



# MEDIA RELEASE

22 August 2016

## FORUM PROMOTES REGIONAL PRIORITIES

Victoria's 10 largest regional municipalities have descended upon Melbourne for the Regional Cities Victoria (RCV) Annual Forum, pledging to work with the State Government on a number of key strategic priorities deemed vital to the future of regional Victoria.

An influential leadership and advocacy group for regional cities, RCV comprises Mayors and CEOs from Ballarat, Bendigo, Geelong, Horsham, Latrobe, Mildura, Shepparton, Wangaratta, Warrnambool and Wodonga.

The RCV Annual Forum focused on a raft of topical issues and opportunities, most notably the five strategic areas where RCV will concentrate its efforts for the next 12 months:

- Population attraction;
- Unlocking regional infrastructure investment;
- Tourism;
- Regional higher education; and
- Promoting regional product to world markets.

RCV Deputy Chair Anna Speedie said RCV is looking forward to working with the Government on its key priorities.

"RCV has identified a number of priority areas where we will be channelling our energy and effort over the next 12 months," Cr Speedie said.

"We're looking to develop a compelling and creative campaign for regional living, and placing our cities at the heart of regional tourism. We also want to continue to close the infrastructure gap, promote regional product to China and other world markets, and work with the government to develop a cohesive regional higher education framework.

"Each of these areas are of significant importance to our regional cities, with real potential to stimulate regional growth, which of course benefits the whole of Victoria," she said.

Cr Speedie said the RCV Annual Forum was a pivotal event for the group to discuss issues of mutual interest while meeting directly with key decision-makers in Government.

"As the 10 largest municipalities outside of Melbourne, RCV is continually working with the State Government to ensure the voices of regional cities are heard, and that their role as centres of support for regional and rural Victoria is recognised," Cr Speedie said.

"RCV's Annual Forum is a fantastic opportunity for our members to share their experiences, hear directly from Ministers around important policy areas, and place regional issues firmly on the Government's agenda."



The Forum also featured a function at Parliament House where RCV members met with Ministers, industry representatives and senior bureaucrats.

Cr Speedie said the attendance of senior figures from both sides of politics at RCV's event underlined the significance of RCV and regional Victoria to state-wide prosperity.

"RCV enjoys a strong record of successfully partnering with Governments to drive policies in key areas for regional cities," Cr Speedie said.

"Our members look forward to continuing to work with the Government to provide solutions to Victoria's future challenges."

*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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