



MEDIA RELEASE

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CALL TO BOOST REGIONAL TOURISM PROJECTS

Regional Cities Victoria (RCV) has called on the Victorian Government to continue its support for regional tourism projects by boosting the Regional Tourism Infrastructure Fund (RTIF).

The fund was originally announced as part of the 2016/17 State Budget, setting aside \$103 million to upgrade tourist landmarks, create jobs, and encourage tourism across the whole state.

RTIF has provided funding to projects such as the Shipwreck Coast Master Plan and the Geelong Convention Centre, while a pipeline of more than 300 projects have been identified as suitable for support in the future.

With the visitor economy vital to the growth of Victoria's regional cities, RCV is calling on the Government to make the fund an ongoing investment in regional tourism.

"The Government is to be commended for establishing the Regional Tourism Infrastructure Fund. It's already funded a number of terrific projects which will have significant impacts throughout regional Victoria," said Acting RCV Chair Cr Anna Speedie.

"RCV is calling on the Government to capitalise on the success of the fund by making it an ongoing commitment.

"We've seen there's no shortage of projects with potential to attract visitors and grow the visitor economy, with over 300 across Victoria suitable for support through RTIF.

"Given the large number of prospective projects and opportunities, we urge the Government to ensure the fund continues to be available in the years ahead.

"With the tourism sector contributing over \$11.5 billion to the regional economy and generating over 114,000 jobs annually, there is a clear case for investing in regional tourism.

"We know the Government wants to grow the tourism sector and this can't be achieved without continuing to invest in the regions," Cr Speedie said.

Media Contact: Joe Fennessy 0499 500 086

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.