

## MEDIA STATEMENT

**May 12, 2021**

### **IPWEA welcomes budget funding for local infrastructure**

Allocations of a further \$1 billion for local road infrastructure and \$1 billion for road safety upgrades in the Federal Budget have been welcomed by the Institute of Public Works Engineering Australasia, (IPWEA), which says the local funding will complement the larger \$15 billion in spending on larger projects to deliver better outcomes for all Australians.

IPWEA President Rita Excell said the budget measures announced by Treasurer Josh Frydenberg were a recognition that an effective national infrastructure combined both larger “big ticket” projects such as highways between major centres with more local projects.

“For a majority of people, their local roads and the infrastructure they use on a daily basis is of the greatest importance to them and makes the biggest difference to their lives,” Excell said.

“We welcome the Government’s recognition of the critical nature of local infrastructure, and our members look forward to playing a key role in effectively planning and executing on this additional investment to the benefit of their communities.”

The budget includes an additional \$1 billion for the Local Roads and Community Infrastructure Program, and a further \$1 billion for road safety upgrades, taking the total Federal investment in the Road Safety Program to \$3 billion. There is also a further \$250 million investment in the Building Better Regions Fund.

Excell noted that the funding for these projects was provided on a “use it or lose it” basis, and said this put the responsibility on local authorities to be proactive in their response, but may disadvantage those communities that do not have access to technical engineering support.

With a looming skills shortage in relevant engineering roles, however, Excell said we hope that some of the funding could also be used to support capability and capacity building as this would deliver better long-term outcomes.

IPWEA represents around 5000 members in Australia and New Zealand, and around 60 percent of the membership work in the local government sector.

“This means that many of our members will be instrumental in drawing on this funding to deliver projects,” Excell said.

“Many of these IPWEA members live in the communities they serve, so they are well placed to understand the needs and optimise planning.”

David Jenkins, IPWEA's Chief Executive, also welcomed the budget announcement as a positive for communities and IPWEA members.

"The investment is of course a positive, but it needs to be invested wisely and executed well, and that means leveraging but also developing the skills of IPWEA's membership at a high level," said Jenkins.

"Now that we have this funding, the task ahead is to ensure the planning process is rigorous, and that also means developing the people to deliver on the projects."

Jenkins said the "use it or lose it" nature of the budget measures also indicated that local decision making would be key, and planning and resource allocations critical.

**For any media enquiries please contact David Jenkins via email: [ceo@ipwea.org](mailto:ceo@ipwea.org)**

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