



# Media Release

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## Rail win big ticket centrepiece in Federal Budget

G21-Geelong Region Alliance has welcomed \$100 million funding of South Geelong-Waurn Ponds rail line duplication as a critical centrepiece win in Tuesday's Federal Budget.

The allocation, part of a \$500 million Budget commitment to regional rail in Victoria, will combine with State Government funding to improve rail connectivity for a rapidly growing local population base, and on the Warrnambool line.

Installation of a passing loop between the stations will allow greater frequency of services. Work will include building of additional platforms at South Geelong, Marshall and Waurn Ponds stations.

G21 chief executive officer Elaine Carbines said the funding provided a significant plus in an otherwise lean big ticket Budget for the region.

Other wins included a \$20 million allocation for Geelong as part of an existing Regional Jobs and Investment Packages program

"G21 has long championed the rail duplication as a key element of our regional rail connections priority project," Ms Carbines said.

"We are very pleased that that this will now become reality and we can look forward to more services importantly accompanying our regional population and economic growth."

Ms Carbines was disappointed other G21 region priorities, including Great Ocean Road tourism infrastructure investment, central Geelong revitalisation and Geelong harbour redevelopment, were overlooked.

She welcomed tabling of \$100 million for an Advanced Manufacturing Fund, announced before delivery of the Budget, but stressed that with allocations unspecified G21 region would need to advocate strongly for its fair share.

The fund includes \$47.5 million addition to an existing \$155 million program supporting high-value manufacturing in response to winding down of car manufacturing.

Other key Budget elements for G21 region included:

- Continuation of the Building Better Regions fund, with an injection of \$200 million via a \$472.2 million new Regional Growth Fund. The Building Better Regions fund provides for projects in regional and remote Australia. The Regional Growth Fund, financed for four years from 2017-18, will provide 27 grants of \$10 million or more for major transformational projects supporting economic growth and job creation.
- A further \$22.5 million for third round delivery of a Stronger Communities Program funding small capital projects in local communities.
- Ongoing commitment to previously announced funding for Great Ocean Road upgrading. The government has committed \$50 million from 2013-14 to 2018-19, matched by the State Government.
- Continuation of the Regional Development Australia Committee program with \$74 million from 2017-18 to 2020-21. Regional Development Australia committees play key planning and advisory roles in areas including economic development and priority projects.
- Ongoing commitment to the National Cities Agenda, which shapes transformative City Deals for major regional cities.
- Ongoing commitment to the Local Government Financial Assistance Grant program, enabling councils to meet local priorities.

G21 also welcomed a \$14 million allocation to Deakin University for maintaining of its Warrnambool campus.

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