



MEDIA RELEASE

The Government said it wants to keep country Victoria growing? Here's how. Regional Cities Victoria names its key priorities for 2019-20 Victorian Budget

The 10 largest regional cities in Victoria have called on the Andrews Government to deliver on its election promise to “keep country Victoria growing”, and to invest \$1 billion to boost regional jobs, enhance tourism, and improve connectivity.

“We saw some strong commitments for regional Victoria by the Government before the election, and we look forward to seeing these delivered in the upcoming State Budget,” 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. 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** 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.

“We need investment that will unlock the potential of the regions, ensure our regional cities are home to growing, connected economies, and are widely known as attractive places to live, work, and play,” Cr O’Rourke said.

CR O’Rourke said regional cities continue to suffer from chronic skills shortages across a range of sectors, which is having an impact on local economies.

“We need more support to attract business investment and skilled workers to the regions – a Regional Jobs Growth Fund would help businesses attract the skilled workers they need to flourish and retain talent.”

“To support this initiative, we’ve also recommended a Regional Jobs Expo is held, to promote regional employment opportunities.”

Regional Cities Victoria has also called for a \$300 million Regional Visitor Economy Growth Fund to invest in attractions, accommodation and visitor experiences.

“We have some of the world’s most beautiful, natural tourism attractions. Targeted investment to support community and visitor infrastructure, and enhance tourism and events offerings will encourage longer stays and greater visitor expenditure,” Cr O’Rourke said.

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.



In its Pre-Budget Submission, Regional Cities Victoria has also called for investment in digital connectivity.

“Digital and mobile connectivity is important not just for economic growth, but also to improve education outcomes, and enhance liveability in regional Victoria.

“Regional Victoria is a great place to live and work; the more connected we are by road and rail, and through digital and mobile, the better.

“Better digital infrastructure means a better-connected regional Victoria,” Cr O’Rourke said.

Regional Cities Victoria is also calling on the Government to fund a pilot of the Local Government Financing and Treasury Shared Service model, to provide regional cities with access to wholesale investment markets.

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

“We look forward to working with the State Government to deliver for the regions,” Cr O’Rourke said.

ENDS

Media Contact: Nadia Wu (0418 355 982)

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.