



# MEDIA RELEASE

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## Regional Victoria set to benefit from better digital connectivity under Albanese Government's first Federal Budget

Regional Cities Victoria (RCV) has welcomed measures in the Federal Budget that will deliver investment into the regions, including the \$757.7 million Better Connectivity Plan for Regional and Rural Australia.

Better digital connectivity has been a long-standing priority for RCV, with many regional areas experiencing poor reception and mobile black spots.

"Regional Cities Victoria welcomes this investment into digital connectivity, as this has been a top issue for regional Victorians for years and something we have advocated strongly for," said Chair of Regional Cities Victoria Cr Andrea Metcalf.

"Our local communities rely on good digital connectivity, and with more people moving to the regions than ever before, it is vital to improve our networks to a consistent standard."

The Better Connectivity Plan includes \$400 million to support the roll out of mobile base stations to improve highway and underservices community mobile coverage, and an extra \$200 million for telecommunications infrastructure.

"We need government investment to help our regional cities grow and welcome the \$5.7 billion earmarked over the next seven years for economic growth and development across regional Australia," said Cr Metcalf.

"We welcome the commitment from the Albanese Government to invest in partnership with regional communities and we look forward to working with them to ensure a fair distribution of funds."

Other announcements in the Federal Budget that will benefit regional Victoria include:

- **Growing Regions Program and Regional Precincts and Partnerships Program** – \$1 billion to support community and place-based investment in rural and regional Australia
- **Priority Community Infrastructure Program** – \$1 billion to support community infrastructure projects across Australia
- **Disaster Ready Fund** – \$630.4 million to strengthen Australia's resilience to disasters, including \$30.4 million to implement disaster resilience initiatives across 30 local government areas
- **Powering the Regions Fund** – \$1.9 billion allocated from the uncommitted funding from the Emissions Reduction Fund, the Climate Solutions Fund and the Safeguard Mechanism Crediting to assist industries, regional Australia and communities with the transition to net zero emissions
- **Health** – \$143.3 million to support access to healthcare in rural and regional areas by investing in primary care services, training, workforce incentives and trials for innovative models of care.

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.

"It is an exciting time for our regions and RCV will continue to advocate for regional Victoria to ensure we get our fair share of funding." Cr Metcalf said.

**For media enquiries, please contact Anne Wright – 0411 035 695**

*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*