



Rural Councils Victoria

2019/20 Victorian budget asks

For this year's Victorian budget, Rural Councils Victoria has identified key investments that will bring a larger share of population and economic growth to rural Victoria. We're asking for investments in two areas that will unleash rural Victoria's potential: improving the sustainability of rural councils, and investing in stronger rural communities.

Sustainable rural councils

Renew funding for Rural Councils Victoria at \$3.5m over four years

Rural Councils Victoria provides valuable support to members in professional development, research and policy. We run events, training and research projects that help governments at all levels understand how rural Victoria can succeed. That's why the Victorian Government must renew funding for RCV to support local governments and rural communities across the state.

Extending the Rural Councils Transformation Program to \$20m per year over four years

The Rural Councils Transformation Program isn't just making rural councils stronger – it's providing better service outcomes for rural Victorians. Current funding is helping, but with a larger program, we can make even more substantive improvements. Extending the program would allow councils to set themselves up for a long future of supporting rural Victorians.

Examine service responsibility between state and local government

With declining incomes and increasing demand on services, rural councils are finding it hard to meet the needs of their communities. With a more balanced share of service delivery between the Victorian Government and rural councils, rural communities will benefit from better services and more financially sustainable councils. Funding a working group to examine service responsibility between state and local government and identify areas for improvement would be a strong first step in making funding arrangements fairer.

Sustainable rural communities

A main street redevelopment fund of \$20m per year over four years

Small businesses are the lifeblood of rural towns, and the main streets they occupy are the centre of many of rural communities. By investing in a main street redevelopment fund, the Victorian Government can help create jobs, protect heritage and deliver a strong economic future for towns across the state.

A dedicated community spaces fund of \$100m each year for four years

Quality public facilities turn towns into communities. With support from the Victorian Government, local councils will be able to increase investment in facilities across Victoria, encouraging families to move to rural communities and improving local liveability. A dedicated community spaces fund, alongside a sustainable facilities fund of \$5m each year over four years will support councils in building new facilities, upgrading ageing buildings and installing renewable energy in more places.

An extension of the mobile blackspot removal fund with an additional \$11m

Rural Victoria relies on the infrastructure that keeps it connected to the rest of the state. With jobs, emergency services and families increasingly dependent on mobile connectivity, far too much of rural Victoria still lacks effective mobile coverage. An extension of the mobile blackspot removal fund with an additional \$11m would continue to remove coverage gaps and keep rural Victorians connected.