



MEDIA RELEASE

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More focus needed to deliver fairness and opportunity for five million Australians

The focus on infrastructure in the 2017-18 Federal Budget is a step in the right direction, but the real extent of investment remains to be seen according to the National Growth Areas Alliance Executive Officer, Ruth Spielman.

“This Budget contains a number of good infrastructure initiatives. But to really achieve the Treasurer’s goal of ‘fairness and opportunity’ for the 5 million people in Australia’s growing outer suburbs, much more focus and investment is needed,” she said.

“The Government must prioritise the growing outer suburbs which are rapidly falling behind in supporting infrastructure. These often overlooked middle child suburbs between inner cities and regions need more attention and support if they are to play their part in providing affordable housing and opportunities for jobs growth.

“We have advocated for better roads and rail to ‘connect people to jobs and services and goods to markets’ and we support initiatives to achieve this. We are pleased that outer suburban residents and businesses will benefit from projects like Sydney’s second airport and the roads and rail package in Perth’s outer suburbs. These are important steps in a long overdue response to rapid population growth on the edges of our capital cities,” she said.

NGAA has been calling for the establishment of a dedicated infrastructure fund for the growing outer suburbs. The sort of positive support that will be provided to regional Australia through the establishment of a Regional Growth Fund must be replicated for the growing outer suburbs where almost one in five Australians live.

The Government’s recent focus on cities, including the establishment of the Cities Reference group, received modest support in this Budget. NGAA welcomes the commitments made for south-east Queensland, including in relation to a City Deal. The outskirts of Australia’s cities are prime candidates for such Deals and other initiatives such as assistance to establish advanced manufacturing.

“Where you live has a huge impact on your quality of life – on how easy or hard it is to get to your job if you have one; how long it takes to get your child to hospital if you need to; how much time spent in your car on congested roads takes you away from family and friends; how much it costs you in petrol and car repairs.

The fast-growing outer suburbs need the backing of Government, a national policy focus and a dedicated budget response to treat the cause of their growing pains, rather than the symptoms. This should include a Growing Outer Suburbs Fund for the transformational infrastructure that will grow jobs and services closer to home,” Ms Spielman said.

Media enquiries 9 and 10 May to Ruth Spielman 0407 324 178