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VIC COALITION PLEDGES \$2M TO SECURE BENDIGO SHOWGROUNDS UPGRADE

New facilities to guarantee showgrounds for the next generation

A Victorian Liberal Nationals Coalition Government will invest \$2 million in the Bendigo Showgrounds to make it the largest facility of its kind in regional Australia.

Bendigo is home to some of the largest and most important agricultural events in Australia and the world.

Under a Coalition Government \$2 million will be invested from the \$1 billion Regional Growth Fund to construct over 6,000 square metres of covered show space and a major facility upgrade as part of a \$4 million project funded in partnership with local users and community groups.

The Bendigo Showgrounds upgrade will be funded in conjunction with the community including the Bendigo Agricultural Show Society, the Australian Sheep Breeders' Association and the City of Greater Bendigo.

Securing the future of major events at the Bendigo Showgrounds will provide enormous flow-on benefits for businesses, tourism and accommodation providers and residents across the region.

We believe regional cities and country communities are future drivers of growth and prosperity in Victoria and we must provide a strong foundation for that growth through investing in major economic and community infrastructure.

The Coalition's announcement comes ahead of the world-renowned Australian Sheep and Wool Show to be held at the Bendigo Showgrounds this week.

A Victorian Coalition Government will guarantee funding towards:

- a new 6,400 square metre permanent covered show facility;
- a 2,400 square metre dedicated equestrian area;
- a Home and Craft exhibition building;
- refurbishment of the Osborne Pavilion;

upgraded toilet, office and meeting sites; and

general Showgrounds upgrades including water and power.

This investment will secure Bendigo as the home of the largest sheep and wool show in the world, as well as a range of other major agricultural events including the National Beef Exhibition.

Events held at the Bendigo Showgrounds, including the annual agricultural show, the sheep and wool show and a national automotive swap meet, are estimated to put around \$3 million every year into the Bendigo economy, attracting people from all over Australia and internationally.

Currently an estimated 500,000 people pass through the showgrounds every year to enjoying shows, swap meet, markets, concerts and festivals – for example, a Powderfinger concert to be held at the showgrounds in October has sold 10,000 tickets.

Other agricultural organisations are increasingly looking to make Bendigo the home of major exhibitions, including the National Beef Exhibition, Australasian Dorset Championship, Pre-Royal Horse Show and the proposed International Beef Week.

In recent years the Bendigo Agricultural Show Society has established a full calendar of events and exhibits including the annual show, weekly and monthly markets, Bendigo's national swap meet, rodeos, major music concerts and other events.

Over the last ten years the Australian Sheep and Wool Show has grown every year since relocating from Melbourne, forcing organisers to spend more than \$90,000 annually for temporary tents to cater to growing numbers of exhibitors.

The Coalition's investment will see temporary tents and overburdened facilities replaced with permanent multi-purpose facilities that will make all of these events a permanent fixture in Bendigo for years to come.