



# Cash call for growth

AN extra \$39 a year in Federal Government money for each resident of Melton is needed to help end a crippling funding crisis.

That's the finding of the National Growth Areas Alliance research into demands for services in Australia's growth areas.

It found that residents in areas such as Melton Shire needed \$3.1 billion to cover the funding shortfall.

Six Victorian councils – Hume, Casey, Cardinia, Wyndham, Melton and Whittlesea – have joined 24 others in the NGAA's campaign to address the shortfall that jeopardises vital infrastructure in their communities. The condition of local pools, libraries, parks, roads and social welfare services are in jeopardy unless federal money is given, according to the NGAA.

The association found \$11.7 billion needed to be spent in the next 15 years on 30 booming council areas to keep up with the demand for services and amenities.

The NGAA's campaign is deliberately geared to this year's federal election and involves sustained lobbying of candidates and community meetings to push the issues on to the political agenda.

The NGAA spokesman, Whittlesea council-

lor Sam Alessi, said residents' demand for services and amenities was outstripping what councils could afford.

"With people now living and working closer to home, councils are under more pressure to deliver basic services while keeping rates and charges low," he said.

The NGAA plea for \$3.1 billion aims to cover a shortfall of \$206 million a year for the 30 councils, or \$39 a resident.

Councils in the growth corridors around the edge of Melbourne united last year in a campaign with Leader Community Newspapers, called Fairer Communities, which led to \$25 million from the State Government for social welfare initiatives.

About one in four Australians live in growth areas, and a further 1.4 million are expected to move in to them by 2022.

The campaign, Securing Our Future, will run in the *Melton Leader* in the build-up to the election campaign.

The alliance research also pinpoints problems with the grants system, which fails to recognise special demands of the growth areas.

It said that services such as open space, children's and youth services, community service centres, cultural facilities and aged-care services will suffer without enough funding.

■ **What does Melton need? See page 5**

Securing our  
future▶