

## Supporting Melbourne's east in the lead up to the Federal election

The Eastern Region Group of Councils is providing a united voice for communities in Melbourne's east in the lead up to the Federal election.

The ERG has identified emerging priorities for the region that require Federal Government action to ensure local communities, economy, environment and infrastructure across the east continue to be supported.

ERG Chair Cr Kylie Spears said the group was advocating for a range of capital works and projects to support local communities, grow the local economy and sustain both the built and natural environments.

"The ERG is six local government areas in eastern Melbourne, including Knox, Manningham, Maroondah, Monash, Whitehorse and Yarra Ranges. We work together on common issues of significance to the region. We advocate, plan and cooperate for the benefit of our communities," Cr Spears said.

"With a population of almost 1 million, 20 per cent of metropolitan Melbourne, it is imperative that the Federal Government continue to inject resources into much needed projects to keep the region thriving," she said.

### The ERG's priorities for Federal Government action include:

- **Pathways to employment**

The ERG is seeking \$450,000 in project funding to engage key industry sectors to better support and retain local jobs, industry and businesses in the Melbourne's east.

- **Mental health**

Immediate Federal Government funding is needed to expand headspace and outreach services across the region to reduce backlog in demand and long waiting lists, particularly for Monash, Knox and Lilydale headspace services. A new headspace facility is also needed in Manningham.

The ERG calls for improvements to make the system easier to navigate and present as a 'single door' service system, and extending the Youth Mental Health First Aid program to schools across the eastern region.

- **Housing our communities**

Federal Government funding is required to create Youth Foyers to accommodate vulnerable youth; transition housing for young people and their families; and crisis accommodation for women and children fleeing family violence.

- **Renewables for the region and for business**

The ERG is seeking \$25 million in Federal Government funding to build solar farms with battery storage in Knox and Yarra Ranges. Seed funding of \$700,000 will establish a renewable Power Purchase Agreement aggregator for our local businesses.

- **Trails**

Funding is needed to complete priority works identified in the Eastern Region Trails Strategy such as the Box Hill Rail Trail, Main Yarra Trail, Ringwood to Croydon Rail Trail, Waverley Rail Trail, Yarra Valley Trail and Ferny Creek Trail. ERG councils are ready to deliver these projects and create a world class network of trails.

- **Rail duplication to build network capacity**

About \$46 million is urgently needed to duplicate 4.4km of rail track between Lilydale and Mooroolbark as services struggle to cater for existing demand.

- **Reducing congestion on key roads**

The ERG is calling for a business case to evaluate options including a trackless tram to connect Caulfield Station and Rowville via Chadstone and Monash University as proposed by Monash Uni and Vicinity Centres. As a region reliant on bus services, the ERG is seeking improvements to the bus network by:

- installing dedicated 24-7 right-of-way priority bus lanes supported by targeted peak hour only bus lanes
- Intersection priority through signal phasing and bus jump lanes
- bus "stations" along key corridors with high patronage, and more efficient bus stop placement.

See the ERG's Priorities for Federal Government action for more information at [www.easternregiongroup.org.au](http://www.easternregiongroup.org.au)

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