

MEDIA RELEASE

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National Party turns its back on road safety

The RAC says the WA National Party has betrayed country Western Australians by turning its back on efforts to improve the safety of regional roads.

Just days after the Auditor General handed down a damning report on the perilous state of our road network, the National Party has said it will not use any funds from the Royalties for Regions program for road safety in regional WA.

The RAC had put together a comprehensive submission calling for a "Regional Roads Rescue Program" based on a similar successful strategy which had delivered a dramatic cut in road deaths in country Victoria.

RAC Head of Member Advocacy Matt Brown said the National Party's response would anger many country people who drive on dangerous regional roads.

"Too many people are being killed or seriously injured on our country roads," Mr Brown said.

"Almost two in every three road deaths in Western Australia happen on country roads. There is a clear an urgent need to improve the safety of our regional road network.

"Country Western Australians will be stunned to learn that not a single dollar of the Royalties for Regions fund can be spared for improved road safety across the State.

"RAC surveys consistently show that country drivers rate the poor condition of regional roads as their number one concern.

"It is beyond belief that the Nationals can say that safety on country roads is not 'the responsibility of Regional Development'.

"Our road network underpins our State's economy. Nowhere is this more relevant than for regional economies.

"Lifting the standard of regional roads would not only save lives, it would deliver a long-term economic benefit to regional Western Australia."

In rejecting the RAC proposal, the Minister for Regional Development said that "road safety is well defined within areas of responsibility in relevant local government, state government and federal government agencies."

Mr Brown said this was a convenient rationalisation for the Nationals which would simply not wash with country Western Australians.

"The Royalties for Regions fund has already committed money to a range of other similar areas such as hospitals and schools.

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“These could all have been funded by core government funding. The National Party seem to pick and choose when to apply this so-called principle.

“Regrettably it looks like saving lives on our roads is less important than winning votes.”

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