



Media Release

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Budget delivers for G21 region - but with some gaps

G21 welcomed today's State Budget as delivering on promises made to Geelong and the G21 region in the lead-up to last November's State election.

"The inclusion of \$100 million to plan and design future track upgrades and duplication of the Geelong and Ballarat rail lines is extremely welcome," G21 CEO Elaine Carbines said.

"The final stage of the GPAC upgrade is now close to being fully funded with the delivery of \$128 million against a previous commitment. A further amount is needed to complete the project.

"Completion of the GPAC upgrade would be another important step in the long-term task of revitalising the region's arts and culture precinct.

"Other positive budget initiatives include funds for new or upgraded schools in the region, new facilities for people who are homeless or escaping violence, and for upgrading and better locating Barwon Health's clinical facilities for people in crisis or seeking addiction treatment."

Northern ARC

However, Ms Carbines said the Budget had some omissions and oversights, which were disappointing.

"There doesn't appear to be funding for the much needed Northern ARC health and wellbeing complex for Geelong's disadvantaged northern suburbs," Ms Carbines said.

"This is extremely disappointing as that project was ignored in the recent federal election and has now been ignored by the State Budget.

"The question has to be asked of our politicians: what do we have to do to get funding for this crucial facility for people in one of the most disadvantaged communities of Victoria?"

Fast-rail – Melbourne-Geelong rail – Waurin Ponds upgrade

“G21 welcomes the allocation of \$100m on planning and design for track upgrades on the Geelong and Ballarat lines,” Ms Carbines said.

“We especially welcome the separation of lines which is crucial for fast-rail to Geelong. We must take away the congestion of suburban commuter traffic.

“We urge all levels of government to work together on providing a world-best-practice fast-rail service to Geelong as a priority.

“Fast-rail must be fast-tracked. We need solutions sooner rather than later to cater for the growing Geelong region commuter demands.

“G21 is on the government’s Geelong Fast Rail Reference Group and will be urging the state government to move this project forward from previously-stated timelines.

“The Morrison Government has committed \$2 billion towards Geelong fast rail. Victoria must be ready to take advantage of that funding.

“In the meantime, funds for up to 18 new VLocity carriages for lines including Melbourne-Geelong should help ease the issues for Geelong commuters.

“Hopefully they can be built to come on stream sooner rather than later, because they are needed right now.

“G21 is pleased to see funds to start designing the much-needed rail upgrade between Geelong and Waurin Ponds stations. Without that upgrade true fast-rail between Geelong and Melbourne will not be possible.

“The federal government’s recent pre-election commitment of \$850 million to the Geelong-Waurin Ponds upgrade adds further impetus to get on with that project as a matter of urgency.”

Great Ocean Road

“As a member of the taskforce which produced the Great Ocean Road Action Plan, I’m especially pleased to see \$1.5 million for establishing a new statutory authority.

“That authority will be crucial to protecting the road and its unique environs for future generations, which was a key recommendation of the taskforce,” Ms Carbines said.

General - Overview

“Realistically, the first budget after an election is about delivering on election commitments, rather than unveiling major new spending initiatives.

“However, pleasingly the government has found room for some new initiatives.

“The inclusion of Barwon South schools in the first-stage roll-out later this year of the new Smile Squad mobile school dental service will benefit families in that area.

“Last year’s Budget allocated funds to deliver a City Deal for Geelong and the Great Ocean Road. Those funds are acknowledged in the budget papers. Spending will begin in 2019-20 and flow into future years.

“The economic stimulus and job creation from that Deal will soon become apparent across the region.”

Key items for the G21 Region in the 2019-20 Budget include:

- \$100 million to deliver detailed planning and **design works for the full separation of regional and metro services on the Geelong and Ballarat lines.**
- \$340 million to purchase up to **18 new VLocity trains** for busy rail services, including Melbourne-Geelong.
- \$2 million for the **design and procurement to upgrade track between South Geelong and Waurin Ponds stations**, upgraded equipment, removal of level crossings at Fyans Road and the Surf Coast Highway.
- \$0.4 million for the previously flagged first stage **upgrade of Barwon Heads Road** and Marshall overpass.
- \$1.5 million to a new statutory authority to protect the Great Ocean Road, its environment and communities.
- **Schools in Barwon South** to be part of the first-stage roll-out later this year of the new **Smile Squad mobile school dental service**. Part of a \$321.9m state-wide initiative to be fully rolled out by 2022.
- \$149 million is allocated to building two new schools in the state, one of which will be at **Armstrong Creek** urban growth area in the G21 region (the other is outside the region at Bass Coast).
- School upgrades will either be planned, commenced or completed at a number of the region’s schools, including: **Bellbrae Primary, Geelong High, Oberon Primary, Bellarine Secondary, Newcomb Park Primary, Matthew Flinders Girls College, Newcomb Secondary College and Clifton Springs Primary.**
- **\$2.3m for design work for Stage 5 of the GMHBA Stadium** redevelopment.
- Funding to fix the notorious **Orton Street and Presidents Avenue intersection**, Ocean Grove.
- An **early parenting centre to be established in Geelong**, as one of three new centres across the state.
- **\$20 million to relocate Barwon Health clinical facilities** to improve responses to people in crisis and access to addiction treatment.
- **New public housing to be built in Geelong to support people escaping violence and homelessness**, as part of a \$209 million state-wide package.
- \$23.5 million for **new state-of-the-art training facilities for cookery and hospitality at The Gordon**, Geelong.
- **\$128 million to deliver the final (third) stage of the Geelong Performing Arts Centre (GPAC)**, including a 500-seat drama theatre, new courtyard, new box office and refurbished back-of-house facilities.

- **Geelong to get one of seven new basketball hubs** to be established across the state, under a state-wide \$5 million allocation.
- **Queenscliff to get funds for an upgraded boat ramp.**
- \$1 million for a **Barwon Heads community hub.**

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