



RAA State Budget 2025–26 Priorities

Recommendation 1:

Increasing the annual road maintenance budget and improving transparency in spending

South Australia’s road maintenance backlog continues to grow, posing significant risks to safety and network efficiency. The Auditor-General’s 2023 Report revealed that only 15 per cent of the annual depreciation value of the sealed road network is currently invested in maintenance. This level of underinvestment has led to deteriorating road conditions, higher vehicle operating costs, and reduced safety for all road users.

RAA recommends increasing the annual road maintenance budget to \$250 million. This investment would not only work to reduce the current backlog but also prevent further deterioration of the network. It would enable the inclusion of safety enhancements such as:

- Sealed shoulders to reduce run-off-road crashes.
- Audio tactile line marking to alert distracted or fatigued drivers.

- Protective barriers to reduce the severity of high-speed crashes.

Key corridors raised in our 2024 Risky Roads survey for road maintenance issues include Victor Harbor Road (McLaren Vale – Willunga), Black Top Road (One Tree Hill), Womma Road, Marion Road and Victor Harbor Road.

Transparency in road maintenance spending is equally important. Current budget papers lack clarity, making it difficult to assess where funds are allocated and how they are spent. RAA calls for detailed reporting to provide a breakdown of maintenance spending by region and road type. Improved transparency will help ensure that investments are targeted towards the highest-priority areas, enhancing accountability and public confidence in the state’s transport planning processes.

Recommendation 2: Progressing the duplication of South Australia’s national highways

The duplication of South Australia’s key national highways is critical to ensuring the safety, efficiency, and resilience of our transport network. Highways such as the Augusta, Dukes, and Sturt are vital links for regional communities and industries, carrying significant freight volumes and supporting economic activity across the state.

RAA strongly supports the long-term plan to fully duplicate these highways by 2050. Immediate priorities include:

- Stage 2 of the Augusta Highway duplication between Crystal Brook and Port Pirie, which addresses the busiest section of this corridor.
- Critical sections of the Dukes Highway, particularly between Tailem Bend and the Mallee Highway, where upgrades would significantly reduce travel times and improve safety.
- Sturt Highway between Nuriootpa and Truro including a bypass of Truro and realignment of the Highway at Accommodation Hill.

RAA recommends the State Government pursue an 80/20 funding split with the Federal Government for these projects. Recent exceptions, such as the Federal Government’s 80% contribution to the Bruce Highway upgrade in Queensland, demonstrate the feasibility of this approach. This funding model would significantly reduce the financial burden on the state and accelerate these vital upgrades.

Investments in these projects will deliver meaningful benefits, including reduced crash risks, greater network capacity, and enhanced freight productivity. Completing these duplications will also support regional growth and improve connections to Adelaide, ensuring the transport network can meet the demands of South Australia’s growing economy and population.

Recommendation 3: South Eastern Freeway upgrades

RAA recommends the State Government commit funding to design and construct a third lane from Stirling to the Verdun interchange along the South Eastern Freeway.

RAA identified the need and recommended a third lane in our 2020 assessment of the South Eastern Freeway.

A third traffic lane between Stirling and Verdun would provide additional efficiencies and capacity along the South Eastern Freeway, including for public transport. Current traffic volumes are as high as 46,000 vehicles per day on this part of the Freeway, of which 10% are commercial vehicles. These volumes are already at levels that compromise vehicle speeds and safety during peak conditions, with continued growth in traffic volumes expected to further compromise speeds, increase congestion and increase the risk of associated crashes.

The need for a third lane was again highlighted in the recent Mount Barker and Adelaide Hills transport study. The study stated this stretch of road was nearing or already at capacity in some locations and that traffic volumes will increase by 30 to 40% by 2036.

It is critical this project is prioritised to safely support future population growth, especially around Mount Barker and Murray Bridge.

RAA also supports the installation of a third safety ramp at the end of the South Eastern Freeway. We welcome all the recent announcements by the Government to improve safety at the end of the freeway; however, we believe there should be an additional opportunity for heavy vehicle drivers to leave the road to avoid a collision prior to the intersection with Portrush Road.

Recommendation 4: Northern suburb upgrades

RAA recommends upgrading the east-west links in the northern suburbs, specifically the duplication of Curtis Road, together with an upgrade of Kings Road and removal of the level crossing to meet current and future demand in this rapidly growing area of Adelaide.

Roads and intersections north of Adelaide featured highly in our recent Risky Roads survey (full results to be announced in early 2025). Curtis Road, Main North Road, Dalkeith Road, Womma Road and Port Wakefield Highway were all nominated in the top 10 metropolitan roads. Other roads including Heaslip Road, Angle Vale Road and Kings Road were also frequently nominated. Common issues include capacity of these roads to accommodate population growth, management of roadside access, safety and congestion at intersections, and provision of adjacent infrastructure for walking and cycling.

We welcome the recently announced \$30m intersection upgrade at Curtis Road and Heaslip Road, which ranked as the state's riskiest intersection for the second time in a row in our Risky Roads survey. Other frequently nominated northern suburbs intersections include Andrews Road/Curtis Road, Angle Vale Road/Dalkeith Road/Andrews Road

(Munno Para West), and the Northern Expressway/Heaslip Road interchange (Penfield).

Ultimately, the feedback received indicates that there is strong community concern surrounding transport infrastructure across the northern suburbs growth areas. Investment is required to progress road and intersection upgrades to support growth and enhance connectivity and liveability in this rapidly growing area. With the completion of the Northern Adelaide Transport Study, funding is now needed to progress improvements within the study area.

While duplication of Curtis Road is a key priority, investment is required to:

- Upgrade Kings Road and remove the level crossing in Parafield Gardens.
- Duplicate Elder Smith Road in Mawson Lakes and investigate the extension of this corridor into the future Dry Creek growth area.
- Upgrade key intersections to reduce congestion and improve safety.
- Improve active transport infrastructure and connectivity.

Recommendation 5: Enhancing public and active transport infrastructure

Investment in public and active transport infrastructure is essential to support South Australia's population growth, reduce congestion, and promote sustainable travel options. RAA research highlights the need for reliable, accessible, and safe alternatives to private vehicle use to encourage broader adoption of public and active transport.

For public transport, RAA recommends:

- Modernising bus, train, and tram networks to improve service reliability and accessibility, ensuring they meet the needs of a growing and diverse population.
- Investing in transit-oriented developments that integrate housing, workplaces, and transport hubs to create liveable, connected communities.

In active transport, RAA believes the Government should invest \$10m per year in the State Cycling Fund to address

safety concerns that currently deter people from walking and cycling. RAA calls for:

- Expanded and better-connected cycling infrastructure, with separated lanes and pathways that protect cyclists from vehicle traffic.
- Improved pedestrian infrastructure, such as safe crossings, well-maintained pathways, and better lighting in high-traffic areas.

These investments will help make public and active transport more viable and attractive options, contributing to a healthier, more sustainable South Australia.

With the anticipated addition of e-scooters and other personal mobility devices to the wider transport network in 2025, safety and connectivity become even more important as use increases.