



**STATE
BUDGET**

Media Release

2 May 2017

Budget delivers mixed news for G21 region

G21 remains concerned \$4.7 million funding for crucial internet upgrades at the region's schools will be overlooked in the 2017-18 State Budget, delivered today.

The Geelong Secondary Schools and Community Digital Learning Hub is not listed among key education or technology allocations, but \$84.3 million is gazetted for upgrading of digital technology in the state's classrooms.

Establishment of the digital hub is a G21-Geelong Region Alliance priority project and has been the subject of sustained lobbying.

"This was the number one issue identified by the Barwon Region Partnership, emphasising its broad and critical importance," Ms Carbines said.

"In announcing money for extension of free Wi-Fi and broadband at Geelong waterfront and in North Geelong this week Regional Development Minister Jaala Pulford stated that improving digital access is a must for small businesses and families.

"It is, but what about our Geelong region students being compromised as they battle last century internet provision at schools?

"If the digital hub is not part of the \$84.3 million then it will be a significant Budget fail for our region and next generations."

The Budget delivered by Treasurer Tim Pallas contained some significant wins for the region, with welcome allocations for other G21 priority projects including:

- \$15 million for central Geelong revitalisation,
- Funding for establishment of a taskforce and management team to simplify management of the Great Ocean Road, and
- Surf Coast and Warrnambool line rail upgrades.

Ms Carbines said a forecast lack of funding for Geelong Convention and Exhibition Centre planning, another G21 priority project, was also a major disappointment.

"Particularly given our long-established need, its forecast economic impact and the assurances which have been coming from government," Ms Carbines said.

“We need it to happen, and I’m confident it will, but the business case is long overdue and way past the deadline the government set itself.”

Ms Carbines welcomed focus on streamlining management of the Great Ocean Road and pre-announced allocations for rail upgrades, including duplication of Waurn Ponds line and planning of a line to Torquay, as well as a funding for Barwon region family violence safety and drug rehabilitation hubs.

She said G21 and its members looked forward to working with the government through implementation of the various budget-funded projects.

G21 WELCOMES THE FOLLOWING KEY STATE BUDGET 2017/18 ALLOCATIONS:

REGIONAL PARTNERSHIPS

- Funding for establishment of a taskforce and project management team to simplify management arrangements for the Great Ocean Road.
- Tourism infrastructure upgrades for Great South Coast and Barwon regions.

CENTRAL GEELONG

- \$15 million to deliver projects in the Revitalising Central Geelong Action Plan, including new stormwater infrastructure at Johnstone Park, construction of new laneway connections to Malop Street, planning to expand the city’s Green Spine and new bus infrastructure.

SPORT & RECREATION

- \$1.5m, redevelopment of Point Lonsdale Surf Life Saving Club’s Ocean Rd headquarters.
- \$3.9m, Simonds Stadium stage five redevelopment planning and design.

EDUCATION

- \$64.1m state wide for upgrading and modernising of 59 schools including
- \$2.01m, Newtown Primary School.
- \$1.55m, Hamlyn Banks Primary School.
- \$754,000, Bellbrae Primary School.
- Unspecified funding for upgrading of primary schools Ashby, Ceres, Chilwell, Deans Marsh, Geelong East, Hamlyn Banks, Lara Lake, Leopold, Mt Duneed, Newcomb Park, Newtown, Oberon, Queenscliff, Winchelsea.

TRANSPORT

- \$110m, Surf Coast rail project, including duplication of South Geelong-Waurn Ponds line and reserving of land for a line to Torquay.
- \$100m, Warrnambool line upgrade enabling increase in services.
- Expansion and upgrading of bus services on the Bellarine Peninsula.

LAW AND ORDER

- Funding for establishment of a family violence safety hub in Barwon region.
- \$308m for state, to include provision of a new secure facility at Barwon Prison among a broad range of public safety measures.

HEALTH

- Capital planning and purchase of a new Barwon region drug rehabilitation facility, as part of \$9.7 million state allocation for three new regional hubs.

COMMUNICATIONS

- Extension of free Wi-Fi to Geelong waterfront and broadband internet services in North Geelong as part of \$7m state funding.

ROADS

- Great Ocean Road, upgrading and bridge strengthening.
- \$260.3m for regional roads improvements, including
- Drainage and barrier works on Lower Duneed Rd from Surf Coast Highway to Barwon Heads Rd.
- Installing of shoulder barriers on Cape Otway Rd, from Princes Highway to Hendy Main Rd.
- Improving roundabouts on Princes Highway east.
- Building continuous barriers on Geelong-Bacchus Marsh Rd, from Ballan Rd to Bacchus Marsh and Heales Rd to Granite Rd.
- Delivering a new roundabout at intersection of Barwon Heads Rd, Black Rock Rd and Stacey's Rd.
- Installing shoulder barriers in Fyansford.
- Pedestrian safety improvements in Geelong and Belmont.

COMMUNITY

- Upgrade of Corio State Emergency Service headquarters.

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