



MAYORAL MINUTE NO 26/2022

CALLING FOR A METROPOLITAN COUNCIL ROAD REPAIRS PROGRAM

8 NOVEMBER 2022

The NSW Government announced in October that it would provide \$50 million to help regional and rural councils fix the increasing number of potholes that were brought on by the record-breaking rain. This means that rural councils can apply for funding under the new Fixing Local Roads Pothole Repair Program to address their highest priority pothole requests.

Just like our rural regions, The Hills Shire has also been affected by persistent wet weather systems over a three-year period. On top of this, our residents have endured four major flooding disasters in the space of 16 months and our roads are deteriorating much quicker than our modelling could have predicted under a third consecutive La Nina. Despite about two-thirds of our Shire being considered rural, we are still not eligible to apply for this funding.

In addition to the record rain, we are seeing more requests for pothole and road repairs than ever before. In 2019, Council received 1680 calls to fix potholes and carryout road patching work. This has now grown to 4783 requests in 2022 – and we still have just under two months to go.

The wet weather is also hindering our efforts to carry out more permanent repairs, and as soon as we place bitumen down, the rain returns and more damage is done to our roads. We are also dealing with material and road contractor shortages, as some of our road require extensive repairs, and there's also additional costs associated with emergency works.

To help address the backlog of requests, Council approved to increase our road asset maintenance and renewal budget by a further \$938k in August. This is on top of the \$2.4million that we've already spent from March to June 2022 on road maintenance and repairs. A further \$1.7 million was approved during the last Ordinary Meeting of Council on October 26 for various road patching jobs across our Shire. These additional funds will make this our biggest-ever road asset maintenance and renewal budget to date and will enable Council to carryout urgent repairs and tackle the growing number of potholes across our road network.

Unprecedented inflation is also pushing up our road maintenance and repairs costs. These rising prices, coupled with multiple natural disasters and unrelenting rain, is stretching our budgets beyond capacity. We've now been placed in a difficult position where we are now weighing up how to deliver certain community services that our residents rely on so that we can keep our roads open to vehicles.

In addition to this, the current rate peg methodology is also failing to meet inflation and the only way we can make up the cost is through revenue provided from the NSW and Federal Governments. Just recently Local Government NSW declared a 'Statewide Roads

Emergency' at the National Local Roads and Transport Congress in Hobart. This declaration, which was supported by NSW mayors, urged the NSW and Federal Governments to increase funding commitments to help local governments repair their road network before the situation became even more dire.

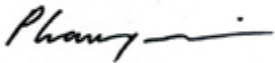
That's why I'm calling on the NSW and Federal Governments to start a road repair scheme – similar to the one that is being offered to rural LGAs - for metropolitan councils who have also been impacted by the ongoing wet weather. This additional funding will help Council carryout these repairs and return our roads, especially those that have been affected by rain and floods, back to a standard that our residents have been calling for.

Our Council is aware that road conditions is a top priority in our Shire right now and we are doing everything we can to repair our roads. However, we can't do this alone, and we will need the support of the NSW and Federal Governments to help us through this time.

Accordingly I move that:

MOTION

1. This Mayoral Minute be received.
2. A letter be written to the NSW Minister for Metropolitan Roads, the Hon. Natalie Ward MP, as well as to the NSW Minister for Regional Transport and Roads, the Hon. Samuel Faraway MP and the Federal Minister for Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development and Local Government, the Hon. Catherine King MP to request a road repair fund for NSW metropolitan councils.
3. A copy of the letter to be sent to the State Members for Hawkesbury, Castle Hill and Baulkham Hills, and the Federal Members for Mitchell and Berowra.



Dr Peter Gangemi
MAYOR