



## MEDIA RELEASE

### **Regional Cities Victoria applauds 2023-24 Federal Budget tackling cost of living pressures, but regional Victoria misses out on funding**

**9 May 2023**

Regional Cities Victoria today congratulates Treasurer Jim Chalmers on delivering the 2023-24 Budget, providing much-needed relief for households struggling with cost-of-living increases.

Key items in the 2023-24 Budget such as energy bill relief, increases in JobSeeker payments and the \$5.7 billion committed to strengthening Medicare will benefit all Victorians and investments in clean energy will help secure our path towards net zero.

RCV also acknowledges the new Regional Investment Framework outlined in the 2023-24 Budget that will establish a regional development forum for Australian Government agencies. Under the framework, all regional investments must meet standards of merit and integrity, to maintain trust and confidence in government.

RCV welcomed particular announcements complementing the ongoing Growing Regions Program, including:

- Committing a further \$4 billion to the renewable energy superpower plan
- \$2 billion to make Australia a world leading hydrogen producer
- \$400 million over 4 years to support reduction of direct and indirect emissions at existing industrial facilities, or clean energy development, in regional Australia.

However, Chair of Regional Cities Victoria, Cr Andrea Metcalf, said RCV had hoped to see more targeted funding for regional Victoria.

“Investment in regional Victoria is critical for our local economies, especially as we prepare to welcome visitors from around the world to the Commonwealth Games in 2026,” she said.

“We welcome the Government’s funding for clean energy and cost-of-living relief, however we would have liked to see regional Victoria secure more targeted funding for much-needed projects.”

#### **Prior to the budget, RCV called on the Federal Government to:**

- Match the \$165 million ‘road repair blitz’ provided by the Victorian Government;
- Provide \$10 million to develop a Regional Transport Plan for Victoria that will design ways to improve inter-city transport connectivity and safe and fast transport links between regional cities;
- Introduce ‘improved resilience’ as an objective for the rebuilding and repair of community infrastructure following a natural disaster and provide the additional funding necessary to ensure communities can ‘build back better’;
- Ensure regional Victoria receives its fair share of funding under the Better Connectivity Plan; and to commit to the continuation of funding for the Plan.

Regional Cities Victoria comprises the 10 largest regional cities in Victoria – Ballarat, Bendigo, Geelong, Horsham, Latrobe, Mildura, Shepparton, Wangaratta, Warrnambool and Wodonga.

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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.*