



# MEDIA RELEASE

## The 2019-20 Federal Budget: A win for regional Victoria

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Regional Cities Victoria welcomes the Federal Government's focus on the regions in the 2019-20 Federal Budget.

"It's pleasing to see the Federal Government continue to recognise the importance of investment in regional Australia," Regional Cities Victoria Chair, Cr Margaret O'Rourke, said.

"We welcome these commitments that will support jobs, enhance liveability, and grow regional economies."

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

Some of the announcements in the 2019-20 Federal Budget that will benefit regional Victoria include:

- Providing \$2.1 billion as part of a **national plan to manage population growth**, including new regional visas for skilled workers and international students, new tertiary scholarships to study at regional universities, and more transport infrastructure to better connect regional centres
- An additional \$2.8 billion for the **Victorian Infrastructure Investment Program**, including:
  - \$360 million for the Western highway final stage duplication from Ararat to Stawell;
  - \$208 million to deliver **stage one of the Shepparton bypass project**
- A further \$206.2 million for a **fourth round of the Building Better Regions Fund**
- \$2 billion towards building **fast rail between Melbourne and Geelong**
- An initial \$3.1 million as part of the **Albury Wodonga Regional Deal** to undertake strategic planning with the community
- \$220 million to **improve regional telecommunications**, including the establishment of a **Regional Connectivity Program** and additional funding for the **Mobile Black Spot Program**
- An additional \$26.8 million to the **Stronger Communities Programme**
- \$102.8 million to establish the **Regional Airports Program**
- An additional \$30 million to the **Geelong City Deal** to support the implementation of the Shipwreck Coast Master Plan
- An additional \$20.2 million over two years to support farmers and farming communities in drought.

"We're particularly pleased that the Building Better Regions Fund has been continued for a further round," Cr O'Rourke said.

"It's vital that our regional cities receive continued investment in essential infrastructure, services and programs to maintain a high standard of living for our communities."

Cr O'Rourke said regional Victoria looks forward to welcoming new migrants to its cities, as part of the Government's National Population Management Plan.



“Targeted skilled migration would help address the chronic skills shortage that some regional cities face, and would deliver a significant boost to local businesses and regional economies.”

“We’re pleased by the announcements in this year’s Federal Budget, and we look forward to continuing to work with the Parliament in the coming years to secure better infrastructure and services for 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. 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*

