



RCV
REGIONAL
CITIES
VICTORIA

2022 Victorian Election Priorities



THE TIME IS NOW
Embracing our regions

RCV is committed to strengthening our regional economies, encouraging sustainable growth, and maximising regional liveability.

Regional Cities Victoria (RCV) is uniquely positioned to represent the shared interests of regional Victoria.

As a leadership group comprising Victoria's 10 largest municipalities outside Greater Melbourne – **Ballarat, Bendigo, Geelong, Horsham, Latrobe, Mildura, Shepparton, Wangaratta, Warrnambool and Wodonga** – we are committed to policy solutions that support and encourage regional growth.

RCV is committed to strengthening our regional economies, encouraging sustainable growth, and maximising regional liveability. We want to help build a prosperous regional Victoria through investment in infrastructure and services that facilitate economic and social development.

Regional Victoria must meet the challenges of current growth trends. With considered investment, we can ensure long-term economic prosperity and improved liveability in our regions.

An ambitious mindset has guided RCV's efforts around each of our four pillars to regional growth and recovery: economic growth; connectivity; liveability; and sustainability.

We are calling on all sides of politics to commit to the important initiatives outlined in this package – key policy measures that will help to bring investment, businesses, visitors, and skilled workers to regional Victoria.

Now is the time to invest in our regional cities: to showcase everything regional Victoria has to offer, and capitalise on the growing interest to live, work, and visit our cities.

RCV is seeking a commitment from the incoming Government to ensure the 2026 Commonwealth Games will create a legacy for the whole of regional Victoria. The legacy must extend beyond just the cities hosting competitions and create tourism, job and infrastructure opportunities for all regions.



1) Growing Regions Development Fund (\$500 million)

Establish 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.

The shortage of housing is an urgent issue in the regions and it is critical that enabling infrastructure is built to support timely land development. Without action, too many regional families face being locked out of the housing market.

ABS data highlights an increase in population growth to regional Victoria of 1.2 per cent¹, and many regional cities are now far exceeding previous population growth estimates.



Victorian Government investment in enabling infrastructure will allow Councils to unlock more housing opportunities, accelerate land supply and increase opportunities for affordable housing solutions.

Delays in providing enabling infrastructure such as water and sewerage is a consistent problem across the regions, holding up land availability for regional home buyers. While Development Contribution Plans (DCPs) provide for local roads, drainage, and parklands, they are unable to fund greenfield utilities infrastructure.

Enabling infrastructure projects included in the Growing Regions Development Fund eligibility should include: stormwater, sewerage, water, gas, electricity, and telecommunications. The Fund should also consider contributing to the costs of hazardous waste removal or contaminated soil, where linked to improved future housing supply.

RCV calls for the Fund to be replenished with profits derived from the Windfall Gains Tax to secure future housing supply for the regions.

¹<https://www.abs.gov.au/statistics/people/population/regional-population/latest-release#victoria>

2) Introduction of 20 per cent regional spend guarantee

Establish a 'regional spend guarantee', ensuring at least 20 per cent of public agency and government entity investments are regionally-based.

Regional Victoria is home to a quarter of the State's population. Public agencies funded by the Victorian Government should be mandated to ensure at least 20 per cent of their budgets for grants and programs is spent on initiatives with a regional focus.

Through focussed regional spending, these agencies can help to strengthen regional economies, build sustainable practices, and elevate regional liveability.

The mandate should be independently audited and publicly reported, each year.

Opportunities to promote regional investment and drive grants managers to pursue greater opportunities outside of metropolitan Melbourne exist across governments.

For example, dedicating 20 per cent of LaunchVic funding to regionally-based and regionally-focused initiatives will help attract start-ups and create innovation in our regional cities. Currently, only 3 per cent of founders in Victoria identify as regional. A dedicated minimum spend will help establish and expand the regional start-up ecosystem – strengthening local economies by assisting early-stage and scaling start-ups through their journey.

Our regional cities' part in the transition to a circular, climate-resilient economy can be accelerated through a commitment to direct at least 20 per cent of Sustainability Victoria's grants, projects, and education programs, to regional Victoria.



3) Regional Living Fund (\$200 million)

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.

A new Regional Living Fund will build on the successful investments made by Federal, State and local governments over the last decade to grow local economies and attract more people to live regionally.

As the populations of our regional cities continue to grow, so too does the demand for improved services and amenities.

The Regional Living Fund would complement other economic-focused programs by investing in cultural facilities; art galleries and museums; performing arts centres; libraries and community spaces; placemaking civic amenity projects; playgrounds and parklands; recreation and leisure facilities; and community health and wellbeing hubs.

Each region has its own unique offering and funding community infrastructure projects will continue to entice visitors, new residents, and businesses to our regional cities.

Further investment in civic, community, cultural infrastructure, and open spaces is needed to enhance the liveability of regional cities and boost the visitor economy.





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Image: Wodonga Library and Gallery