



MEDIA RELEASE

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Scrap the SRL? Invest \$3 billion in regional Victoria

Regional Cities Victoria (RCV) says billions earmarked for Melbourne's Suburban Rail Loop could be redirected to regional roads, housing, infrastructure and jobs, declaring it is time to rebalance Victoria's infrastructure priorities.

RCV Chair Cr Ben Blain, speaking at Parliament House today, said regional communities had watched billions flow into major metropolitan projects while regional roads deteriorated, the Regional Jobs and Infrastructure Fund was scrapped and councils were asked to shoulder increasing costs.

"People want to live in regional Victoria. The opportunity is already there – what we are missing is the investment to match it," Cr Blain said.

"If the Suburban Rail Loop is abandoned, I can tell the next government exactly where to start with some of those billions.

"Give regional Victoria \$2 billion over four years to fix our roads and \$1 billion toward infrastructure to unlock housing and kick-start job-creating precincts.

"That \$3 billion that could start changing regional communities immediately."

RCV is calling on all parties contesting the November state election to commit to:

- an additional **\$2 billion Regional Roads Package over four years** to address the deteriorating condition of regional roads; and
- a **\$1 billion Regional Fund** to unlock enabling infrastructure, housing, investment and jobs across regional Victoria.

Cr Blain said the state election presented an opportunity to reset the relationship between Spring Street and regional Victoria after years of frustration over the balance of government investment.

"We watched the Regional Jobs and Infrastructure Fund disappear while enormous investments continued to be made in Melbourne," Cr Blain said.

"We've watched our roads get worse, and new costs imposed on our communities through things like the Emergency Services Volunteer Fund, and too often regional Victorians feel their concerns aren't being heard.

"The next government has the opportunity to right those wrongs.

"Regional Victoria is growing. People want to live there. Businesses want to invest there. But we need roads, housing and enabling infrastructure to turn that demand into long-term prosperity.



“Regional Victoria isn’t asking to be saved. We’re asking government to stop making growth harder than it needs to be.

“If there are billions of dollars freed up from the Suburban Rail Loop, regional Victoria is ready with a plan for more homes and more jobs,” Cr Blain said.

“And unlike the SRL, you won’t have to wait decades to see the difference.”

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