



MEDIA RELEASE

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Federal Budget includes record spending for the regions... but Victoria misses out

Regional Cities Victoria has welcomed the Federal Government's overall record investment in the regions in the 2022-23 Federal Budget, but says the lack of investment in regional Victoria is disappointing.

"After an incredibly challenging two years, investment in regional Victoria is critical to help our local economies rebuild and recover," Chair of Regional Cities Victoria, Cr Kim O'Keeffe, said.

"Particularly as more and more people move to the regions, we need government investment to help us grow, and be great places to live, work, and visit.

"We welcome the Government's funding for transport, community infrastructure, and digital connectivity, which will support jobs and enhance liveability across regional Australia – but, most of these will benefit regions in other states, not regional Victoria."

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

Announcements in the 2022-23 Federal Budget that will benefit regional Victoria include:

- **Regional Accelerator Program** – \$2 billion for regional manufacturing, education, supply chains, export opportunities and defence industry;
- **Inland Rail** – \$3.1 billion for two new intermodal terminals and connecting infrastructure in Melbourne at Beveridge and Truganina, and \$150 million to fund the construction of complementary infrastructure projects that will unlock benefits of inland rail for regional economies;
- **Road safety projects** – \$180.1 million to establish the Regional Australia Level Crossing Safety Program; which includes \$160 million for upgrades to level crossings;
- **Enhancing freight supply chains** – \$880 million for the Roads of Strategic Importance initiative to improve road safety, enhance productivity and boost the resilience of freight network;
- **Health** – \$66.0 million to expand access and reduce out-of-pocket costs to magnetic resonance imaging services in rural and remote areas; and
- \$45 million for the Ballarat to Ouyen Road Corridor; \$4.5 million for the Bendigo Airport Terminal Redevelopment; \$83.2 million for the Albury Wodonga Regional Deal; and \$600,000 for Foodshare in Shepparton.

In particular, Regional Cities Victoria welcomes the Government's \$501.7 million investment to help local Councils deliver priority projects.

"The Government says: 'If small business is the engine room of the economy, then regional Australia is the backbone'. This is absolutely correct, and that's why it's critical governments invest in growing the regions – all regions – to ensure we all thrive," Cr O'Keeffe said.

To arrange an interview with Cr Kim O'Keeffe, please contact Evelyn Ek – 0412 887 853