



## MEDIA RELEASE

### New Chair and Deputy Chair appointed to lead Regional Cities Victoria

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A new Chair and Deputy Chair have been appointed to Regional Cities Victoria, a leadership group comprising the Mayors and CEOs of the 10 largest cities outside Melbourne – Ballarat, Bendigo, Geelong, Horsham, Latrobe, Mildura, Shepparton, Wangaratta, Warrnambool and Wodonga.

Collectively, these cities are home to more than 600,000 Victorians.

The new Chair of RCV will be Cr Kim O’Keeffe, Mayor of Greater Shepparton City Council, with Cr Jennifer Alden, Mayor of the City of Greater Bendigo, appointed Deputy Chair.

Following Local Government elections across the state, Regional Cities Victoria has welcomed seven new Mayors to the group, which represents regional Victoria’s interests to the State and Federal Government.

Cr Kim O’Keeffe has run her own business in the services and training industry for the past 28 years in Shepparton, expanding the business nationally and taking on the role as National Education and Marketing Manager for the Salons Group. Cr O’Keeffe previously served as Deputy Chair of RCV in 2019, and this will be her third term as Mayor of Shepparton.

Cr Jennifer Alden is serving her second term as Councillor for the City of Greater Bendigo, with 30 years’ experience in public health and a long-standing interest in global food security and sustainable food systems in a changing climate.

“I’m excited to be part of Regional Cities Victoria again, and look forward to bringing my experience to bear as RCV continues to advocate for investment to support sustainable growth in regional Victoria,” Cr O’Keeffe said.

“Regional Victoria demonstrated resilience and grit throughout the COVID-19 lockdowns, and was able to re-open for business earlier as a result. As we move to a COVID-Normal in 2021, regional cities and communities are already welcoming back visitors from around the state, and we know that regional living has never been more attractive.

“If moving to the country is the next big trend, we need to ensure that we have the infrastructure, services and amenities to accommodate new families and residents, so that we can maintain the unique liveability that regional cities have to offer,” Cr O’Keeffe said.

RCV advocates for the sustainable growth of Victoria’s regions, and for policies and programs that help attract business investment and a diverse workforce to regional Victoria.

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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.*