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## Committee welcomes Eureka pledge, questions priorities

Committee for Ballarat has welcomed Labor's pledge to commit \$30m to make the Eureka Stadium AFL standard and constructing a major events facility in the precinct.

This is an important contribution to the wellbeing and social inclusion for residents in Ballarat and throughout the region, Tony Chew, Chair of Committee said today. It will also go further in putting Ballarat on the map as a great place to live and play, and take an increasingly important share of the State's population growth.

Committee has helped identify that the City's population is growing at a more rapid rate that has been recognised in official projections. It is pushing to have the provision of infrastructure accelerated to keep up with the population growth. This will be an important contribution to the improvement of recreation and entertainment facilities, including for the iconic Australian football and agricultural sector around provisions for showground facilities, Mr Chew said.

Committee has also recognised that jobs growth in Ballarat must be restored and accelerated to keep pace with population growth, and ideally lead it. Its *10,000 jobs in 10 years* statement has become a benchmark for the way we need to grow jobs to avoid unacceptable unemployment and social dislocation, retain our high livability, and improve social inclusion.

While it is important to grow regional infrastructure for recreation and entertainment, Committee questions the balance in priorities, Mr Chew said. We believe a commitment to the additional \$35.5m to construct stage 1 of the Western Road Link is a much higher priority. We know that this will trigger the creation of 9,200 new jobs and add \$1.4b net worth to the Ballarat economy. It should have been pledged together with the Eureka precinct initiative.

Committee remains hopeful that all leaders and candidates in the State election will pledge to this Western link Road and associated Ballarat West Employment Zone in the airport precinct.

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