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**SENATOR TONY SHELDON
SPECIAL ENVOY FOR DISASTER RECOVERY
SENATOR FOR NSW**



**THE HON JENNY AITCHISON
MINISTER FOR REGIONAL TRANSPORT AND ROADS**

JOINT MEDIA RELEASE

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**\$32 MILLION FUND WILL SUPPORT THE CENTRAL WEST TO
'BUILD BACK BETTER' LOCAL ROADS AND BRIDGES**

Applications are now open for funding to help four Central West councils rebuild their transport infrastructure to better withstand the challenges posed by future severe weather events.

The \$32 million Regional Transport Resilience Fund (RTRF) is jointly funded by the Albanese and NSW Governments to assist betterment work in the worst hit local government areas (LGAs) of the Central West:

- Cabonne
- Forbes
- Lachlan, and
- Parkes

Transport for NSW and the NSW Reconstruction Authority started working with eligible Councils earlier this year to identify opportunities for betterment projects and support councils to make submissions which are due by 31 May.

The RTRF package is part of the recently announced joint Commonwealth and State Government \$100 million *Central West Recovery and Resilience Package*. The RTRF will see vital transport infrastructure like bridges and flood crossings replaced and roads improved.

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Importantly, this program focuses on building back better to ensure communities across the Central West are better prepared in the face of future disasters.

Quotes attributable to Special Envoy for Disaster Recovery, Senator Tony Sheldon:

“The Albanese Government is committed to working with the Minns Government to make sure communities in New South Wales are more prepared for increasingly intense and frequent severe weather events in the future, so they can respond effectively and recover quicker.

“Betterment work ensures that assets like roads and bridges are built back to an improved standard, helping Central West communities to bounce back faster after severe weather events.

“By investing now to improve the quality and durability of transport infrastructure, we reduce the need to close roads and important access routes, as well as the time it takes to clear debris and rebuild for communities, each time severe weather hits.”

Quotes attributable to NSW Minister for Regional Transport and Roads Jenny Aitchison:

“The 2022 floods in the Central West had a catastrophic impact on local government transport infrastructure, impacting a geographical area of about 11,000 kilometres, severing critical emergency access and community service connections, and causing extensive damage.

“These works will help reduce future costs of repairs to road and transport assets damaged by natural disasters, as well as improving safety, asset utility and connectivity during, and after natural disasters.

“Research shows that for every dollar invested in risk mitigation and betterment, up to \$10 is saved in recovery.”

Further information:

The \$32 million Regional Transport Resilience Fund (RTRF) is jointly funded by the Australian and NSW Governments through the Disaster Recovery Funding Arrangements (DRFA).

Eligible councils will need to submit detailed project estimates by 31 May 2024 which will be assessed, and successful funding announced from June 2024. Successful councils must start work on their betterment work within 12 months from executing their funding instrument.

Projects will be prioritised based on their ability to:

- Strengthen the regional transport network's capability to withstand natural disasters
- Improve the reliability of the regional transport network for regional communities during and after disaster events
- Enhance the adaptability of the regional transport network during and after disaster events
- Improve the regional transport network's ability to respond and recover when disasters occur
- Improve community safety through enabling a safer regional transport network readiness and ability to deliver the nominated program.

Transport infrastructure, including roads and bridges, was significantly impacted in these LGAs during the 2022 floods. These floods affected a geographical area about 11,000 kilometres across the Central West.