



STUART GRIMLEY MP

Member for Western Victoria
State Leader of Derryn Hinch's Justice Party

MEDIA RELEASE



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Grimley Welcomes Federal Infrastructure Blitz

State Leader of Derryn Hinch's Justice Party Stuart Grimley MP has welcomed the Federal Budget announcements which include a number of local infrastructure projects that will create jobs and prepare the booming Western region for its journey back to 'normal'.

The Federal Budget included funding for rail and road projects throughout South-Western Victoria. Spending commitments included the duplication of Barwon Heads Road (\$292m), Warrnambool to Geelong rail line upgrades (\$208m), bringing forward funding for the South Geelong to Waurin Ponds rail upgrades (\$605m) and \$30m additional investment to progressing Geelong's fast rail plans.

Mr Grimley was however concerned that no financial commitments had yet been made about infrastructure in rural townships such as Horsham and the broader Wimmera region which is struggling as a result of COVID-19 restrictions.

Mr Grimley said he hoped the State Governments would consider following the Federal Budget in terms of major and considerable infrastructure funding, such as for the Warrnambool Hospital and regional court upgrades in their Budget.

Mr Grimley had remained optimistic about additional Federal funding for the Murray Basin Rail project, however this was not included in last night's Budget. Derryn Hinch's Justice Party wrote to the Deputy Prime Minister and lobbied local councils to not only support but also accelerate the project and now hopes the State Government will commit funding to the project.

Mr Grimley was also concerned by the lack of funding for social housing in the Federal Budget, which would have stimulated the residential construction industry and had major social benefits for years to come.

Quotes Attributable to Stuart Grimley MP:

"I welcome the Federal Budget announcements so far that will stimulate Geelong particularly, but I am now hopeful the State Government will follow with some investment in other rural townships and areas that are really struggling as a result of coronavirus.

I would very much like to see the Federal and State Governments working together to deliver the Murray Basin Rail Project. I don't care who pays for it, just get it done.

Whilst it is good to see spending on regional infrastructure, which will unlock productivity within the region, it is unfortunate to see limited spending on social housing by the Federal Government. A lack of social housing is a huge issue right across Western Victoria.

Additionally, I would like to see upgrades to regional courts in Horsham and Colac, as I've called for recently. I'd also like to see the State Government fund upgrades to the Warrnambool Hospital.

This Federal budget was a step in the right direction but there is still more to do!"

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