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REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT AUSTRALIA EYRE PENINSULA

Media release

Strong productivity and resources growth ahead for Eyre Peninsula

5 February 2024

Regional Development SA (RDSA) has released its latest Infrastructure Prioritisation Plan (the Plan) with the Northern Water project (NW), construction of the 250MWe Electrolysers, 250MW of power generation and renewable hydrogen storage facilities associated with the State Government's Hydrogen Jobs Plan and associated Hydrogen Hub infrastructure, along with the Cape Hardy Industrial Export Precinct named as high priorities.

Also, on the high-priority list are the Southern Eyre Peninsula Desalination Plant with enhanced distribution network and improved Port facilities at Thevenard.

18 others project from across the State have also been listed as the most important developments that support the \$65.99 billion regional investment pipeline RDAs track and consolidate for State Government, and has the potential to create 21,702 construction jobs.

The Northern Water project (NW) – a 600km pipeline delivering 260ML/day of desalinated seawater from the Spencer Gulf to the Upper Spencer Gulf, Eyre Peninsula, and the Far North is among the highest state priorities.

The NW is a 25-year project which remains in the feasibility stage and is expected to generate once in a generation growth opportunity in industries including hydrogen and green energy, mining, and pastoral pursuits.

The Plan is a five-yearly plan which summarises priority projects, their likely impacts on the State and what resources are required to deliver these projects successfully. This allows a focus on broader State needs and promotes transparent decision making.

The latest report, which was finalised in late December, focuses on projects which support greater regional housing development, addresses the "childcare desert" and much-needed jetty upgrades impacting several regions, along with many others.

Eyre Peninsula RDA Chair Bryan Trigg said along with the provision of infrastructure associated with the Hydrogen Jobs Plan, Northern Water project, Cape Hardy Export Precinct and the Thevenard Port to improve efficiency that are considered of State significance, there were 5 other significant regional projects identified in the report, ranging from the refurbishment of the Tumbby Bay jetty to support regional tourism to the Port Lincoln Marina and Wharf upgrade to support the regional commercial fishing fleet.

“Our region is one of South Australia’s most productive, generating almost \$4 billion in gross regional product annually, and with an abundance of wind, solar, copper, graphite, magnetite, and other rare earth resources. We also have access to ports and our spectacular coastline that is at the forefront of a strong tourism industry,” Mr Trigg said.

“However, we need to attract and retain a larger workforce, provide economic-enabling infrastructure such as ports and jetties, and allow for industry diversification. These projects are highly important for us to move forward.”

RDSA Chair Hon Rob Kerin said the report’s priorities aligned with the South Australian Government’s A Better Housing Future Plan and the Federal Government’s Housing Accord.

Mr Kerin said while the report did not directly include housing, it included infrastructure to support growth in communities such as highway and freight route upgrades, water projects, telecommunications upgrades, energy developments, irrigation and community master planning for growth across the State.

“Many communities where work is available are unable to accommodate workers moving to their city or town,” Mr Kerin said.

“By recommending the improvement to regional infrastructure – such as telecommunications, energy, water and jetty projects - we’re hoping it will pave the way for significant regional growth, which not only builds community strength, but builds capacity and improves the social fabric of surrounding areas.

“Communities become more viable, increasingly liveable and health and wellbeing improves. When communities grow and prosper, young people also start to return, and the future of many towns begins to brighten.”

The report also highlighted projects interconnected across regions, such as the Northern Water and the Northern Irrigation projects, freight connectivity, and tourism projects including extensive wine trails and transport routes.

There was also a need for a greater focus on circular economies to reduce waste, energy production, pollution and recycling as growth opportunities for many regional communities, potentially supporting the creation of an additional 25,700 new jobs and reducing the State’s carbon emissions by 27 per cent.

“Our regions drive our state’s economy, particularly when it comes to agricultural production, resources, construction and health care. By prioritising and advocating for projects, we can promote the State’s growth, which will benefit every South Australian,” Mr Kerin said.

“If supported by targeted investment and a robust pipeline of required skills and resources, the State can continue to develop a smart, sustainable and inclusive economy which is competitive on a national and global scale.”

RDSA is a member-based, not-for-profit organisation that supports economic development across seven regions and metropolitan Adelaide, with each funded by the three tiers of Federal, State and local government.

The full report can be accessed at <https://regionaldevelopmentsa.com.au/resources/>.

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