



Councils in bid for \$3.1b

By **ALISON COURT**

ARMADALE, Gosnells and Serpentine-Jarrahdale councils have thrown their support behind a national campaign lobbying for a boost in Federal Government funds to maintain and replace infrastructure.

The councils are members of the National Growth Areas Alliance, a coalition of 30 of some of the fastest growing councils in the country. The alliance claims its member councils are home to one in four Australians.

On Friday, the City of Armadale hosted the WA launch of NGAA's new Fund the Gap campaign aimed at lobbying Canberra for \$3.1 billion over 15 years to help meet the estimated \$11.6b cost of infrastructure maintenance and replacement.

Armadale Mayor Linton Reynolds, the WA spokesman for the campaign, said there was a "massive gap" between what councils could afford to fund and what residents needed.

"Councils are under increasing pressure to deliver more than basic services, while keeping rates and charges low," he said. "The City of Armadale has calculated that as its population grows to 100,000 by 2022, the shortfall of funding needed to

maintain its assets and facilities will have increased to \$36m.

"This is despite having increased its rates by CPI plus 3 per cent for over six years, and by CPI plus 1 per cent for a further 14 years to 2022.

"Without this severe rating strategy, the shortfall in 2022 would be \$70m, a serious legacy for future generations."

Cr Reynolds said it was "only fair and reasonable" that the Federal Government invested money in areas where the population was rapidly expanding, particularly in newly-developed suburbs.

"Residents in new and growing suburbs expect 21st century services, but councils are expected to manage with a 1960s rating system," he said.

"We hold genuine fears community services and facilities will deteriorate unless additional funding is allocated immediately."

Gosnells Mayor Pat Morris said her council had been one of Australia's fastest growing local governments for several years.

"Without assistance from federal and state governments, the City of Gosnells will struggle to provide necessary infrastructure, particularly with an expected population increase of 40,000 over the next 20 years," she said.

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