



MEDIA RELEASE

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2022 State Election: The regions must be a priority for all major political parties

Regional Cities Victoria (RCV) is calling for all major parties ahead of this month's State Election to commit to deliver funding directly to regional cities to enable them to deliver improvements in their facilities and infrastructure.

In an opinion piece published today in *The Weekly Times*, RCV Chair Andrea Metcalf said regional cities need access to funding that can be used for their specific needs, particular as many areas recover from the devastating floods.

"Prime Minister Anthony Albanese noted during his visit to flood affected regions that the most sensible and effective delivery of grants into these areas is by providing funding directly to local governments. This ensures that, through their local representatives, communities are consulted about investment in their region," Cr Metcalf wrote.

RCV represents Victoria's 10 biggest regional cities and has three key priorities ahead of the 26 November election:

- A \$200 million Regional Living Fund to allow cities to invest in civic, community, and cultural infrastructure and open spaces to enhance the liveability of regional cities and boost the visitor economy.
- A \$500 million Growing Regions Development Fund to ensure utilities and services like stormwater, sewerage, water, gas and electricity can be provided across the regions in a timely manner.
- A 'regional spend guarantee', ensuring at least 20 per cent of public agency and government entity investments are regionally-based.

Cr Metcalf said RCV's policies will protect the liveability of regional Victoria, as it experiences unprecedented growth with more than 1.5 million people now living in regional and rural communities.

"While it is fantastic that people have made the decision to move to our cities, what is key now is to invest in the amenities and facilities that will retain them," Cr Metcalf wrote.

"State and Federal Governments cannot adopt a one size fits all approach in regional funding, and Mr Albanese is correct that local government holds the intel needed to get best value for money.

"Key infrastructure funding allocated to regional cities must reflect the specific needs of each region. What is required in Ballarat or Latrobe will inevitably be different to Warrnambool or Shepparton."

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.

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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