



MEDIA RELEASE

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RCV BACKS BUDGET'S FOCUS ON INFRASTRUCTURE, HEALTH, EDUCATION & REGIONAL JOBS

Regional Cities Victoria (RCV) Chair Cr Rod Fyffe welcomed the focus on regional jobs, transport, hospitals and schools in today's State Budget.

Cr Fyffe said the Treasurer's statement that this Budget 'recognises regional Victoria as the key to our state's economic strength' was particularly pleasing to Victoria's 10 largest regional cities.

"The Treasurer has said that with this Budget, regional cities can start to rival Melbourne in the race for new jobs, visitors and business. While our cities are already doing this, we welcome the Government's commitment to the regions, demonstrated through today's investments," Cr Fyffe said.

"RCV's pre-Budget submission called on the Government to make Victorian regional cities a priority in this year's Budget. We asked for the focus to be on attracting investment, building modern transport infrastructure and putting training at the front of the agenda."

"Improving roads and public transport links to our cities is vital for growth and vital for community safety. RCV is pleased to see \$1.6 billion pledged to roads and public transport in the regions," Cr Fyffe said.

"Particularly positive is the half-a-billion-dollar commitment to upgrade the Ballarat rail line, which will serve as a prime example of how modernising these important links can provide a huge boost for our local economies."

"RCV also welcomes the Government's allocation of \$325 million to regional job creation, including upgrades to irrigation infrastructure and strengthening links with Asia, particularly China – ties that RCV has been building on to maximise international partnership and trade opportunities," Cr Fyffe said

"Many of our cities have outdated health facilities. We welcome today's announcement of a \$200 million *Regional Health Infrastructure Fund* and will work with the Government to assist in its prioritisation."

"Many of our schools are also in need of regeneration. RCV welcomes the investment in upgrades to 54 rural and regional schools, such as Warrnambool College and Morwell Park Primary School." Cr Fyffe said.

"We also want to applaud the Government on the establishment of Tech Schools, particularly in Ballarat, Bendigo, Geelong and Gippsland."

"Attracting people to regional Victoria to live, work and holiday is paramount. The Government's decision to invest \$101 million in the *Regional Tourism Infrastructure Fund* is very welcome. We look forward to partnering with the Government to get projects off the ground, and also to maximise the effectiveness of the new \$20 million *Regional Events Fund*," Cr Fyffe said.



The Government has also allocated funding for a range of vital projects in our cities, which will stimulate growth. These include:

- \$169 million for redevelopments at Goulburn Valley Health in Shepparton
- \$40 million to assist the Latrobe Valley community to diversify the local economy
- \$4.2 million for the Ballarat Innovation Lab and Digital Space
- \$3.5 million to build the Wimmera Cancer Centre in Horsham

“We are grateful that the Government has committed funding to so many of our requests through the Budget process. However, there is always more to do and we look forward to continue working with the Government, and the Opposition, to ensure our regional cities can achieve their full potential,” Cr Fyffe said.

RCV is a regional leadership group dedicated to building a sustainable Victoria by providing strategic advice, coordination and advocacy to State and Federal Governments to support policies which enable Victoria’s regional centres to grow and develop.

Comprising Mayors and CEOs of the 10 largest cities in regional Victoria – Ballarat, Bendigo, Geelong, Horsham, Latrobe, Mildura, Shepparton, Wangaratta, Warrnambool and Wodonga – RCV is focused on achieving real change in regional Victoria through policy development and active implementation of those policies.

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