



## MEDIA RELEASE

### Regional investment critical: RCV welcomes Infrastructure Victoria report

Regional Cities Victoria has welcomed Infrastructure Victoria's report - *Growing Victoria's Potential* - that flags regional infrastructure investment as key to managing Victoria's record population growth.

"Investments in the regions that are aimed solely to at taking the pressure off Melbourne won't work to manage our population growth," Regional Cities Victoria Chair, Cr Margaret O'Rourke, said.

"Each regional city has its own unique opportunities and challenges, and we need targeted investment in infrastructure and services if we are to equip regional cities to be an effective part of the population management solution – this is what Regional Cities Victoria is calling for in the upcoming State Budget."

Regional Cities Victoria comprises the 10 largest regional cities in Victoria – Ballarat, Bendigo, Geelong, Horsham, Latrobe, Mildura, Shepparton, Wangaratta, Warrnambool and Wodonga. Collectively, these regional cities are home to more than 600,000 Victorians, and attract hundreds of thousands of visitors each year.

In its 2019-20 Victorian Pre-Budget Submission, Regional Cities Victoria is calling for:

- A four-year \$600 million **Regional Jobs Growth Fund**, as well as a Regional Jobs Expo, to attract new businesses and skilled workers to regional Victoria;
- A \$300 million **Regional Visitor Economy Growth Fund** to supercharge regional tourism; and,
- A \$100 million **Digital Connectivity Fund** to improve digital and mobile connectivity in the regions.

Cr O'Rourke said Regional Cities Victoria would also like to see investment in new industries to diversify regional economies, and build on the natural advantages of regional locations.

"For example, while the Infrastructure Victoria report identified the renewable energy sector as having potential for development in most regions, there are some barriers that prevent these regions from reaching their potential," Cr O'Rourke said.

"We are pleased to see that Infrastructure Victoria's report aligns with Regional Cities Victoria's priorities for the upcoming State Budget, and we look forward to ongoing consultation with Infrastructure Victoria as it develops its 2020 strategy."

Regional Cities Victoria's full 2019-20 Victorian Pre-Budget Submission is available at <https://bit.ly/2YUIMch>

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