of the Inquiry into Local Government Financial Sustainability. The Minister emphasised that all submissions from the previous inquiry will be considered, and only updated information needs to be resubmitted by early February 2026.

In acknowledgement of the critical role councils play in delivering and maintaining community infrastructure, our keynote speaker Rupert Hoskin AM shared insights on effective leadership for managing complex infrastructure projects, especially during adversity.

The Congress provided a dynamic platform for collaboration, knowledge exchange, and strategic planning to advance Australia's local roads and transport priorities. Road safety remains a top priority, with delegates exploring evidence-based approaches to reducing road trauma and strategic planning for achieving zero fatalities.

Delegates heard from a wide range of experts and gained practical insights into infrastructure financing models, strategies for successful grant applications, and contemporary asset management practices. Sustainable road construction, circular economy principles, strategies for building resilience into infrastructure and research on behavioural change for active transport were also showcased.

Local governments are key partners in delivering national priorities and sessions covering regional transport planning, zero emissions strategies, and delivery of major freight projects like Inland Rail provided important insights into how these can be achieved.