

Media Release

Date: Tuesday, 9 May

Embargo: For immediate release

Economic recovery Budget delivers on infrastructure promise, restores vital council funding

Australia's peak body for public works engineering has congratulated the Federal Government on its Budget, applauding the extensive funding of major capital infrastructure projects and the move to end the freeze on local government Financial Assistance Grants.

The Institute of Public Works Engineering Australasia's (IPWEA) CEO Robert Fuller says the continuation of the freeze would have meant ongoing pain for local governments and their communities.

The indexation of the Financial Assistance Grants programme was frozen in the 2014-15 budget, a move that, if extended until 30 June 2018, would have stripped nearly a billion dollars from local governments.

"A continued freeze on indexation of the grants would have meant councils such as Newcastle would have lost around \$2.8 million in funding by 2018," Mr Fuller said.

"Putting an end to the freeze means local governments – particularly those in rural and remote areas – will be far better equipped to provide community services, infrastructure and maintenance on assets."

The indexation will be restored from 1 July 2017.

Mr Fuller also welcomed the \$75 billion announced for infrastructure spending and investment during the next 10 years.

"The \$8.4 billion in funding for the Melbourne to Brisbane inland rail link will act as a catalyst for growth, revitalising the regional communities along the route," he said.

And, Mr Fuller commended the Government's commitment to building Sydney's second airport at Badgerys Creek by 2026.

"The airport and allied infrastructure that will be built to support it will create 20,000 jobs during construction, and the regional community will benefit from the improved associated infrastructure and amenities."

Mr Fuller also welcomed the increased injection of funds into Black Spot projects and the Bridges Renewal programme.

However, he voiced his disappointment about the funding cuts to the Roads to Recovery programme, which scored \$815.1 million in the 2016-17 budget and just \$699.6 million in today's budget.

"Overall, this budget is targeted at reinstating economic confidence for both business and families with a strong commitment to long-term 'good debt' major investments projects that Australia has needed for some time," he added.



IPWEA

INSTITUTE OF PUBLIC WORKS
ENGINEERING AUSTRALASIA

Contact Details

Robert Fuller | Chief Executive Officer | IPWEA Australasia

M +61 412 526 100

E robert.fuller@ipwea.org

About IPWEA

IPWEA is the peak not-for-profit association for public works and engineering professionals across Australia and New Zealand. It provides training, publications and advocacy to support its 4,000-plus members and 20,000-plus community of engineering professionals who provide essential community infrastructure. Visit www.ipwea.org.