



MEDIA RELEASE

RCV welcomes plan to bring skilled migrants to regional areas

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Regional Cities Victoria has welcomed the Federal Government's announcement of \$19.4 million in funding to help regional areas attract skilled migrants.

The Chair of Regional Cities Victoria, Cr Margaret O'Rourke, said with the right planning, a regional migration program had the potential transform regional cities and alleviate the population pressures in capital cities.

"We already know that our regional cities are attractive alternatives to Melbourne, and this is backed up by data from the RCV Liveability Index, undertaken by Deloitte Access Economics. The challenge is to encourage people who are looking to move to choose a regional city over a capital city."

"The migration initiatives in today's funding announcement could significantly boost regional economies, as well as increasing cultural diversity in regional cities.

"It's also good to hear that the Designated Area Migration Agreements program will be expanded. There are several Victorian regional cities who would be interested in following in Warrnambool's footsteps with this program."

However, RCV cautions that any migration program would need to be carefully managed and supported by investment in infrastructure, such as reliable rail, improved road networks, and expansion of healthcare and education services to match increased demand. RCV would also like to see programs to help new families settle into their new communities.

"For any migrants, adjusting to a new city and a new culture takes time. If we want to ensure that migrants remain long-term in our regional cities, we need to be able to offer support programs for new families to help them settle in, find work and schools, and connect with the community," said Cr O'Rourke.

"RCV supports the sustainable growth of our cities. Attracting new residents in only one part of the equation.

"Supporting infrastructure, services and programs are all necessary to ensuring our cities' growth is managed sensibly, so that we maintain a high standard of liveability for our communities," Cr O'Rourke said.

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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