

# PAVING THE WAY



**ROADS IN VICTORIA**  
**1913 - 1988**



*Early construction on the Great Ocean Road near Lorne*

# Paving the Way

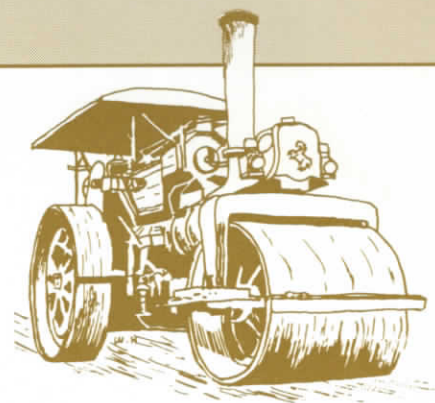
**The history of  
roads in Victoria  
1913-1988**

In the early 1900s Victoria's roads were little more than dirt tracks.

The few well constructed major coach routes had been allowed to deteriorate and travel, even over short distances, was often difficult, generally uncomfortable and occasionally impossible.

By 1912, settlement had far outpaced road construction and there was no comprehensive road system linking all parts of the State.

The demands created by these arduous conditions led, in January 1913, to the proclamation of the Country Roads Act 1912 which established the Country Roads Board as a central road authority.



*Cover Top - working on Reserve Road  
Moorabbin, 1937*

*Cover Bottom - pavement construction with RCA  
Autograde on the Hume Freeway*



In March 1913, a 53 year old Scotsman, William Calder, was appointed the CRB's first Chairman. With the authority's other two Board Members, he carried out a detailed investigation into the condition of Victoria's roads.

Following the two-year investigations, Mr Calder and his colleagues decided that almost 8050 km of roads should be classified as 'main roads' and, consequently, come under the control and maintenance of the Country Roads Board.

As motor vehicle ownership grew, the need for better roads became more apparent. The types and classifications of roads were increased to eventually include State Highways, Freeways, Tourists' Roads and Forest Roads.

All aspects of Victoria's transport infrastructure, including roads and public transport, were subject to an extensive review by the State Government in the early 1980s. The result was a restructuring of the then seven transport authorities one of which was the Country Roads Board, into four new bodies: the Road Construction Authority became operational on 1 July 1983, replacing the CRB.



*CRB car bogged near Orbost, 1913*

Today, the RCA is the primary Government agency for planning and managing Victoria's road network, operating in association with Victoria's 211 municipalities.

Victoria's 160,000 km of public roads represent a \$30,000 million asset.

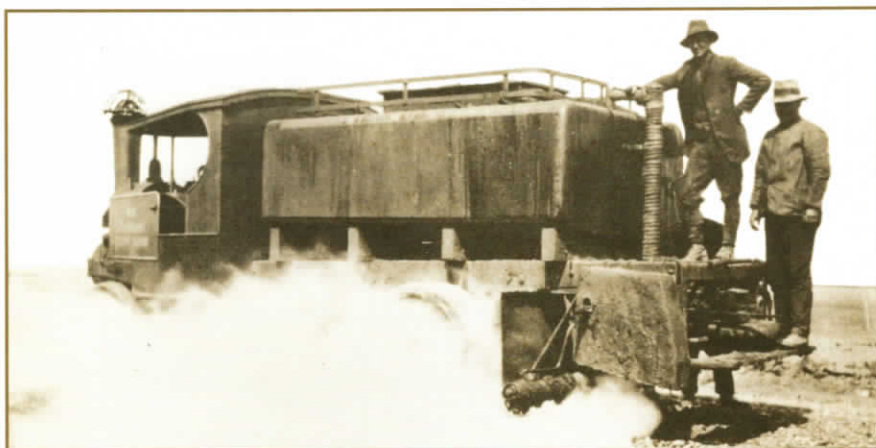
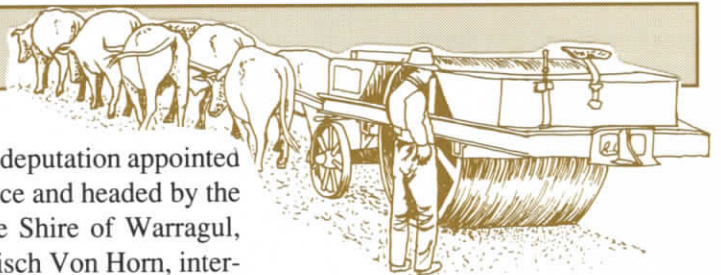
The RCA is responsible for 24,000 km of roads which form Victoria's declared road network and carry 60% of all the State's traffic.

## The early years

The Country Roads Board originated from a meeting in Warragul on Tuesday 11 August 1911. Representatives of the Gippsland Shires met to discuss ways and means of making the Government of the day more aware of the needs of the Province of Gippsland, particularly the need for improved roads and extensions to the railway network.

The next day, a deputation appointed by the conference and headed by the President of the Shire of Warragul, Councillor Killisch Von Horn, interviewed the Acting Premier, Mr Watt and the Minister of Public Works Mr Edgar.

As a result of the case put by the deputation, the Country Roads Board was set up in 1912.



*All aboard the Number 5 Sprayer at Colac on the Princes Highway, 1926*

When introducing the Country Roads Bill in the Legislative Assembly in 1912, it was announced that the CRB's first duty would be to "make a thorough investigation into existing highways so that it may have the materials on which to exercise sound judgement".

The Board Members realised that if they were to accomplish their job of determining which roads were to be declared main roads, they would need the co-operation of the municipalities. They immediately began visiting every municipal district in the State to inspect the road system, and explain in detail to councillors the provisions of the Act.



## The early years

To help with their investigations, the Board divided the State into ten districts - a similar system still operates today.

In determining main road classifications, the Board not only assessed traffic patterns and volumes, but also studied the likelihood of the particular route contributing to future settlement and development.

The Board began its first investigation in Gippsland between May and September of 1913 when conditions were at their worst and most of the travel had to be completed on horse-back.

The investigation of the State's road system took two years with the Board finally declaring that some 8,050 km would come under the responsibility of the CRB.



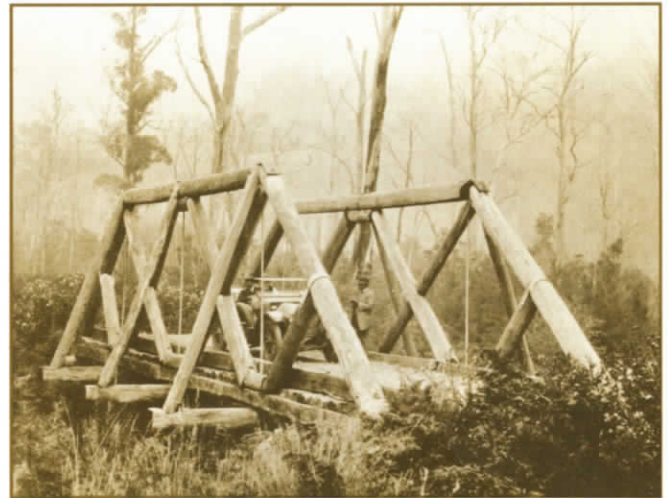
*Road in Port Melbourne, 1925*

Mr Calder found many problem areas during his travels:

- \* frequently little attention was given to the provision of adequate road foundations and drainage;
- \* many councils used poor materials and improper construction methods;
- \* there was a lack of roadmaking equipment in many councils;
- \* few councils had a proper appreciation of the need for regular maintenance of the road system.

The Board found it necessary to furnish many councils with advice and instructions on road construction techniques and emphasise the finer points of a systematic maintenance program.

The Board did not immediately recommend a comprehensive road building program, however. In fact, it decided that no construction would begin until further surveys had been completed. As Mr Calder observed, faulty alignment had proved most expensive in the past, and old mistakes were not to be repeated.



*Bridge over Lightning Creek on the Omeo Highway near Mitta Mitta, 1914*

The first contract under the Country Roads Act was let for metalling on the Olinda Road in the Shire of Ferntree Gully on 23 December 1913 and the first contract to be completed was on the main Gippsland Road in the Shire of Warragul, adjacent to the site where the Calder Memorial now stands on the Princes Highway on the Melbourne side of Warragul.





*Horse drawn scoop on South Gippsland Highway west of Loch, 1948*

In 1915 it was hoped that a start could be made on a major construction program, but the Board had not anticipated the onset of World War 1. The outbreak of hostilities resulted in the enlistment of large numbers of men who would have otherwise been engaged on roadworks.

After the war the CRB's activities continued to be hampered by spiralling costs and shortages of labour and roadmaking materials. The economic situation meant that contractors were unwilling to tender for contracts and a method of direct labour was adopted for essential projects.



*Bridge at Belgrave, 1947*

By 1922 the economy had improved and the Board was able to report that 90 per cent of all construction works which had been undertaken during that year were by contract.

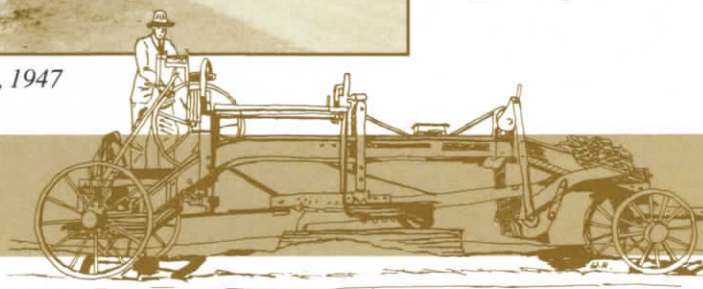
Two years later the Highways and Vehicles Act was passed providing for the declaration of State Highways which were to be the direct responsibility of the CRB.

The Board appointed several senior engineers to represent them in various parts of the State, and in 1925 district headquarters were established in Benalla, Bendigo and Sale.

The Federal Aid Roads Agreement was passed in 1926 which provided for Commonwealth funding on a systematic basis.

But the healthy financial state of affairs was shortlived. The depression of the '30s forced the CRB to reduced expenditure on maintenance and curtail major road construction works.

In 1936 the Tourists' Road Act was passed which saw the CRB take on responsibility for constructing and maintaining roads proclaimed as tourists' roads.

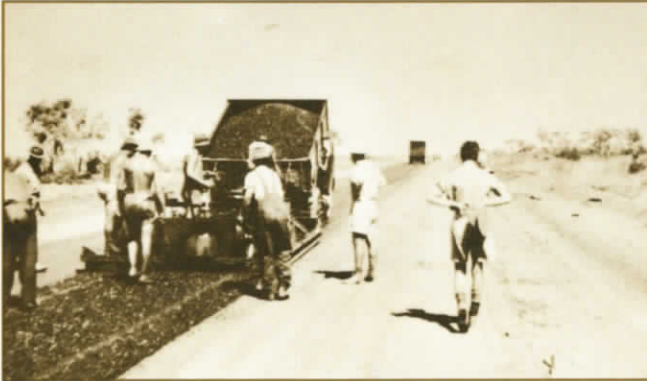




## The CRB goes to war

In 1939 Australia's entry into World War 2 saw another large drain on its human resources. There were also numerous requests from defence authorities for the CRB's services and only a skeleton staff remained to carry out essential maintenance.

In 1942 the CRB was asked to undertake the reconstruction and sealing of a section of the Stuart Highway in the Northern Territory between Alice Springs and Larrimah. The task was completed during the following year.



CRB workers sealing the Stuart Highway, 1943



Line marking near Kororoit Creek, Brooklyn, 1947

## Tackling the post war period

Problems with the road system which had developed during the war were quickly tackled with funds which had accumulated and the manpower which became available on demobilisation. Between 1945 and 1950 many new bridge projects were initiated and the State highway system expanded by 1,489 km to 6,189 km.

## The advent of the Freeway

The CRB began duplicating certain State highways in 1955. "The Board has long foreseen that the time would come when the provision of additional traffic lanes would be required on many of our principal highways," wrote the CRB's Chairman, Mr D V Darwin, in the Board's 44th annual report.

Initially, the CRB concentrated on duplicating major roads leading into Melbourne and provincial cities.

On 16 June 1961 the 10km Maltby Bypass was opened to traffic, thus completing the duplication of the Princes Highway from Melbourne to Geelong. The bypass was Victoria's first freeway.

In the next decade sections of Tullamarine Freeway and the West Gate Freeway, between Altona North and Spotswood, were completed. During the '70s many sections of rural free-

way were built including the Western Freeway, the Hume, and the South Gippsland, while in the metropolitan area major work was completed on the Mulgrave and the Eastern freeways.

The CRB became more involved in urban freeway construction following the transfer of roading responsibilities from the Board of Works in 1974.

Between 1961 and 1981, the CRB

spent nearly \$440 million on freeway construction, including land acquisition.

This era also saw many important developments in bridge construction with the CRB's involvement in the Snowy River Bridges at Orbost and the \$30 million Charles Grimes Bridge over the Yarra River. In 1978 the mammoth West Gate Bridge was also opened. (The West Gate Bridge Authority was abolished in 1982 and its functions transferred to the CRB)



Duplication of the Maroondah Highway at Blackburn, 1961





## Into the '80s

Victoria's freeway network continued to expand during the '80s. By the end of 1983 motorists were enjoying freeway conditions on many sections of the Princes, the Hume, the Calder, the Mornington Peninsula, the Mulgrave and the Eastern.



Top : Aerial view of the West Gate Freeway, South Melbourne  
Above : Opening of Hume Freeway, Benalla, 1977

## The Road Construction Authority : today's road managers

The RCA began operations on 1 July 1983 with a brief to maintain, manage and further improve the State's roads. The Authority was formed under the provisions of the Transport Act 1983.

The functions of the RCA are to maintain, upgrade, vary and extend the State's declared road network; assist municipalities in the maintenance, upgrading and construction of other roads; provide traffic management facilities with the Road Traffic Authority; determine and advise load and speed limits; manage roadside reserves; establish requirements for vehicle mass and dimension permits; compete on the open market for road construction and other projects; investigate, promote and undertake related research.

Major projects which have been completed since the formation of the RCA include the \$60 million duplication of the Nepean Highway, bypasses of Berwick, Warragul, Benalla, Wodonga, Old Longwood, Keilor, and Melton;

the eastbound extension of the West Gate Freeway in South Melbourne; and the final sealing of the Cann Valley Highway and the Great Ocean Road.

Currently the RCA is, through its regional and project offices, involved in the construction of the Gisborne Bypass on the Calder Freeway, the Greensborough Bypass, the new Barwon River Bridge in Geelong, Moorooduc Road duplication and the Mornington Peninsula Freeway, the Dimboola Bypass on the Western Highway, the South Eastern-Mulgrave Arterial Road Link, the Bypass of Morwell on the Princes Highway, and the westbound carriageway of the West Gate Freeway. Major duplication work is also being carried out on the South Gippsland and the Princes highways.

Victoria's 24,000 km of declared roads make up only 15% of the 160,000 km total road network but they carry almost 60% of all vehicles.





*Princes Highway bridge over railway crossing at Moe, 1947*

## Building roads since 1913 : the highlights

- |  |   |
|--|---|
| <b>1913</b> Formation of the Country Roads Board   | <b>1932</b> Great Ocean Road completed  |
| <b>1915</b> Completion by CRB of two years of investigating Victoria's roads   | <b>1936</b> Tourists' Road Act passed empowering the CRB to recommend the proclamation of tourists' roads. Also takes on role of constructing and maintaining such roads. Philip Island Bridge built. |
| <b>1918</b> Work begins on the Great Ocean Road using returned servicemen  | <b>1939</b> World War 11 diverts resources to defence works   |
| <b>1923</b> Main Roads Development Act passed by Commonwealth Government which provides first general funds to States to supplement Federal funds on a dollar for dollar basis | <b>1943</b> Forest Roads and Stock Routes Act passed  |
| <b>1924</b> CRB takes on direct responsibility of State highways   | <b>1945</b> CRB resumes normal activities after war   |
| <b>1926</b> Federal Aid Roads Agreement passed by Commonwealth provides funds from revenue on a systematic basis; Barwon River Bridge built at Geelong                         | <b>1950</b> Commonwealth Aid Roads Act passed providing for distribution to States of a portion of monies raised through petrol sales   |
| <b>1930</b> Roads expenditure reduced due to the Depression  | <b>1954</b> Level Crossings Fund established  |
|  | <b>1955</b> CRB begins building dual carriageways on State highways   |





- 1956** Legislation empowers CRB to build freeways
- 1961** The Maltby Bypass, Victoria's first freeway, completed
- 1963** Dual carriageways on Princes Highway between Oakleigh and Dandenong are completed
- 1965** Roads (Special Projects) Fund provides finance for special road projects in Victoria
- 1966** CRB begins design and construction of access roads to Lower Yarra Crossing Project (West Gate Bridge)
- 1968** Tullamarine Freeway, north of Essendon Airport, opens to traffic
- 1969** CRB involved in major transport studies in Ballarat, Bendigo and Geelong. Phillip Island Bridge opens to traffic
- 1970** Tullamarine Freeway, south of Essendon Airport, opens
- 1971** West Gate Freeway, between Altona and Spotswood, completed



*Glenelg River bridge on Princes Highway, Dartmoor, 1968*



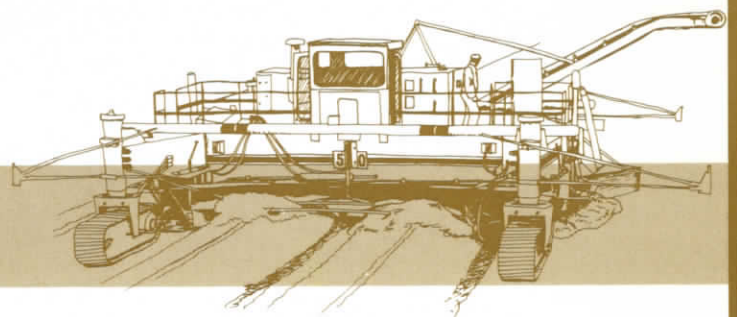
*Dismantling of the old Phillip Island suspension bridge, 1969. Inset : the bridge today*



- 1973** Western Freeway at Pentland Hills and Mulgrave Freeway, Jacksons Road to Springvale Road, Waverley, completed
- 1974** CRB takes over MMBW's roading responsibilities in Melbourne metropolitan area. Completion of work on Mulgrave Freeway, Jacksons Road to Stud Road
- 1975** Completion of Western Freeway at Myrmiong and widening of High Street, St Kilda, and Hoddle Street, Collingwood
- 1976** Completion of Hume Freeway, Wallan to Broadford; South Gippsland Freeway, Hampton Park; Mulgrave Freeway, Springvale Road to Blackburn Road; Snowy River Bridge at Orbost
- 1977** Completion of Eastern Freeway, Collingwood to Bulleen; Mulgrave Freeway, Blackburn Road to Forster Road; Princes Freeway, Orbost
- 1978** West Gate Bridge and Charles Grimes Bridge opens to traffic; completion of Western Freeway, Ballan
- 1979** Completion of final section of Tullamarine Freeway, Essendon; Mulgrave Freeway, Forster Road to Huntingdale Road; Hume Freeway, Avenel to Tubbs Hill. Adoption of SCRAM traffic signal project
- 1980** Abolition of Roads (Special Projects) Fund. Opening of Mornington Peninsula Freeway, Keysborough to Seaford and Hume Freeway at Violet Town
- 1981** Completion of Princes Freeway, Drouin; Hume Freeway Bypass of Avenel; final section of Mulgrave Freeway to Chadstone
- 1982** Completion of Hume Freeway Bypass of Seymour; Calder Freeway Keilor Section; Eastern Freeway arterial road extension and La Trobe Terrace overpass in Geelong. West Gate Bridge Authority abolished and functions transferred to CRB
- 1983** Bypass of Wallace and Bungaree on Western Freeway opened. Restructure of State transport authorities - CRB is replaced by the RCA. Princes Freeway Bypass of Berwick is opened. Last gravel section of Murray Valley Highway is sealed
- 1984** Completion of Hume Freeway at Longwood; extension to Mornington Peninsula Freeway; Nepean Highway duplication between Elsternwick and Moorabbin; Calder Freeway Bypass of Keilor; dual carriageways on Princes Highway at Malvern. Work begins on Hume Freeway Winton Bypass; duplication of South Gippsland Highway and Greensborough Bypass; and South Eastern-Mulgrave Arterial Road Link
- 1985** Opening of Hume Freeway Bypass of Wodonga and Princes Highway Bypass of Warragul. Work begins on Moorooduc Road duplication, South of Frankston; Princes Highway Bypass of Morwell. Last gravel section of Cann Valley Highway is sealed. Start of major noise attenuation fencing project on freeways. West Gate Bridge tolls lifted. New Murray River Crossing at Mildura opened



*Relocating Koonung Creek in an underground conduit on the Arterial Road Extension of the Eastern Freeway, 1982*







**1986** Opening of Princes Highway duplication between Darnum and Nilma. Cyclists given access to Western Freeway and Princes Freeway. Work begins on the Hume Freeway Bypass of Glenrowan; duplication of Footscray Road, West Melbourne; the eastbound extension of West Gate Freeway through South Melbourne; Doncaster-Mitcham Road duplication and Genoa River Bridges on the Princes Highway

**1987** Opening of Western Freeway Bypass of Melton; Hume Freeway duplication at Barnawartha, and bypasses of Benalla and Winton; eastbound lanes of the West Gate Freeway in South Melbourne; Princes Freeway Tynong Section, and the widening of Footscray Road. Work begins on Hume Freeway Bypass of Wangaratta and Bypass of Euroa; duplication of Bell Street, Preston; Barwon River Bridge, Geelong. Last gravel section of Great Ocean Road sealed. Emergency telephones installed on Hume Highway Freeway

**1988** Opening of first stage of Greensborough Bypass in early 1988. Proposed openings of South Eastern - Mulgrave Arterial Road Link; westbound lanes of West Gate Freeway; Bypass of Gisborne; Barwon River Bridge in Geelong; Hume Freeway-Creightons Creek to Euroa and Bypass of Glenrowan; Princes Highway Genoa River Bridge; Moorooduc Road duplication; the Bypass of Dimboola.

*Left : Construction of Plenty River bridge on Greensborough Bypass.*

## Further Information

Further details about the RCA can be obtained from Head Office (see back page) or the regional offices below :

**BARWON**  
63 McKillop Street  
Geelong 3220  
(052) 21 4744

**DANDENONG**  
360 Whitehorse Road  
Nunawading 3131  
(03) 875 4000

**NORTH EASTERN**  
50-52 Clarke Street  
Benalla 3672  
(057) 62 2288

**WIMMERA-MALLEE**  
138 Firebrace Street  
Horsham 3400  
(053) 82 0121

**CENTRAL GIPPSLAND**  
120 Kay Street  
Traralgon 3844  
(051) 74 3311

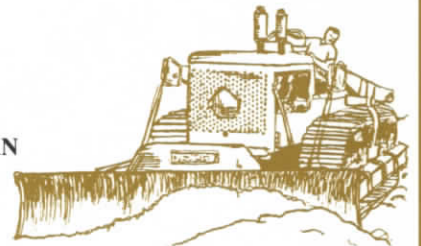
**EAST GIPPSLAND**  
75 Nicholson Street  
Bairnsdale 3875  
(051) 52 3344

**NORTHERN**  
57 Queen Street  
Bendigo 3550  
(054) 43 9133

**CENTRAL HIGHLANDS**  
1315 Sturt Street  
Ballarat 3350  
(053) 32 7361

**METROPOLITAN**  
700 High Steet  
East Kew 3102  
(03) 860 6222

**SOUTH-WESTERN**  
29 Jamieson Street  
Warrnambool 3280  
(055) 62 3955





## Paving the way into the '90s

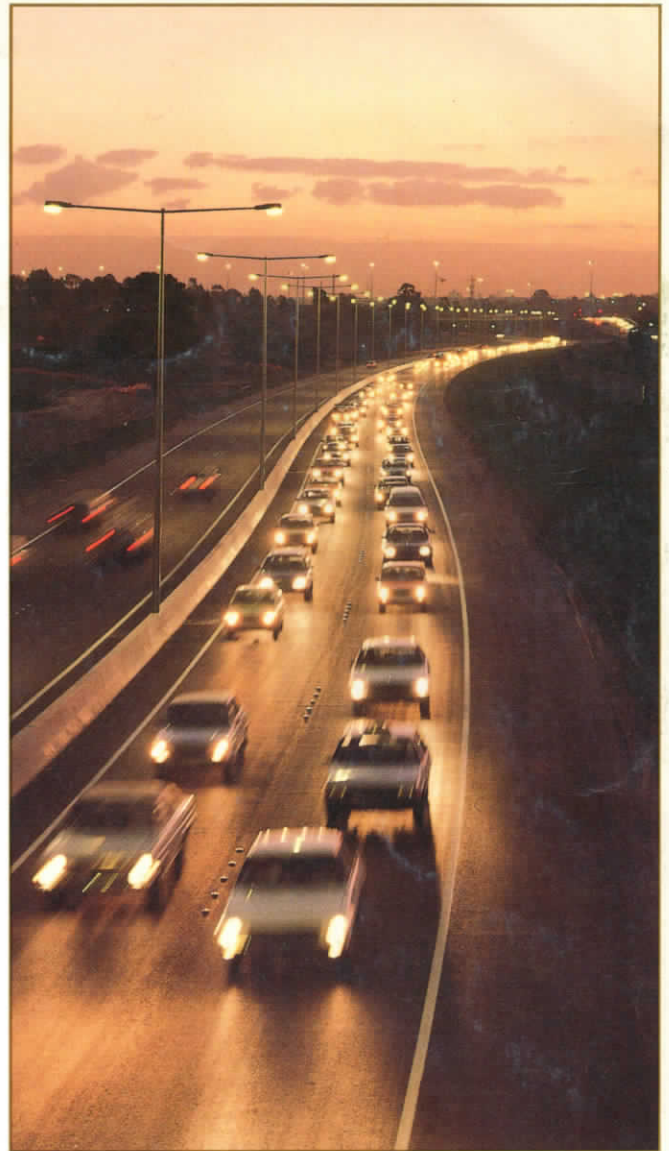
The direction of Victoria's road program is changing markedly in response to State Government policies.

Today, funds are being directed to assist on-road public transport and access to Melbourne's district centres. More emphasis is being placed on road safety, traffic signal co-ordination and freight and bicycle movement.

The framework for future road project investment in Melbourne is outlined in the Metropolitan Arterial Road Strategy (METRAS), released by the State Government in 1987. The RCA has also proposed a National roads strategy, which emphasises the infrastructure investments which support manufacturing development, particularly exports (NATROV).

Several important multi-million dollar projects will be completed by 1990 including the 6 km Calder Freeway Bypass of Gisborne, the 5.8 km Bypass of Greensborough, the duplication of the Hume Highway from Chiltern to Wodonga and Bowser to Sringhurst, Hume Freeway Bypasses of Euroa and Glenrowan, the Barwon River Crossing, Geelong, Moorooduc Road Duplication near Frankston, the 9.5 km Mornington Peninsula Freeway, 16.7 km of the Princes Freeway at Tynong, the first stage of the Princes Highway Bypass of Morwell, the west-bound carriageway of West Gate Freeway, the Western Highway Bypass of Dimboola, and the South Eastern-Mulgrave Arterial Road Link.

Collectively these roads will promote Victoria's economic development as well as improving driving conditions and contributing to road safety.



*Eastern Freeway at Bulleen*

*Loddon River bridge on the Bridgewater - Serpentine Road*

