

15 May 2019

2019-20 State Budget needs to manage sustainable regional growth

The Victorian Chamber of Commerce and Industry calls on the Victorian Government to use the 2019-20 State Budget to map out a long-term vision to manage growth in regional Victoria.

Our recommendations call for a comprehensive decentralisation plan to manage regional population growth and dispersal through the further relocation of key government departments, renewed efforts to support regional towns, industries and workforces under pressure from restructuring, tax incentives to attract new investment, transport, health and education infrastructure upgrades and reforms to expand opportunities to get more regional businesses involved in government procurement.

Supporting actions the Victorian Chamber seeks in this year's budget include better regional infrastructure and land use planning, a commitment to eradicate all mobile blackspots and further investment in new technologies to improve regional transport capacity and integration.

The Victorian Chamber's 2019/20 State Budget recommendations include:

- Plan for regional infrastructure needs to support population growth and jobs in Geelong, Gippsland, Ballarat and the Hume region.
- Increase the payroll tax threshold to \$850,000, while retaining the regional payroll tax discount.
- Ensure the airport rail link incorporating fast trains to Geelong and Ballarat announced in the lead up to 2018 Victorian election is delivered on time and on budget.
- Strengthen Invest Victoria's focus on regional Victoria.
- Fund a dedicated, comprehensive and tailored support service to help regional businesses who have never engaged an apprentice.

To be attributed to Victorian Chamber Chief Executive Mark Stone AM:

"The 2019/20 budget is an opportunity for the re-elected Andrews Government to set out a long-term vision for growth and job creation in regional Victoria. While there have been numerous initiatives over the past year benefiting business, our recommendations build on this work to generate more economic activity, investment and jobs.

"Our recommendations for investment in apprenticeships and traineeships would set more young people on a successful career pathway, strengthen recognition of employers who take on apprentices and develop workers with skills that meet industry needs.

"Regional Victoria has experienced strong growth but much of it has been concentrated in larger regional cities close to Melbourne. The Victorian Government must broaden its policy approach to not only promote regional growth but manage regional growth."

To request a copy of the Submission or interview with Mark Stone AM, please contact:

Media contact: Anne Wright 0423 883 945 or Ellana Katos 0400 976 889 media@victorianchamber.com.au

Background – About the Victorian Chamber of Commerce and Industry

The Victorian Chamber of Commerce and Industry, established in 1851, is the most influential business organisation in Victoria, informing and servicing more than 15,000 members, customers and clients around the state.