



Rebekha Sharkie MP

Federal Member for Mayo



MEDIA RELEASE

SELLING OUT THE ADELAIDE HILLS

Federal Member for Mayo Rebekha Sharkie says the Federal Budget contains some positive measures for regional Australia, but growing communities across Mayo are still not receiving infrastructure investment proportionate to their population growth and economic contribution.

“Communities across the Adelaide Hills, Fleurieu Peninsula and Kangaroo Island are expanding rapidly, but infrastructure and services are struggling to keep pace,” Ms Sharkie said.

Ms Sharkie welcomed the Government’s new \$2 billion Local Infrastructure Fund for roads, water, sewerage and power. Of that funding, \$500 million has been earmarked for regional Australia.

“While it’s encouraging to see regional communities recognised within the new infrastructure fund, regional Australia represents around 30 per cent of the nation’s population and continues to experience major growth pressures,” Ms Sharkie said.

“Communities like Mount Barker, Strathalbyn, Victor Harbor and Goolwa are seeing significant housing growth, and that’s where infrastructure funding should be spent.”

On housing, Ms Sharkie said there remained uncertainty and concern around the proposed changes to negative gearing and capital gains tax arrangements.

“There are mixed views from economists about how these changes may affect housing affordability and supply, particularly for young Australians trying to enter the housing market,” she said.

Ms Sharkie welcomed continued supplementary road funding for South Australia, with \$230.8 million allocated over 10 years for local roads.

“Regional roads are critically important for freight, tourism and community safety, particularly throughout Mayo where many people rely on long-distance travel every day.”

The Budget also includes further investment in regional and community grant programs, including additional rounds of the Growing Regions and Stronger Communities programs.

“There’s always a strong take up in Mayo for programs like these, so I’m hopeful some local broad-use community infrastructure and small-scale projects will secure Federal support,” Ms Sharkie said.

Ms Sharkie also expressed concern about regional cost-of-living pressures, particularly fuel costs.

“There’s no indication the Government will continue its cut in fuel excise and that will hit hard when the temporary relief ends at the end of June. People across the Fleurieu rely heavily on their cars because public transport options are limited, so rising fuel prices hit regional households much harder.”

In aged care, Ms Sharkie welcomed the Government bringing forward Support at Home packages in a bid to reduce waiting times, along with continued support for the Maggie Beer Foundation.



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“After consistently advocating for better aged care support, it’s encouraging to see a promise to expedite Support at Home packages, but we’re waiting on more details and know much more needs to be done.”

“I’m also very pleased to see continued funding for the Maggie Beer Foundation, which is doing incredible work to improve food quality and nutrition in aged care. It’s a South Australian success story that is making a genuine difference to older Australians.”

Ms Sharkie said changes to private health insurance rebates for older Australians were a major concern.

“A lot of people are incredibly frugal with their pensions just to maintain private health insurance. This change will likely see a lot of older Australians lose their ability to hold private health insurance and that will have a huge impact on our public health system.”

“It’s mean-spirited of the government to implement this cut.”

In relation to the NDIS budget cuts, Ms Sharkie acknowledged the concern many people have about eligibility change but said she had already been briefed by the Minister and the initial focus would be on providers and reducing fraud.

Ms Sharkie also welcomed continued funding for telecommunications improvements, including mobile black spot programs, and previously announced support measures for South Australia’s marine algal bloom crisis.

“There’s very little in this Budget specifically for agriculture or the wine industry, despite these industries being the backbone of Mayo and regional South Australia.”

“In fact, the Government has confirmed it’s phasing out the Wine Tourism and Cellar Door Grant program, which effectively removes \$10 million per year from one of the only Federal programs wine businesses have been able to access,” Ms Sharkie said.

“Right now there is a great deal of international uncertainty while at home, we’re experiencing rising interest rates and inflation, as well as cost of living challenges. With all of that, it’s difficult to see the positive long-term reform story for the country in this Budget, particularly for regional Australia.”

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