



MEDIA RELEASE

Fast rail key to unlocking regional potential

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Regional Cities Victoria says the Federal Government's announcement today – that it will provide \$2 billion towards building fast rail between Melbourne and Geelong – recognises the importance of investing in regional infrastructure.

“Greater connectivity between regional cities, as well as to Melbourne, will make our cities even more attractive, and boost our local economies,” Regional Cities Victoria Chair, Cr Margaret O'Rourke, said.

Regional Cities Victoria comprises the 10 largest regional cities in Victoria – Ballarat, Bendigo, Geelong, Horsham, Latrobe, Mildura, Shepparton, Wangaratta, Warrnambool, and Wodonga.

Today's fast rail announcement follows the Federal Government's release of a national plan to manage population growth, including a plan to encourage migrants to choose to live in the regions, earlier this week.

“We welcome the focus on the regions, and the recognition that it has so much potential that can be realised with the right investments and policy settings,” Cr O'Rourke said.

Regional Cities Victoria has advocated for fast rail for some time, and hopes the Federal and State Governments will work together to deliver fast rail for the regions.

Studies are already underway into fast rail from Melbourne to Ballarat and to Shepparton. The Federal Government also announced today funding for studies into fast rail links to Traralgon and Wodonga.

“Improving the transport infrastructure in regional cities is crucial, and it is critical that the various major rail projects – Geelong Fast Rail, Melbourne Airport Rail Link, and Suburban Rail Loop – are aligned to optimise connectivity to regional cities,” Cr O'Rourke said.

Recent research by RCV found that, while regional cities rate well in areas such as housing affordability and natural amenities, rail reliability and speeds in regional areas required significant improvement.

“Fast rail will transform regional cities. It would improve access to employment and education opportunities in the regions.”

“Regional tourism will also benefit from fast rail, making it even easier for visitors to travel to the fantastic attractions, products and experiences across regional Victoria,” 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.



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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

