

## Media Release

Friday, 18 May 2018

### **\$750,000 State Government boost to G21 region's GROW initiative**

Today the State Government announced (by Christine Couzens MP, Member for Geelong) the Give Where You Live Foundation will receive a further \$750,000 towards the implementation of GROW within the G21 region. This new funding is in addition to a previous funding contribution of \$1million for the first five years, and \$100,000 to help develop the original GROW Strategic Plan.

What started as an ambitious and innovative idea to address place-based disadvantage in the G21 region has been adopted by the State Government to be rolled out across Victoria.

The State Government yesterday (Thursday, 17 May 2018) announced it would fund projects replicating the successful GROW - *G21 Region Opportunities for Work* (GROW) project in both Ballarat and Gippsland, with other centres to follow.

The principle of GROW is to encourage enterprises to strategically buy and employ locally, and in doing so specifically create opportunities for work for disadvantaged communities. This is GROW Social Procurement.

GROW was established jointly by the *Give Where You Live Foundation* and *G21 – Geelong Region Alliance* in 2014 to address disadvantage in the region through creating jobs, especially within target areas of high unemployment.

Give Where You Live Foundation CEO Bill Mithen, said the State Government's adoption of GROW in other centres of Victoria was a "no brainer" when the G21 region program achievements were examined.

Mr Mithen welcomed today's announcement of funding to help secure GROW's work within the G21 region.

"Today's announcement will go a long way to ensuring GROW continues to benefit the region but specifically those in disadvantaged areas," Mr Mithen said.

"Some 82 businesses and other organisations have signed the GROW compact in the G21 region, committing to procure and employ locally wherever practical.



“Earlier this month GROW announced outcomes based on expenditure data collected from 16 of the Compact signatory organisations, showing a \$20.2 million increase in local procurement, leading to 179 jobs in the region broadly over a 12 month period.

“Most importantly, we reported 75 on-the-ground specific jobs in disadvantaged target communities.

“Collectively, for every \$1 million spent locally, about 8.84 new jobs can potentially be created. And there are obvious commercial benefits for those companies agreeing to procure locally wherever possible.”

G21 CEO Elaine Carbines said addressing long-term entrenched disadvantage was in many ways about cultural change and collective action.

“Our GROW compact signatories continue to illustrate why our region has flourished as it undertakes such an initiative,” Ms Carbines said.

“These plans are a catalyst for change in disadvantaged communities. GROW signatories are identifying and developing innovative opportunities to drive meaningful transformation in people’s lives, their own organisations and the broader economy.

“We’re delighted that the groundwork and hard-slog put in by G21 and Give Where You Live Foundation, with the support of local businesses and organisations, has shown what’s possible and has inspired others to follow.”

*Give Where You Live Foundation* committed \$2 million as well as ongoing operational support and in-kind contributions over 10 years to establish GROW, with the expectation that additional government, business and philanthropic funding will be committed as the project developed.

G21 provided \$30,000, plus an ongoing in-kind contribution. The State Government provided \$1million for the first five years \$100,000 to develop the GROW Strategic Plan document and the further \$750,000 announced today

GROW website: [www.grow.g21.com.au](http://www.grow.g21.com.au)

### **Media contacts:**

**Bill Mithen: CEO, Give Where You Live Foundation & Chair, G21 – Geelong Region Alliance**  
(03) 5229 4364 office or 0419 302 650

**Elaine Carbines: CEO, G21 – Geelong Region Alliance (03) 5227 4000 office**  
or 0437 202 300

