



MEDIA RELEASE

Fast rail needed to grow regional Victoria

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Regional Cities Victoria (RCV) has welcomed the Andrews Government's plans for fast rail to regional cities.

The State Government today pledged further funding for a business case and infrastructure works for regional fast rail, if re-elected in November. Construction would commence in 2022, with the high-speed rail services to significantly cut travel times between Geelong and Melbourne, and between Ballarat and Melbourne.

RCV Chair Margaret O'Rourke said continued investment in regional rail services is pivotal to driving growth and liveability in regional Victoria.

"RCV is a strong advocate for improving the speed, frequency and reliability of regional rail services, and in the lead up to the State election has advocated strongly that regional Victoria matters.

"We are pleased to see both major parties commit to planning and investment in fast rail to regional cities, and we welcome today's announcement from the Andrews Government.

"With the right planning, fast rail will change the way people travel between regional cities and Greater Melbourne, and transform the notion of regional living. We welcome the Government's emphasis on the need to get the planning right, which will be pivotal to the long term sustainability of this investment.

"There has been strong progress on Victoria's regional rail network in recent years, and we are delighted to see both sides of politics focusing on regional fast rail in the lead up to the State election.

Cr O'Rourke said the complexity of the Government's rail proposals, which include fast rail, the Suburban Rail Loop and Melbourne Airport Rail Link, will require close engagement with local government and regional representatives.

"We look forward to seeing more detail on this latest rail proposal from Labor. Meaningful consultation will ensure the benefits of all these projects are fully realised.

"Ensuring all regional cities are supported by modern, dependable passenger rail remains a key focus for RCV. Ongoing investment is required across all regional passenger train lines to deliver fast and efficient services to regional Victorians," Cr O'Rourke said.

Regional rail connectivity is a key priority of RCV's advocacy plan, *Growing Regional Victoria*. View the platform [here](#).

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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