



MEDIA RELEASE

REGIONAL VICTORIANS DESERVE A SHARE OF FEDERAL FUNDING

Wednesday 20 March 2024

Regional Cities Victoria (RCV) has called on the Albanese Government to provide a guarantee that 25 per cent of all Commonwealth infrastructure funding allocated to Victoria is spent on initiatives and projects outside Melbourne.

With 1 in 4 Victorians living in regional Victoria, the 10 largest regional cities – Ballarat, Bendigo, Geelong, Horsham, Latrobe, Mildura, Shepparton, Wangaratta, Warrnambool and Wodonga – are collectively home to more than 800,000 people.

RCV Chair, Cr Shane Sali said regional Victoria needs considered investment to underpin long-term economic prosperity and improve community infrastructure and services.

“Local infrastructure projects are a vital part of any regional community. They not only help maintain services, improve transport options, and make our regional cities and country towns better places to live – they also create jobs for locals and boost the national economy.

“Whether its upgrading municipal main roads in growing regional cities, building community hubs and libraries, new parks and recreational centres, or improving public transport, regional Victorians deserve their share of the Federal infrastructure funding allocated to Victoria.”

Cr Sali said while RCV acknowledges the Albanese Government’s \$1 billion allocation for regional Australia made through the *Growing Regions Program* and *Precincts and Partnerships Program*, it feels regional Victoria is disadvantaged by these competitive schemes because Councils in regional Victoria cannot access compulsory co-contributions from the Victorian Government.

“We were gutted when funding was removed for a series of projects across regional Victoria – like the Geelong Fast Rail, stage 1 of the Shepparton Bypass, and the Hume Freeway intersection upgrade in Wodonga,” Cr Sali said.

“Regional Victorians shouldn’t be denied their share of funding from the Albanese Government simply because Victoria abolished its Regional Jobs and Infrastructure Fund.

“Our regional cities and towns are experiencing significant population growth and are desperate for jobs and investment. Without infrastructure funding, regional Victoria risks falling behind, unable to provide adequate services to current residents and future generations,” Cr Sali said.

Media contact: Emily Broadbent 0413 133 627