



Fact sheet

The Government recognises that modern, high quality infrastructure provides the building blocks for economic development across provincial Victoria.

The *Regional Infrastructure Development Fund (RIDF)* established by the Government in 1999, is the first of its kind in Australia dedicated solely to rebuilding regional infrastructure. It has played a key role in reviving regional and rural Victoria.

While the RIDF continues to fund a diverse range of projects across the state that benefit regional communities and businesses, the *Moving Forward* consultations suggested the RIDF should look at new ways to support infrastructure development.

The Government is responding to these suggestions by providing several refocused initiatives under the RIDF to support small towns, energy and arts infrastructure.

1. Building stronger small towns

The Government will provide a further \$5 million to boost the *Small Towns Development Fund* and improve the funding ratio for small municipalities.

Recognising that municipalities with a small rate base sometimes have difficulties meeting the requirement for a 2:1 contribution to projects, the Government will increase its maximum funding ratio for eligible projects within the 38 smaller rural municipalities to 3:1.

2. Developing Victoria's regional arts and cultural infrastructure

The Government will allocate a further \$10 million to extend the *Building Arts and Cultural Facilities* program under the *Regional Infrastructure Development Fund*.

Demand for the *Building Arts and Cultural Facilities* sub-program over the last two years has been strong and has exceeded expectations. The Government will extend the program to enable the construction of major new facilities and the funding of smaller arts and cultural projects throughout provincial Victoria.

3. Upgrading provincial Victoria's energy infrastructure

The Government will allocate \$10 million to a *Regional Electrical Access Program* under the *Regional Infrastructure Development Fund*.

The cost of new and upgraded electrical connections in regional locations can be high, and is usually much greater than a similar project in urban areas.

The *Regional Electrical Access Program* will provide a grant of up to 50 per cent of the customer's contribution where the customer is a business and the upgrade works will improve power availability for surrounding properties.



4. Making industrial land more accessible

The Government will continue to support regional cities and towns in competing for industrial proposals to drive continuing economic development and secure new business.

The Government will continue to prioritise infrastructure provision to existing zoned industrial land in provincial areas.

5. Widening access to broadband

The Government will jointly fund a new Broadband Project Officer to work within Regional Development Victoria for a two-year period.

The officer will identify opportunities for new and improved broadband services in regional Victoria and support the next generation broadband network infrastructure rollout, access and effective use by geographic location and industry sector.

*The Victorian Government's provincial economic statement Moving Forward: Making Provincial Victoria the Best Place to Live, Work and Invest was launched in November 2005. This \$502 million program aimed to build on provincial Victoria's strong economic success since 1999, drive further growth and development in regional cities, communities and industries, and attract more people, jobs and investment to regional and rural areas. Consultations conducted by the Government in November and December 2007 showed strong support for the direction taken by Moving Forward, but also highlighted new challenges. Moving Forward: Update – The Next Two Years responds to these consultations. It reinforces the Government's strong support for provincial Victoria, continues to deliver the highly successful Moving Forward agenda and introduces additional initiatives to tackle the challenges ahead. Moving Forward: Update addresses five key areas: **growth and change; industry; skills; infrastructure; and drought and a changing climate.***

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