

MEDIA RELEASE

20 May 2015

“Stronger Regions funding too focused on Darwin,” says Mayor.

Roper Gulf Regional Council’s Mayor Tony Jack expressed concern that recent announcements about Commonwealth National Stronger Regions Funding did not include any projects outside Darwin.

“While the funding of an amazing \$9 million upgrade of the Parap Pool will be a nice asset in the lifestyles of the people of the northern suburbs of Darwin it leaves some important development projects in the remote regions unfunded and under a real cloud”, said Mayor Jack. “It seems to reinforce the old Berrimah line”.

“I am really concerned that projects like the freight transport hubs that Roper Gulf Regional Council is planning for Numbulwar, Ngukurr and Borroloola will have to be put on hold despite having enough merit to already have raised \$1 million co-funding with the Northern Territory Government.

These are real infrastructure projects with significant economic, safety and amenity benefit for these communities and the broader region. This funding will potentially be lost without Commonwealth financial support.

Other valuable projects across the north will also collapse for lack of adequate funding”.

Mayor Jack added that,

“The Commonwealth Government has been strong on infrastructure and development of Northern Australia yet when it comes to applying stronger regions funding support they seemed have lost focus on where regional and remote Australia really is.

The remote regions have suffered from a range of funding cuts in the last year including Indigenous Advancement Strategy cut backs and the removal of indexation of Commonwealth Grants funding which will take millions out of regional and remote budgets.

I am concerned that there appears to be an element of political expediency in the recent funding allocations, heightened by a coming federal election in 2016. It appears the regions do not have the electoral pull of the urban centre.

Roper Gulf Regional Council has been a quiet achiever in our region and a strong advocate for emerging business. We calculated an economic multiplier on our projects.

Big ticket items are important in the macro economic development of the north but this needs to be balanced with local infrastructure investment; minor roads, transport hubs, improved communications and real jobs if our towns are to be viable and sustainable. This is the basis of stronger regions.

The Commonwealth Government needs to do more than talk about infrastructure in the regions. It also needs to walk the talk.”



Mayor Jack called on the Commonwealth Government to continue to invest in local projects to develop the potential of the regional and remote Australia.

For further details please direct your enquiries to
Michael Berto CEO
Roper Gulf Regional Council
08 8972 9000
END.