

MEDIA RELEASE



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Government and Opposition to meet with leaders from Australia's fastest-growing outer suburbs in Melbourne's south east

Local Government leaders from fast-growing outer suburbs across Australia will gather in Melbourne's south east next week to share stories of the incredible impact of rapid population growth on their communities.

The 2017 National Growth Areas Alliance Congress, hosted by the City of Casey on 21-22 November, comes at a time when urgent action is needed by the Federal Government to address the increasing economic and social hardship in fast-growing outer suburbs.

Chair of the Alliance, Mayor Glenn Docherty of the City of Playford in Adelaide's north said population hotspots are at a cross roads.

"The impacts of population growth on our cities – traffic congestion, difficult access to essential services, commuting time to work - are increasingly hot button community issues.

"Alarmingly, there is no apparent solution in sight and we are calling on the Government to focus its attention on fast-growing outer suburbs across the country, like those here in the City of Casey, where 28 new residents arrive every day," Mayor Docherty said.

Growth area populations have doubled from 2.24 million to 4.46 million in just one generation – about double the national average rate. Recent Census data shows fast-growing outer suburbs are changing as well as growing.

"The commonly held belief that growth areas resemble urban sprawl and dormitory suburbs filled with young families and first home buyers no longer rings true. Our communities are home to a broad range of age groups, and a growing number of empty nesters and professionals looking to upgrade to a brand new home.

"It is the fast-growing outer suburbs where much of Australia's population growth is going and therefore the impacts are magnified. But it is also in these areas where there is a major opportunity to build the suburbs, the infrastructure and the jobs of the future. We call on the Government to increase infrastructure spending in line with, and directed to, population growth hotspots and create a dedicated investment stream for foundational infrastructure in public transport, roads and high speed broadband," he said.

The National Growth Areas Alliance is seeking urgent action from Government in the form of a National Growing Outer Suburbs Co-Investment Fund to underpin infrastructure projects that will act as a catalyst for future investment in industry and business. Alliance members are also calling for a National Growing Outer Suburbs Taskforce to coordinate policy, programs and investment across Government.

"We cannot afford to wait before taking action. It is time for the Government to focus on growth areas where nearly one fifth of Australia's population lives. We urgently need to address the infrastructure deficit, and provide real opportunities for jobs and business growth to our communities," Mayor Docherty said

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