



## MEDIA RELEASE

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### RCV launches \$3bn campaign for regional growth ahead of election

Regional Cities Victoria (RCV) will today formally launch its state election advocacy campaign, calling for a \$1 billion Regional Fund and a \$2 billion Regional Roads Package to secure the future of regional Victoria.

The campaign launch comes as regional leaders, industry stakeholders and media gather in Geelong for a joint event with the Rural Press Club of Victoria.

Chair Cr Ben Blain said RCV's advocacy was about matching investment to the scale of growth happening across regional Victoria.

"Regional Victoria is doing the heavy lifting when it comes to population growth – but we're being asked to do it without the investment to match," Cr Blain said.

"We've got the plans, we've got the land, and we've got the ambition but without infrastructure funding, we'll struggle to turn strong regional growth into something we can actually sustain."

RCV's call for a \$1 billion Regional Fund follows the Victorian Government's decision to discontinue the Regional Jobs and Infrastructure Fund in 2023, leaving a significant gap in regional development funding.

The previous program supported more than 1,000 projects and helped create around 13,000 jobs across regional Victoria.

"When the Regional Jobs and Infrastructure Fund was scrapped, it didn't just remove funding – it left a gaping hole in economic policy for the regions," Cr Blain said.

"Right now, there is no dedicated pipeline for the kind of investment that brings jobs, unlocks housing and supports projects of scale for growing communities."

The proposed Regional Fund would not only support essential infrastructure, housing development and workforce capability – helping cities meet 2051 housing targets – but also co-fund the large transformational projects that regional communities deserve.

Alongside this, RCV is calling for a \$2 billion Regional Roads Package over four years to address the deteriorated regional network.

"Regional roads are critical to freight, agriculture, tourism and everyday life, and right now they're in dangerous disrepair," Cr Blain said.

"Our roads carry more than vehicles – they carry our economy but most importantly our loved ones."

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The roads package would target both local and state-controlled roads, improving safety, restoring productivity and reducing long-term maintenance costs.

Cr Blain said RCV's advocacy priorities were essential to making sure regional Victoria can keep up with the pace of its own growth.

“A \$1 billion Regional Fund and a \$2 billion roads package are not nice-to-haves – they're the foundation for safe, sustainable growth.”