

For immediate release

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IPWEA applauds the commitment to regional infrastructure but emphasises the importance of maintenance.

In its recent [infrastructure policy statement](#), IPWEA welcomed the federal government's ongoing commitment to support nationally significant projects in regional Australia. Given the resourcing challenges many regional councils face, prioritising investments in regional networks to help grow economies and communities is a positive step.

IPWEA has long recognised the growing challenge of climate change impacting infrastructure assets and has supported the profession with a series of guidance materials for Practitioners. The focus should be on delivering new and replacing/retrofitting existing assets at an affordable price.

A change in mindset will be necessary to achieve the government's commitment to cut emissions by 43 per cent by 2030. David Jenkins, IPWEA CEO, believes that "natural or green infrastructure assets can be used in parallel with traditional approaches to delivering infrastructure projects. Natural solutions come with lower capital and operating costs, mitigate urban heat islands, and support resilience to the impacts of climate change. Green infrastructure has the potential to provide a win-win solution to achieving sustainability goals, human well-being, and environmental quality."

A greater focus on maintenance and renewal is essential. [ALGA's National State of the Assets Report in 2021](#) highlighted that replacing poor-quality infrastructure is estimated to cost \$51bn, underscoring the need to consider the ongoing management of existing infrastructure assets. ALGA will be releasing an updated report in 2024.

"Maintaining existing infrastructure is just as important as building new infrastructure. However, this policy statement says very little about maintaining past infrastructure investments, a challenge faced daily by the most asset-intensive level of government - local government.

Ensuring a long-term lifecycle management plan for infrastructure that is regularly reviewed, updated and applied would be better than concentrating on large-scale new projects that will only add to overall depreciation and future lifecycle costs." Jenkins said.

About IPWEA

The Institute of Public Works Engineers Australasia (IPWEA) is the peak association for infrastructure asset management and professionals who deliver public works and engineering services across Australia and New Zealand.

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