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**MEDIA RELEASE**

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**AG confirms Brumby Government neglects regional roads**

The Auditor-General's damning report released this week confirms neglect by the Brumby Government of Victoria's regional roads says David Koch, Member for Western Victoria.

"Unlike the Government, the Auditor-General does not mislead the Victorian community on Government underspending and has identified that the average between maintenance expenditure and the funding required to keep pace with inflation fell short \$38 million in 2007–08 prices.

"The report verifies what motorists driving on our regional roads have suspected for sometime - that maintenance expenditure has failed to keep pace with inflation, the ageing of the regional road network or increasing traffic volumes.

"It is now blatantly obvious that a costly catch up program is desperately needed to bring major arterial roads up to scratch and regain the safety margins previously enshrined.

"There are many roads across western Victoria that need broken shoulders and potholes repaired, and long stretches of major secondary roads need pavement reconstruction and widening to make them safer.

"These important transport links, now taking more and more heavy traffic, were not originally designed or built to carry the increasing volume they are now forced to bear.

"Many secondary roads are becoming popular as tourist roads and far too many school bus routes are falling into disrepair. This is becoming more obvious by the month as larger transports including B-Doubles are accessing these routes.

"Our country roads are turning to dust while the Brumby Government continues to underspend a total of \$300 million on road maintenance since 1999. Current spending is merely keeping pace with the minimum needs of maintaining country roads.

"The Brumby Government boasts of how rapidly regional Victoria is growing, but the Auditor-General's report says outright that the Government has not spent the money needed for basic maintenance of country roads, let alone address the needs of growing traffic volumes in country Victoria.

"The Government must immediately restore the funds VicRoads desperately needs to keep our country road network safe and functional. It must immediately give VicRoads the \$100 million the Auditor-General says is needed this coming financial year to start to repair the damage the Government's neglect has caused to country roads", said David Koch.

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