

Tuesday, 22 June 2021

\$2.8 BILLION TO FUTURE PROOF REGIONAL NSW

Thousands of new jobs and significant infrastructure builds in regional NSW will be delivered through the 2021-22 NSW Budget, supporting the recovery and future prosperity of regional communities following drought, bushfires, floods, the COVID-19 pandemic and more recently the mice plague.

Deputy Premier John Barilaro said more than \$2.8 billion has been secured in this year's budget for the Department of Regional NSW to help regional communities continue to grow, move through recovery and build on the benefits of regional living.

"Since 2017 the NSW Government has committed more than \$2 billion to 2,100 regional infrastructure projects, and today I can announce 800 more projects will be added to that tally, putting more cash into local economies, creating new jobs and helping businesses thrive," Mr Barilaro said.

"Almost \$64 million announced last week for the NSW Government's Future Ready Regions package will help regional communities prepare for future droughts by investing in the latest technologies, data and tools to boost business productivity, while helping communities to plan ahead.

"This package includes \$48 million for the Farms of the Future program, which will boost on-farm connectivity so producers can adopt agtech and compete with the best. We will also survey western NSW for new water sources to reduce pressure on other supplies during drought.

"We are also investing \$50 million to fund a new Mobile Coverage Project, to improve infrastructure and boost emerging technologies."

Mr Barilaro said a raft of programs and Budget measures will directly and indirectly support or create new regional jobs now and into the future, such as the \$100 million committed to the Regional Job Creation Fund, which aims to generate at least 5,000 new jobs alone.

"The Stronger Country Communities Fund Round Four will roll out a total of \$100 million for new projects across all 93 regional Local Government Areas (LGAs), with half of the funding dedicated to improving female sporting participation, including facilities and amenities," Mr Barilaro said.

"Round Eight of the Resources for Regions program will close for applications on 12 July 2021 and will allocate \$75 million across 24 eligible LGAs for projects that support the ongoing prosperity of mining communities in regional NSW by providing vital infrastructure, economic opportunities, and positive social outcomes.

"A \$30 million Regional Tourism Activation Fund will deliver high impact tourism and events infrastructure that helps to boost local economies and put towns on the map

while the \$20 million Regional Events Acceleration Fund is bringing visitor dollars to regional towns.

“\$462 million has also been invested into the Special Activation Precinct and Regional Job Precinct programs, to create jobs and build an investment roadmap across the state.”

Highlighted programs supported by the 2021-22 Budget for regional NSW include:

- \$878 million for Snowy Hydro Legacy Fund priorities including:
 - o \$48 million for an expanded Farms of the Future program to help farmers adopt on-farm technology to boost productivity and resource management;
 - o \$50 million for the Mobile Coverage Project, part of the Regional Digital Connectivity program;
 - o \$462 million into Special Activation Precincts, including the implementation of Parkes and Wagga Wagga, development of the Narrabri precinct and continued planning for Moree, Williamtown and the Snowy Mountains precincts;
- \$150 million Mouse Control Package to help farmers, small businesses and households fight the mice plague currently impacting parts of regional NSW;
- \$100 million Regional Job Creation Fund to generate at least 5,000 new jobs;
- \$100 million for Round Four of the Stronger Country Communities Fund to build new projects across all 93 regional Local Government Areas;
- \$75 million for Round Eight of the Resources for Regions program to support the ongoing prosperity of mining communities across 24 Local Government Areas;
- \$64 million for the Future Ready Regions strategy to improve drought data so farmers can plan ahead, survey new water sources to reduce pressure on other supplies and deliver business skills training;
- \$30 million Regional Tourism Activation Fund to deliver high impact tourism and events infrastructure;
- \$20 million Regional Events Acceleration Fund to bring major events and visitor dollars to regional towns.

MEDIA: Georgina Kentwell | 0427 206 308