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PREMIER ADDRESSES COMMITTEE FOR BALLARAT MEMBERS ON STATE BUDGET

Following the release of the State Budget this week, the Premier the Hon Dr Denis Napthine today addressed Committee for Ballarat members at a breakfast held at Craig's Royal Hotel, Ballarat.

Committee for Ballarat Chair Judy Verlin stated, "Committee welcomes the State budget funding announcements made with a record \$24bn being invested in major road and rail projects; and \$1.2bn allocated to build a stronger and better Regional Victoria."

In March this year, Committee launched its *Advancing Ballarat & Western Region, Preparing for Growth* document advocating for major projects and initiatives that will stimulate our region's local economy and grow jobs.

Key announcements from the budget impacting on Ballarat and the greater region include:

- \$8.5bn - \$11bn funding allocation for construction of the Western section of the East West Link, which will improve productivity and connectivity for business and residents in our region.
- \$30.2 million for the 1st stage development of the Ballarat West Employment Zone covering provision of roads and major trunk infrastructure,
- \$40 million for free wi-fi on V/Line trains and removing mobile phone black spots,
- \$14.2 million for an additional passing loop at Rowsley and car parking at Ballan,
- \$180 - \$220 million for the Murray Basin Rail Project to upgrade and standardise country rail lines in Western Victoria,
- \$447 million to increase prison capacity across Victoria including Langi Kal Kal prison
- \$8.4 million to build a new police station and emergency services hub in the Ballarat West Growth Zone (Lucas)
- \$7.8 million upgrade for Ballarat High School
- funding for preconstruction work for the Western Highway bypass Beaufort and Ararat

"Ballarat's voice is being heard. These announcements address the need for key infrastructure and jobs to keep pace with projected population growth in our region." Verlin said.

Verlin added, "Ballarat needs to deliver 10,000 jobs over 10 years to keep pace with population growth and Committee members welcomed the opportunity today to hear directly from the Premier about what the State Budget means for them and their businesses, as well as our region."

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