

How can RCV support my council to advocate on an issue?

Background

RCV was established in 2005 to coordinate the network of 38 rural councils across Victoria in their efforts to better understand, articulate and address the issues affecting them.

In March 2011 the State Government announced funding of \$3.3 million for RCV, to be delivered over four years under the Networked Rural Councils Program (NRCP). A further \$3.5 million was committed to RCV to continue this work under the auspices of the Municipal Association of Victoria (MAV).

In 2016, RCV became an Incorporated Association operating independently, with a three year funding commitment of \$3.5 million from Regional Development Victoria (RDV). We continue to work closely with MAV, RDV, Local Government Victoria (LGV) and other state and federal agencies as we deliver our program of work. The RCV Rules of Incorporation are available on the website.

RCV Program of work

The RCV program of work is driven by the funding agreement with the State Government. Under the terms of the agreement RCV will;

- (1) Promote a collective voice for rural Councils and provide an avenue for engagement with State and Federal Governments;
- (2) Heighten awareness and understanding of issues that impact on rural communities;
- (3) Build the capacity of rural Councils to face current and future challenges and provide effective and sustainable services;
- (4) Develop and advocate for policies, strategies and initiatives to improve outcomes for rural Councils and their communities; and
- (5) Provide leadership on local governance.

The agreement identifies three workstreams to be addressed across the term of the funding period;

- Workstream 1: Governance, Networking and Communications
- Workstream 2: Sustainable Rural Councils
- Workstream 3: Sustainable Rural Communities

The scope of the activities to be delivered through these workstreams has been developed by the RCV Committee in consultation with our members, and with the Victorian Government as RCV's primary funder.

A number of key reports inform our current program of activities and advocacy. They outline some of the challenges facing rural councils and rural communities, as well as some of the forecast changes to the Victorian Local Government sector.

- Victorian Local Government Act Review (June 2019)
- Victorian Government Response to the Parliamentary Inquiry (June 2019)

- Victorian Parliamentary Inquiry into the sustainability and operational challenges of Victoria's rural and regional councils (March 2018)
- KPMG Report - Local Government Victoria's Rural and Regional Councils' Sustainability Reform Program (December 2017)

RCV Governance Structure

RCV members are represented by an elected official and a CEO from each of the six regions defined by the Municipal Association of Victoria (MAV).

The role of each Committee Members as regional representative is to:

- Proactively communicating with the member Councils in the region they represent
- Bring insights gathered from regional meetings to back to the Committee for consideration and to inform the RCV ongoing program of work
- Represent RCV at regional assemblies
- Act as an advocate and champion for rural communities throughout the state.

Raising an issue with the RCV Committee

We know there are a number of pressures and issues impacting individual councils across Victoria.

Though RCV's program of work has been defined as part of the funding agreement the State Government, we understand that from time to time, emerging issues need the support of RCV as a peak body working across the local government sector.

For an issue to gain advocacy support from RCV, the Committee needs to be satisfied that:

- Rather than being a localised issue, it is an issue impacting rural councils as a collective.
- It is in line with RCV's existing program of work and core remit as outlined in our funding agreement with the Victorian Government.
- RCV has the potential to influence a policy or funding decision by contributing to advocacy efforts.

To do this, any member council wishing to seek RCV support on a specific issue should:

1. Formally raise the issue via their own Council
2. Seek the formal support of the councils in their region
3. Seek the formal support of RCV via your regional representative with demonstrated evidence that the issue has regional support.

The RCV Committee Member in their capacity as a regional representative will bring the issue to the attention of the RCV Committee. The Committee will discuss the issue as a group, determine RCV's capacity to contribute, explore the most impactful way for RCV to provide advocacy support and to commit to a program of action.

RCV's response will be provided in writing to the lead council.

For more information, please contact the RCV Secretariat on 02 6071 5100.