

# STRENGTHEN Strathbogie

BY PROVIDING ADEQUATE  
FUNDING TO RURAL COUNCILS



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## THE PROBLEM

The Strathbogie Shire is located in the Hume Region, approximately 90 minutes from Melbourne. The shire has a small ratepayer base of approximately 7,000 people and maintains over 3000km of roads, over 500 bridges and major culverts and a multitude of community buildings and facilities.

Despite significantly reducing operating expenditure per annum in the last five years through efficiency initiatives, the Strathbogie Shire, like other small rural shires, faces challenges to deliver acceptable levels of service to residents while remaining financially sustainable.

The recent three year freeze on indexation of Financial Assistance Grants, the termination of the Country Roads and Bridges Program in 2015 and the introduction of the Fair Go Rates Policy has placed substantial revenue pressure on the Strathbogie Shire. Infrastructure maintenance is the major budgetary item, yet the 'Know Your Council' results show residents are dissatisfied with the standard of our roads.

## THE SOLUTION

The Strathbogie Shire agrees with the recent Parliamentary Inquiry into the sustainability of Victoria's rural and regional councils that a "new approach to funding councils" is required, one that improves fairness and equity.

The Strathbogie Shire also believes that changes should be made to the Financial Assistance Grant Scheme to ensure funding is provided to councils that face the greatest financial sustainability challenges. Per capita funding being removed from metropolitan councils who have the potential to raise revenue from sources not available in rural areas e.g. parking.

Recent announcements regarding increased funding for rural roads are a start, but the funding announced is not of the magnitude to move ahead of the 'renewal curve'.

## THE ASK

Project	Description
<b>Financial Assistance Grant scheme</b>	Funding allocated based on greatest financial sustainability challenges rather than per capita funding
<b>Infrastructure Investment</b>	Greater funding for rural and regional Councils to adequately maintain and renew infrastructure

## THE RESULT

- ✓ **Greater capacity** for Councils to **meet community expectations**
- ✓ Improved **quality of roads** and other **infrastructure** across the Strathbogie Shire
- ✓ **Fair** and **equal** approach to funding Councils
- ✓ Stronger transport links **connecting local producers** and **manufacturers** to intrastate and interstate markets as well as gateways for **international trade**



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