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MEDIA RELEASE

The United Dairyfarmers of Victoria and Corangamite Shire have taken up the mantle in pursuing better roads for south-west Victoria's dairyfarmers.

The shire is leading the development of a regional road plan which will be used to seek more funding to improve the road system.

And the UDV is using figures collated by the Western Victorian dairy industry to launch a political campaign to improve the roads and infrastructure.

The moves have been inspired by WestVic Dairy's 'Driving Down the Track' project which prioritised a strategic direction for the industry to reach a goal of producing three billion litres of milk by 2020.

A regional transport committee was formed as part of the Driving Down the Track project, bringing together the key transport decision makers in the region.

Corangamite Shire Director Works and Services Alex Green said the south-west transport plan would inform local, state and federal government decisions on road funding.

Mr Green said the plan would identify key areas where investment would benefit the regional economy.

"It will identify where money would be best invested in infrastructure to develop the region's economy."

The shire has sourced \$100,000 additional funding for the study which will be carried out by Hyder Consulting.

Mr Green said the impetus for the plan came from the WestVic Dairy Driving Down the Track initiative.

"This will be a good initiative for the region. It stemmed from discussions held with WestVic Dairy and the formation of the regional group which included representatives of local government, the dairy industry, manufacturers and other key players in the region's economy."

"It will focus on the region's growing industries of which dairying is probably the most important," Mr Green said.

UDV south-west regional representative Roma Britnell said data collated by WestVic Dairy as part of the Driving Down the Track project would be used to advocate for more road funding.

"It is clear to most farmers that Western Victoria lags behind the north and the east of the state when it comes to roads, but we need to have facts and figures to support any campaign to the government for more funding," Mrs Britnell said.

"The work in Driving Down the Track highlighted the depth of the problem and brought all the major players into one room, leading to the development of the transport plan which will give us more chance of a positive outcome."

Mrs Britnell said she would be working in the UDV to take up the issue at the political level. "That's the best possible outcome. WestVic Dairy has come up with the information and brought people together and now the UDV can take it to the next level."

Mr Green said work on the road plan was expected to start in November.

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