



MEDIA RELEASE

11 May 2015

RCV CALLS FOR ONLINE VOTING AT LOCAL GOVERNMENT POLLS

Regional Cities Victoria (RCV) has called upon the Victorian Government to establish online voting in local government elections.

Responding to the Victorian Government's decision to reform the Local Government Electoral Act for the first time in a decade, RCV Chairman CR Rod Fyffe said the state's electoral system requires modernising to increase voter participation and ensure greater transparency.

"For some time now we've seen relatively poor participation rates in council elections – less than 71 per cent in the last round of polls," Cr Fyffe said.

"When you compare that to the 93 percent of Victorians who cast their vote at the last state election, it's clear that reform is needed at the local government level.

"Given the rapid growth in internet use across the country, including regional and rural Victoria, RCV fully supports an inquiry into the introduction of online voting capabilities in local government elections.

"We're of the strong opinion that it will lead to greater democratic outcomes for regional Victoria, and will be a cost-effective option once it's up and running.

"We've seen trials conducted in other states with some success, and it's our view that the time is right to do likewise in Victoria," he said.

Cr Fyffe noted the increase in internet activity across Victoria is in stark contrast to the declining capabilities of Australia Post – the traditional outlet for postal vote applications and voter enrolments – and that providing voters with electronic options for such services was welcome reform.

He also committed RCV to working with the Government to develop a new system that appropriately illustrates the skills and experience of candidate's running for local elections.

"The variety of skills and experiences of our local candidates must be readily available for their communities to consider at election time," Cr Fyffe said.

"RCV stands ready to work with the Government to ensure voters are properly equipped with the appropriate information to cast an informed vote in Council elections," he said.

Media Contact: Joe Fennessy, CPR 0499 500 086

Regional Cities Victoria (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.