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Cash push forum for Hume City

Simon Craig

THE campaign by Australia's growth area councils for more federal funding comes to Hume next month.

As part of its commitment to the National Growth Areas Alliance, the council will hold a forum to gauge residents' views on the future of local pools, libraries, parks, roads and social welfare services. The dates and details of the forum will be published in the *Leader* in the coming weeks.

The alliance is a coalition of 30 of Australia's growth councils. It is using the build-up to the federal election to lobby the major parties to commit to an additional \$3.1 billion during the next 15 years to keep up with the demand for services and amenities.

Hume Mayor Gary Jungwirth said the cash shortfall was a major issue facing the future of service provision in Hume.

Meanwhile, alliance president Cr Linton Reynolds said he was "disappointed" at the response by both Fed-

eral Government and Opposition representatives during the coalition's Fund the Gap Summit in Melbourne on August 31.

The alliance was hoping for more detail from the Government after Prime Minister John Howard was reported last month to be offering special grants to fund local community projects, such as libraries and sporting facilities.

Also speaking at the summit, Victoria Council of Social Service chief executive Cath Smith said youth problems, drug and alcohol addiction, and social isolation could escalate in growth areas without key infrastructure funding.

"Social infrastructure is the social fabric of our communities. We've already got very high levels of unmet need in early intervention services for children with disability, family violence services, housing and homeless services and drug and alcohol counselling," she said.

"Funding this social infrastructure gap is critical."