

Media Release

The Hon Shaun Leane MLC
Minister for Local Government
Minister for Suburban Development
Minister for Veterans



Wednesday, 6 October 2021

HELPING RURAL COUNCILS DELIVER FOR THEIR COMMUNITIES

The Victorian Government is supporting Victoria's 38 rural councils to deliver exciting projects that improve services and provide value for money for local communities.

Minister for Local Government Shaun Leane today announced the opening of a \$8 million second round of the ground-breaking *Rural Councils Transformation Program*.

Improving rural councils' financial sustainability is a priority for the Government. The first initiative of its kind in Victoria, the program was launched in 2018 to enable rural councils to work with other councils to improve services and reduce costs.

Round one focused on large-scale projects including the Rural Councils Corporate Collaboration, led by Horsham Rural City Council.

Horsham joined forces with three other councils — Hindmarsh, Loddon and West Wimmera — to adopt integrated systems to manage their business processes, including finance, payroll and procurement. This project received \$5 million from the program and is now in the tender phase.

Round two is focused on smaller projects that include new and ongoing collaboration and resource sharing such as shared workforce planning and asset management systems. Projects will be funded up to \$1 million, with a maximum rate of \$250,000 for each rural council involved.

While funding is not awarded for metropolitan or regional council involvement, all Victorian councils can participate in the program – a minimum of two rural councils must be involved and projects will have to be completed within two years.

The *Victorian Budget 2021/22* also allocated \$1.4 million over two years for the *Rural Roads Support Package*, which will improve the road asset management practices of 11 rural councils that have responsibility for the longest lengths of local roads on a per capita basis.

Applications for the *Rural Councils Transformation Program* close on 10 December 2021. For more details and funding guidelines visit localgovernment.vic.gov.au.

Quotes attributable to Minister for Local Government Shaun Leane

"Rural councils play a vital role in supporting country Victorians and this funding will improve the capacity of councils to meet the needs of their local communities."

"I encourage councils to be innovative and bold as they consider the opportunities this program provides to do things differently and better."

Quote attributable to Minister for Regional Development Mary-Anne Thomas

"By working together, rural councils can take their operations to the next level – and local families, businesses and community groups will be the winners."

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