



12 October 2020

The Hon Daniel Andrews MP
Premier of Victoria
1 Treasury Place
MELBOURNE VIC 3002

Dear Premier

Calling on the Government to Ease restrictions in regional Victoria to stimulate the economy

We write on behalf of the Boards and members of Victoria's regional Committees for Cities. Our network draws its members from business and industry, the knowledge sector, local government, statutory authorities, the community and not-for-profit sectors.

We acknowledge the tremendous effort and resolve of the Victorian Government to protect the health and wellbeing of our community during this crisis. We also acknowledge the significant support provided by the Victorian Government to assist businesses and individuals and we look forward to further financial commitments and support from the Victorian Budget 2020-21.

Regional Victoria's current 14-day coronavirus case number average sits at 0.4 new cases with 0 'mystery' cases. If these numbers were applicable in metropolitan Melbourne, we would be praising the efforts of Melbournians, and businesses would be re-opening in a COVID Normal environment.

We believe it is now time for the Victoria Government to recognise the efforts of regional Victoria in suppressing the virus and allow us to move to the Final Step in the state's re-opening roadmap.

The data shows the virus is under control in regional Victoria and we ask you to consider untethering our progress to COVID Normal to the coronavirus case numbers in metropolitan Melbourne.

Any further delay in moving to the Final Step for regional Victoria would seem to disregard the Victorian Government's own assertion that lifting restrictions must be driven by data. The data for regional Victoria meets the Government's stated targets.

Further, delays in moving to the Final Step for regional Victoria will continue to damage our regional economies and people's lives and livelihoods. Growing community fatigue has the potential to erode the good work done to date; moving to the Final Step in the Roadmap for regional Victoria is due recognition for the cooperation and compliance that has allowed us to get to where we are.

With restricted movement of people out of Melbourne, we believe Victoria can be confident that the risk of further community transmission in the regions is very low. The recent Kilmore outbreak, and the excellent public health response to it, shows that containment strategies are in place and can be effective.

Business in regional Victoria has invested heavily in COVID safe practices. Our businesses have innovated, developed new policies, trained staff, invested in infrastructure and transformed their workplaces. They have clearly demonstrated they have prioritised the health and safety of their staff, customers and their broader communities.

Our businesses and communities deserve to be rewarded for their dedication to suppressing the virus in regional areas and be allowed to progress to the next stage towards a COVID normal future.

As advocates for regional Victoria, we the undersigned ask the Government to give our communities and our businesses the chance to move towards recovery, in a safe and responsible way. It is in all our interests to do so.

We look forward to receiving a response and please contact any of the organisations listed below for further information.

Your sincerely



Michael Poulton
CEO, Committee for Ballarat



Geoff Kelly
Chair, Committee for Echuca-Moama



Jennifer Cromarty
CEO, Committee for Geelong



Stephen Garner
Chair, Committee for Portland



Sam Birrell
CEO, Committee for Greater Shepparton



Jane Oakley
CEO, Committee for Gippsland

CC: The Hon Tim Pallas MP, Treasurer
The Hon Jaclyn Symes MP, Minister for Regional Development
The Hon Martin Foley, MP Minister for Health