

## NSW LOCAL ROADS CONGRESS

### Making Our Roads Work

5 June 2017

#### Congress Communiqué

The NSW Roads & Transport Directorate, a partnership between Local Government NSW and the Institute of Public Works Engineering Australasia (IPWEA), in holding the 2017 NSW Local Roads Congress resolved to announce the following communiqué.

The Congress recognizes the contribution of other levels of Government in providing ongoing financial assistance for the management of local roads and infrastructure, particularly in regional areas through:

#### **NSW Government**

- Rebuilding NSW
- Regional Road Block Grant and REPAIR Programmes
- Fixing Country Roads
- Fixing Country Rail
- Fixing Country Truck Washes

#### **Australian Government**

- Bridges Renewal Programme
- Heavy Vehicle Safety and Productivity Programme
- Black Spot Programme
- Roads to Recovery Program
- Financial Assistance Grants

While the funding of the Roads to Recovery Programme has been maintained with \$4.4 billion from 2013–14 to 2020–21 for the construction, repair and upgrade of local roads; it is critical to the management of council roads there is a need for this funding to become permanent and for the quantum to be increased to support regional freight connections and to provide efficient links between areas of production and national and international ports and markets.

Local Government acknowledges the key role that these funding programs provide in assisting to address social equity, road safety and drive the economy, noting the particular importance of providing support to regional communities. These capital funding programs are vital to supporting productivity improvements by addressing the 'first mile' issues on local and regional roads, to open up access by higher productivity freight vehicles to improve transport efficiency.

The chronic under-funding of basic road resurfacing and renewal works is contributing to worsening road safety outcomes as evidenced by the increasing road toll on local and regional roads. The Congress notes with concern:

- the increasing proportion of fatal and injury crashes occurring in regional NSW, now representing 67% of fatalities
- the increasing proportion and number of fatal and injury crashes occurring on Council roads, now representing over 45% of crashes
- the high percentage of pedestrian fatalities, now representing 18% of all road related deaths in NSW

Information collected by IPWEA (NSW) indicates that very few councils have adopted a Strategic Road Safety Plan as part of their suite of strategic planning tools. This must be addressed to ensure that councils are considering the road safety implications of all the activities they undertake.

The NSW Local Government Road Safety Officers programme is a key part of addressing the road safety issue. The current three year funding program is creating uncertainty for Councils and making it difficult to retain qualified Road Safety Officers. The Congress calls on the NSW Government to make a long term commitment to the NSW Local Government Road Safety Officer programme.

**The Congress fully supports Australian Local Government Association's (ALGA) call for:**

- *A Local Government - Higher Productivity Investment Plan* of \$200m per year over 5 years be provided by the Federal Government to facilitate increased freight access on local roads by addressing current barriers to effective implementation of the Heavy Vehicle National Law
- *A Local Government Community Infrastructure Program* of \$300m per year over 4 years to help achieve important social and regional policy outcomes, including attraction and retention of skilled workers, preventative health, social cohesion and tolerance, stronger social capital and community resilience and better access to broad-based education, learning and employment.

The Congress fully supports The Local Government NSW (LGNSW) *Submission on the NSW Budget for 2017/18* publication in relation to road and transport infrastructure issues, principally the focus on: *"investment in local infrastructure - roads in particular – as the logical, crucial "last mile" of its infrastructure strategy and a key part of the NSW Government's urban and regional planning agenda, driven by population growth, demand for housing and the need for liveable communities"*.

The Congress notes the significant impact the skills shortage in professional personnel is having on delivering outcomes for the community and calls on the Australian and NSW Governments to work with Local Government to build the capacity of existing professional personnel and support an increased number of cadetships across the Local Government sector.

To further the outcomes of this Congress, the Congress calls on Governments to take the following measures:

**NSW Local Government**

The Congress calls on all Councils in NSW to:

1. progress the Congress Communiqué by all Councils writing to the relevant Ministers and their local NSW and Australian Government MPs seeking their support for the Congress outcomes
2. continue to improve asset management performance including working with the Office of Local Government to provide transparency and consistency of infrastructure measures within the Integrated Planning & Reporting framework
3. pro-actively address the skills shortage issue by incorporating measures within each Council's Workforce Strategy to:
  - a. build capacity within the Local Government sector by supporting ongoing training and knowledge sharing, including within regional groups and peak professional bodies
  - b. implement a cadetship program with appropriate experiential development and mentoring programs to develop the skills needed to deliver services to our communities in the short and long term
4. actively support the pursuit of innovation and use of improved techniques to better meet community needs.
5. implement Road Safety Auditor training of existing staff available through the partnership with IPWEA NSW and Transport for NSW to develop the specialist skills within all Councils
6. develop strategic road safety plans by no later than 30 June, 2019
7. support long term asset management of local roads by extending membership of Weight of Loads Groups to include a greater number of councils across NSW

### **NSW Government**

The Congress calls on the NSW Government to:

1. work with the LG sector to develop improved infrastructure reporting including 10 year forward infrastructure schedules based on condition, functionality and capacity requirements needed to service the community, now and in longer term
2. develop a sustainable infrastructure funding framework and model utilizing the Integrated Planning and Reporting Framework as the basis gathering an aggregated funding picture for NSW Councils
3. work with the Australian Government to redistribute additional Federal Assistance Grants within NSW to regional to address social equity and reduce the infrastructure renewal funding gap. Any reduction in funding for metropolitan councils to be offset by a one off approval to increase rates above the approved rate cap
4. develop a more meaningful rating system for Councils as an incentive to meeting population density targets, and ensuring Councils are financially sustainable, including consideration of rating vertically to recognize the demands placed upon Councils from high density development
5. continue to provide resources to Local Government for the management and upgrade of transport infrastructure, particularly to address the declining condition of bridges, open up opportunities for higher productivity vehicles
6. implement a new Active Walking Programme to supplement the existing Active Transport Programme, to address the deficiency in footpaths and pedestrian facilities
7. implement a programme through the Department of Planning to develop strategies to determine and mitigate the cumulative impact of State Significant Development, e.g. mining, on communities and transport infrastructure beyond the immediate development area
8. undertake meaningful engagement with Local Government across the regions including to develop the NSW Transport Plan, Regional Transport Plans (inclusive of Freight Plans and identified intermodal options), NSW Freight and Ports Strategy and NSW Road Safety Plan
9. ensure all transport and freight plans refocus on the proposed solutions to provide an integrated network of rail, road transport, intermodals and address the need to overcome institutional impediments to access to rail
10. increase the Regional Roads Block Grant funding to address the \$89 million per year funding gap on Regional Roads
11. commit to ongoing council involvement in existing RMCC arrangements on the state road network
12. support for councils to work with local businesses and communities to implement local and regional Climate Change Plans - particularly in relation to infrastructure.
13. re-assess all environmental legislation to provide clarity and allow road safety to be addressed within road reserves in an efficient and cost effective manner within Local and Regional Road reserves
14. Consider broader landscape solutions, including the current sale of Crown road reserves and the proposed biodiversity funding programs, to address sustainability of fauna and flora, outside of the road corridors.
15. Support councils financially in developing and implementing strategic road safety plans as part of the implementation of the NSW Road Safety Plan 2021
16. Increase financial support for Weight of Loads groups for better road asset management and road safety.
17. to improve reporting and sharing of data with Local Government for emergency situations (road closures etc.)
18. Actively support, and commit to working collaboratively with, the Regional Infrastructure Coordinator, particularly in improving the delivery of road infrastructure across NSW.

### **NSW & Australian Governments**

The Congress calls on the NSW and Australian Governments to:

1. Work with Councils to develop improved integrated regional transport plans
2. Continue the funding to Local Government under grant programmes such as *Fixing Country Roads* and the *Bridges Renewal Programme*
3. Build upon the Fixing Country Rail Programme to target the reduction of freight loads on local and regional roads, including resolving institutional impediments for access to existing rail
4. Provide transport linkages, both rail and road, to the future inland rail line to ensure the best productivity outcomes for NSW and Australia.
5. ALGA work with COAG, informed by IPWEA, and other State LG peak bodies and, to develop a new National Infrastructure Partnership for the three tiers of Government for smarter long term investment planning in transport and community infrastructure.
6. Review the National Disaster relief payments scheme to
  - Establish turnaround times by Government for approvals of works to mitigate the risk of managing damaged road networks
  - Allow Councils to determine the most efficient and effective method of delivery of works, either by day labour or contract
  - Allow Local Government to utilize the funding for betterment of affected assets, to reduce future potential damage, risk and inconvenience to our communities

### **Australian Government**

The Congress calls on the Australian Government to:

1. Work with the NSW Government to review the distribution of Federal Assistance Grants in NSW, having regard to social equity for regional communities with lower populations
2. progressively increase funding to Local Government tied to a percentage of the GST equivalent to 1% of National GDP
3. permanent doubling of Roads to Recovery (to at least \$700 million per annum) from 2019-20
4. reinstate the funding gap created by the FAG indexation freeze and to fund the gap into the future
5. require ARTC to identify, consider and address community infrastructure impacts resulting from increased use of rail freight, as part of their future "Capacity Strategy Plans."

### **Australian Local Government Association**

The NSW Congress seeks the support of ALGA to deliver the NSW Roads Congress outcomes.

### **Further enquiries:**

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