

NSW Road Management Arrangements



December 2008

Road management between the RTA and councils in NSW provides for three categories of road: State, Regional and Local.

State Roads

- State Roads are the major arterial links throughout NSW and within major urban areas. They are the principle traffic carrying and linking routes for the movement of people and goods within the Sydney, Newcastle, Wollongong and Central Coast urban areas and which connect between these urban centres, the major regional towns, the major regions of the State and the major connections interstate.
- The RTA takes responsibility for managing the primary traffic function of State Roads including funding and determining priorities, and regulates the activities of third parties on the road and access to adjoining land to promote road safety, traffic efficiency and protect the road asset.
- The Federal Government contributes some funding for a sub set of State Roads designated as part of the Federal [AusLink](#) network.
- State Roads are maintained by either the RTA's own Road Services organisation or by contractual arrangements with councils and private contractors.
- In carrying out work under the contract arrangements, councils work in the capacity of a contractor, rather than as the road authority.
- State Roads, including the land under the road reserve are capitalised by the RTA as an RTA asset.
- Under the Roads Act 1993, councils are the owners and roads authority for State Roads other than Freeways. However, the Act allows the RTA to exercise roads authority functions to the extent necessary for the functioning of a road as a State Road. The RTA generally funds and manages:
 - the road formation and associated drains in rural areas
 - the main carriageway between kerbs in the Sydney built up area
 - the central lanes through towns elsewhere, including traffic lights, roundabouts, signs and line markings.
- Councils retain responsibility for the road reserve of State Roads, including service roads, footpaths and control of noxious weeds except in situations where the RTA has specified to, or agreed with, council that the RTA would be responsible for specific other assets, works or activities within the road reserve.

Regional Roads

- Regional Roads are routes of secondary importance between State Roads and Local Roads which together with the State Roads, provide the main connections to and between smaller towns and districts and perform a sub arterial function in major urban areas
- Regional Roads are the responsibility of councils to fund, determine priorities and carry out works. They are capitalised as a council asset.
- Regional Roads are eligible for annual assistance grants from the State Government in recognition of their relative importance. This funding assistance comprises an identified funding pool comprising the Block Grant Program and the REPAIR Program.
- Each council receives an annual formula based Regional Road Block Grant for use according to council's priorities on Regional Roads. The formula takes into account road length and traffic usage, and, in the country, timber bridges, and includes a supplementary component which provides an equivalent level of funding to that which each council received under the former 3X3 Council Determined Program. The

grant also includes a formula determined component towards the cost of traffic facilities on both Regional and Local Roads.

- Councils may apply for a 50 per cent contribution for specific maintenance and construction works under the REPAIR Program. Projects are prioritised by consultative committees of local councils within the six RTA Regions.
- Councils also apply other sources of funding to works on Regional Roads including local rates, developer contributions and funding from the Federal Government.

Local Roads

- Local Roads comprise the remaining council controlled roads which provide for local circulation and access.
- Local Roads are the responsibility of Councils to fund, determine priorities and carry out works.
- The State Government provides only limited assistance under special programs eg Urban Bus Routes.
- The Federal Government has a long standing role in providing road funds to councils. It provides annual financial assistance grants to councils that include a significant identified roads component. In 2000, the Federal Government introduced the Roads to Recovery Program to provide additional funding to councils. Councils have discretion to use their Federal funds for works on any category of road. In 2006, the Federal Government introduced the AusLink Strategic Regional Program under which councils may seek additional funding.

The State Government provides additional funding to councils including:

- **Road Safety** - Councils may apply for specific grants for local area safety initiatives including the Federal Blackspots Program. Councils may also apply for contributions towards the employment of road safety officers.
- **Traffic Route Lighting Subsidy Scheme** – Councils receive an annual formula based subsidy towards the provision of street lighting to a higher than normal level on important traffic routes.
- **Traffic Management** – Councils may apply for specific grants for pedestrian and urban amenity works, provision of bicycle paths and rail crossings improvements, and provision of specific traffic facilities.
- **Heavy Vehicle Compliance** – An annual formula based grant is provided to council weight of loads groups to support their operation of enforcing heavy vehicle compliance on public roads.
- **Natural Disasters** – Councils may apply for restoration funding for Regional and Local Roads damaged in declared natural disasters.
- **Urban Bus Routes** – Councils in the greater metropolitan area receive an annual formula based grant in part recognition of the use of urban Regional and Local roads by buses.

The RTA is also responsible for:

- 188 State Asset Bridges and ferries on Regional and Local Roads. These assets historically have been managed by the State in view of their significance.
- About 2,900 km of Regional and Local Roads in the unincorporated area of NSW where there is no council.

There are other roads in NSW which are the responsibility of agencies other than councils and the RTA. These include crown roads (responsibility of the Minister for Lands), and roads available to the public managed by State Forests, National Parks and Wildlife Service, Sydney Foreshore Authority and Olympic Park Authority.