



10 May 2017

Budget 2017 presents great opportunity for Capricornia

Budget Comments from Federal Member for Capricornia Michelle Landry:

What this budget delivers for Capricornia is great opportunity to fund infrastructure projects that have been given local priority.

We're allowing the regions to decide what projects best suit their needs and giving the financial support to build them:

- A new \$272 million fund for regional growth. The government will invest a minimum of \$10 Million in projects that transform regions. This could include construction of the airport levee, CBD Revitalisation projects, tourism assets and much more.
- An extra \$200 Million towards Building Better Regions to deliver projects under \$10 Million. This includes the ability to apply for feasibility studies for things like the Airport Levee, the Yeppoon Conference Centre, the Eungella Rainforest Walk and other economy boosting infrastructure.
- An additional round of the Stronger Communities Program to support smaller capital projects in local communities. This can benefit the many community groups that provide valued sports and cultural services in our regions.

This additional funding will be a welcome boost to rejuvenate the local economy and create the right opportunity for growth and investment.

This is a great opportunity for Capricornia and a testament to what happens in regions with a Coalition Government.

Local Government Financial Assistance

The coalition government will resume indexation on the Financial Assistance Grant program from July 1 2017. This will provide an estimated additional \$836.5 million to councils across Australia including those in Capricornia. The exact amount for each Council will be calculated in the coming weeks.

The Government has also announced that it will bring forward two quarterly payments from the 2017-18 allocation to be paid in this financial year. This will result in Councils receiving an immediate cash injection of almost \$1.2 billion in the coming weeks.

This something I have lobbied strongly for, and puts money directly into local areas for much needed infrastructure.

Infrastructure

The Capricornia electorate has seen massive investment in infrastructure over the last few years. While it is endlessly frustrating that the State Labor Government continues to delay many of these vital projects like Rookwood Weir, the federal government remain committed to getting things built including budget allocation in 2017/18 for:

Projects Commencing:

- The Bruce Highway – Sarina Northern Access (\$2,730,000).
- Capricorn Highway (Rockhampton to Emerald) – Overtaking Lanes (\$2,500,000)
- Capricorn Highway (Rockhampton to Gracemere) – Duplication (\$11,960,000)
- Rockhampton Road Network – Road Train Access (\$11,000,000)

Projects Continuing:

- Bruce Highway – Rockhampton Ring Road - Plan and Preserve Corridor (\$8,330,000)
- Bruce Highway – Pavement Widening Caboolture to St Lawrence (\$20,000,000)
- Bruce Highway – Pavement Widening St Lawrence to Bowen (TBC)
- Peak Downs Highway – Four Bridges ((\$7,520,000)

Projects set for completion:

- Curra to Sarina – Overtaking Lanes (\$6,883,989)
- Curra to Sarina – Black Spots (\$1,599,071)

Black Spot Funding:

- \$9,807,358 in black spot funding in Rockhampton, Livingstone, Mackay, Isaac and Whitsunday Regional Councils.

Education

This is great news for the 89 primary and secondary schools in the electorate, and their 27,333 students.

The total increase in Federal Government funding for schools in Capricornia over the next ten years is \$408 million.

Importantly, our increased funding will be tied to reforms that evidence shows make a real difference to supporting our teachers and schools to improve student outcomes.

Healthcare

We will continue to provide record funding for health and Medicare, and guarantee Medicare's future with a dedicated fund which will protect these vital services for this generation and the next.

We have already seen a record number of Australians in Capricornia accessing these vital services. Last financial year there were 716,501 GP services in the electorate bulk billed. GP Bulk Billing rates in Capricornia was at 80.5% last financial year.

Securing access to vital and lifesaving Medicines:

This Budget provides \$1.2 billion to provide cheaper access to vital medicines.

We are listing more drugs on the Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme to ensure families have access to these vital drugs. These medicines will assist people suffering from:

- Heart Disease
- Pulmonary Fibrosis
- Schizophrenia
- Psoriasis
- Severe Asthma
- Myeloma

Fully Funding the NDIS

Importantly, this budget secures funding for the National Disability and Insurance Scheme.

Australians with a disability deserve the best care we can provide. The National Disability Insurance Scheme was established to fund this but never received enough money to do the job properly.

Once fully rolled out, the NDIS will directly help an estimated 3,426 people in the electorate of Capricornia.

Delivering Tax Relief for Small Business

In this Budget we are extending the incredibly popular Instant Asset Write-Off for local small businesses. There are 12,927 small businesses in Capricornia that can take advantage of this measure.

We are delivering Small and Medium Business Tax cuts – benefiting 3.2 million small and medium businesses that employ 6.5 million Australians. This will help the 13,449 businesses – with turnovers up to \$50 million if they are incorporated, and up to \$5 million if they are unincorporated, in Capricornia invest and employ more Australians.

Record Investment in Australian Apprentices

We are creating a fund to help train Australian Apprentices in key trades and skills to get more young Australians into work and help Australian businesses to grow.

This extra investment will help the approximately 800 local young Australians aged 15-24 looking for job or looking for more work in Capricornia.

Childcare and pre-school

Childcare is incredibly important for families in Capricornia. There are currently 6,430 families in the electorate that use Government supported child care.

Through reforms that recently passed through the Parliament, we are making child care more accessible and affordable - providing the greatest level of assistance for those that need it most.

We are also ensuring that children in Capricornia can access 15 hours of preschool a week under a new agreement for early childhood education.

More than 2,157 children in Capricornia are set to reap the benefits of the additional \$2.7 million in funding for Capricornia announced by the Turnbull Government for preschool education.

Cost of Living

The Government is providing a one-off Energy Assistance Payment this year of \$75 for single recipients and \$125 per couple for those eligible for qualifying payments on 20 June 2017 and who are resident in Australia. Qualifying payments include the Age Pension, Disability Support Pension, Parenting Payment Single, and a range of veterans payments. This will assist more than 21,900 people in the electorate of Capricornia.

In response to Mayor Margaret Strelow:

I am surprised by the Mayor's comments this morning. My guess is that she has been spending too much time jumping on her Labor backed bandwagon and not enough time actually reading the budget.

Mayor Margaret Strelow is misled in her understanding of the budget. Contrary to her comments, Barnaby Joyce has not said there is money on the table if I support it. What he told the Mayor clearly was that support would be available if a case was presented that showed full community support including the funding model. This is about what the community wants, not what the Mayor thinks she can demand without so much as submitting an application.

She is crying poor regarding the levee, but I have these questions for her:

1. If the flood levee is so important, why was it not approved at the Council table until 3 weeks ago?
2. Given it was only tabled at Council 3 weeks ago, how would she expect it to be included in the budget?
3. Why did she wait two and a half years to start requesting funds?
4. Why does she believe tax payers and rate payers should cover the entire cost without a contribution from benefitting landholders?
5. Why haven't Council applied for Building Better Regions funding under the community investment scheme for the Airport Levee?

ENDS

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