When the State Government handed down its Budget for the 2019/20 financial year last week, it was disappointing to find that some of our most important requests had not been funded. Earlier this year we provided the State Government with our pre-budget submission. This document is an important one, outlining the priority areas in need of investment from the State across Wyndham – funding for education, funding to ease congestion and funding for public transport. We are consistently one of the fastest growing municipalities, not only in Victoria, but in Australia. It goes without saying that our residents deserve to see their fair share of infrastructure funding that this growth is placing on our community and on our residents daily lives.

We were delighted to see that the removal of the dangerous level crossing at Hoppers Crossing has been brought forward. And we thank Sarah Connolly and Tim Pallas for the work they have done to put this onto the priority list. We have been in regular talks with the State Government to ensure this was a priority, to improve safety and reduce congestion. We are still expecting the two Werribee level crossings to be removed by 2022, as committed by this State Government, and we very much look forward to continuing to engage with Level Crossing Removal Project (LCRP) on potential design options to jointly deliver best outcome for the community.

The State’s work to upgrade roads continues and we’re very grateful for the Western Roads Upgrade program, which was funded back in 2016. Councillors were given an update on this project last week and this $1.8 billion program is progressing well, with the upgrade of eight of our busiest roads across Wyndham well underway. In last week’s column I wrote about the work Council is doing to ease congestion, and outlining our priority roads we wanted the State Government to fund in this budget. These included:

- The upgrade of the intersection of Point Cook and Sneydes Roads, improving safety and the installation of traffic lights. Not funded.
- Ison Road Bridge, to create a second rail crossing west of Werribee, including upgrade works at Princess Freeway. This is the first stage of the Wyndham West Link, which will provide a continuous road link between Tarneit, Wyndham Vale and Werribee. Not funded.
- The duplication of Ballan Road (from Armstrong Road to Bolton Road). Not funded.
- The duplication of Sayers Road (from Derrimut Road to Palmers Road). Not funded.

When Western Roads Upgrade program was funded in 2016, our population sat at 217,122. In 2019, our population is 270,478 but there has not been any additional investment in road infrastructure. This is concerning.

Balancing budgets and the needs of the community is not an easy task. While we did miss out on investment in roads, it was great to see some other important community initiatives funded. Some highlights include funding for a new high-performance basketball hub in Werribee, money for the new Point Cook Community Hospital, and funding for construction of the new Truganina South East Primary School and Wollahra Primary School in Wyndham Vale. I am also pleased that progress is being made on the Suburban Rail Loop and the Western Rail Plan, and we encourage the State Government to include a rail link between Werribee and Wyndham Vale as part of these projects.

It is worth noting that ahead of last month’s federal election, the Coalition did not pledge funding for a single infrastructure project here in Wyndham. Now that we have a Coalition Government for another three years, it’s important that we work with politicians across both State and Federal Government to ensure that our needs are met.

Regards, Mia Shaw.