

**TO THE HONOURABLE THE SPEAKER
AND MEMBERS
OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES**

This petition of the people of the Manning Valley, NSW, draws to the attention of the House:

The urgent and immediate need for additional funding to regional councils to replace ageing and unsafe bridges and roads, which are an unreasonable burden on residents of rural Australia. A 2013 national survey of 344 Local Government Areas (LGAs) by ALGA highlighted that over 12% of rural sealed roads and 18% of unsealed roads managed by rural councils are in poor or very poor condition.

Greater Taree City Council (GTCC) has a \$300 million roads and bridges infrastructure backlog. With a rates income of \$25 million per annum, and a proposed capital expenditure on infrastructure for the year 2014–15 of only \$8 million, this situation is unsustainable.

Recently, the Minister for Infrastructure and Regional Development withdrew from GTCC a budgeted allocation of \$11.4 million for four critically important infrastructure projects, despite the fact that the Australian Government had already advanced \$1.1 million to GTCC to design these projects. Many of GTCC's 240 bridges are approaching the end of their lifespan. Rural LGAs were not designed to replace all ageing roads and bridges infrastructure, nor do they have the financial capacity to do so.

We therefore ask the House to:

- Immediately restore the \$11.4 million roads and bridges funding package to GTCC.
- Allocate additional funding to GTCC for its Roads and Bridges Replacement Program.
- Urgently establish and fund structures for providing direct funding to rural LGAs for roads and bridges.