



A physically and digitally connected region

For our communities, businesses and visitors to be connected through a diverse range of safe, inclusive, low impact private and public transport options and high quality, reliable internet and mobile telecommunications services.



Accelerated road repair program through doubling the funding of the Commonwealth Government's Roads to Recovery Program and the NSW Government's Regional Roads Repair Program over the next four years.

Goal #6: An efficient, safe and sustainable regional transport system that enables improved productivity, connectivity and social inclusion for businesses, residents and visitors.

Background: The Roads to Recovery Program supports the maintenance of the nation's local road infrastructure asset, which facilitates greater access for Australians and improved safety, economic and social outcomes. From the 2013 to 2014 financial year to the 2021 to 2022 financial year the Australian Government will provide \$4.8 billion under the Roads to Recovery Program.

The REPAIR Program is a *Roads and Maritime Services* grant program providing funding to Local Government for the management and maintenance of Regional Roads, providing funds to assist councils in carrying out larger rehabilitation and development works on Regional Roads, aiming to minimise the long-term maintenance costs of these roads in line with their function and usage.

Policy Context: The *Regional NSW Services and Infrastructure Plan* sets a 40-year vision for transport in regional NSW to support liveable communities and productive economies. The aspiration for regional NSW is to maximise its potential recognising the diversity between regions in their natural assets, individual communities, local skills and globally competitive industries. The **vision for regional NSW** is a safe, efficient and reliable network of transport services and infrastructure that recognises and reinforces the vital role of regional cities such as **Lismore** as hubs for services, employment and social interaction for their surrounding communities. Achieving this vision will require an integrated whole-of-government approach, working in partnership with local communities and stakeholders to deliver integrated transport networks and places that best meet the needs of our wide range of customers. The NSW Government's *Regional Development Framework* provides an overall vision across Government for regional development in NSW and acts as a point of reference for work such as *Future Transport 2056*.

Should the Nationals be elected, they have announced in February 2019 that cost shifting will be addressed by establishing a process to take back up to 15,000km of the 'Regional Road' network. NRJO councils will require input into the independent expert panel that will determine a process, cost and timeline to take back these regional roads.

Achievements and changes needed to achieve the goal: Transport plays a key role and the NR has some important links in place including several regional airports, upgraded sections of the Pacific Highway and access to external markets through the Gold Coast International Airport and the Port of Brisbane.

Unfortunately, transport shortfalls remain. Many communities have no access to public transport and poor quality roads limit tourism, safety and the movement of freight.

Problem: The financial information is compiled from council annual statutory returns. The NRMA has highlighted the infrastructure backlog issues with regional data highlighting the problem:

- The North Coast had the biggest infrastructure shortfall at \$16.6m
- The North Coast is one of the top five infrastructure backlog regions. The combined infrastructure backlog in these regions totals \$1.29b representing 77% of the total regional backlog and 57.3% of total NSW backlog.
- North Coast region has the highest infrastructure backlog estimate at \$437.8m, being 26% of the total backlog.

A good quality transportation network requires ongoing and increased investment, which is vital to a region achieving its economic growth potential and so enabling the appropriate regional development for the NR that is envisaged and embodied within the *Northern Rivers and Tweed Transport Plans* and corresponding *Regional Economic Development Strategies*.

Support and Partnerships: A collaboration between Regional Development Australia – Northern Rivers, DPC and Southern Cross University is producing a *NR Freight and Supply Chain Strategy*. The study included extensive stakeholder engagement, with the study being enriched by the valued local input from producers, manufacturers, council staff and industry bodies. The study has explored what is needed for resilience of the system and the following issues must be addressed and resourced:

- Flooding risk and improved immunity of structures and particular routes
- Impact of vehicle accidents/incidents on the transport system and the need for alternate routes and options
- Bushfire impacts both on transport systems and transport systems that provide improved ability to combat bushfires
- Dealing with congestion points and drivers
- Vehicle type selections and route approvals
- Opportunities for building in redundancy and/or additional transport options of similar or equal efficiency



NRJO will represent the region's interests in the *Transport for NSW*-led process to develop region-specific, place-based and corridor plans for the NR, with a focus on:

- Improved connectivity between regional centres, including east-west connectivity
- More public, community and active transport options
- Use of innovative technology and materials in transport options
- Low emissions transport

Solution and Actions sought: As demonstrated in the attached table of NRJO member councils (Special Schedule 7 of Annual Financial Statements), the total estimated cost to bring infrastructure to satisfactory standard is **\$123,485,000**.

NRJO has agreed that a doubling of the two key roads programs is needed for a satisfactory standard.



Estimated Cost to Bring to Satisfactory Standard	Sealed roads	Unsealed roads	Bridges	Footpaths	Totals
Kyogle Council	2,793,000	3,158,000	6,807,000	26,000	12,784,000
Tweed Shire Council	6,639,000	101,000	16,000	606,000	7,362,000
Byron Shire Council	24,037,000	1,045,000	6,274,000	550,000	31,906,000
Ballina Shire Council	628,000	216,000	717,000	46,000	1,607,000
Lismore City Council	47,106,000	5,868,000	9,820,000	773,000	63,567,000
Richmond Valley Council	5,135,000	294,000	830,000	-	6,259,000
Total for the NRJO Member Councils in the Region					\$123,485,000