

Tuesday September 13 2022

Regional Population and Infrastructure

Federal Member for Nicholls Sam Birrell says the Albanese Labor Government seems set on disproportionately reducing regional infrastructure funding, putting at risk strong regional growth.

Today the Regional Australia Institute launches *Regionalisation Ambition 2032 – a Framework to Rebalance the Nation*, a bold plan to have 11 million people living outside capital cities by 2032.

Achieving this target will see an extra 500,000 people living in the regions, above the estimated prediction of 10.5 million.

“As I said in my first speech in the federal parliament, I want to continue to develop our region and regional Australia more broadly. I don't want an Australia that's dominated by a few ever-expanding megacities,” Mr Birrell said.

“For Nicholls and other regional electorates to cope with the influx of new residents during the pandemic and the forecasts for further population growth there needs to be a steady and reliable pipeline of investment.”

Mr Birrell said he was concerned that the October Budget will deliver a hammer blow to regional aspirations.

“Labor already has a raft of programs and funding committed by the former Coalition Government under review and has indicated it will scrap billions of dollars in regional investment planned for the next decade,” Mr Birrell said.

“Regional Australia is facing a horror federal budget at a time when regional investment is more critical than ever.”

The Regional Australia Institute report speaks to the uneven playing field with a 100 percent jump in job vacancies in the last 2.5 years in the regions, more than 3.7 million regional Australians living in a ‘childcare desert’, regional home building approvals having declined in five out of the last 10 years, and remote students doing half as well as their metropolitan counterparts in NAPLAN.

“Now is not the time for the Albanese Government to back away from investing in regional Australia,” Mr Birrell said.

Mr Birrell attended the Regional Australia Institute Summit Dinner to launch *Regionalisation Ambition 2032 – a Framework to Rebalance the Nation*.

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