



AfPA Puts Forward Road Resiliency Recommendations

Wednesday 22nd February 2023

The Australian Flexible Pavement Association (AfPA) has issued a submission on behalf of its members and the wider industry to the House of Representatives Standing Committee on Regional Development, Infrastructure and Transport - regarding its inquiry into the implications of severe weather events on the national, regional, rural, and remote road network.

In the face of mounting road repair backlogs and ongoing network deterioration, the inquiry aims to ensure current and future road resiliency against severe weather events, such as major flooding events and fires, which disproportionately affect rural and regional communities.

AfPA has used the submission to advocate for enhanced road resilience which supports Australian communities using three crucial themes:

- A fix it first Approach to Roads
- Addressing Skills Shortages and
- Incorporating Sustainability into Roads

AfPA's first recommendation toward road resiliency calls for the establishment of more sustainable, healthier, and longer-term pipelines of investment, with a focus on fixing it first. Recommending that governments aim not to just fix problems retroactively, but ensure that roads stay well-maintained year-round, making them more resilient to unpredictable and catastrophic weather events and keep communities connected.

AfPA has also recommended that with the increase of natural disasters in recent years, from floods to bushfires, it is critical to address the underlying cause of weather instability and climate change. Our industry requires support to work toward the best practices and innovative, sustainable methods of road maintenance and repair. This includes encouraging the reuse of renewable engineering materials to support circular economy outcomes across our sector.

Finally, AfPA has highlighted that recent disasters have exposed major shortfalls within the industry – specifically, the availability of trained and skilled workers. An issue only exacerbated in regional and remote areas. AfPA has put forward practical ways to increase the flow of skills into the industry and encouraged upskilling efforts such as the Australian Flexible Pavement Industry Skills Card.



Carlos Rial, CEO of AfPA, said:

“AfPA and its members welcome and share the committee's concern for the increasing deterioration of the nation’s road network, particularly in regional, rural, and remote areas.

“AfPA believes that adopting a fix-it-first approach to road maintenance to address the nations backlog of deteriorated roads – susceptible to weather damage will go a long way to road resilience. In addition, funding roads appropriately will support a nation of skilled first responders to keep communities connected. Finally, our industry is doing its part to ensure we proactively reduce carbon emissions through increased sustainability and circular economy practices.”

For more information, AfPA will be hosting a NSW Industry Breakfast Event ‘Resilience in Roads’ on the 11th of May. Please find details here: <https://www.afpa.asn.au/industry-breakfast-nsw-may-2023/>