



MEDIA RELEASE

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Regional Cities Victoria announces new leadership team for 2026

Regional Cities Victoria (RCV) has today elected its new leadership team for 2026, with Warrnambool Mayor Cr Ben Blain appointed Chair, alongside Wodonga Mayor Cr Michael Gobel as Deputy Chair.

RCV is a powerful alliance of Mayors and CEOs from Victoria's 10 largest regional cities – Ballarat, Bendigo, Geelong, Horsham, Latrobe, Mildura, Shepparton, Wangaratta, Warrnambool and Wodonga – united in their vision for stronger, more sustainable growth across regional Victoria.

“As we head into a state election year, RCV is focused on championing the policy settings that will unlock population growth, strengthen liveability, and expand economic prosperity across regional Victoria,” Cr Blain said.

“Our cities are ready to be part of the solution – supporting housing supply, attracting new industries and creating a thriving future for Victorian families.”

Deputy Chair Michael Gobel, Mayor of Wodonga, said sustained investment in regional cities would be critical to shaping Victoria's future.

“Our regional cities are central to what makes Victoria so great. As more people choose regional Victoria for its opportunity, lifestyle and affordability, we must match that growth with the jobs, housing and essential community infrastructure needed to support it,” Cr Gobel said.

Following recent mayoral elections, RCV has also welcomed three new mayors to the table: Cr Ali Cupper (Mildura), Cr Thomas Prince (Bendigo), and Cr Brian Klowss (Horsham) and we look forward to their contributions.

2025 RCV Chair and Mayor of Greater Shepparton, Cr Shane Sali, will continue as an active member of the alliance.

“Leading RCV has been an honour. Our shared advocacy has strengthened the voice of regional cities and positioned them as a key part of Victoria's economic and social future. While I am stepping back from the Chair role, my commitment to this alliance remains strong, and I look forward to supporting the next phase of RCV's leadership,” Cr Sali said.