



BRAIDWOOD COMMUNITY ASSOCIATION

30 October 2022

Mrs Nichole Overall, MP
Member for Monaro, NSW Legislative Assembly

Sent by email to: monaro@parliament.nsw.gov.au

Dear Nichole,

Subject: Deteriorating state of rural roads

I am writing to you on behalf of the Braidwood Community Association to express our concern at the above. No doubt when driving around your electorate you have seen firsthand what is happening to our roads. It is not an understatement to say that we are facing a national emergency on the state of rural roads.

With this extended exceptional period of wet weather and heavy downfalls of rain, local Councils, in our case Queanbeyan and Palerang Regional Council (QPRC), are fighting a losing battle to keep our roads, even state roads, safe to drive on. Some have so many potholes they are more like a dodgem course than a road.

Such roads have become dangerous leading to more accidents, injuries and potentially fatalities. Then there are the personal costs of repairs to vehicles damaged after hitting a pothole. Added to that there is the broader economic cost of these impacts on the economy through the additional time it takes to travel as drivers reduce their speed to match the conditions.

While QPRC is doing all that it can to patch the roads, all it takes is a heavy downpour and the repairs are washed out and made worse. To undertake more significant repairs like resheeting or reconstruction of the whole road takes resources that QPRC simply does not have.

The announcement on 25 October by the NSW Government to invest \$50 million under the new Fixing Local Roads Pothole Repair Round is very much welcomed in this regard. But with some 95 Councils eligible for this scheme, this is only amounts to just over \$526,000 per Council and will go nowhere near meeting the real costs facing Councils.

Further this scheme is limited to only fixing potholes and explicitly excludes any reconstruction work, re-sheeting work, rehabilitation work and any bridge repairs or maintenance work. In many cases just filling the potholes simply does not provide the solution needed.

We urge you therefore to seek further significant additional funding for this scheme and for rural and regional roads in general to address this exceptional situation.

We recognise how important existing programs are to improving the state of rural roads, including Fixing Local Roads and Fixing Country Roads. These programs need to be continued with enhanced funding.

Encouraging the Commonwealth government to maintain and enhance funding for their local road programs, like the Local Roads and Community Infrastructure Program, the Roads to

Recovery Program, the Black Spot Program and the Bridges Renewal Program, is also of importance in addressing this issue. As would be enhancing the Commonwealth Financial Assistance Grants to local Councils, which has declined over the past three decades from around 1% of Commonwealth taxation revenue to around just 0.53%.

I would be more than happy to show you the state of our local roads should you wish to see them yourself.

Thank you in anticipation.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Sue Murray". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, stylized initial "S" and "M".

Sue Murray
President, Braidwood Community Association.

Background information – not included in the letter

[Fixing Local Roads Pothole Repair Round](#)

The \$50 million Fixing Local Roads Pothole Repair Round will supplement existing funding and support additional efforts by local councils in the short-term repair of priority potholes and road repairs on local and regional roads.

[The Local Government Recovery Grants program](#) is jointly funded by the Australian and NSW Government and administered by the Office of Local Government under Category D of the Disaster Recovery Funding Arrangements (DRFA) 2018.

Only covers designated Councils and does not address deteriorating roads

[Fixing Local Roads](#) is a \$500 million NSW Government program enabling councils to accelerate upgrades and maintenance on their local road network. The NSW road network is over 180,000 kilometres in length, with approximately 80 per cent classified as 'Local Roads'. Local councils are currently responsible for maintaining well over 85 per cent of the NSW road network (including Regional and Local Roads).

Councils can apply for funding to complete vital works to improve journeys on these local roads which are used by regional communities every day, making journeys for locals, farmers and freight safer, more efficient and more reliable.

[Fixing Country Roads](#) is a \$543 million NSW Government program providing targeted infrastructure funding from Restart NSW for regional freight projects. Regional councils can apply to repair and upgrade local and regional roads to improve the movement of freight to key freight hubs and state roads. Applications for truck wash projects can also be made through Fixing Country Roads.