

**ATTACHMENT 2:** ALGA Advocacy Campaign: Strathbogie Shire Council Media Release

A new independent research report has recommended that Australian councils are provided with an extra \$1 billion in federal funding year each year to maintain and upgrade their local roads.

The Grattan Institute's *Potholes and pitfalls: how to fix local roads report*: [Potholes and pitfalls: How to fix local roads \(grattan.edu.au\)](https://grattan.edu.au/potholes-and-pitfalls-how-to-fix-local-roads) recommends that the Government increases untied federal funding to councils through Financial Assistance Grants by \$600 million per year, and Roads to Recovery funding by \$400 million per year.

This aligns with the Australian Local Government Association's call for Financial Assistance Grants to be restored to at least one percent of Commonwealth taxation revenue and Roads to Recovery funding increased to \$800 million per year.

One of the key issues identified in the Grattan Institute's report is that federal funding to councils is not keeping up with increases in road construction and maintenance costs.

"Flooding has damaged our roads so badly we must look at repairs that are above and beyond our normal maintenance programs.

"We estimate the damage bill could be as high as \$50 million – something that is well outside our ability to fund.

"On top of this the flood event has forced the closure of Kirwans Bridge – a crucial access route to locals and visitors – and the Goulburn River underneath Chinaman's Bridge is closed because collapse is imminent."

The report also highlights that many regional, rural and remote councils face additional challenges in maintaining their local roads, based on their large geographic size and relatively small ratepayer base.

"At the local level, Strathbogie is responsible for the maintenance of more than 2,210 km of roads – 1,465 kms of unsealed and 748 kms of sealed. On top of this there are 521 bridges and culverts and 37 kms of cycleways and over 14 kms of formed walking tracks to maintain.

"The repairs needed on our road network is significant and we will need funding from the State and Federal governments.

"Not only do we want to repair our roads, we also want to future-proof them to ensure they can withstand the ongoing effects of severe weather events due to climate change."

The Grattan Institute has also recommended that the Federal Government establish a new \$200 million per year fund to assess and upgrade local roads identified as priority freight routes.

"It's about ensuring the quality of our roads and ensuring these roads can withstand the effects of freight transportation, major flooding events and other factors which we know are likely to cause ongoing damage."

The Federal Government is currently undertaking a review of Australia's Infrastructure Investment Pipeline, which also includes local government road funding programs.

"Council is reliant on funding allocations through the Federal Government's roads and infrastructure programs to either improve our local road networks or deliver priority community infrastructure projects."