



MEDIA RELEASE

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FIXING COUNTRY ROADS: \$42.85 MILLION TO HELP UPGRADE COUNCIL-OWNED FREIGHT INFRASTRUCTURE

NSW Deputy Premier Troy Grant and Minister for Roads and Freight Duncan Gay today announced 77 projects on council-owned roads would be largely funded as part of the NSW Government's \$42.85 million *Fixing Country Roads* program.

"*Fixing Country Roads* is about moving freight around the state more efficiently – and I am immensely proud the NSW Liberals & Nationals Government is helping regional councils to fix freight pinch points on their roads," Mr Grant said.

"For 16 years under Labor, country communities and businesses were treated like second-class citizens – but now with initiatives like *Fixing Country Roads* and *Bridges for the Bush*, regional transport and freight are firmly back on track."

Fixing Country Roads is about better connecting local and regional roads to state highways and key freight hubs such as silos, saleyards, rail heads, super market distribution centres, industrial parks and depots to make it easier to move regional freight from paddock to port.

Mr Grant said by getting trucks to key freight hubs – including grain rail heads – more efficiently, the NSW Government can help take pressure off council-owned roads and therefore reduce 'wear and tear' on these assets.

"*Fixing Country Roads* has been designed to complement a number of historic rail freight funding initiatives, including our \$277 million investment over five years to upgrade and maintain grain rail lines and \$6 million to upgrade rail sidings throughout country NSW," Mr Grant said.

"The NSW Government has partnered with regional councils and the Australian Government to grow the *Fixing Country Roads* program to a total package of works worth \$89 million over the next couple of years.

"I sincerely thank the Deputy Prime Minister of Australia and Federal Nationals Leader Warren Truss for jointly funding a lot of these council projects through the *Bridges Renewal* and *Heavy Vehicle Safety and Productivity* programmes – Warren always delivers for regional Australia.

"I also congratulate all those regional councils who worked closely with both the NSW and Australian governments to successfully secure funding through these multiple initiatives."

Mr Gay said too many local roads and bridges are unable to carry the weight of high productivity vehicles, like modern B-doubles, which means these freight trucks are unable to take the most direct and cost-effective route to transport goods to market.

“Labor left councils in NSW with a huge backlog of critical freight infrastructure, and these historic state and federal government funding initiatives are helping regional councils and businesses reduce their costs and grow their local economies.”

Mr Gay said three quarters of the projects were ‘shovel ready’ and this meant the majority of councils can start work over the coming weeks and months.

“60 successful council applications are road and bridge construction projects while 17 successful applications are bridge and culvert assessments, which will see the load carrying capability of a total of 420 bridges and culverts assessed right across country NSW,” Mr Gay said.

Fixing Country Roads projects were selected by an independent Assessment Panel for their capacity to boost freight productivity and ease network capacity constraints – or ‘last mile’ problems – right across country NSW.

The Assessment Panel was made up of representatives from the NSW Farmers Association, Livestock and Bulk Carriers Association of NSW, Local Government NSW, Infrastructure NSW and senior officials from Transport for NSW’s Freight and Regional Development Division, Treasury and the Office of Local Government.

Mr Gay said the NSW Government’s commitment to helping councils was at an historic high – *Fixing Country Roads* is on top of the \$1.55 billion committed since March 2011 to help country and city councils across the state build and repair their local roads, bridges and culverts.

“Since March 2011, the NSW Government has invested \$15.4 billion to upgrade and repair state and council owned roads, bridges and culverts in regional NSW,” Mr Gay said.

“This equates to \$3.85 billion each year, a 59 per cent increase in average annual funding compared to past Labor governments.”

Councils with successful *Fixing Country Roads* projects will be invited by Transport for NSW’s Freight and Regional Development Division to attend briefing sessions to arrange the payment of grants, including some additional funding from the historic high levels of funding in the roads budget, and discuss the construction schedule of selected projects.

Mr Grant said if the NSW Liberals and Nationals Government was re-elected in March then a further \$500 million would flow to future funding rounds of *Fixing Country Roads*.

“This means those projects not selected by the independent Assessment Panel in this first round could get further opportunities for funding in the future,” he said.

Councils with successful *Fixing Country Roads* projects will soon be formally notified. For a list of successful Fixing Country Roads projects, please visit the [Transport for NSW Freight and Regional Development website](#).

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