



MEDIA RELEASE

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Cancellation of 2026 Commonwealth Games a major loss for regional cities

Regional Cities Victoria is greatly disappointed by the Victorian Government's decision to cancel the 2026 Commonwealth Games.

RCV Chair Cr Andrea Metcalf said the promised Commonwealth Games was an opportunity to showcase regional Victoria to the world, better connect regional communities with each other, and gain long-term value from tourism, job creation, and attracting skilled workers to our regional cities.

"The opportunity to host a once-in-a-lifetime event in regional Victoria has been something our cities and regional communities embraced and welcomed since Commonwealth Games Australia and the Victorian Government submitted the bid," Cr Metcalf said.

"The 2026 Commonwealth Games promised flow on benefits for every corner of the state. Outside of the hub cities, this now appears lost."

"We look forward to seeing details of the proposed state-wide tourism package but recognise this will not deliver the same benefits as broadcasting the best of regional Victoria into billions of lounge rooms around the world."

Cr Metcalf said RCV understood the fiscal reasons behind the Victorian Government's decision today, but says the need for long-term investment in the still exists.

"The Victorian Government's announcement of a \$1 billion package for social and affordable housing in the regions is much needed. The shortage of affordable housing is an urgent issue across all our cities and is impacting our availability to attract and retain skilled workers," Cr Metcalf said.

"Regional Cities Victoria is keen to work with the Victorian Government to ensure the new \$1 billion package is delivered to areas most in need and adds to the Big Housing Build."

RCV recently launched its Commonwealth Games legacy document. Among the top priorities highlighted is the need to invest in community infrastructure; repairing an old legacy and creating a new one.

"We are pleased that the infrastructure legacy across Ballarat, Bendigo, Geelong, the Latrobe Valley and Shepparton will still be delivered. But we reiterate our call for repairs and upgrades to sporting facilities in other regions," Cr Metcalf said.

Today's announcement comes on top of the Victorian Government's decision to axe the Regional Jobs and Infrastructure Fund in the 2023-24 State Budget, which for over two decades was used to create jobs, help

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.



businesses relocate to regional cities, build community centres, and make regional Victoria a better place to live and work.

“Without this funding, Councils no longer have the same access to funding co-contributions from the Federal Government.”

“This is a disappointing day for the 1.5 million people - a quarter of all Victorians – who call regional Victoria home and had excitedly welcomed the Commonwealth Games, encouraged by the long term value it promised for their communities,” Cr Metcalf said.

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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