



MEDIA RELEASE

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Regional Cities invites new Premier to regional Victoria

Regional Cities Victoria (RCV) has welcomed Premier Ben Carroll's new ministry and has extended an invitation for the Premier and his ministers to reconnect with regional Victoria and renew focus on the regional economies helping drive the state's future.

Chair Cr Ben Blain said RCV stood ready to host the Premier in any of Victoria's 10 largest regional cities to show firsthand the opportunities, challenges and enormous potential that exist beyond Melbourne.

"We'd love to welcome the Premier to one of our regional cities and show him what's happening on the ground," Cr Blain said.

"Regional Victoria isn't just where you go for a weekend away. There's a lot of economic opportunity waiting to be unlocked. Our communities are growing, we're building homes, creating jobs and backing the industries that can support the state's future. There is so much to capitalise on and invest in outside the metropolitan boundary."

Cr Blain thanked former Premier Jacinta Allan for her service and acknowledged her longstanding connection to regional Victoria.

"Jacinta Allan was a champion of regional Victoria, but somewhere along the way the Government lost touch with the needs of rural and regional communities," Cr Blain said.

"The Regional Jobs and Infrastructure Fund that helped communities get important projects off the ground was scrapped. Regional and rural Victorians continue to pay more because of policies like the Emergency Services Volunteer Fund levy. Billions have been invested in metropolitan rail and road projects meanwhile regional roads are busted and broken.

"It's these things that have left a lot of people wondering whether the regions – and the rural communities they support – are still part of the conversation."

Cr Blain said RCV was keen to work with the Carroll Government to rebuild regional economic development.

"We're asking for a \$1 billion Regional Fund to unlock even more housing and jobs, and an extra \$2 billion on top of the existing maintenance spend to fix regional roads. We want to restore confidence to help build the economies that growing regions need," Cr Blain said.

"I want to assure the new Premier, once you leave Melbourne, you don't leave opportunity behind – you find it."