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DECENTRALISATION – CREATE 1000 ADDITIONAL GOVERNMENT SECTOR JOBS IN BALLARAT

The Ask

- Relocate a major government department/authority to Ballarat

Further decentralisation will deliver jobs, and stimulate growth and investment, bringing long term benefits to the City and its region.

Problem we are trying to solve

Ballarat's CBD needs more people to stimulate its social and economic vibrancy; beyond the city centre decentralisation will promote growth and investment in the regional economy and take advantage of the area's highly skilled workforce.

A lack of high quality jobs providing career pathways in Ballarat has resulted in a 'brain drain' from the municipality. If Ballarat is to continue to grow sustainably and further consolidate its role as the Capital of Western Victoria, stable, new long-term, skilled public-sector jobs are essential.

Building Momentum

City of Ballarat has welcomed dual government announcements in the past year relating to relocation/creation of government jobs and functions to Ballarat.

These announcements reflect confidence in the Ballarat economy and its workforce, and its function as the Capital of Western Victoria; this in turn builds confidence and increases activity in the local economy, with associated construction having a positive impact.

Further decentralisation to build on this momentum is essential and brings significant benefits to governments and to Ballarat and region.

Relocating Federal Department to Ballarat – a strategic location

City of Ballarat believes there are considerable advantages and synergies to be enjoyed through relocating these Federal Government departments to Ballarat:

- Department of Infrastructure and Regional Development and Cities - Infrastructure Investment Division (app 170 staff). Ballarat's advantage - in addition to general decentralisation advantages Ballarat enjoys a strategic location at the centre of the Victoria transport rail and road transport system
- Department of Prime Minister and Cabinet - Digital Transformation Agency (approx 110 staff). Ballarat's advantage - strong, innovative, established and evolving ICT sector
- Department of the Environment and Energy. Ballarat's advantage - located at the gateway to the expanding renewable energy industry in Western Victoria
- Australian Space Agency. Ballarat's advantage - unique combination of a strong, innovative ICT sector, collaborative linkages with universities, close proximity to Melbourne and a choice of greenfield sites

Relocation to Ballarat by any of these Federal departments will bring significant and increased benefits for the nation, government and the communities they serve.



Benefits

Given the nature of regional economies, the City of Ballarat supports going beyond a simple cost-benefit analysis of an individual relocation to weigh up the regional impact.

City of Ballarat will enjoy significant social and economic advantages as a consequence of the decentralisation of a government department/authority, and the State and Federal Governments benefit from growing regional jobs, realising cost savings, and accessing a skilled and engaged workforce.

The competitive advantages for corporate entities to relocate to Ballarat include:

- Affordable office accommodation and reduced labour costs (10–20% lower than major metropolitan centres)
- Utility charges are up to half the cost of metropolitan areas
- Government organisations already located in the region report high staff retention rates and lower HR costs
- Employees who move to Ballarat find it more affordable to enter the housing market; enjoy lower mortgage interest payments and easy access to excellent educational and health facilities
- Added benefits include proximity to Melbourne (30 minutes to western fringe and one and half hours by road to CBD and just over an hour by train to CBD); excellent connectivity as a result of the early NBN rollout in Ballarat

Context

Ballarat has enormous potential to help relieve the housing affordability and availability 'crisis' that is impacting Melbourne residents and workers because of the city's rapid population growth.

Ballarat is an attractive decentralisation location; the cost of doing business is lower than in major metropolitan areas, the cost of living is lower, and housing is more affordable.

Decentralisation of a major government department/authority will create the jobs that will make Ballarat and region an ideal location for people wanting to live and work, and enjoy the lifestyle, of a major regional city.

Economic Modelling

- Economic benefits for 1000 public service jobs relocating to the Ballarat CBD:
- Activation of the Ballarat CBD and professional services sector
- \$103 million per annum direct benefit from the public service wages
- Additional 838 ongoing jobs in indirect and allied industries
- Retail sector economic support
- Enhanced service delivery for the 270,000 people served by the Ballarat economy
- High quality, long term jobs
- Efficiency savings through workforce consolidation, and the use of modern office infrastructure and facilities