



## MEDIA RELEASE

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### Cautious welcome for 2025-26 Federal Budget

Regional Cities Victoria (RCV) Chair Shane Sali has cautiously welcomed the cost-of living relief for taxpayers outlined in the 2025-26 Federal Budget but says broader investment is needed to help regional Victoria prosper.

Cr Sali welcomed budget initiatives for regional areas to deliver more homes, boost health, education and childcare, complete the NBN rollout, and secure greater accountability from banks and supermarkets, but noted Victoria's share of big-ticket infrastructure investment included \$2bn for a suburban railway station and \$1bn for a suburban roads blitz.

"Many regional Victorians look at the tens of billions being spent to ease growth pains in metro-Melbourne and wonder about the potential of that level of investment in growing and better connecting our regional cities," Cr Sali said.

"Regional Victorians rely on our cities as 'hubs' for access to education, health, financial, transport and social services, as well as retail, sport and recreation, and cultural amenities.

"Every single day, an extra 35 people call one of our regional cities home. Local Government is at the forefront of responding to this net population growth and maintaining the liveability for which regional Victoria is renowned.

"The Australian and Victorian governments must work with our regional cities in a genuine partnership to ease the strains of population growth on our capital cities and reset government investment priorities to capitalise on the economic opportunities the regions offer," Cr Sali said.

RCV wants to see a federal commitment that 25 per cent of all infrastructure funding allocated to Victoria will be spent on projects in regional Victoria.

"Governments need to look beyond metro areas. Collectively we must raise aspirations for our regional cities. There is so much opportunity outside Melbourne to give rise to new and emerging industries, create more jobs, more affordable housing, and stronger communities," Cr Sali said.

"RCV's vision is to develop and advocate for policies that invest equitably and sustainably in our regional cities to support a growing and prosperous state and nation."