

Media Release

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IPWEA: Federal Government budget 23/24 still does not address the key issues of capacity and capability in local government engineering and long-term infrastructure planning.

The Federal Budget represents a solid investment in local government, with \$3.1 billion in Financial Assistance Grants to be provided to local government in the coming twelve months.

This initiative is welcomed; however, we remain committed to the long-term future of managing our infrastructure assets in a sustainable and affordable way. Coupled with an increased skills shortage, specifically in local government engineering, there is an acute need to encourage graduates into the profession. This 23/24 Federal Budget does not address these critical issues.

Capacity and capability

“More investment is required to develop capacity and capability in local government engineering. Services that many take for granted are reliant on skilled professionals to deliver. People are the most important resource, and by taking a long-term approach, we will deliver better outcomes, grow capability, and allow local communities to thrive. That’s good for the economy and Australia.” Myles Lind, IPWEA President

Council asset management practices vary widely for various reasons, including resourcing, methodology, and capability. IPWEA’s White Paper highlights the importance of asset management and the need for ongoing investment to building capacity in the profession.

In our pre-budget submission, we stated that the government should invest \$110 million over the next ten years and partner with recognised member associations such as IPWEA to deliver credible education and training programs that follow global best practices such as the IPWEA Asset Management Pathway.

Financial sustainability

In addition, climate change, emerging technology and population shifts will impact how we plan, all this requires a high level of proficiency in asset management to deliver solutions that ensure the long-term financial sustainability of our organisations.

Local Governments are the most asset intensive sphere of government in Australia. Long-lived infrastructure assets provide essential services to our communities. To put this in perspective, at the end of the 2019-20 financial year local government had control of a \$523bn asset portfolio. Non-financial infrastructure assets were valued at \$342bn, accounting for 65% of the total portfolio. To manage these assets, appropriate and effective investment is required to ensure essential capacity and capability in local government engineering.

About

IPWEA The Institute of Public Works Engineering Australasia is the peak association for municipal and public works professionals in Australia and New Zealand. IPWEA is a global leader in the delivery of asset management education, sustainable infrastructure asset management, financial planning and reporting.

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