



## MEDIA RELEASE

Thursday 4 August 2022

### **RCV launches State Election platform, *The time is now - Embracing our regions***

Regional Cities Victoria today launches its State Election platform with three key priorities needed to build stronger regional communities.

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 800,000 Victorians.

The high-profile advocacy group of regional Mayors and CEOs will officially launch its election platform at Parliament House on Thursday evening, calling for targeted investment into regional Victoria.

*The time is now – Embracing our regions* election priorities document calls for state-wide investment in Victoria’s regions, including:

- A \$500 million investment to fund enabling infrastructure in regional cities to ensure key utilities and services are provided; accelerating developments and relieving critical land and housing shortages.
- Establish a ‘regional spend guarantee’, ensuring at least 20 per cent of public agency and government entity investments are regionally-based.
- Establish a new Regional Living Fund to invest in civic, community, and cultural infrastructure and open spaces to enhance the liveability of regional cities and boost the visitor economy.

Chair of RCV and City of Greater Bendigo Mayor, Cr Andrea Metcalf, said the minimum \$700 million investment would relieve critical land and housing shortages in regional cities and enhance liveability and the visitor economy through infrastructure investments and open spaces.

“Over the past few years more Victorians are flocking to our regions than ever and setting down roots. Our election platform centres on how we will provide adequate ongoing services to our communities as they continue to grow and ensure infrastructure development keeps up with demand,” Cr Metcalf said.

Regional Victoria’s 2026 Commonwealth Games will attract a \$2.6 billion investment to the regions and is expected to create more than 7,500 jobs, however RCV has cautioned against solely focusing on the four cities hosting events and athletes: Geelong, Bendigo, Ballarat and Gippsland.

“The legacy of the 2026 Commonwealth Games must extend beyond just the cities hosting competitions and create tourism, job and infrastructure opportunities for all regions,” Cr Metcalf added.

“A key theme in our election platform is equity of funding across regional Victoria so no cities get left behind. Our recommendation for a mandated minimum 20 per cent spend of agency funds to have a regional focus would help establish and expand the regional start-up ecosystem and strengthen local economies.”

“RCV is pleased to see the continued growth of regional Victoria these investments will showcase everything the regions have to offer and build on people’s interest to live, work and visit our communities.”

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