

JOINT NEWS RELEASE

FAILURE TO INVEST LEAVES REGIONAL NSW AT RISK

Wednesday 12 May 2010: NRMA Motoring & Services and the NSW Farmers Association today expressed concern for the future prosperity of many regional centres after the Federal Budget failed to invest in country NSW.

NRMA President Wendy Machin and NSW Farmers President Charles Armstrong said both organisations were disappointed that regional NSW had again missed out on road funding.

“There is nothing in this Budget for regional roads, even though communities and industry rely heavily on the road network,” Ms Machin said.

“Regional roads that attracted so much attention over the year for a number of fatalities, such as the Pacific and Princes highways, have been given no additional funds to make them safer.

“The NRMA is very concerned that our regional highways will continue to fall behind without a major injection of funds to maintain and upgrade the network.”

Ms Machin criticised the Government’s failure to invest in a year when the amount contributed by taxpayers and business in fuel excise will reach a record \$16.1 billion.

“The fuel tax bonanza comes mainly from diesel, which makes the decision to provide no new funding for regional roads even more bizarre,” Ms Machin said.

NSW Farmers Association President Charles Armstrong says the Association has serious concerns about transport inefficiencies, inputs to agriculture and delivering produce to consumers.

“The lack of funding for rail branch lines to move wheat is a good example,” Mr Armstrong said.

“This and other problems in road networks are a major impediment to productive agriculture that is set to get a whole lot worse. We need to see a coordinated freight strategy to address these issues.

“While we welcome the limited announcements for rural infrastructure, particularly relating to rail, we feel another opportunity has been missed.

“We are disappointed that the budget has failed to deliver meaningful investment for infrastructure in rural and regional NSW.”

NRMA: Daniel Stanton 0439 133 092

NSW Farmers contact: Ellen McNamara 0429 990 218