



MEDIA RELEASE

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BUDGET MUST PRIORITISE REGIONAL JOBS

Ahead of the 2017-18 State Budget, Regional Cities Victoria (RCV) has called on the Victorian Government to prioritise regional jobs in an effort to stimulate economic growth in regional communities.

RCV's pre Budget submission, *Growing our Regions*, outlines five key policy proposals designed to foster job creation and address the challenges emanating from regional Victoria's economic transition.

With the regional economy contracting by 1 percent in 2015-16 – the fourth consecutive year of economic decline for regional Victoria – RCV Chair Cr Anna Speedie nominated job creation, business attraction and infrastructure investment as the keys to unlocking regional growth.

"We're calling on the Government to renew its efforts to attract people to regional Victoria by investing in jobs and liveability in our regions," Cr Speedie said.

"Investment is required to ensure our regions can adapt to current and future challenges, attract more people and enable new business.

"Regional Victoria is facing challenges on several fronts, be it Hazelwood in the Latrobe Valley, Alcoa just outside Warrnambool, SPC in Shepparton or the impacts of the Murray Darling Basin Plan in northern Victoria.

"These factors and many more have contributed to the regional economy going backwards, yet again, in total contrast to Melbourne which continues to surge ahead with annual growth of almost 4.5 percent," she said.

In addition to calling for a renewed focus on jobs, RCV's submission makes the case for further investment in tourism and transport infrastructure projects.

"There are many world-class tourism projects identified and costed by our Councils that are worthy of Government investment – it's a real opportunity to further support local jobs and drive economic activity in line with the Government's focus on the visitor economy.

"We're also keen to see the \$970 million promised to regional Victoria from the lease of the Port of Melbourne rolled out to regional cities as a priority, to improve freight routes, transport logistics and facilitate better port access. Each of our councils have done the hard work preparing infrastructure projects which will increase productivity, and place regional Victoria in a position to continue the positive trend in jobs growth."

Cr Speedie said that as the ten largest cities in regional Victoria, RCV is uniquely positioned to lead economic growth and the ongoing recovery.

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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



REGIONAL CITIES VICTORIA 2017-18 BUDGET PROPOSALS

Proposal 1: Incentivising business. Creating jobs. Increasing liveability.

Calling on the Government to renew its efforts to attract people to regional Victoria by investing an extra \$100 million in jobs and liveability in our regions.

Proposal 2: Placing cities at the heart of the Visitor Economy.

Calling for further investment in the Government's successful \$103 million Regional Tourism Infrastructure Fund – supporting local jobs and driving economic activity in our regions in line with the Government's focus on the visitor economy.

Proposal 3: Driving regional access to the Port of Melbourne.

Calling for the \$970 million from the Port of Melbourne lease to be rolled out to regional Victoria as a priority.

Proposal 4: Unlocking regional investment.

Seeking \$75,000 in funding for the development of a business case for an RCV Treasury Shared Service.

Proposal 5: Building connections with international markets.

Seeking an in-principle commitment to support inbound trade missions into regional Victoria – enabling regional markets to reap the benefits of international investment.