



Legislative Council Economy and Infrastructure Committee

Inquiry: Inquiry into Local Government funding and services

Hearing Date: 7 August 2024

Question[s] taken on notice

Directed to: Moyne Shire Council

Received Date: 29 August 2024

1. **David DAVIS, page 53**

Question asked:

David DAVIS: ...I just had three quick points. The first is I have been asking councils for a time series on libraries, maternal and child health and arts and cultural funding to look at state funding and what councils have been putting in. I think that long-term chain is actually quite important, so I would certainly appreciate if you could do that as an on-notice question. The second one is country roads and bridges. That program, in my experience, was well received by country councils, and I wonder what your response is to that successively.

Response:

Please see below as per your request.

**Moyne Shire Council
Maternal and Child Health**

Natural Account	2019/20 Actuals	2020/21 Actuals	2021/22 Actuals	2022/23 Actuals	2023/24 Actuals	Total
1152 Enhancement						
2846 Government Grants - Operating State Gov	-146,711	-170,840	(141,680)	(182,745)	(246,109)	(888,085)
Total 1152 Enhancement	-146,711	-170,840	(141,680)	(182,745)	(246,109)	(888,085)
2663 MCH Management & Administration						
2846 Government Grants - Operating State Gov	-136,981	-147,602	(200,616)	(159,164)	(236,038)	(880,402)
Total 2663 MCH Management & Administration	-136,981	-147,602	(200,616)	(159,164)	(236,038)	(880,402)
3804 Immunisations						
2846 Government Grants - Operating State Gov	-8,651	-9,087	(9,301)	(15,171)	(8,405)	(50,615)
Total 3804 Immunisations	-8,651	-9,087	(9,301)	(15,171)	(8,405)	(50,615)
Grand Total	-292,343	-327,530	(351,597)	(357,080)	(490,552)	(1,819,102)

Library Contribution

Prior to 2022/2023, library services were operated by the Corangamite Regional Library Corporation in which, Moyne was one of 4 local government partners. All state government funding was paid directly to the corporation and each shire paid a contribution.

Year	Operation model	State Government contribution	Moyne Shire contribution operations	Moyne Shire contribution Capital for books
2019/20	CRLC	Total contribution not specific to Moyne	\$371,780	NA
2020/21	CRLC	Total contribution not specific to Moyne	\$594,581	NA
2021/22	CRLC	Total contribution not specific to Moyne	\$708,677	NA
2022/23	CMLS	\$195,855	\$417,426	\$65,000
2023/24	CMLS	\$199,734	\$335,307	\$65,000

Art & Culture contribution

Moyne Shire does not receive State Government support for delivering Art & Cultural services but is engaged in the Regional Arts Victoria South West Creative Industries Partnership.

An annual fee is paid to RAV to facilitate this partnership. RAV is funded by Creative Victoria.

Year	Moyne Shire contribution operations
2019/20	\$43,845
2020/21	\$44,000
2021/22	\$50,000

2022/23	\$50,000
2023/24	\$55,367

Country Roads & Bridges

All Councils appreciate the funding we receive from external sources such as Roads to Recovery, Victorian Grants Commission, and programs like the Safer Local Roads and Streets Program etc. Whatever the state-based local road infrastructure funding ends up being called, there are significant benefits to Local Government, community and industry from external roads and bridge infrastructure funding for LGs. The individual capacity of individual rural Councils to contribute to the road network across Victoria. Is quite constrained for instance, Moyne with its 2,745 kilometers of roads and 12,609 ratepayers has 4.5 ratepayers per kilometer of road.

A large proportion of local roads and bridges were designed and constructed when the heaviest vehicles likely to use them were prime mover semi-trailer combinations weighing in at 44-tonnes. The last 25-30 years have seen a proliferation of new heavy vehicle types (B—Doubles/Performance Based Standard vehicles etc.) accessing the road network. These vehicles certainly boost productivity, but the increasing mass, length and general take up by industry (for Moyne that largely means dairy, livestock, grain and timber haulage) can leave local road networks struggling to provide (at least) first/last mile access.

Added to this, and although they are required, large scale upgrades of the rural arterial road network can place additional pressures on the local road network. This usually falls into two categories:

- The haulage of large quantities of road making materials from the quarry/supplier over roads not constructed or capable of handling the quantities required. Where practicable this impact is able to be partially offset through traffic management.
- Light and commercial/heavy vehicles doing a “rat run” on the local road network to avoid the works on the arterial road.

Given that Moyne is in the centre of a Renewable Energy Zone, this is expected to continue to be an issue across the arterial network in south-western Victoria. This activity has added an additional impact on the local road network through excess axle widths being required for some transport vehicles (eg for turbines etc).

The limited capacity of some arterial bridge infrastructure can also lead to PBS and Special Purpose Vehicle/Oversize Overmass Vehicles (i.e. mobile cranes) seeking alternate access around them.

The drive towards safety improvements such as those prescribed under the Safe Systems approach to road safety will also have other consequences for users of the local road network and Council. If industry and communities' expectation is for Council to maintain the 100km/h speed limit on an upgraded section of rural road, under safe systems this would add the need for several new (and more costly) treatments beyond the simple renewal of pavement and seal. The alternative is reducing speed limits in local roads in rural areas, which will have its own impacts.

Councils 2022 Road Infrastructure Asset Management Plan indicated that for the 10-year period between 2022 and 2032, Council expects to have an available road operations, maintenance and renewal budget of \$127.45 million, but the estimated forecast cost for road operations, maintenance and renewal for that same period is expected to be \$194.47 million resulting in a financial gap of just over \$67million. Council therefore needs to attract an extra annual average of \$6.7 million dollars in external funding just to keep up with the estimate deterioration of the local road network. The Shire of Moyne allocated 12% of its 2024/25 Operating Budget and 38% of its Capital Budget towards maintaining roads and bridges. However, a significant proportion of this road funding comes from the Commonwealth Government and without this Federal funding the roads would be considerably worse as the Council is not in a position to make up the shortfall. Even with the Commonwealth Government contributions recent studies have estimated that at most large rural councils are generally only being able spend 80-85% annual on road infrastructure of the appropriate level to keep the road network maintained at a sustainable level.

That is why programs like the Federal Governments Safer Local Roads and Infrastructure Program (SLRIP) and the State's Safer Local Roads and Streets Program (SLRSP) both provide significant boosts to the funding of the local road network.

Whilst SLRSP is a significant increase in roads funding from the State Government, and the fact that there is no expectation of major co-contribution is

greatly appreciated, there is a level of expectation to spread the money around to furnish a number of treatments at a number of sites. Therefore, the really large scale projects (such as bridge replacement or widening multiple kilometers of the same road) that might otherwise have been covered under previously funded programs such as Local Roads to Market or Fixing Country Roads must either be managed within the confines of Councils own budget, or deferred, which can even result in a Council having to close a road or a bridge in the interests of safety. Such actions can have considerable impact on productivity for industry, and the socio-economic wellbeing of the community, as in some areas, the detour around a closure can be lengthy. This also has onflow impacts in terms of driver fatigue, wear and maintenance on vehicles, and ever-increasing fuel costs.

Additional funding sources (eg Fixing Country Roads and Bridges program or its predecessor programs), even if they're only a \$2:\$1 co-contribution spend, allow Councils to stretch their annual roads budget significantly to cover those larger projects, even if in the more extreme cases it has to be a multi-staged project.

To conclude, it also important that the State Government continues to appropriately fund the maintenance of critical State Government transport routes for example the Heywood Woolsthorpe Road.”