



## David Littleproud MP

Federal Member for Maranoa

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### Media statement

May 10, 2017

#### **A Federal Budget that's focused on the regions: David Littleproud MP**

OUR region and rural communities are at the forefront of the Federal Coalition Government's Budget delivered last night, Maranoa MP David Littleproud said.

"As the Treasurer said, this is an honest Budget and is about ensuring fairness, opportunity and security and I believe it's focused on the regions because, let's face it, the majority of our nation's wealth is generated outside the capital cities," Mr Littleproud said.

"Regional Australia is a key driver of the Australian economy, responsible for 67% of our exports and 45% of the domestic tourism market. Most food production and all production of the gas and electricity that powers our households, occurs in regional Australia. Our cities rely on Maranoa to support their way of life.

"Maranoa is critical in this government's plan to drive economic growth to secure more and better paying jobs which will encourage investment, facilitate innovation and provide vital infrastructure."

Mr Littleproud said better targeted education funding was a highlight with 167 primary and secondary schools and the more than 25,000 students in his electorate.

"Over the next 10 years, Maranoa will receive \$391 million to help our kids get the education they rightly deserve by supporting our teachers and schools to improve student outcomes," he said.

"As a father, I know how important education is to unlocking our children's full potential. My Dad was a teacher and I believe teachers are crucial to the future of our kids – great teachers are the difference between a life of opportunity and one without options."

Regional infrastructure was also a big ticket item in last night's Budget, injecting billions and set to create jobs for bush communities.

"In one of the biggest investments ever seen in regional Australia, the government will fund the Melbourne to Brisbane Inland Rail project with an additional \$8.4 billion. This government will also establish a \$472 million Regional Growth Fund that will deliver critical infrastructure to ensure regional areas do not miss out on Australia's growth story," he said.

Mr Littleproud said other highlights for his Maranoa electorate include:

- **Regional investment to support our producers:**

This Budget delivers on our election commitment to establish a **\$4 billion Regional Investment Corporation**, a national body to streamline and speed up the approval of farm concessional loans and administer the **National Water Infrastructure Loan Facility**.

Affordable and reliable water supplies are key to growth in regional Australia. This Government is already making the most significant investment in water infrastructure in Australian history to drive regional investment, agricultural production and jobs.

The **\$500 million National Water Infrastructure Development Fund** and the **\$2 billion National Water Infrastructure Loan Facility** are in place to incentivise the state government to fast track priority projects that will support the growth of our agricultural industries and regional communities.

Under the **Regional Growth Fund**, \$200 million in additional funding will increase the government's commitment to the **Building Better Regions Fund** to almost \$500 million, supporting more projects across rural, regional and remote Australia. In addition, a \$272 million fund will be established to drive major transformational projects of more than \$10 million to unlock opportunity and potential in the regions.

- **Rural health:**

A \$9 million investment will see rural and remote Australians, for the first time, be able to access psychology services covered by Medicare through teleconferencing.

- **Stronger bush communities:**

Regional communities will also receive investment through a third round of the **Stronger Communities Program** which helps fund small capital projects in local communities.

- **Supporting local government (there are 17 LGAs in Maranoa):**

The Government has also resumed the indexation of **Financial Assistance Grants** to councils, which results in an extra \$836.5 million provided over the forward estimates.

- **Making our local roads safer:**

The **Roads to Recovery Program** has been secured with \$4.4 billion from 2013-14 to 2020-21 committed to the construction, repair and upgrade of local roads. The Coalition Government will also continue to fund the **Black Spot Program** with \$685 million committed from 2013-14 to 2020-21 to deliver improvements such as safety barriers and street lighting to sections of dangerous road that have a crash history.

- **Better telecommunications:**

The Coalition's **Mobile Black Spot Program** continues to roll out with over 140 new base stations already live and almost 250 due to be live by June 30, 2017. The Budget allocates \$155.9 million towards the program over the forward estimates, for a total program spend of \$220 million from 2015-16 to 2019-20.

The **regional NBN roll out**, already 75% completed or under construction, continues in 2017-18 and the fixed wireless rollout due to be completed by the end of 2018.

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