



Australian Government
Department of Infrastructure
and Regional Development



Regional
Development
Australia

Independent Review of the Regional Development Australia Programme

Final Report

The Hon Warwick Smith AM

December 2016



Purpose

The Australian Government has initiated a review of the Regional Development Australia (RDA) programme. This review is being undertaken by the Hon. Warwick Smith AM LLB, with support from the Department of Infrastructure and Regional Development. The review will examine the effectiveness of the RDA programme in delivering the Australian Government's regional agenda and make recommendations regarding its future scope, structure and delivery model, in light of developments in the Australian Government's regional agenda.

The Terms of Reference for this independent review are included at **APPENDIX A**.


The Australian Government has requested that the final report is to be completed by December 2016. This is the Final Report from the Hon. Warwick Smith AM LLB in response.

The Hon. Warwick L. Smith AM LLB



The Hon. Warwick Smith AM LLB is Chairman New South Wales & Australian Capital Territory and Senior Managing Director of the Australia New Zealand Banking Group Limited (ANZ Bank); Chairman of the Board - ANZ Bank Greater China, Chairman of the Advisory Board of Australian Capital Equity, holder of interests in Seven Group Holdings, West Australian News, Coates Hire, WesTrac and Caterpillar industrial services and equipment in Western Australia, New South Wales and North East China; Chairman of the Australia–China Council, Global Trustee of the Asia Society; Chairman of the Financial Services Knowledge Hub, New South Wales. He is also a Board Director of Seven Group Holdings and Coates Hire. Recently, Mr. Smith completed a review of the Federal Department of Infrastructure and Regional Development and the Federal Department of Finance and a review of the Contestability of Members of Parliamentary Services.

Formerly, he was Chairman of E*TRADE, the Australian Sports Commission and an Executive Director with Macquarie Bank; and a Federal Government Minister with a parliamentary career spanning 15 years. He was also Australia's first Telecommunications Ombudsman and has received a Centenary Medal and an Order of Australia.



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Director - Publishing and Communications
Communications Branch
Department of Infrastructure and Regional Development
GPO Box 594
Canberra ACT 2601
Australia

Email: publishing@infrastructure.gov.au
Website: www.infrastructure.gov.au

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Abbreviations

Acronym	Full Title
ACC	Area Consultative Committee
ACT	Australian Capital Territory
ALGA	Australian Local Government Association
BBRF	Building Better Regions Fund
CRG	RDA Chairs Reference Group
DoIRD	Department of Infrastructure and Regional Development Organisation
EO	Executive Officer
IOT	Indian Ocean Territories
IOTRDO	Indian Ocean Territories Regional Development
LGA	Local Government Association
MOU	Memorandum of Understanding
NSRF	National Stronger Regions Fund
NSW	New South Wales
NT	Northern Territory
ONA	Office of Northern Australia
PIRSA	Primary Industries and Regions South Australia
QLD	Queensland
QPRC	Queanbeyan Palerang Regional Council
RAB	Remote Area Board
RCCC	Regional Communities Consultative Council
RDA	Regional Development Australia
RDAF	Regional Development Australia Fund
RDC	Regional Development Commissions
RDV	Regional Development Victoria
RJIP	Regional Jobs and Investment Packages
SA	South Australia
TOR	Terms of Reference
VIC	Victoria
WA	Western Australia



Executive Summary

There is strong recognition of the contributions by Regional Development Australia (RDA) Committees to their regions since the programme commenced in 2008. The over 600 volunteers that have contributed to the programme annually over the past nine years are to be congratulated for their community service and should be encouraged to continue to support their communities. There is also acknowledgement of the earlier work of the Australian Government's Area Consultative Committees in fostering economic development.

The review found broad support for Australian Government involvement in regional development and I note that the Australian Government will set a future direction for the Commonwealth's work in regional Australia by releasing a regional development policy in 2017.

I have been listening to stakeholders across the country and have heard that people, in the true regions of Australia, feel forgotten by governments. This is despite record Commonwealth investment—particularly in regional infrastructure, transport and communications. Government investments are not resonating with regional Australians; therefore, a different approach must be taken. The Government, through partnerships with state, territory and local governments, must focus initiatives on strengthening the pillars of growth to reboot the economies of our true regions, enabling the private sector to harness opportunity.

Some of the foundation is there—the Building Better Regions Fund to support regional infrastructure and community building projects, the Mobile Black Spot program to improve mobile phone coverage and competition in regional Australia, the Regional Jobs and Investment Package to help regions to diversify their economies, stimulate long-term economic growth and deliver sustainable employment and Australia's Free Trade Agreements which provide opportunity to build our trading relationships—but the Australian Government must also ensure that it supports regions to engage in their futures, listens and responds to diverse circumstances and provides resources to ensure that it meets the needs of regional Australians.

Through my previous work in the review of the Department of Infrastructure and Regional Development and the Department of Finance, I am aware that the Australian Government is seeking to reduce the size of government by improving efficiency, effectiveness and by eliminating waste and duplication. There is potential to achieve this through governments' working in synergy rather than isolation on regional development matters without significant negative impact on regions.

In performing the review, I was asked to examine the effectiveness of the RDA programme ('the programme') in delivering the Australian Government's regional agenda and make recommendations regarding its future scope, structure and delivery model, in light of developments in the Australian Government's regional agenda.

I have researched, considered and will report on three themes: RDA programme framework; the governance and administration of the programme; and alignment with the Australian Government policy objectives now and into the future.

Key Findings

Several key findings have emerged in the course of the review. There is strong evidence to suggest that:

The RDA programme framework

- the tripartite approach of the programme to establish independent committees to bring the three levels of government — Commonwealth, state and local — together with the community, to develop a shared economic vision for a region, was never fully realised. The Australian Government, along with most state and territory governments, have not shown total commitment to the RDA Programme, maintaining or creating other mechanisms to achieve similar policy and program outcomes;
- state and territory governments continue to revise both the way they promote regional development and the entities in which they use to deliver regional development. While some jurisdictions continue to operate their own regional development entities, others are looking to utilise local government as a means for delivering regional initiatives. Equally, while the Australian Government has continued the programme it delivers its broader policy and programs, even regional programs, in isolation to and separately from the RDA programme;
- while state and territory governments have continued to collaborate and engage with RDA Committees, the level of direct and in kind funding has significantly reduced. Despite the fact that RDA Committees receive operational funding from the Australian Government (and the state or territory government in some jurisdictions) there is no uniform formula for determining funding levels nor the utilisation of funding under the programme. In the absence of a formula, a model that builds on the historical operations of Area Consultative Committees has evolved;
- As independent not for profits, RDA Committees (excluding those in Victoria) have had the opportunity to bid for third party contracts and become significant players in their community. The degree to which this opportunity was pursued is wide-ranging and accordingly, the long term viability of RDA Committees is varied. Some RDA Committees which deliver additional activities under third party contracts are financially viable in their own right, while others are totally dependent on program funding. Twenty-nine RDA Committees hold around 100 third party contracts with a combined value of over \$10 million, the remaining RDA Committees are struggling to continue operations within existing funding allocations;
- all RDA Committees have delivered a regional plan, promoted government programs and provided support to community groups seeking funding. However, there is a great deal of variation in the quality of those plans and the acceptance that those plans are the main driving mechanisms for growth;
- regional plans represent agreed comparative strengths and future economic opportunities but RDA Committees have limited capacity to implement those plans. Regional plans are considered useful in achieving outcomes in regions by only 54 per cent of respondents who were not members of RDA Committees;
- analysis that underpins regional plans is unlikely to significantly change over the next decade. Also, the comparative and competitive advantage of regions is now well understood by governments and communities but realising those plans requires action not planning. Initiatives to promote those opportunities with investors, deliver the planning approvals to support economic



activity and galvanise the soft skills in community leadership to support those projects that will deliver growth are needed;

- existing boundaries of Australian Government regional programs are not aligned with each other, let alone work in harmony with the boundaries of state and territory programs. Only 58 percent of respondents who were not members of RDA Committees provided a positive rating in relation to the extent to which their current RDA boundary accurately reflects the way in which individuals interact with people, businesses and organisations;
- the built up urban areas of the major capital cities are included in the programme, which is at odds with many state government and international approaches to regional development, including the Australian Governments own Building Better Region Fund. The core functions of RDA Committees are more valued the further away they are from the built up urban areas of the major capital cities, and more important as a mechanism to engage in a broader range of issues as remoteness increases;
- metropolitan RDA Committees are quite agile, performing activities that are similar to and often duplicate those performed by large city councils, peak bodies and state development associations, coordinating development activities across their broader regions, in an attempt to define a role where significant effective development activity is evident;
- stakeholders report that the key value of the RDA programme lies in soft infrastructure—networking, facilitation, brokering and advocacy, not in the management and development of regional planning which duplicate activities performed by state and local government bodies;
- clear key performance indicators do not exist for the programme therefore it is not possible to accurately measure outputs of RDA Committees and anecdotal evidence such as success stories are quite often only seen by individual organisations or are seated in facilitatory roles in regions involving many individuals and organisations;
- despite this, it is generally accepted that the performance of RDA Committees has improved over the life of the programme as their role and functions were better understood, but the strengths and capabilities of RDA Committees remain varied; and
- there is an agreed correlation between the quality and performance of RDA Chairs, Executive Officers and the perceived value of an RDA Committee, this does not appear to extend to the broader committee. In addition, RDA Committee member's perception of their level of performance did not reflect that of the community, 87 per cent of RDA Committee members provided positive ratings in relation to their performance across all three measures, whereas only 60 per cent of respondents who were not members of RDA Committees agreed.


The governance and administration of the programme

- RDA Committees operate as independent, not for profit bodies under state based constitutions. The exception to this being those in Victoria who operate as committees of Regional Development Victoria (RDV), under a single funding agreement with the Victorian Government;
- the role of RDA Committees changed with the internal review of Minister Truss in 2014, narrowing the programme focus to economic planning, promoting government programs and providing a local resource to those looking to apply for funding under government grant programs. Despite this clear direction, RDA Committee members continue to express confusion regarding their role and how they relate to the various other regional development bodies in their region;

- a focus by the Department of Infrastructure and Regional Development (the Department) on supporting RDA Committees in the infancy of the programme was not continued as the programme matured. A subsequent shift to a program management model which focused on deliverables, resulted in a redirection of resources and less interaction between the Department and RDA Committees. This has been viewed by RDA Committees as disinterest in the programme;
- RDA Committee Chair and Deputy Chair appointments are made by the Australian Government minister responsible for regional development, and where relevant, in conjunction with state and territory ministers and relevant local government organisations. The appointment of RDA Chairs and Deputy Chairs under this arrangement is inconsistent with the ideology of an independent body and is questionable;
- some RDA Committee members report that they are both independent community voices and an artifice of the Australian Government, which is not possible. In the broader community the programme is seen as a bureaucratic mechanism of the Australian Government without legislative responsibility or the necessary resources to take forward development in regions; and
- regional leaders have volunteered their time and energy to ensure that RDA Committees comprise a genuine cross section of the community, in spite of this only 60 per cent of respondents who were not members of RDA Committees, in significant contrast to 86 per cent of RDA Committee members, believe that this was achieved.

Alignment with the Australian Government policy objectives now and into the future

- the community welcomes the pending regional policy statement by the Australian Government and believes it will clarify how the different threads and approaches to regional development dovetail together, which is currently unclear with many programs duplicative;
- the Building Better Regions Fund, Regional Jobs and Investment Package and the various other regional programs are only the foundation on which a regional development approach must be built. Efforts of governments must be sustained over the long-term, foundational programs that provide quality advice to regions every day, must be complemented by programs that support regions who have been left behind;
- there remains strong support for the Australian Government to be engaged in and support regional development but the effectiveness of continuing to invest in a mechanism, created to undertake the development of a regional plan, is questionable. Regional plans are now developed, the focus going forward must be on the activities that deliver on these plans;
- a one size fits all approach is no longer the preferred means of promoting regional development, existing government initiatives are rather generic and are not sufficiently fine-tuned to the needs and demands of Australia's diverse regions. The Australian Government must work in partnership with the states and territories, and local government to listen to communities to identify their needs;
- investing in infrastructure is important but more focus needs to be put into the other pillars of economic growth; Human capital—particularly education and skills; information and communications technology; business competitiveness; access to markets; collaborative partnerships; and service delivery; these will drive long-term regional development;
- business leaders who have been successful in developing regional engines of growth need to have a stronger and more direct access to the Minister for Regional Development. It is the private



sector that will deliver on jobs and opportunities for regional communities and it is governments responsibility to ensure that the conditions are right and the workforce is available for them to do so;

- attracting private sector investment and skills from metropolitan to regional areas is important to build capacity within and realise opportunity of regions;
- recent announcements by the Australian Government to relocate public sector functions and jobs to regional areas to stimulate regional economic development and support regional involvement in decision-making have been welcomed throughout regional Australia;
- stakeholders in the regions, both community and government based, are broadly supportive of a decentralisation policy. Decentralisation of government services which are not policy functions have long been a feature of state government approaches to regional development and to a lesser degree that of the Commonwealth; and
- confidence in our regions is essential to promote the benefits of investing in regional areas globally—particularly in Asia, but there are impediments to getting good news stories out about regional Australia.

Recommendations

Australia's regions are unique and very diverse. As these regions have undergone significant change, both economically and socially, they will be required to continue to adapt to change into the future. The Australian Government's involvement in regional development began when tight controls over trade, vast distances between population centres, high unit costs for service delivery and limited connectivity both protected regional economies and constrained their ability to access wider markets. Globalisation, advances in technology—particularly transport and communications technology, and productivity gains have resulted in the need for regions to remain relevant and competitive by harnessing their comparative advantages, both nationally and internationally.

Even though the Australian Government is faced with diminished control over traditional trade protections due to globalisation, a concerted effort to strengthen the pillars of economic growth in regional Australia; Human capital—particularly education and skills; information and communications technology; business competitiveness; access to markets; collaborative partnerships; and service delivery; will drive long-term regional development. It will also ensure that regions experience the right environment and have the resources to harness the opportunities from Free Trade Agreements to expand their economies.

The diversity of Australia's regions requires an approach that recognises their unique circumstances and tailors initiatives to strengthen these pillars. Most of the policy and programs that will deliver this have a national and or state reach which is not specific to regional Australia. Therefore, collaborative arrangements amongst and between all tiers of government and the private sector are essential in guaranteeing that government services such as health, aged care, education and communications meet the needs of regional Australians and support regional economies.

Approaches to regional development have evolved over time and will continue to do so. This means that any approach to regional development must be subject to a robust monitoring and evaluation mechanism that provides an evidence base to ensure that the best possible outcomes are achieved in partnership with regional Australians.



Today, Australian businesses are finding more ways to export their products, professional services and expertise. Australians must understand that our markets and opportunities are more extensive than believed. Access to global markets and our proximity to the Asian vertical increases competitiveness in the region but also provides the Australian economy and its businesses with expansive opportunities that must be embraced. Opportunities such as those that result from the increase of regional access to international air freight routes to Asia or through access to the latest technologies powered by fast and reliable broadband are vital in helping Australian businesses remain competitive in the global economy.

The Australian Government must ensure that its programs, particularly its regional programs, deliver initiatives that are right for today but also prepare regional Australia for the future. By reducing the fragmentation of its regional policy interventions and delivering a coordinated suite of initiatives that strengthen regional economies, the Australian Government can begin to rebuild regional Australia.

A commitment must be made to regional development initiatives that grow local economies, promote economic opportunity and build capacity. It is only through direct action that the Australian Government can build the economies of regional Australia. To support these objectives, I strongly suggest that the Australian Government:

- continue to play a role in regional development, in concert with state and local governments creating partnerships, to achieve regional development outcomes together, rather than through a unilateral approach;
- ensure that any participation, new initiatives or re-shaping of existing approaches in regional development have clear direction and add value, rather than duplicating the work of other levels of government;
- deliver a suite of regional development initiatives that operate in the day to day, but are also responsive to, and able to be bolstered in, times of crisis ensuring regions are not left behind;
- ensure that the boundaries of its regional programs work in harmony with the states and territories and where possible reflect the unique ways that communities already interact with people, businesses and organisations;
- note that areas within the built up urban areas of the major capital cities are particularly well catered for by large city councils, national and local growth alliances and other metropolitan development bodies;
- maintain elements of the programme, particularly the focus of improving the capacity of regions to engage in regional development activities, but not at the exclusion of other existing, effective regional development bodies in the regions;
- refocus the programme from funding entities to funding activities which invest in human capital, promote regional leadership and collaboration, adopt digital technology and support regions to take existing regional plans forward, enabling regions to realise global economic opportunity;
- prioritise provision of funding for regional development activities on a co-funding basis, where project applicants co-invest, or 'partner', with the government by providing either a cash or in-kind contribution to ensure project viability and the leveraging of additional funds;
- seek the strategic advice of regional business experts who are globally connected, across areas as diverse as advanced manufacturing, agriculture and innovation and technology, on a wide range of regional economic development matters;

- develops a framework to inform decentralisation policy decisions to ensure that they are sustainable over the long-term, integrate well within the established expertise and comparative advantages of a region; and
- commit to a heightened focus on the strengthening of regional economies by promoting economic investment opportunities in regional Australia to the national and international market, to attract investment and build confidence.

In light of current fiscal constraints some recommendations will require the repurposing of existing RDA programme funding and resources. I have not focussed on identifying savings, though some recommendations, if not fully implemented, might lead to savings in the short or long term. On this basis, I recommend:

Recommendation 1: The Australian Government cease Regional Development Australia programme operations on 30 June 2017;

Recommendation 2: The Regional Development Australia Chairs Reference Group be dissolved immediately;

Recommendation 3a: The Minister for Regional Development appoint a new Australian Regional Business Advisory Board consisting of business experts who are globally connected, across areas as diverse as advanced manufacturing, agriculture and innovation and technology to consult with on regional economic development matters; and

Recommendation 3b: The Board as a priority establish an independent taskforce chaired by a board member to review and assess the appropriateness and the major impact of a policy of decentralisation of non-policy functions of the Commonwealth and the states from the major metropolitan centres of Sydney, Melbourne, Brisbane and Canberra;

Recommendation 4: The Australian Government focus its efforts in regional development matters on the true regions of Australia, that is those outside of the built up urban areas of the major capital cities;

Recommendation 5: The Australian Government strengthen its partnerships with the states, territories and local government to formalise tailored tripartite arrangements for regional development through Memorandums of Understanding within each jurisdiction;

Recommendation 6: The Australian Government engage a network of Directors of Regional Development to enhance community collaboration and linkages to deliver on established regional visions. Directors of Regional Development would:

- foster collaborations between a diverse number of participants;
- encourage and support entrepreneurship;
- promote and disseminate information on government policy initiatives; and
- support community stakeholders to develop project proposals to access funding.

Recommendation 7: The Australian Government in consultation with the states and territories, embed its network of Directors of Regional Development in established state based regional development bodies aligned to the functional economic zones of jurisdictions;

Recommendation 8: The Australian Government establish a Regional Collaboration Fund, drawing as a minimum on established funding within the current RDA programme, to enable investment in human capital, regional leadership and collaboration, and fund regional development activities. Proposals would be agreed by the Regional Business Advisory Board and support activities which encourage:

- investment in human capital particularly regional leadership;
- adoption of technology to harness economic opportunity and support entrepreneurship; and
- implementation of international best practice approaches to regional development.

Recommendation 9: The Australian Government appoint a Regional Investment Commissioner located within Austrade for a period of two years to promote the economic opportunities in regional Australia; and

Recommendation 10: The Australian Government (through the Department of Infrastructure and Regional Development and Austrade) in partnership with the states and territories develop a two-year regional campaign to develop a prospectus for investment in regions.

If these recommendations are implemented with the surety of bipartisan support from all levels of government, they will result in more effective outcomes for regional Australians and their communities.

In closing, it is apparent that over the last decade all jurisdictions have made great progress and shown commitment to the development and strengthening of approaches to better support regional development. Even so, there is considerably more work to be done to ensure that regional Australians enjoy the same benefits as all Australians—access to economic opportunities; access to government services; and connected and cohesive communities.



The Hon. Warwick L. Smith AM LLB

Report

Introduction

The Independent Review of the effectiveness of the RDA programme (the review) was commissioned by the Minister for Regional Development, Senator the Hon Fiona Nash in September 2016, following a commitment in 2014 by the Former Deputy Prime Minister, the Hon Warren Truss MP.

I am aware that the RDA programme was reviewed in 2014 by the Australian Government and there has been numerous other pieces of work, both internal and external to the Australian Government, with the potential to inform the review, including the ***Towards Responsible Government – The Report of the National Commission of Audit***, the Australian Government's Smaller Government agenda and my previous work on the Department of Infrastructure and Regional Development's Functional and Efficiency Review.

These activities and the genuineness of interest in regional Australia which I have experienced during the course of the review, suggest a willingness and commitment to achieving regional development outcomes across Australia.

There are obstacles, however, created by a lack of willingness to work towards other mechanisms of implementing the Australian Government's policy objectives, including through state and territory partnerships, that if not addressed will prevent the true regions of Australia from capitalising on the economic opportunities of the future.

This report responds to the review's Terms of Reference (TORs) which asked that I research, consider and report on three themes: alignment with the Australian Government policy objectives now and into the future; the RDA programme framework; and the governance and administration of the programme.


The final report sets out my observations and recommendations across the RDA programme, and makes observations on the broad operation of the programme as it relates to regional development across the country.

Methodology

The TORs requested that I examine the effectiveness of the RDA programme in delivering the Australian Government's regional agenda and make recommendations regarding its future scope, structure and delivery model, in light of developments in the Australian Government's regional agenda.

The methodology was designed with this in mind and to allow me to meet the review's requirements, which were to research, consider and report on three themes:

- alignment with the Australian Government policy objectives (including the smaller government agenda) now and into the future;
- the RDA programme framework; and
- the governance and administration of the programme.



I gave initial priority to discussions with Ministers and Members of Parliament, who are responsible for, or have taken a significant interest in, regional development. I have also spoken with secretaries and deputies of state and territory departments who are responsible for regional development in their jurisdictions and academics from across Australia who are well versed in regional development matters. An official from the Department of Infrastructure and Regional Development (the Department) provided support to the review.

The review was also informed by:

- consultations with a representative cross section of regional business and economic development peak bodies;
- a workshop facilitated by Mosaic Lab, at the RDA National Forum in Albany, Western Australia on 25 October 2016, with over 110 representatives from RDA Committees and governments;
- a survey, conducted by ORIMA Research, with approximately 840 participants, representative of a broad cross section of stakeholders;
- Eighty-nine (89) written submissions; and
- other recent reviews including the 2014 Department of Infrastructure and Regional Development's internal ***Regional Reform – Regional Engagement Review*** and the 2016 ***Functional and Efficiency Review***.

RDA National Forum Workshop

The Department contracted Mosaic Lab to facilitate the forum to provide an important opportunity to bring a range of RDA Committee members together to assist with determining the following:

- understanding what related themes are common across all of the RDAs;
- reflect and share successful experiences from across RDA committees;
- consider how effective the current programs of activity are given existing frameworks;
- align current operational frameworks with government regional agendas; and
- seek ways to do more of the positive activity into the future.

Mosaic Labs' approach involved using a variety of collaborative workshop style processes to begin to build a picture of the major themes and preferences in the room. Participants needed some time to connect and share ideas and this took the best part of a full day.


Mosaic Lab prepared a summary of all participant contributions from the RDA National Forum which can be found at **APPENDIX C**.

Online Survey

The Department commissioned ORIMA Research to undertake an online survey with a range of RDA programme stakeholders, including: RDA Committees members; RDA stakeholders nominated by each RDA Committee; state, territory and local government contacts and academics.

Survey Methodology

Contact details for all stakeholder groups were provided by the Department to ORIMA Research. Prior to being invited to participate in the survey by ORIMA Research, a Primary Approach Letter (PAL) was sent by the Department to all contacts. The letter introduced the research, and informed the stakeholders that ORIMA Research will be inviting them to participate in an online survey.



Following this, all stakeholders were sent an email invitation to participate in the online survey. Fieldwork was conducted between 30 September and 17 October 2016. To maximise research participation, three reminder emails were sent during fieldwork to those who, at the time, had not yet completed the survey:

- The first email reminder was sent at the end of the first week of fieldwork (mid-fieldwork), targeting all who had not yet started or completed the survey;
- The second email reminder was sent a few days before the fieldwork end, targeting all who had not yet started or completed the survey; and
- The last email reminder was sent on the last day of fieldwork, targeting only those who had started but had not completed and/ or submitted their responses.

A total of 839 out of 1755 stakeholders who were invited to participate completed the survey, equating to an overall response rate of 48%. Of the 839 participants, 37% self-identified as RDA Committee members and 26% self-identified as local government representatives.

RDA Committee members overwhelmingly provided positive ratings to the survey questions, this was counteracted with less favourable ratings provided by local government representatives. Therefore, any interpretations of the results must be cognisant of this.

ORIMA Research provided key findings from the survey and a chart pack which can be found at **APPENDIX C**.

The RDA Programme Framework

Establishment of Regional Development Australia

The RDA programme is a national initiative established in 2008 to provide a cooperative approach between Commonwealth, state and local governments to develop and strengthen economic outcomes for regions. Made up of 55 committees, the RDA network covers all metropolitan, rural and remote regions across the country, excluding the external territories.

RDA Committees are independent incorporated bodies under their respective state and territory legislation with the exception of the Victorian based RDA's which operate as advisory committees administered by the Victorian Government.

RDA Committee members are volunteers drawn from the region and represent the community, business and not-for-profit organisations. RDA Committees also include members with local government experience. Each RDA Committee aims to have a broad and diverse skills base, and demonstrated networks and alliances.

RDA Committees are encouraged to work together on projects and other activities where they have common interests and common boundaries.

Area Consultative Committees

The RDA programme replaced Area Consultative Committee (ACCs) which were established in 1994 and delivered by the former Department of Employment, Education and Training to provide advice and generate support for labour market programs under the *Working Nation Initiative*. When established, ACCs were unincorporated advisory bodies with secretarial support provided by Commonwealth Officers.

In 1996 all ACCs were incorporated under state/territory legislation, provided with operational funding for staff via a funding agreement, and slowly took over the economic development role of Regional Development Organisations.


The role of ACCs was to identify projects and assist in the development and application of a range of programs including the Regional Partnerships Programme, Regional Assistance Program, Dairy Regional Assistance Program and Regional Solutions and Sustainable Regions Programme.

When the Australian Government ceased support for the program, ACCs responded in varying ways; de-registration, continuing to operate under an alternative name, or, in some circumstances, continuing as RDA Committees.

State and Territory Programme Arrangements

Memoranda of Understanding (MoU) between the Australian, state and territory governments established the overarching policy and operational framework for the RDA programme. The MoUs defined the relationship between the parties and varied slightly in each jurisdiction, and in Tasmania and South Australia local government associations were also a party to the MOU.

Responsibilities and funding under the MoUs varied from state to state with full integration of a tripartite arrangement in South Australia, a Commonwealth and state initiative in Victoria and where the RDA programme operated in parallel with the state's own regional development activities in Western Australia.



All MoUs expired on 8 January 2015 and alternative arrangements are in place with governments, and where relevant local government associations, in the Northern Territory, South Australia, Tasmania, and Victoria. A summary of Key Arrangements can be found at **Appendix B**.

RDA Programme Funding

In the 2016-17 Budget, the Australian Government committed \$73.6 million to the RDA programme for the period 2016-17 to 2019-20.

RDA Committees receive operational funding from the Australian Government (and the state, territory and local government in some jurisdictions). Current Commonwealth funding agreements are in place with all incorporated RDA Committees and the Victorian Government and expire on 31 December 2017.

The amount of operational funding to individual RDA Committees is varied and generally available for three years. A funding formula to determine levels of operational funding specific to each RDA Committee was never implemented. Instead the Department has continued the historical arrangements of ACCs to determine payment levels. Funding levels for each committee under the ACC program was determined by a range of factors including the size and population of ACC regions, staff management responsibilities of executive officers, the travel required to perform their roles and the performance level of committees.

The Department approves an operational budget for the use of Australian Government funds, which is submitted by each RDA Committee, based on a 'reasonable cost principle'. RDA Committees are required to operate within that budget, and any significant changes must be discussed with the Department. Provision is made in the funding agreement for the roll-over of unspent funds, with requests for a roll-over above the agreed level (as described in the funding agreement) to be made to and accompanied by a strong business case.

Each RDA Committee uses this funding to employ personnel to support it in undertaking its roles, liaise with the community and achieve outcomes for their region. Operational funding can also be used to support the employment of personnel to complete administrative tasks, support the day-to-day operation of the committee and complete necessary reports and plans.


Subject to the funding agreement, the Australian Government can cease or vary operational funding of an RDA Committee in response to administrative or government policy changes.

Until 2014, the Minister for Regional Development had access to a pool of funds to support economic development projects that addressed small regional issues. When the programme was refocused these funds were no longer available.

RDA Programme Boundaries

RDA Committee boundaries are fixed within state jurisdictions and attempt to reflect local government or state administrative boundaries. All boundaries were agreed by the Minister for Regional Development and the relevant state or territory Minister. Maps of existing RDA Committee boundaries can be found at **Appendix B**.

Proposals to change boundaries are only considered by governments at an agreed time once per year. Submission of proposals for boundary changes must be lodged between 15 January to 15 February of each calendar year. Requests to change boundaries must be made by at least one of the impacted RDA committees, and should include written support from all RDA Committees



impacted by the proposed changes. Proposals should also include the views of local government organisations (excluding the ACT) and lead state agencies responsible for delivery of regional development affected by the proposed changes. Written support from other organisations, for example, local Chambers of Commerce and evidence of broad consultation are encouraged.

Decisions to alter intra-state boundaries are jointly agreed by the Minister for Regional Development, and the respective state or territory minister responsible for regional development. Agreement is sought from the president of Local Government Associations (LGA) in South Australia or Tasmania where relevant, who are co-signatories to the MOU establishing RDA Committees in those states. If agreement is not reached by ministers and, where relevant, the LGA President, the boundaries will not be changed.

Decisions to alter inter-state boundaries are jointly agreed by the Minister for Regional Development and the respective State or Territory Ministers responsible for regional development.

Funding to support the assumption of new boundary responsibilities are negotiated and agreed between RDA Committees, the Department (and, where relevant, the State or Territory Department) within existing funding allocations of the RDA Committees concerned).

RDA Programme Activities

Contracted activities

The RDA programme provides a mechanism for regional community voices to be heard in the development of regional plans. RDA Committees are contractually required to establish and maintain a leadership role in their regional community as local champion, facilitator, mentor and solution broker drive economic growth and build the capability of their region. They are also required to identify ideas and strategies for making their region stronger and more sustainable through:

- consultation and engagement with the regional community on issues, solutions and priorities to identify the aspirations and potential of the region, help to develop a long term vision for its future and connect the regional community with this vision;
- informed regional planning that identifies solutions which turn regional strengths and comparative advantages into a sustainable, innovative and competitive regional strategy for implementing the vision for the region;
- an enhanced whole-of-government approach to regional issues based on strong and creative partnerships across and between all three levels of government – Australian, state, territory and local – which link governments to the regional community to better realise the opportunities created by regionalism and encourage regionally informed policy development;
- enhanced awareness of government programs that supports their use by Your regional community to complement and build on regional strategies and aspirations, including leveraging funding between governments and the private sector; and
- improved community and economic development that encourages soundly-based economic growth, environmental sustainability and social inclusion in regions by facilitating partnerships across all sectors - including the private sector and non-government organisations - such as by promoting business, contributing to environmental studies and supporting services that encourage social inclusion.



RDA Committees are funded to:

- maintain a three to five-year regional plan that focuses on economic development of the region and takes account of Australian, state/territory and local government plans;
- advise on the priority activities to drive regional economic development and take advantage of comparative advantages, based on consultation and engagement with community leaders;
- assist local community stakeholders to develop project proposals and help shepherd them to appropriate public and/or private funding sources;
- provide advice to the Australian Government on critical issues affecting each region; and
- enhance awareness of Australian Government programs.

They are also required to:

- report as agreed;
- ensure their operations remain viable and sustainable;
- have an ongoing and physical presence in their region;
- foster strong communication between local communities and the Australian, state, territory and local governments; and
- remain incorporated under state or territory incorporated associations legislation, for the term of their funding agreements.

Third party contracted activities

As independent and incorporated bodies RDA Committees (except those in Victoria) are able to enter into contracts with third parties (other Australian Government departments, state and local governments and not for profit organisations) to deliver a range of services.

RDA Committees currently hold over \$10 million in third party contracts. These contracted activities include but are not limited to: regional development planning and projects; delivering youth education and training pathways; child and family support programs; and acting as Regional Certifying Bodies for the Department of Immigration and Border Protection.

Performance of RDA Committees

The performance measurement framework, which is based on outcomes, attempts to provide a consistent national performance and reporting framework. It also presents RDA Committees with an opportunity to share their successes with governments, including how their activities relate to the strategic priorities of the region and of all levels of government.

In its Annual Report on outcomes, an RDA Committee is required to report to the Department across three Key Performance Areas by providing evidence of its achievement of each of the five outcomes. The three Key Performance Areas are: quantitative evidence of RDA activity, qualitative evidence of RDA process and narrative evidence of RDA impact. An RDA Committee may also wish to set its own locally relevant Key Performance Indicators in its Annual Business Plans and report against them in the Annual Report on outcomes.

The assessment of an RDA committee's performance is focussed on:

- Performance – the extent to which the RDA Committee has achieved the five Outcomes, set out in the Funding Agreement.

- Compliance – how each RDA Committee has met its obligations under the Funding Agreement, with a particular focus on financial accountability.

Departmental Program officers utilise checklists to ensure that all contractual obligations are met, a sample of a checklist is available at **Appendix B**.

RDA Committees are able to discuss issues affecting their performance from time to time with the Department. Reporting requirements include that RDA Committees report on any notable shortcomings in performance or other significant problems experienced, what lessons these issues provide and challenges for the next twelve months. Where the Department believes that an issue of performance may not be being addressed by the RDA Committee, the Department may seek to discuss the matter with the RDA Chair.

Chairs Reference Group

The RDA Chairs Reference Group (CRG) was established in 2015 by the former Deputy Prime Minister the Hon Warren Truss MP. It is a reference group of RDA Chairs comprising of one representative per state and territory who are nominated by their RDA peers in each of the states or territories and one Chair for the reference group, selected by the Minister for Regional Development.

The CRG is an informal consultation group and was established to provide information and advice to the Minister for Regional Development on critical issues in their respective jurisdiction on regional and economic development matters. The mandate of the CRG is to provide advice on:

- issues affecting RDA Committees and regional development;
- opportunities to build regional economic development;
- critical issues impacting on Australia's regions;
- the potential beneficial and adverse impact of Australian Government policy change on regions;
- enhancing the quality and effectiveness of projects to advance economic development in regions; and
- engaging with other levels of government and the business community regarding economic development issues.

The Reference Group is scheduled to meet biannually in Canberra with the specific dates and times for meetings to be determined by the Minister for Regional Development.

Members of the Reference Group are expected to consult with the other RDA Committee Chairs in their state or territory prior to meetings.

The current membership of the Chairs Reference Group includes:

- Dr Jennifer Cleary, Chair Far North, South Australia (CHAIR);
- Mr Stuart Benjamin, Chair Grampians, Victoria;
- Ms Katherine Bensted, Chair Ipswich and West Moreton, Queensland;
- Mr Tom Black, Chair Tasmania;
- Cr Graeme Campbell, Chair Kimberley, Western Australia;
- Mr Peter Elford, Nominated Representative, Australian Capital Territory;
- Mr Michael Reed, Chair Northern Territory; and
- Cr John Walkom, Chair Orana, New South Wales.



Northern RDA Alliance

The Northern RDA Alliance is a collaboration between the eight Northern Australian RDAs and was formed in 2014 as a direct response to the then emphasis on northern development and aims to provide input into government policy development and implementation as well as undertake cross-regional projects to drive northern Australian development. The establishment of the Northern RDA Alliance built on the informal arrangements of RDA Committees in Northern Australia.

The Alliance is made up of the Chairs and Executive Officers of the eight RDA Committees whose regions fall within the footprint of Northern Australia. The Northern RDA Alliance includes the following RDA Committees:

- RDA Kimberley;
- RDA Pilbara;
- RDA Midwest Gascoyne;
- RDA Northern Territory;
- RDA Far North Queensland and the Torres Strait;
- RDA Townville and North West Queensland;
- RDA Mackay Isaac Whitsunday; and
- RDA Fitzroy and Central West.

The RDA Programme Governance and Administration

Internal Governance

To receive operational funding, RDA Committees must be incorporated bodies under the relevant state or territory incorporated associations' legislation. The exceptions are: RDA Committees in Victoria, which are administered through Regional Development Victoria.

It is the responsibility of RDA Committees and its employees to remain informed of their obligations and responsibilities under the relevant state or territory legislation and the Committee's constitution. Such responsibilities may cover governance requirements, conflict of interest arrangements, record and account keeping, auditing obligations, and taxation arrangements.

RDA Constitution (Rules of Incorporation)

The Constitution of incorporated RDA Committees includes the rules for running an incorporated legal entity. Each RDA Committee must ensure that the rules in its Constitution are consistent with the requirements of the Funding Agreement.

It is the responsibility of each RDA Committee to periodically review its Constitution and to make necessary amendments to ensure that it conforms to:


- current state and territory incorporated associations' laws, as these can be subject to regular changes;
- the Contract and its Schedules, as these may be varied from time to time; and
- any requirements of the Department of Infrastructure and Regional Development.

Selection and Appointment Processes

At the establishment of RDA Committees in 2008, appointments to Committees (and Boards, as they are known in South Australia) were made by the relevant Australian Government minister and, in most jurisdictions, the state or territory government minister responsible for regional development. In some jurisdictions the local government association was also a signatory to appointments.

In October 2014, the then Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Infrastructure and Regional Development, the Hon Warren Truss MP, announced changes to the appointment process as part of a review of the RDA programme aimed at streamlining appointments, reducing administrative burdens and simplifying governance arrangements. These included:

- a) RDA Committee Chair and Deputy Chair appointments to be made by the Australian Government minister responsible for regional development, and where a specific state, territory or local government contributes significant financial and/or in kind support to RDA Committees, appointments will be made in conjunction with state and territory ministers and relevant local government organisations; and
- b) RDA Committee Chairs and Deputy Chairs to appoint Committee members following consultation and agreement from the Australian Government minister responsible for regional development and the relevant state/territory minister and local government bodies where that state/territory/local government contributes significant financial or in-kind support to RDA Committees. The Department of Infrastructure and Regional Development provide guidance material to assist in the appointment process and to ensure that membership of



Committees reflects a range of skills and regional stakeholders including strong engagement with local government, business and industry.

RDA Committees amended their constitution/rules to reflect these changes to the appointment process.

Applications for committee membership are sought through a public Expression of Interest (EOI) process. The EOI process ensures that RDA Committee Chairs, Deputy Chairs and committee members:

- bring a diverse range of skills, experience and expertise to the Committee;
- reflect the economic, social, gender and cultural diversity of the region; and
- possess a sound understanding of the economic, social and environmental opportunities and challenges facing their region.

Members are drawn from a variety of backgrounds, such as business, the education and health sectors, local government, industry, the community and environmental organisations. People from different cultures, young people and the disabled are also appointed to committees in some states.

Administrative Processes

The primary role of the Executive Officer (EO), or equivalent, is to provide advice to the RDA Committee Chair about matters relating to the administration and operation of the RDA Committee, the Funding Agreement, and engagement with the community.

The EO, as an employee of the organisation, works under the authority of the RDA Committee and is accountable to the committee. For day-to-day matters, the EO takes direction from and reports to the RDA Committee Chair.

The recruitment of the EO must be undertaken through an open, independent, transparent process and be endorsed by the RDA Committee (as applicable). It is considered appropriate to include an independent third party on any panel which is established to conduct interviews for an EO.

In developing the employment contract between the RDA Committee and the EO, it is a requirement that RDA Committees use the services of an independent employment expert, such as an industrial relations consultant, legal employment specialist or the Fair Work Ombudsman. The employment contract should include a duty statement and clearly outline the conditions of employment. Details on performance measures and reviews and reporting requirements should be clearly stated. The period of employment shall be consistent with the RDA Committee's Contract.

Alignment with Australian Government Policies

Smaller Government Agenda

The Australian Government is continuing to deliver a comprehensive package of Smaller Government reforms designed to manage the size and shape of government and cut waste and duplication, while improving the efficiency and focus of the Commonwealth public sector.

Since 2013-14 the Smaller Government reforms have delivered around \$1.5 billion in savings. These reforms represent improved efficiency, involving the consolidation of functions into departments and the merger of bodies with synergies to link related functions. The reforms are supported by the Commonwealth Governance Policy introduced by the Government on 14 December 2014 which can be found here: <http://www.finance.gov.au/resource-management/governance/policy/>.

This ensures that the creation of new government bodies is properly considered and functions undertaken by existing bodies where appropriate. This policy also requires sunset or review dates to be set for new Commonwealth bodies. Periodic review is essential to ensure bodies remain fit for purpose over time. The introduction of the Australian Government Organisations Register by the Australian Government also ensures that the size and shape of government is transparent to the Australian public. The Australian Government Organisations Register can be found here: <http://www.finance.gov.au/resource-management/governance/agor/>.

Regional Development Agenda 2017

The Australian Government committed to the 2017 release of a regional development policy in the 2016-17 Regional Ministerial Budget Statement *Investing in Regional Growth 2016-17* in May 2016.

While the final contents of the regional development policy will be a matter for Government, the Department anticipates that a range of key issues will be covered by the policy, including:

- Connectivity—both digital and physical connectivity are key to regional Australia’s wellbeing and productivity;
- Economic opportunity and employment growth—to secure ongoing sources of growth, regions must continue to strategically diversify their economies and capitalise on their comparative advantages; and
- Innovation—building on the Government’s National Innovation and Science Agenda, innovation will be critical for Australia’s regions to deliver new sources of growth, maintain high-wage jobs and seize opportunities.

Australian Government Regional Programs

The 2016–17 Regional Ministerial Statement released on 3 May 2016, *Investing in Regional Growth*, outlines almost 400 measures that benefit regional Australia across health, education, employment, defence, infrastructure, telecommunications, agriculture and water resources and other portfolios. It outlines the Australian Government’s commitment to regional Australia by providing the investment needed to support and grow the local communities and businesses that underpin Australia’s economy. Further information on regional programs can be found here:

www.infrastructure.gov.au/department/statements/2016_2017/ministerial-statement/

Black Spot Programme

The Black Spot Programme is part of the commitment to reduce crashes on Australian roads.

Road crashes are a major cost to Australians every year. Black Spot projects target those road locations where crashes are occurring. By funding measures such as traffic signals and roundabouts at dangerous locations, the programme reduces the risk of crashes. Programs of this sort are very effective, saving the community many times the cost of the relatively minor road improvements that are implemented.

The Black Spot Programme makes an important contribution in reducing the national road toll under the National Road Safety Strategy and Action Plan.

The Australian Government has committed \$500 million to the Black Spot Programme from 2014-15 to 2018-19, which includes an additional \$200 million over two years from 2015-16 to improve road safety across the nation.

Bridges Renewal Programme

The Australian Government has committed \$300 million to the Bridges Renewal Programme from 2015-16 to 2018-19. In the 2016-17 Federal Budget this was extended by \$60 million per year from 2019-20. The objectives of the Programme are to upgrade and repair bridges to enhance access for local communities and facilitate higher productivity vehicle access.

The Australian Government will contribute a maximum of fifty per cent of the total project cost. Projects are selected through a competitive, merit based process. Proponents are encouraged to consult with industry and community more broadly on potential projects to ensure industry priorities and community views are considered in the development of proposals.

Payments for all successful projects are made through National Partnership Agreements to state/territory governments.

Building Better Regions Fund


On 23 November 2016, Senator the Hon Fiona Nash, Minister for Regional Development, announced the opening of the new Building Better Regions Fund (BBRF). The Fund will invest \$297.7 million over four years and supports the Australian Government's commitment to create jobs, drive economic growth and build stronger regional communities into the future.

The program will fund projects in regional Australia outside the major capital cities of Sydney, Melbourne, Brisbane, Perth, Adelaide, and Canberra.

There are two streams of funding available under the program:

- The Infrastructure Projects Stream – will support projects which involve the construction of new infrastructure, or the upgrade or extension of existing infrastructure that provide economic and social benefits to regional and remote areas; and
- The Community Investments Stream will fund community building activities including, but not limited to, new or expanded local events, strategic regional plans, and leadership and capability building activities. These projects will deliver economic and social benefits to regional and remote communities.

Applicants are encouraged to seek the support of the RDA Committee for their projects. The RDA Committee can assist applicants to identify and develop a strong project proposal that will



contribute to long term economic growth; and prepare a competitive application, supporting documents and evidence.

Applications for both streams open on 18 January 2017. Guidelines and supporting material are available at www.business.gov.au/bbrf.

Financial Assistance Grant to Local Government

The Australian Government has provided over \$48 billion under the Financial Assistance Grant programme to local government since 1974–75 (including 2016–17). The grant is provided under the Local Government (Financial Assistance) Act 1995 (the Act).

The Financial Assistance Grant programme consists of two components:

- a general purpose component which is distributed between the states and territories according to population (i.e. on a per capita basis), and
- an identified local road component which is distributed between the states and territories according to fixed historical shares.

Both components of the grant are untied in the hands of local government, allowing councils to spend the grants according to local priorities.

Local government grants commissions in each state and the Northern Territory recommend the distribution of the funding under the Financial Assistance Grant programme to local governing bodies in accordance with the Act and the National Principles for allocating grants.

The Australian Capital Territory does not have a local government grants commission as the territory government provides local government services in lieu of the territory having a system of local government.

The grant is paid in quarterly instalments to state and territory governments for immediate distribution to local governing bodies.

The quantum of the grant pool changes annually in line with changes in population and the Consumer Price Index (the Act provides discretion to the Treasurer to alter this annual indexation).

Mobile Black Spot Programme

The Australian Government is improving mobile phone coverage and competition in regional and remote Australia through the Mobile Black Spot Program.

The Australian Government has committed \$220 million to the Mobile Black Spot Program to invest in telecommunications infrastructure to improve mobile coverage along major regional transport routes, in small communities and in locations prone to natural disasters.

Together rounds 1 and 2 will deliver almost \$600 million in new investment towards improving mobile coverage in regional and remote Australia. This \$600 million investment is enabling the delivery of:

- 765 new and upgrade mobile base stations;
- 86,300 square kilometres of new and upgraded handheld coverage;
- 202,300 square kilometres of new external antenna coverage; and
- over 7,600 kilometres new coverage to major transport routes.

Round 3

The Australian Government has committed an additional \$60 million to a third round of funding. As part of this commitment, the Australian Government has announced a number of priority locations which may receive funding for a mobile base station under round 3.

A competitive process to allocate round 3 funding is expected to commence in 2017.

Northern Australia Beef Roads Programme

The \$100 million Northern Australia Beef Roads Programme is proposed to make targeted upgrades to key roads necessary for transporting cattle to improve the reliability, productivity and resilience of cattle supply chains in northern Australia, thereby reducing freight costs and strengthening links to markets.

To help identify priority projects, the Australian Government actively engaged with key stakeholders, including members of the northern Australian beef and transport industries, through a series of stakeholder roundtables held in Rockhampton, Kununurra and Darwin throughout late-2015 and early-2016.

The CSIRO analysed and modelled the different scenarios put forward by state, territory and local governments using the Transport Network Strategic Investment Tool (TraNSIT) to determine the extent of benefits to the movement of cattle and assist in the prioritisation of projects.

The Australian Government announced projects to be funded under the Northern Australia Beef Roads Programme in October 2016.

Northern Australia Roads Programme

The Northern Australia Roads Programme forms part of the White Paper on Developing Northern Australia (the White Paper), comprising a \$600 million commitment to enable upgrades to high priority roads in northern Australia essential to the movement of people and freight to support the North's economic development.

Roads identified in Infrastructure Australia's Northern Australia Audit, along with other roads identified as priorities by the states and territories, such as those connecting communities, or regional towns to ports, were considered for funding.


Works to be undertaken include upgrades and safety and productivity improvements, such as road widening, overtaking lane construction and pavement renewal.

The Australian Government announced projects to be funded under the Northern Australia Roads Programme throughout 2016

Regional Jobs and Investment Package

The Australian Government has committed \$220 million to the Regional Jobs and Investment Packages (RJIP) to help regions in Australia diversify their economies, stimulate long-term economic growth and deliver sustainable employment.

Ten regions have been chosen to be a part of the Regional Jobs and Investment Packages. These regions have much untapped potential which, if unlocked could lead to new sources of growth, economic diversity and the opportunity to pursue export markets. RJIP aims to support these regions to meet the opportunities that will help to secure their economic future.



The packages will be delivered across the following ten regions:

- Bowen Basin, will receive \$30 million;
- New South Wales North Coast, will receive \$25 million;
- New South Wales South Coast, will receive \$20 million;
- Wide Bay Burnett, will receive \$20 million;
- Goulburn Valley, will receive \$20 million;
- Cairns, will receive \$20 million;
- Geelong, will receive \$20 million;
- Tasmania, will receive \$25 million;
- Upper Spencer Gulf, will receive \$20 million; and
- Latrobe, will receive \$20 million.

Local planning committees will be established in each region to help communities assess their region's economic opportunities and competitive advantages and develop local investment. This will create a community-driven, government investment partnership between the local communities, business and the Australian Government.

Once a planning committee establishes a local investment plan, funding will be available through three streams:

- Stream 1: Business innovation grants;
- Stream 2: Local infrastructure grants; and
- Stream 3: Skills and training grants.

Wherever possible, grant funding will be used to leverage funding from additional sources including from project proponents, private sector and other levels of government.

The Australian Government is currently considering the establishment of a local planning committee in each region to develop a local investment plan. Appointment of members to the local planning committees will soon be finalised and the critical work to develop a local investment plan will commence with a view to funding rounds commencing in 2017.


The RJIP program guidelines are expected to be available shortly.

Roads to Recovery Programme

The objective of Roads to Recovery is to contribute to the Infrastructure Investment Programme through supporting maintenance of the nation's local road infrastructure asset, which facilitates greater access for Australians and improved safety, economic and social outcomes. The Roads to Recovery programme does not contain a sunset clause under the new *National Land Transport Act 2014* meaning no new legislation will be required for the continuation of the Programme.

From 2014-15 to 2018-19 the Government will provide \$3.2 billion under the Roads to Recovery Programme, to be distributed to Australia's local councils, state and territory Governments responsible for local roads in the unincorporated areas (where there are no councils) and the Indian Ocean Territories.

Roads to Recovery allocations for the councils in each jurisdiction (except the ACT as it is a unitary jurisdiction) have been determined on the basis of the recommendations of the Local Government Grants Commissions in each state and the Northern Territory for the roads component of the



Financial Assistance Grants. This is the same methodology as was used for this purpose in previous Roads to Recovery programmes.

State and Territory Policy Agendas

In 2014 the focus of the RDA programme on economic development made obvious the stark duplication of the RDA programme with the activities of the states and territories, and local government. Accordingly, states and territories have questioned the need for multiple organisations to perform these roles and in most cases have ceased active involvement in the RDA programme.

Australian Capital Territory Government

Overview of ACT Government's regional engagement activities

Sustained population growth, interdependent economic relationships and the complex issues of service delivery require a coordinated approach across ACT and NSW Government agencies, along with our regional partners, to support the Canberra Region's regional development opportunities. Ensuring targeted service delivery, managing sustainable regional growth and collaborating on future economic prospects are important priorities for the ACT and NSW Governments and the surrounding local council areas.

The surrounding NSW region continues to have greater prominence and consideration in the ACT Government's policy settings. The ACT Government utilises three forums to facilitate our regional engagement activities, namely:

- ACT-NSW MoU for Regional Collaboration;
- ACT-Canberra Region Joint Organisation (CBRJO) MoU; and
- ACT- Queanbeyan Palerang Regional Council (QPRC) agreement.

ACT-NSW MoU for Regional Collaboration

Originally signed in 2011 and recently resigned by the ACT Chief Minister and the NSW Premier, the MoU allows both governments to:

- Develop and implement shared proposals for policy change, planning and service delivery initiatives;
- Consult with communities, business and industry groups, relevant parliamentarians, local government, government agencies and regional organisations; and
- Identify key regional issues that impede efficient and consistent service delivery to communities, where attempts to resolve such issues at a local level have been unsuccessful or where a strategic government-to-government approach is required.

Initiatives progressed under the MoU include:

- Facilitating ACT Government input to NSW Planning and Environment's recently released draft regional growth plan for the South East and Tablelands;
- Working with NSW Industry to development industry profiles across the ACT and region that support both the Chief Minister and NSW Premier's economic development, investment and trade activities;
- Building investment and export capability and capacity across the region by co-hosting workshops for local governments and industry;

- Developing the tourism product for an international market by VisitCanberra working with the respective Regional Tourism Organisations and DestinationNSW;
- Developing the ACT and Region Catchment Management Strategy;
- Sharing of data collections to assist in service planning for health and education; better understanding of the interactions of key markets across the Canberra Region, including housing supply and school capacity mapping; and the roll out of NDIS across NSW South East region;
- Facilitating networking opportunities between the respective emergency service agencies, testing cross border emergency scenarios; and
- Coordinating efforts to prevent illegal waste dumping activities.

ACT-Canberra Region Joint Organisation MoU

The NSW Government is utilising the joint organisations across the state as a way to formally engage with its regional communities to deliver regional priorities. Areas of focus include regional strategic planning, regional leadership and advocacy, strategic capacity building and regional service delivery. The Canberra Region Joint Organisation (CBRJO) is the only cross border entity.

The CBRJO's membership comprises local governments across south east NSW including: Queanbeyan-Palerang, Yass Valley, Goulburn-Mulwaree, Upper Lachlan, Hilltops, Snowy-Monaro, Eurobodalla and Bega Valley with the ACT Government as an associate member. In August the ACT Chief Minister signed a MoU with the CBRJO agreeing to support their activities with a particular focus on economic development opportunities which include:

- Developing a Canberra Region Economic Development Strategy;
- Activating the CBR Region identity and brand;
- Enhancing regional freight, export and investment capacity and capability;
- Supporting the development and success of a CBR Region Tourism identity embracing the CITY, COAST, ALPINE, TABLELANDS sub brands;
- Examining joint procurement opportunities between the CBRJO and ACT Government; and
- Examining cross-border collaboration for resource recovery and waste management.

ACT- Queanbeyan Palerang Regional Council (QPRC) agreement

Queanbeyan Palerang Regional Council (QPRC) is the ACT's closest NSW Local Government neighbour. To facilitate a more strategic and structured engagement with QPRC, in August 2016 the Chief Minister signed a letter of intent with the Administrator of QPRC.

The principles for engagement with QPRC include optimising 'best of region' outcomes, pursuing a borderless approach to key infrastructure, and sharing information and data to inform planning and policy development and initiatives.

Priority areas for engagement include:

- Improving road and active transport connectivity;
- Collaborating on policy and planning opportunities to consider management of water, sewage, waste and renewable energy Planning and collaborating on major contiguous developments; and
- Understanding the infrastructure requirements to support population growth; and coordinating efforts to support major events across the ACT and QPRC.

New South Wales Government

Regional Development Framework

Regional NSW is home to about 40% of the total NSW population, and produces about one third of total NSW gross state product. It is also home to resilient and adaptive communities and places of historical and cultural significance. With high levels of natural beauty and diverse lifestyles, regional locations are attractive places to live and work.

The NSW Government recognises the need to be more strategic and better coordinated if it is to make a difference, particularly in addressing some of the serious issues facing regional NSW such as pockets of youth unemployment, social disadvantage, changing economic opportunities and increased competition.

The NSW Government is determined to ensure that regional NSW continues to be a vibrant and growing part of the economy and that people are supported in their decision to live in the regions.

The Regional Development Framework provides a scaffold for better coordination, decision making and effort on the ground. The Framework will be based around a model of investment in regional NSW that:

- Provides quality services and infrastructure in regional NSW – ensuring a baseline set of services across regional NSW;
- Aligns efforts to support growing regional centres, acknowledging the needs of areas with strong growth in population, jobs or both, and
- Identifies and activates economic potential by looking across regional NSW for opportunities to change the economic outlook and activate local economies.

The NSW Government recognises the importance of ensuring all regional communities can access the essential services of a modern economy and believe the geography brings enormous opportunity, and should not deter people from choosing where they live, work and play.

The NSW Government have created economic conditions for growth with a clear rationale for investment. The NSW Government will put the Framework into practice to support further growth through:

- Improved regional structures to facilitate regional development
- Building the evidence-base for investment in regional development
- Attracting investment and co-investment
- Building regional workforce capability

Creating a modern system of local government

The NSW Government is transforming the system of local government to ensure that councils are ready to deliver the quality services and infrastructure that communities deserve.

The NSW Premier Mike Baird and the Minister for Local Government Paul Toole have announced 19 new councils will be created in NSW.

Local Government reform will create new, stronger councils, improve council performance and strengthen the system of local government.

The reforms will deliver substantial savings and benefits for local communities in NSW.

Regional Communities

Regional communities play a vital role in supporting the State's economy and sustaining major export industries. The NSW Government has a plan to revitalise regional NSW and provide the infrastructure, jobs and services country communities need and deserve.

The NSW Government's proposal to create new councils is a key part of that plan.

The NSW Government recognises that there is no 'one-size-fits all' solution for regional NSW. That's why they are also investing more than \$5 million to establish new Joint Organisations that will connect local councils and provide a forum for working with State Government on the things that matter to regional communities.

The new Regional Joint Organisations to help councils work together with the State Government on important regional issues. Each new Joint Organisation will receive direct funding of \$300,000 to help get established and begin the work of identifying regional priorities. The final model for Joint Organisations is being developed in consultation with councils.

The NSW Government is also offering extra support to smaller rural communities, with up to \$4 million in Innovation grants to help local councils explore new ways of working.

Northern Territory Government

The Northern Territory Government is focused on attracting new investment in regional areas.

Regional areas of the Northern Territory offer economic opportunities in mineral and energy resources, tourism, and agricultural products such as meat, seafood, fruit, vegetables, crops, forestry and ornamental plants.

The potential commercial benefit from native flora and fauna, food and medicines is largely untapped.

The Department of the Chief Minister is helping to create new economic opportunities by doing all of the following:

- strengthening relationships between private enterprise and government through the NT Regional Development Framework;
- financial support through the Regional Economic Development Fund;
- supporting Regional Economic Development Committees to give advice to government on local needs;
- providing NT regional economic profiles to attract investment; and
- managing selected projects to maximise investment opportunities.

Northern Territory Regional Development Framework

The Northern Territory Regional Development Framework gives local communities the opportunity to drive their own development goals and ideas and contribute to government decisions that affect their region.

The Regional Development Framework includes:

- five Regional Development Committees in Nhulunbuy, Katherine, Alice Springs, Tennant Creek and the Tiwi Islands; and
- a Regional Development Senior Office Group made up of senior representatives from government agencies.

The Regional Development Senior Office Group

The group is chaired by a representative from the Department of Regional Development and Women's Policy.

The group advises on regional development initiatives across the NT.

They make sure information from the Regional Development Committees is communicated to government agencies.

Queensland Government

Overview of QLD Government's regional engagement activities

The Queensland Government is focused on making Queensland's economy Australia's strongest and most diverse.

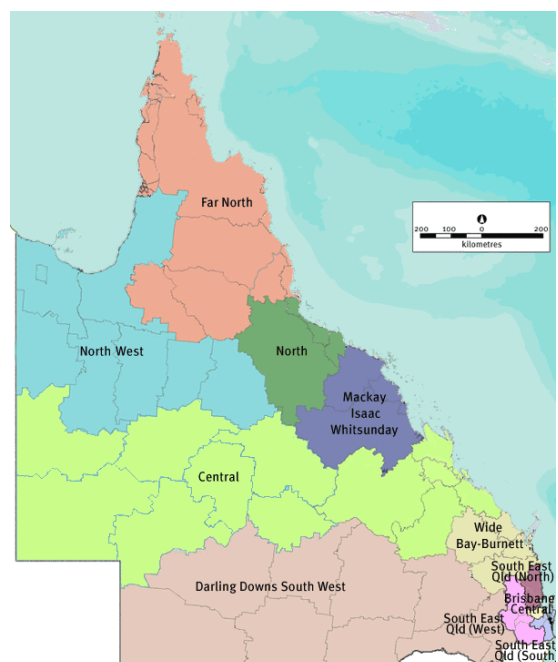
The Queensland Government is taking clear actions, leveraging off private sector activity, capitalising on regional strengths and harnessing research and innovation to help regional economies to be more resilient and sustainable.

Planning is being synchronised across Queensland – supported by coordinated approach to meet future priorities, needs and community expectations.

Queensland regions

Queensland has ten defined regions:

- Central Queensland
- Darling Downs South West
- Far North Queensland
- Mackay Isaac Whitsunday
- North Queensland
- North West Queensland
- South East Queensland North
- South East Queensland South
- South East Queensland West
- Wide Bay Burnett



Remote Area Boards

Remote Area Boards (RABs) undertake regional development activities in remote regions of Queensland. RABs bring together key economic development stakeholders to provide a single voice on strategic issues, and act as a forum for the community to decide on economic priorities and advocate for those priorities.

The Department of State Development is providing \$1 million (GST exclusive) funding for the period July 2016 to June 2018 to support delivery of economic development projects, services and activities in remote regional communities.

The funding is used by RABs to fill the gaps—usually either at the broad level such as long-term economic development plans, or at the very specific level where a capability gap exists (such as working with Indigenous communities to identify business opportunities for further development).

There are five RABs:

- Cape York Sustainable Futures (CYSF)
- Gulf Savannah Development (GSD)
- Mount Isa to Townsville Economic Development Zone (MITEZ)
- Central Western Queensland Remote Area Planning and Development Board (RAPAD)
- South West Regional Economic Development (SWRED)

Building our Regions

The \$375 million Building our Regions Regional Infrastructure Fund (Building our Regions) is a targeted infrastructure program for local government projects. The primary purpose of the Building our Regions program is to provide funding for critical infrastructure in regional areas of the state, while also supporting jobs, fostering economic development and improving the liveability of regional communities.

The program forms a key element of the Queensland Government's overarching economic strategy - *Working Queensland*.

The funds

There are four focused infrastructure funds under the program. The three funds managed by the Department of State Development include:

- Regional Capital Fund
- Royalties for Resource Producing Communities Fund
- Remote and Indigenous Communities Fund

These three funds have \$225 million available over three financial years.

The fourth fund is the Transport Infrastructure Development Scheme (TIDS), managed by the Department of Transport and Main Roads. The Building our Regions program provides a \$150 million boost to this fund over five financial years.

South Australian Government

Regions contribute to the economic strength and social fabric of South Australia and are an integral part of the State's identity. Regional South Australia contributes in excess of \$20 billion to the State's economy and produces over 50% of overseas exports – and it does so with just 30% of the State's population.

The South Australian Government recognises the need for regional communities to build on their economic foundations, generate social vitality and preserve their environmental assets.

Regions are dealing with various challenges and opportunities – some are region-specific and need a local solution, while others are common across all regions and affect the whole State.

The success of industries such as agriculture, forestry and fishing, mining and minerals processing, manufacturing, tourism, energy production, aquaculture, and food and wine production is vital. Creating the conditions for regional businesses and communities to grow and prosper is fundamental.

It's an imperative recognised by the State Government and a key reason for the creation of Primary Industries and Regions South Australia (PIRSA). This department brings together our efforts in primary industries and regional development to strengthen their presence within government.

By listening to regional communities about their concerns and aspirations, the State Government realises it must continually renew its approach and have an ongoing dialogue about meeting regional needs.

The South Australian Government's commitment to engage with regional communities is evidenced through the Better Together: Principles of Engagement and the government is committed to using these principles as a foundation for engaging with communities.

Regional Statement

The Regional Statement for South Australia reaffirms the State Government's commitment to regional communities. It is an expression of the ongoing partnership between the South Australian Government and regional communities.

The Statement is a product of consultation and collaboration, and reflects the discussions held with regional communities across the state.

Regional communities have identified key areas of particular importance to them. These include the need for:

- real engagement with government and within communities to shape the decisions that matter most;
- resilient and diverse regional economies powered by innovation, and public and private investment;
- training support and career pathways for young people; and
- proud, prosperous, safe and inclusive communities for all.

Regional communities are seeking government action that aligns with these goals, and the State's seven strategic priorities have been framed with this in mind. In its consultation report on the Draft Regional Statement, the Regional Communities Consultative Council (RCCC) found all seven priorities relate to the regions.

Charter for Stronger Regional Policy

Regions SA supports the portfolio responsibilities of Minister for Regional Development, Geoff Brock, and focuses on implementing the new Charter for Stronger Regional Policy committed to Minister Brock by Premier Jay Weatherill.

The agreements between Minister Brock and the Premier detail a number of actions committed to by the State Government for regional South Australia, and includes additional support to be provided to communities, projects and programs.

The regional development package of initiatives is worth \$39 million in 2014-15 and \$29 million per annum thereafter.

The \$39 million includes:

- \$10 million as a once-off Jobs Accelerator Fund in 2014–15, directed at regional development opportunities;
- \$13.4 million per annum increase to the Regional Development Fund; and
- \$15.5 million per annum drawn from existing resources across government.

The Charter for Stronger Regional Policy sets out a number of opportunities for regional communities to interact with the government, and provides for a greater focus on regional South Australia in government decisions through a variety of regional engagement processes, including:

- the reintroduction of three Country Cabinet meetings in regions each year;
- at least one state parliamentary forum in a regional area per year;
- the requirement that at least one minister spend a day each week in a regional area;
- holding at least three Senior Management Council meetings in regions each year; and
- a dedicated GovChat program that will enable regional South Australians to discuss issues directly with the Premier, ministers and chief executives.

South Australian regions

South Australian government departments and agencies use a consistent set of boundaries to define 12 administrative regions in the state. For the purpose of regional development, 'regional South Australia' is considered to be made up of the eight regions classified as 'Greater Adelaide' and 'Country regions'. The 12 regions of South Australia are:

- Adelaide Hills
- Barossa, Light and Lower North
- Eyre and Western
- Far North
- Fleurieu and Kangaroo Island
- Limestone Coast
- Murray and Mallee
- Yorke and Mid North

Tasmanian Government

The Department of State Growth was established on 1 July 2014 to create jobs, growth and opportunity for Tasmanians.

The department:

- aggressively pursues and facilitates new investment in Tasmania;
- ensures investment in infrastructure is strategic and supports state growth;
- ensures efficient and cost effective transport and logistics systems to support state growth;
- drives major projects through assessments and approvals;
- reduces red and green tape and address barriers to growth;
- skills our workforce and ensure training is directed towards industry and state growth needs;
- develops innovative, outward and forward looking strategies to drive state growth;
- provides a regional interface and engages with Tasmanian small business and industry to facilitate growth and create jobs;
- leverages off our competitive strengths and grows our core industries (including agriculture, aquaculture, forestry, mining, energy and tourism), while being open to new industries and opportunities; and
- supports growth of the cultural, creative and hospitality industries.

Regions

Of key importance to state growth is the development of Tasmania's regions and increasing local prosperity.

Tasmania has one of the most decentralised populations of any state or territory in Australia and these smaller, more connected communities contribute much to the Tasmanian way of life.

Sustainable regional economic growth is an essential element of growing regional communities and a combination of a region's prosperity and lifestyle make it a place that attracts and retains people to live and work.

Tasmania's three regions all have different cultural and economic profiles based on established and emerging sectors.

The Department of State Growth has offices located across the state to assist business, industry and the greater community with their development inquiries and business needs.

Grow our sectors and maximise competitive advantages

Tasmania has competitive advantages in a number of key industry sectors.

Strategies have been developed for these trade and investment industries identifying growth potential, brand benefits or where the economy as a whole is most likely to benefit from focused government attention.

These sector strategies focus whole-of-government attention on making the most of opportunities and overcoming constraints to growth.

Different industry sectors will have different priority issues. For example, waste management is a priority for many industries including mining, mineral processing and red meat, while irrigation is a

priority for vegetables, dairy and wine. Agricultural sectors are concerned about the cost and availability of labour, while manufacturing, science and research and tourism sectors are concerned with skill shortages.

Key sectors

- Advanced manufacturing
- Antarctic and Southern Ocean
- Building and construction
- Cultural and Tourism industry
- Defence
- Food and agribusiness
- Dairy
- Wine
- Salmonid
- Fruit
- Vegetables
- Red meat
- Poppy
- Forestry and related industries
- Information, communication and technology
- Contact centres
- International education
- Mining and mineral processing
- Renewable energy
- Science research

Tasmanian Development Board

The Tasmanian Development Board supports the industry development activities of the department. The board's primary focus is the creation of investment and associated employment through supporting the implementation of government policies.

The board has specific areas of responsibility under the *Tasmanian Development Act 1983* and has governance of the legal entity Tasmania Development and Resources (TDR). The board provides independent advice to the Minister on matters relating to this portfolio and its associated responsibilities.

Victorian Government

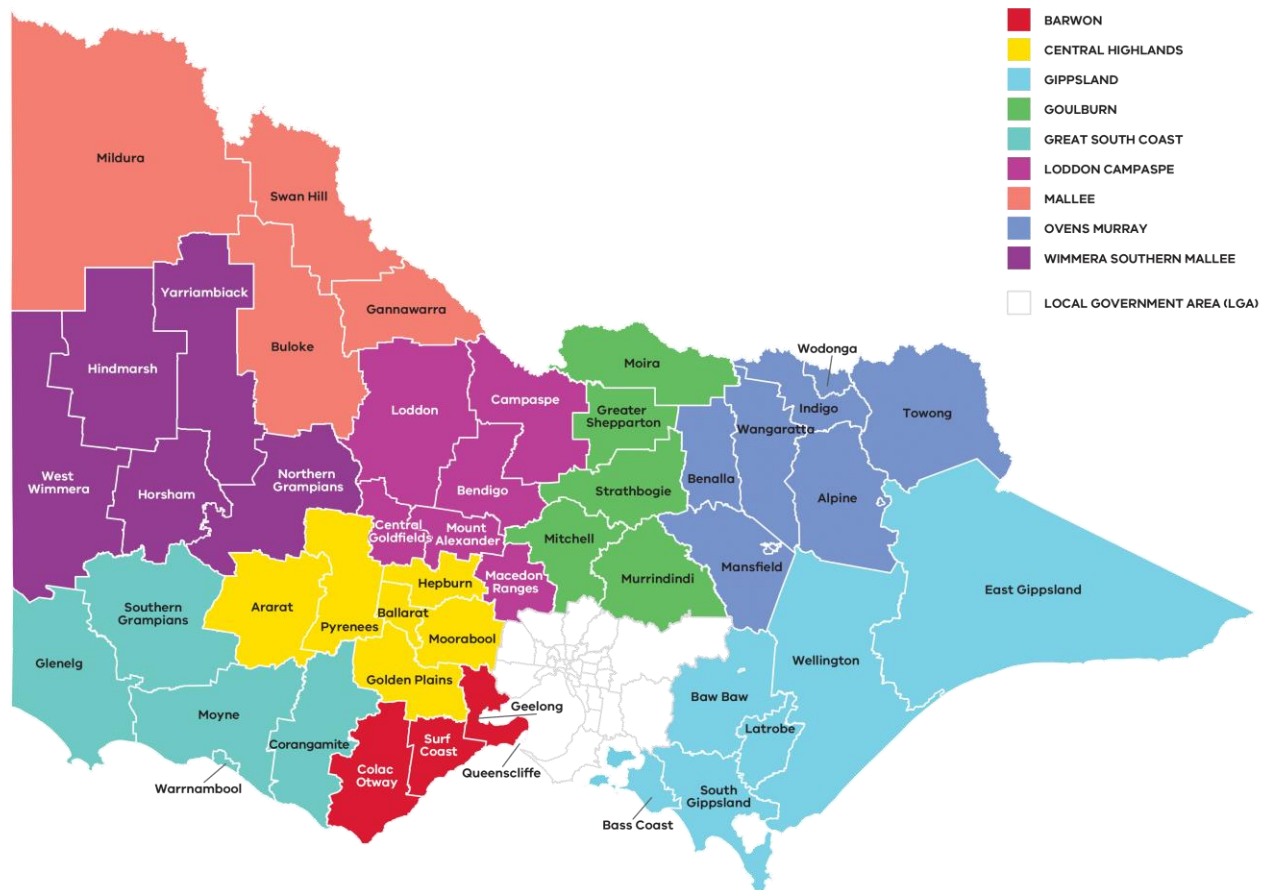
Victoria's Partnerships Model

Regional Partnerships have been established by the Victorian Government across the State to give regional communities a greater say about what matters to them and ensure their voices reach the heart of government. Metropolitan Partnerships will be established in Melbourne in 2017.

Victoria's Partnerships Model was developed in 2015 following an independent review into Regional Economic Development and Services. The Review found that the Victorian Government needed better governance arrangement to ensure it could 'listen to – and act on – the voice of regional Victoria.'

Victoria's Partnerships Model is based on international research that emphasises collaboration between citizens, the private sector and all tiers of government to determine and act on regional priorities. It recognises that local communities are in the best position to understand challenges and opportunities. It aims to help governments better understand the priorities of regions to inform policy and investment decisions, and to encourage regions to establish a shared vision for their future.

Where are the Partnerships?



There are nine partnerships in regional Victoria. Each Regional Partnership covers a number of local government areas and aims to reflect natural ‘communities of interest’. These regions are smaller than the regions used by the Commonwealth’s Regional Development Australia Committees, to ensure that smaller communities farther from Melbourne and the largest regional cities to receive adequate recognition in State Government decision-making. Regional Partnerships have the flexibility to work together to solve problems across boundaries if necessary. Six more partnerships will be established in Melbourne in 2017.

Who is involved in Regional Partnerships?

A strength of the Regional Partnerships model is the engagement of all three tiers of government in an ongoing dialogue on regional community priorities.

The members of the partnerships are:

- local business and community leaders;
- the Chief Executive Officers (CEOs) of each local government area located within the Regional Partnership region;
- a Regional Development Australia Committee member to act as a link to the Commonwealth Government; and
- a Deputy Secretary from the Victorian Government to act as the conduit between government departments and agencies.

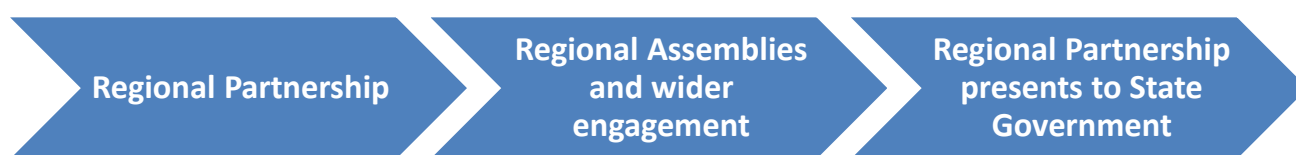
Due to the inclusive nature of the Regional Partnerships model, there are a variety of ways for councils and the broader community to be involved, in particular at annual Regional Assemblies. As Regional Partnerships develop their priorities they may form working groups on select topics and regional priorities, which will also draw on a wider range of individuals and organisations.

What do Regional Partnerships do?

Regional Partnerships provide advice to government about regional priorities that can be incorporated into government policies, programs, planning and budget processes. They also oversee the implementation of some local priorities.

Drawing on existing strategies and plans, evidence-based research, expert advice and data, Regional Partnerships undertake broad engagement with their communities to identify priorities and develop collaborative solutions to local problems. Regional Partnerships are open and accountable for their work, reporting regularly through an online platform on their activity.

Regional Partnerships work across all government portfolios together with the three levels of government to address complex issues facing rural and regional communities. Partnerships build on and complement existing regional leadership groups, working groups and strategic planning processes, and form relationships with these groups to suit local needs and arrangements.



Pathway for regional priorities into State Government decision-making

What are Regional Assemblies?

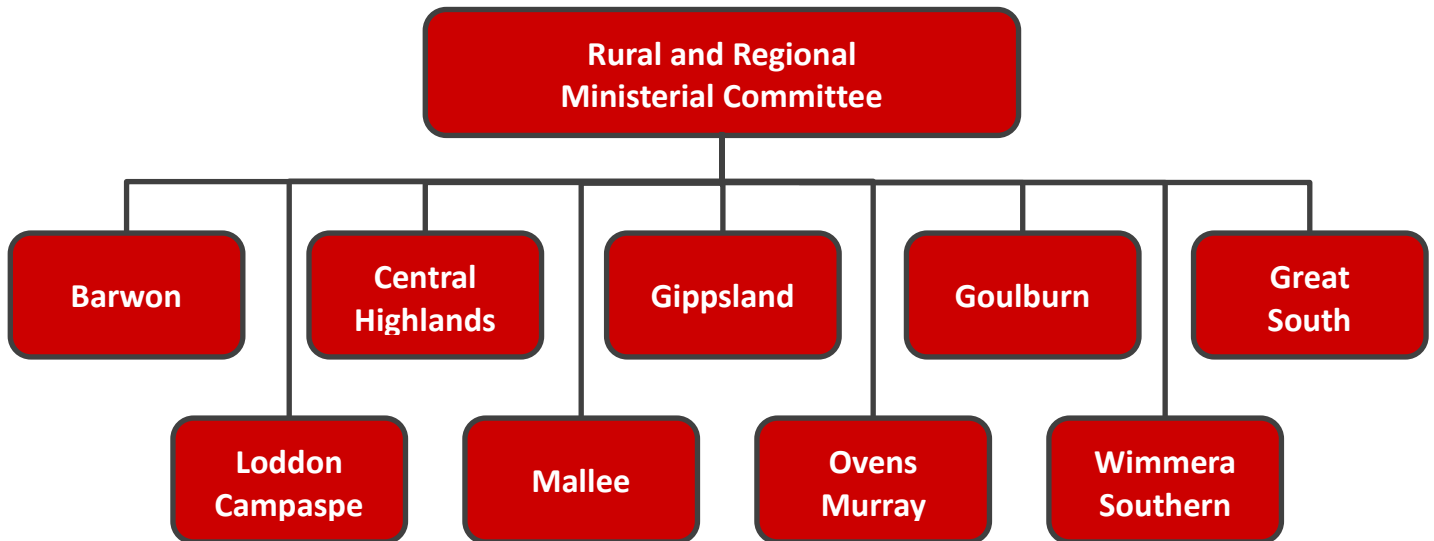
Regional Assemblies will be conducted by Regional Partnerships each year and are the pinnacle of their annual community engagement activities.

Assemblies provide regional communities with an opportunity to have their say about the priorities and issues for their region. A new website – engage.regions.vic.gov.au – gives community members the chance to share their thoughts and offer ideas about local opportunities and challenges.

The conversation at each assembly is used by the Regional Partnership to inform their presentation of emerging regional priorities to the Victorian Government.

Regional Partnerships governance structure

Regional Partnerships have a direct pathway into policy and resourcing decisions made by ministers and departments through the Rural and Regional Sub-Committee of Cabinet, or in the case of the Metropolitan Partnerships through the Victorian Minister for Suburban Development.



How has the community responded to Regional Partnerships?

While Regional Partnerships are in their formative stages, early feedback from stakeholders and community members has been largely positive. In particular, stakeholders have expressed support for the direct channel into State Government decision-making, the breadth and diversity of Partnerships' membership, and the smaller, sub-regional boundaries that better reflect communities of interest.

Western Australian Government

The Western Australian Government recognises that building prosperity begins largely with the lands, waters and natural resources with which regions are endowed.

This understanding is the basis of the State Government's unprecedented and sustained commitment to developing the potential of our regions, including the Royalties for Regions program.


This commitment to regions, since 2008, is making a difference in the everyday lives of regional Western Australians across the State.

Regional people are benefitting from improved health services through the Southern Inland Health Initiative, while in the northern-most part of the State, locals enjoy growing economic opportunities through the Ord-East Kimberley Expansion. There have been social, safety and business benefits through investment in regional telecommunications, while the Pilbara has been transformed to match the development of the resources sector.

With the State's economy now changing, the focus of our regional development effort must adapt. The State Government will direct greater resources towards establishing the socio-economic foundations for development while also driving growth and new investment in the regions.

The Regional Development Portfolio

The Western Australian Government's regional development commitment is led by the Minister for Regional Development and coordinated through an integrated Portfolio comprising the Department of Regional Development (DRD) and nine Regional Development Commissions (RDCs).



The RDCs are a dedicated “front door” for regional development in each region.

Together the RDCs and the DRD take responsibility for the effective planning, coordination and delivery of the State Government’s regional development agenda. This includes the management of the Royalties for Regions investment program and maintaining effective relationships with key partners across government agencies, industry and communities.

The Portfolio is supported by two statutory advisory bodies. The Regional Development Council brings the chairs of the nine RDC boards together to provide leadership and promote liaison across the Portfolio. The Western Australian Regional Development Trust provides independent advice to the Minister on the Royalties for Regions program.

The Regional Development Strategy

The Regional Development Strategy, in conjunction with the Regional Investment Blueprints, directs our regional development effort and investment towards building vibrant regions with strong economies.

As the global economy continues to evolve, a range of opportunities arise for which our regions enjoy a comparative advantage. But the competition is fierce, and success is not assured.

The Regional Investment Blueprints provide a comprehensive development plan, prepared by the Regional Development Commissions with their key stakeholders. They outline the imperatives for growth and development in each region and a rich source of potential investment opportunities. Importantly, the Blueprints identify opportunities common across more than one region.

The Strategy provides a framework to prioritise and progress the opportunities with the most potential, emerging from Blueprints and other sources. It is the vehicle to develop a ‘whole-of-state’ approach to matters of importance across the regions.

Regional development involves many players and is shaped by multiple issues, geographies and industries. All tiers of government, business and communities contribute and share a stake in the development of our regions.

The best regional development outcomes are achieved when stakeholders and opportunities are aligned towards a clear common purpose and guided by consistent principles of good regional development.

The Strategy provides the common direction for regional development in Western Australia into the next decade.



Index of Attachments

Appendix A: The Terms of Reference

Appendix B: The RDA Programme

Appendix C: RDA Independent Review Consultation

Appendix A: The Terms of Reference

Independent Review of the effectiveness of the RDA programme

The Regional Development Australia (RDA) programme funds 55 RDA Committees that bring together local leaders who work with state and local governments as well as regional stakeholders to develop economic plans for their region. RDAs also work with stakeholders to support the development of robust proposals for funding (government and private sector) as appropriate. RDAs promote awareness of, and access to, Australian Government programmes.

Objective of the Independent Review

To examine the effectiveness of the RDA programme in delivering the Australian Government's regional agenda and make recommendations regarding its future scope, structure and delivery model, in light of developments in the Australian Government's regional agenda.

The review will research, consider and report on three themes.

1. Alignment with the Australian Government policy objectives (including the smaller government agenda) now and into the future. This will include consideration of:
 - c) whether the current RDA programme framework is appropriate for delivery of the Australian Government's regional agenda, considering new initiatives; state and territory regional policy agendas; and implementation mechanisms and changes to regional programmes.
2. The RDA programme framework, including the:
 - a) value of RDA Committees' outputs and measures of success;
 - b) purpose and structure of the Chairs Reference Group;
 - c) funding model/formula for the programme (including historic and future allocations, state co-funding and potential collaborative arrangements);
 - d) number of RDAs and their boundaries (including processes to alter them, and whether capital cities and external territories should be included);
 - e) desire to minimise any duplication of activities between other bodies in states and territories (including Joint/Regional Organisations of Councils, Regional Development Commissions, etc.); and
 - f) RDA Committees' role in both promoting access to programmes and assisting proponents to develop proposals.
3. The governance and administration of the programme, including:
 - a) whether RDA Committees can manage their internal governance appropriately within the current structure;
 - b) whether appointment processes are appointing appropriately skilled committee members;
 - c) RDA Committee membership and appointment arrangements, with a focus on simplifying the administrative processes involved in appointing RDA members;
 - d) how government can best support and administer the RDA programme, including evaluation processes, data collection and staff resourcing; and

- e) any other opportunities for reducing the administrative burden imposed on RDA Committees and government in delivering the RDA programme.

Review panel arrangements for the Independent Review

The Review will be conducted under the leadership of an independent consultant (the Reviewer), who will be supported by a secretariat and supplemented by other consultants deemed relevant by the Reviewer and/or the Department.

Consultation and approach for the Independent Review

The review will consult with stakeholders via multiple methods including written submissions, interviews, surveys and workshops. The review may seek the views of:

- Regional Development Australia Committee representatives;
- Relevant state and territory Ministers and/or Departments;
- A broad and representative cross section of regional business and economic development peak bodies (e.g. ALGA, chambers of commerce); and
- Any other relevant stakeholders identified in the consultations.

Resources to be provided to support the Reviewer

The Department will provide the Reviewer and other review team members with a suite of resources to support the Review. The reviewer will be provided existing research and data sources, including:

- Collected statistical data and information analysis and published reports (such as the Progress in Australian Regions – Yearbook 2015 and Trends report);
- A summary of current RDA key arrangements including: partnership arrangements with state and territories; structure, funding contributions, number of committees per jurisdiction, and boundary maps;
- Examples of all Funding Agreement deliverables including samples of regional plans, business plans and budget reports; and
- Any other relevant data and information sources identified in the consultations.

Timing of the Independent Review

The review panel arrangements will commence as soon as possible. An interim report will be provided to the Department in October/November 2016, and a final report by the end of 2016.

Background

RDA Committees are funded by the Government to foster economic growth and make the most of the potential capability of their region. Under funding agreements with the Australian Government, RDA Committees are funded to develop 3-5 year regional plans that focus on economic development of the region, enhance awareness of Australian Government programmes, and assist proponents in seeking funding. RDA Committee members are all volunteers – the funding to RDA Committees is for staff, premises, committee costs and resources necessary to deliver the outcomes expected by Government. Some jurisdictions also partner with the Australian Government in supporting RDA Committees, although this has reduced overtime.



The Committees (except in Victoria) are incorporated associations, responsible for their own activities. The states and territories often also have their own localised organisations that may perform similar functions to the Australian Government’s RDA Committees.

Following the 2016 election, the Government is implementing two new regional programmes, a national Building Better Regions Fund, which will deliver investment in regional infrastructure and communities, and a Regional Jobs and Investment Programme, which will see community leaders and local experts work together to create a genuine community-driven jobs and investment programme to be piloted in nine regions.

Appendix B: The Current Programme

List of RDA Committees by State and Territory

Australian Capital Territory	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Australian Capital Territory 	
New South Wales	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Central Coast • Central West • Far South Coast • Far West • Hunter • Illawarra • Mid North Coast 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Murray • Northern Inland • Northern Rivers • Orana • Riverina • Southern Inland • Sydney
Northern Territory	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Northern Territory 	
Queensland	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Brisbane • Darling Downs and South West • Far North Queensland and Torres Strait • Fitzroy and Central West • Gold Coast • Ipswich and West Moreton 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Logan and Redlands • Mackay-Isaac-Whitsunday • Moreton Bay • Sunshine Coast • Townsville and North West • Wide Bay Burnett
South Australia	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Adelaide Hills, Fleurieu and Kangaroo Island • Adelaide Metropolitan • Barossa • Far North • Limestone Coast 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Murraylands and Riverland • Whyalla and Eyre Peninsula • Yorke and Mid-North
Tasmania	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tasmania 	
Victoria	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Barwon South West • Gippsland • Grampians • Hume • Loddon Mallee 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Melbourne East • Northern Melbourne • Southern Melbourne • Western Melbourne
Western Australia	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Goldfields Esperance • Great Southern • Kimberley • Mid-West Gascoyne • Peel 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Perth • Pilbara • South West • Wheatbelt

RDA Programme Key Arrangements – by State or Territory

	NSW	VIC	QLD	SA	WA	TAS	NT	ACT
RDA Committees	14 RDAs	9 RDAs	12 RDAs	8 RDAs	9 RDAs	1 RDA	1 RDA	1 RDA
Model	Commonwealth and state government partnership. The RDAs in NSW are incorporated associations.	Commonwealth and state government partnership The RDAs in Victoria are unincorporated advisory committees administered by State Government.	Commonwealth only. The RDAs in QLD are incorporated associations.	Commonwealth, state and local government partnership. The RDAs in SA are incorporated associations.	Commonwealth only. The RDAs in WA are incorporated associations.	Commonwealth, state and local government partnership. The RDA in Tasmania is an incorporated association.	Commonwealth and state government partnership. The RDA in the NT is an incorporated association.	Commonwealth only. The RDA in the ACT is an incorporated association.
Appointments	Joint State/Commonwealth Ministerial appointment of Chair and Deputy Chairs. Tenures expire: 31 Dec 2017; and Joint State/Commonwealth Ministerial approval of Committee members. Tenures have various expiry dates.	Joint State/Commonwealth Ministerial appointment of Chair and Deputy Chairs. Tenures expire 31 Dec 2017; and Joint State/Commonwealth Ministerial approval of Committee members. Tenures have various expiry dates.	Sole Commonwealth Ministerial appointment of Chair and Deputy Chairs. Tenures expire 31 Dec 2017; and Sole Commonwealth approval of Committee members. Tenures have various expiry dates.	Joint State/Commonwealth Minister and Local Government appointment of Chair and Deputy Chairs. Tenures expire: 31 Dec 2017; and Joint State/Commonwealth Minister and Local Government approval of Committee members. Tenures have various expiry dates.	Sole Commonwealth Ministerial appointment of Chair and Deputy Chairs. Tenures expire 31 Dec 2017; and Sole Commonwealth approval of Committee members. Tenures have various expiry dates.	Sole Commonwealth Ministerial appointment of Chair and Deputy Chairs. Tenures expire 31 Dec 2017; and Sole Commonwealth approval of Committee members. Tenures have various expiry dates.	Joint State/Commonwealth Ministerial appointment of Chair and Deputy Chairs. Tenures expire 31 Dec 2017; and Joint State/Commonwealth Ministerial approval of Committee members. Tenures have various expiry dates.	Sole Commonwealth Ministerial appointment of Chair and Deputy Chairs. Tenures expire 31 Dec 2017; and Sole Commonwealth approval of Committee members. Tenures have various expiry dates.
2015-16 Funding (\$17,836,596)	Commonwealth funding: The Australian Government has a funding agreement with each RDA that expires 31 December 2017. 2015/16 - \$4,317,353 State government funding: The NSW Government has a funding agreement with each RDA that expires 31 December 2016. 2015/16 - \$2,100,000 (\$150,000 per RDA, paid on completion of milestone-based projects. Funding RDAs now made with performance-based FAs).	Commonwealth funding: The Australian Government has a single funding agreement with the Victorian Government that expires 31 December 2017 2015/16 - \$3,449,390 State government funding: The funding agreement between the Commonwealth and the Victoria Government indicates \$5.6 million in cash and in-kind per annum across metropolitan RDAs and regional RDV offices	Commonwealth funding: The Australian Government has a funding agreement with each RDA expiring 31 December 2017. 2015/16 - \$3,860,084	Commonwealth funding: The Australian Government has a funding agreement with each RDA that expires 31 December 2017. 2015/16 - \$1,822,328 State government funding: 2015/16 - \$3,000,000 to non-metro RDAs (Funding Deed expires 30 June 2018) Local government Funding: All 49 regional SA councils contribute funding to their local RDA. LGASA advises that all LG funding agreements expire on 30 June 2016 and will need to be renegotiated	Commonwealth funding: The Australian Government has a funding agreement with each RDA that expires 31 December 2017. 2015/16 - \$2,944,419	Commonwealth funding: The Australian Government has a funding agreement with the RDA that expires 31 December 2017. 2015/16 - \$616,979 State government funding: in-kind office space for RDA project officers in Hobart and in Burnie.	Commonwealth funding: The Australian Government has a funding agreement with the RDA that expires 31 December 2017. 2015/16 - \$576,675 Territory government funding: 2015/16 - \$70,000	Commonwealth funding: The Australian Government has a funding agreement with the RDA that expires 31 December 2017. 2015/16 - \$249,368



Maps of RDA Committee Boundaries

Map 1.1 National

Map 1.2 Australian Capital Territory

Map 1.3 New South Wales

Map 1.4 Northern Territory

Map 1.5 Queensland

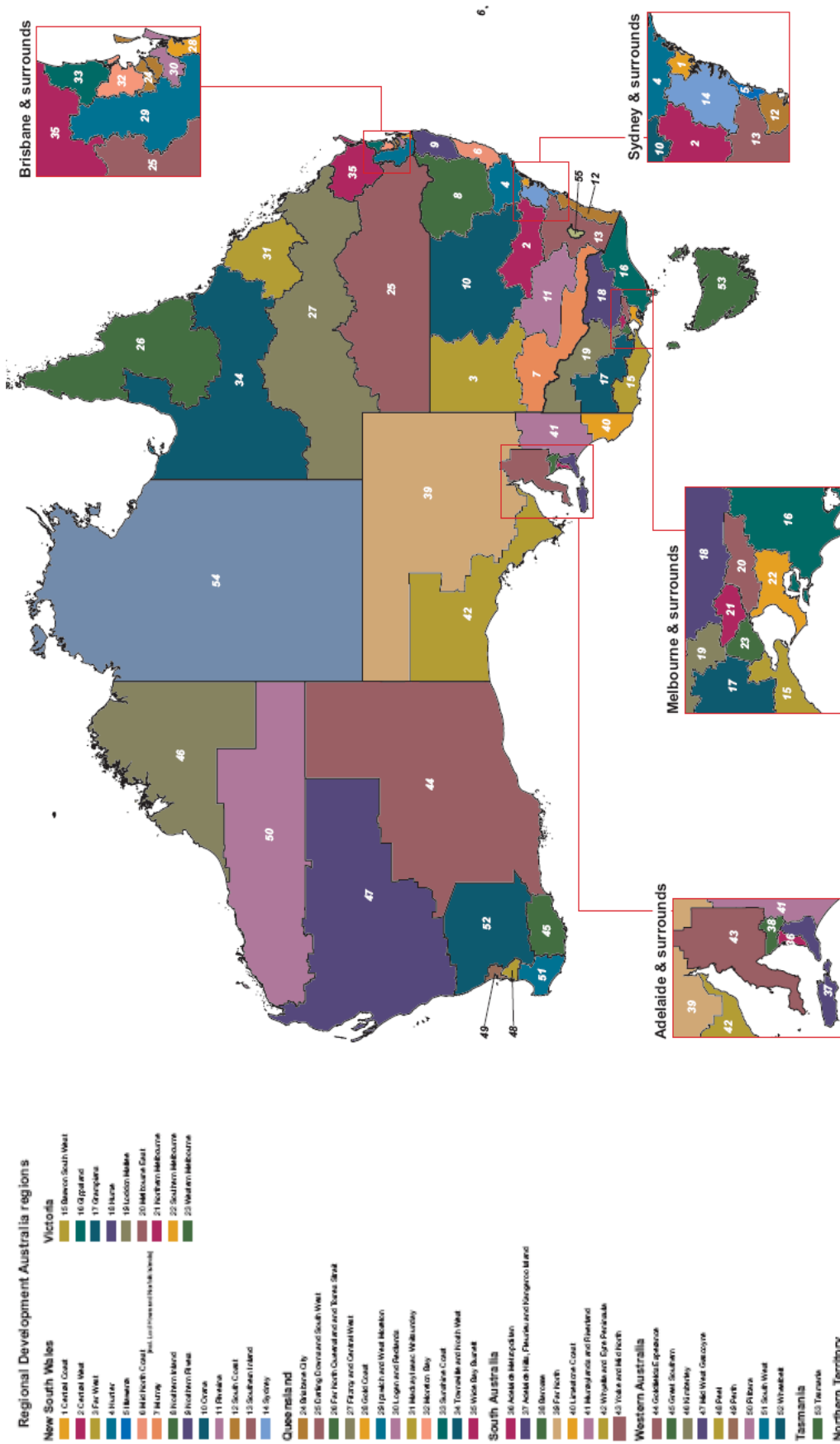
Map 1.6 South Australia

Map 1.7 Tasmania

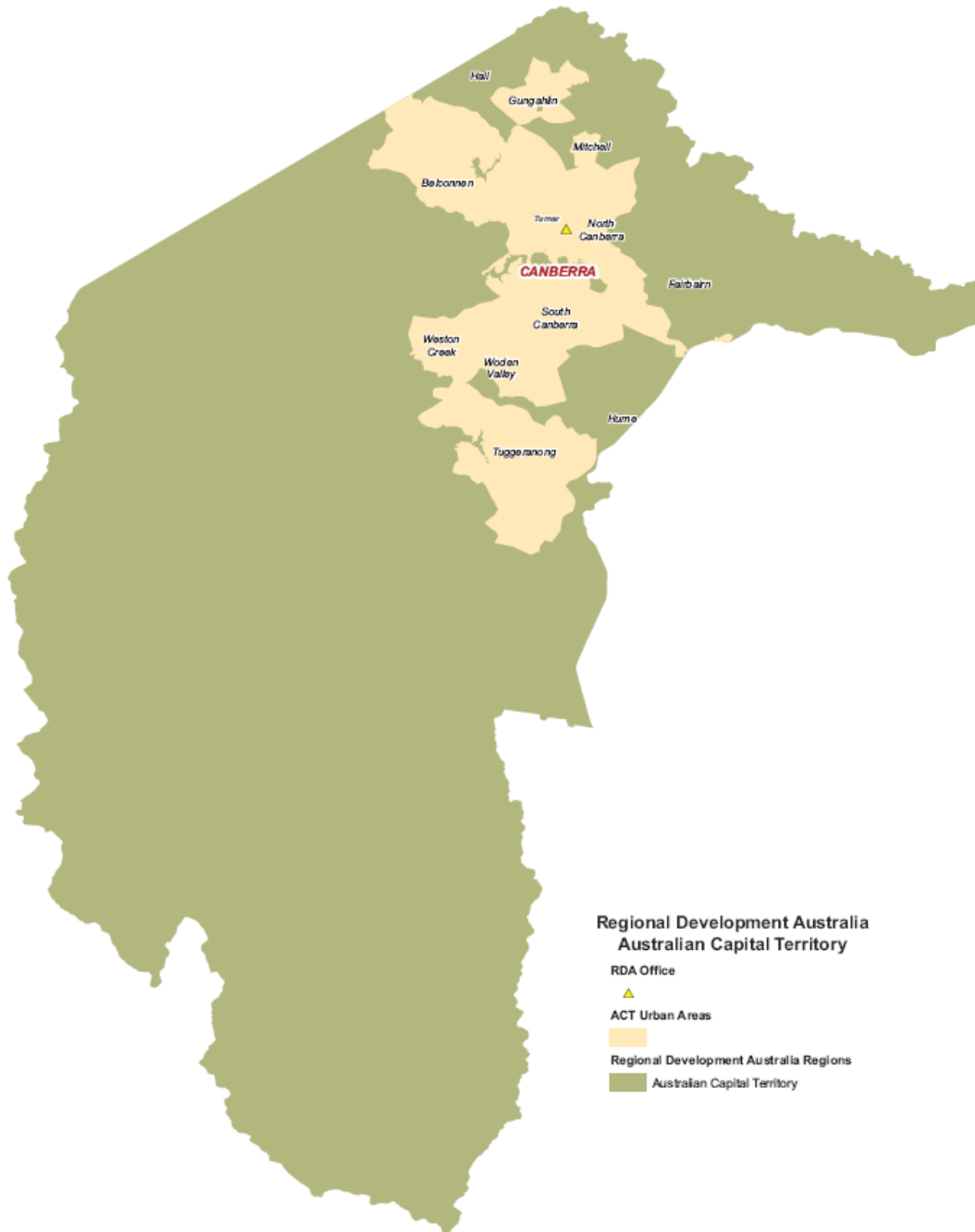
Map 1.8 Victoria

Map 1.9 Western Australia

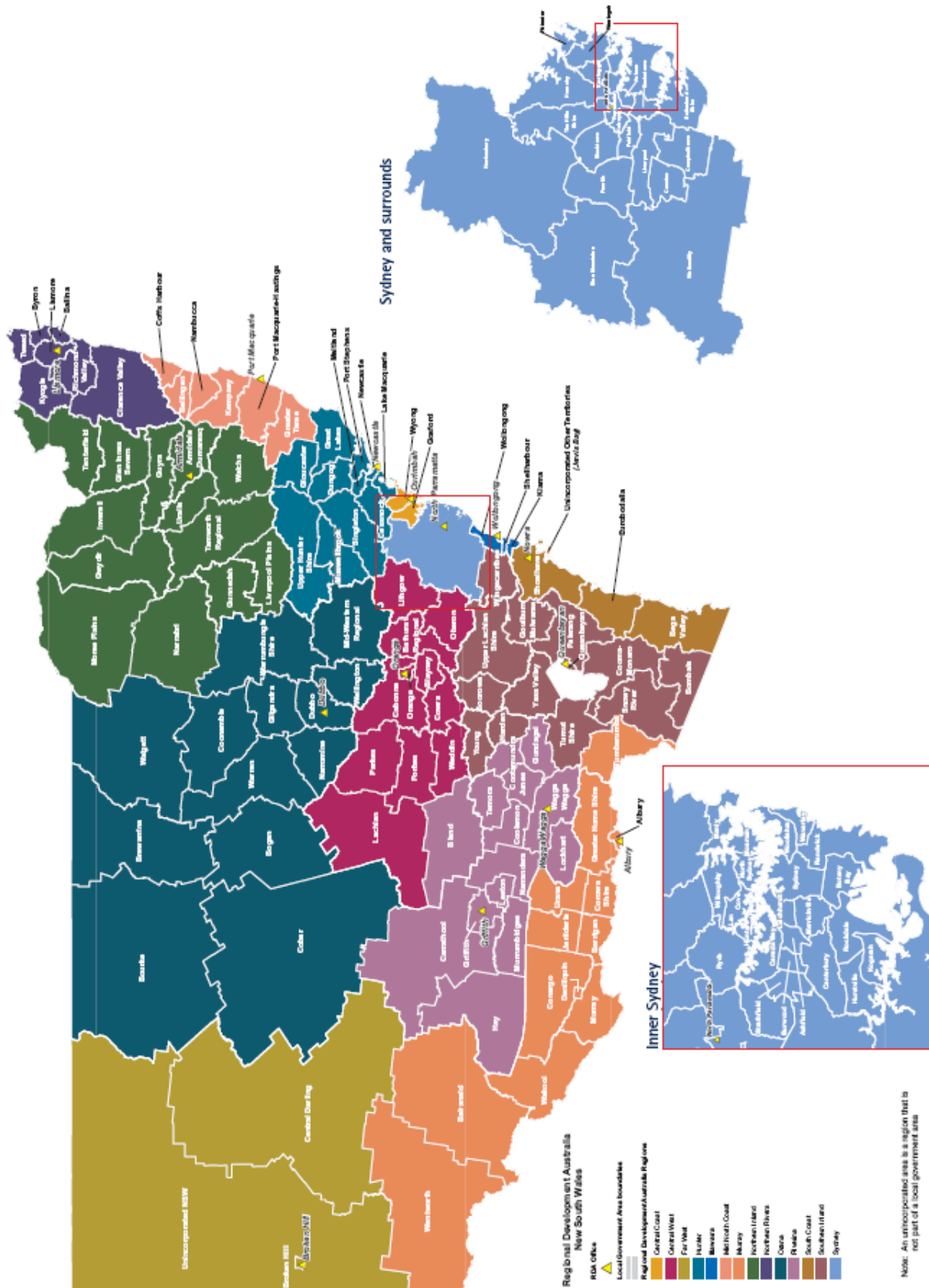
Map 1.10 National



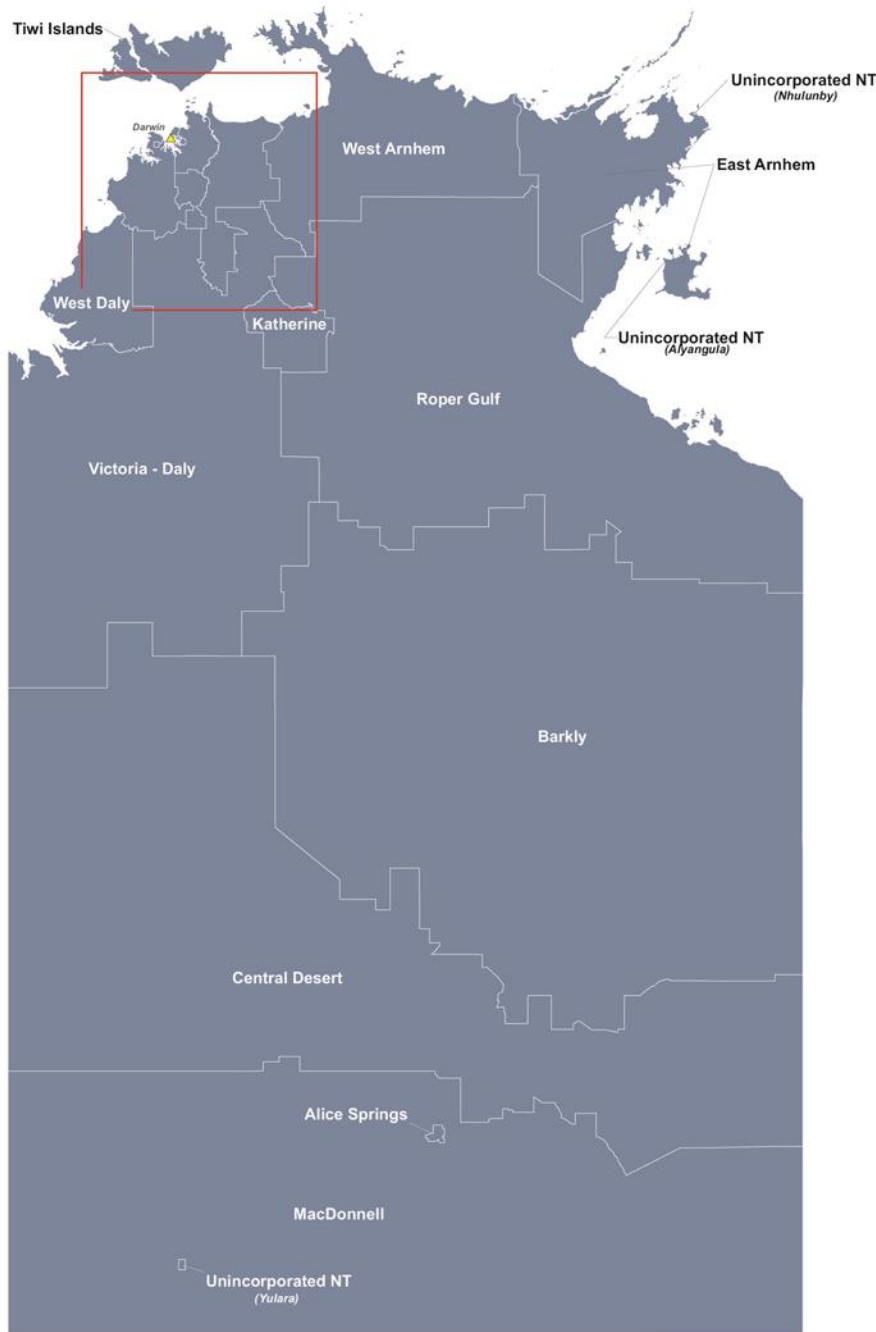
Map 1.11 Australian Capital Territory



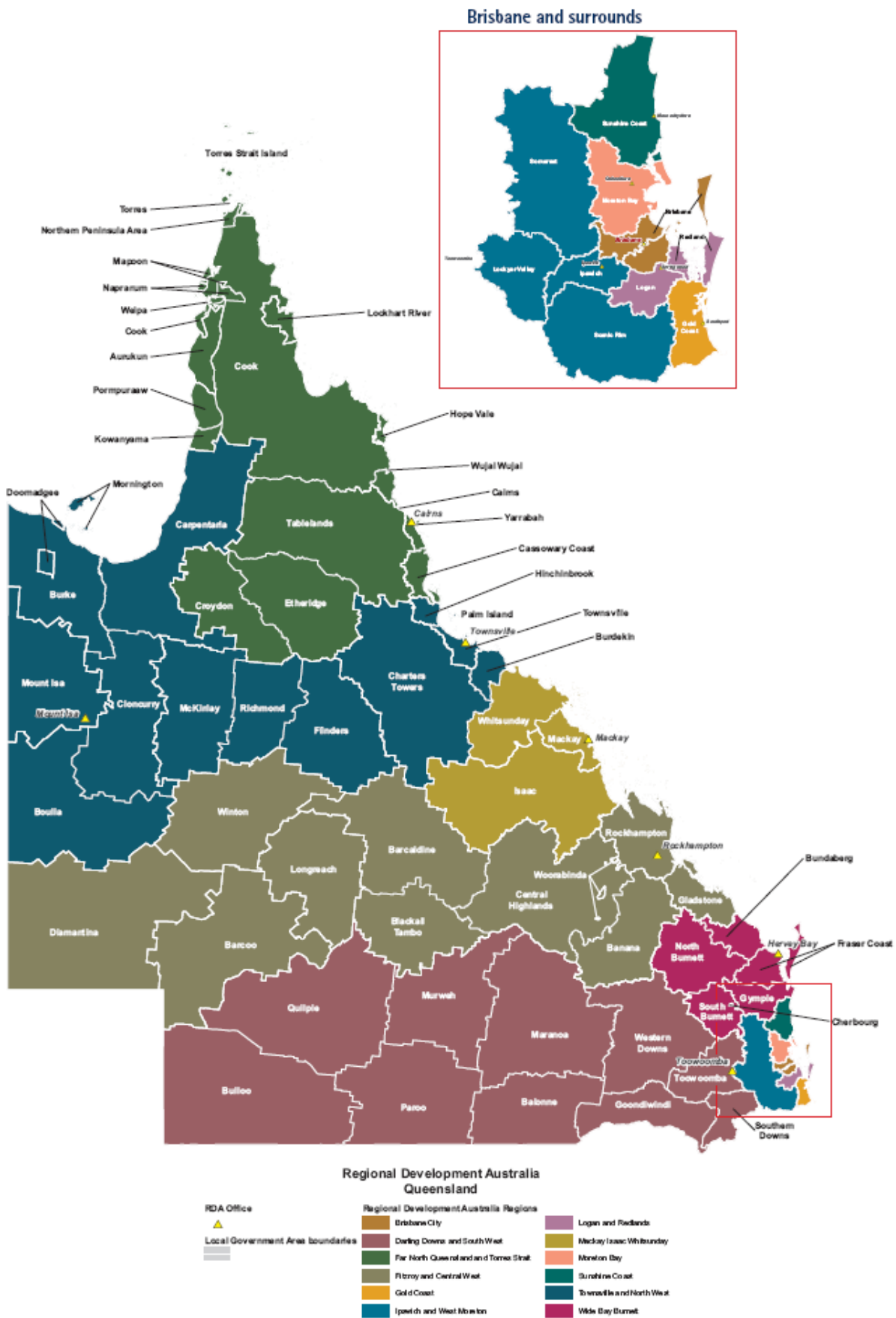
Map 1.12 New South Wales



Map 1.13 Northern Territory



Map 1.14 Queensland



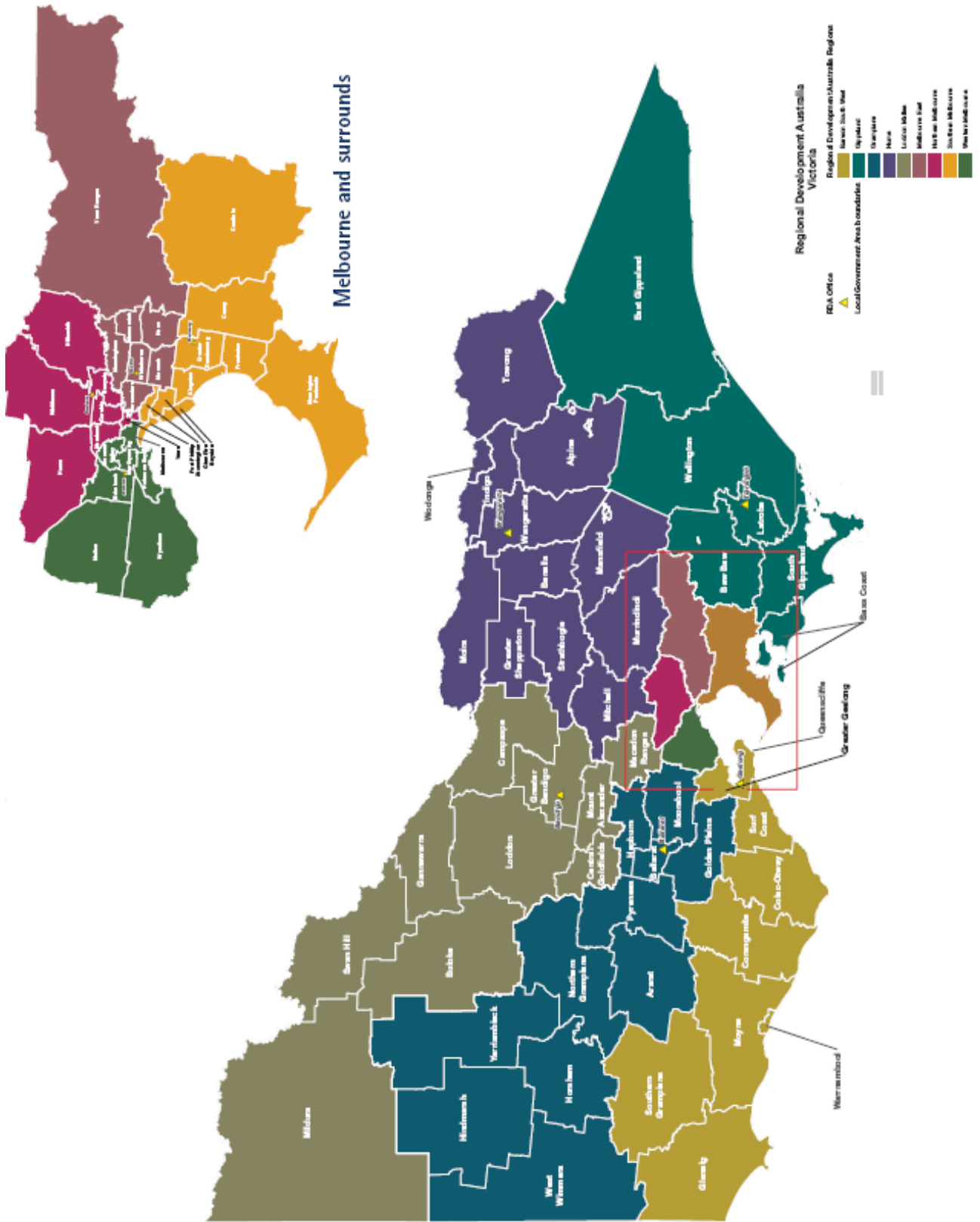
Map 1.16 Tasmania



Hobart and surrounds



Map 1.17 Victoria



Departmental Program Management Checklist

2016-17 BUSINESS PLAN AND BUDGET -ASSESSMENT CHECKLIST

Checklist 1: RDA Business Plan & Budget FA reference A.4.3 BPG Reference 3.3

RDA Name	
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Due Date	Reminder	Draft Received	Feedback	Extension	Final Received
31/08/2016					

Recommendation and Approval

Overall Risk Rating					
This Business plan and Budget Report has been reviewed in accordance with the RDA's risk rating. I recommend / do not recommend acceptance based on the RDA Committee's certification of the Business Plan and Budget and its compliance / non-compliance with the requirements of the Funding Agreement and the RDA Better Practice Guide					
Recommendation	APS 5/6 Name:		Signature:	Date:	1/08/2016
Approval	EL 1 / EL2 / SES Name:		Signature:	Date:	Click here to enter a date.
Regional Liaison Assessment - Comment / Sensitivities / Need to Review Risk Rating / and follow up action if required:					

LOW RISK RDAs - Assessment – Only Complete Questions 1 - 8 Below

Quality Assurance & Budget Check	Yes	No
1. Is the BP and budget in accord with the templates A.1.0 and A.1.3 in the Better Practice Guide?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
2. Is the BP and budget certified by the RDA Chair? (This may be on the budget template, or by separate email)?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
3. Has the RDA identified the correct amount of Operational Funding they will receive for 2016-17?		
	<u>Actual from Dept</u> \$	<u>RDA BP Budget</u> \$
4. Carry Over: Does the budget identify operational funding carry-over from the previous financial year?	<u>Carry over</u> \$	<u>% of budget</u> %
5. Is the carry forward of funding <i>less</i> than 15% of their Funding? ¹	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
6. If No, do you recommend approval? (please provide comment in comment section below) ²	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
7. Is there a surplus or nil balance of Funding included at the end of the financial year? If not, has a satisfactory explanation been provided?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
8. Budget Line Items: Are funds allocated against each line item & do the funding allocations seem reasonable?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
If "Yes" to Questions 1 to 8, the Business Plan & Budget may be approved with no further checks		
Comment if necessary (note – any "No" answer above <u>must</u> be commented on)		

¹ Clause 6.16 of the Funding Agreement requires that an RDA Committee must write to the Department if more than 15% of the total Budget remains unspent at the end of the financial year and the RDA Committee wishes to treat that unspent amount as Funding for the following year. Please identify below the estimated Carry-Forward from previous years as a percentage of your previous year's Funding. The actual carry-forward is to be confirmed in your Annual Audited Accounts. The RDA Better Practice Guide provides advice on the process for approval of Carry-Forwards greater than 15%.

² Note any RDA Request to Carry-Over funds exceeding 15% is to be treated as a financial approval requiring the appropriate delegation for Approval. this does not apply to amounts up to 15% as these can be transferred by RDAs between years without our approval. Approval Delegations (as the currently stand) are:

- Over 15% and up to and including \$50,000 EL2
- Over 15% and over \$50,000 General Manager

MEDIUM AND HIGH RISK RDA - Assessment - complete all relevant fields below.

Have the following requirements set out in Attachment A.1.0. of the BPG been met?

Introduction	Yes	No
<p><u>Does the Summary of Key Achievements and Learnings from the Previous Year</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide a summary of significant events and achievements of the previous year? • Outline activities which were not achieved and require ongoing work? • Describe lessons learnt and implications for the coming year? 	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
<p><u>Overview of Committee Members and Staff</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Does the RDA acknowledge that the RDA website information is up-to-date with regard to Committee Members and Staff? Or does the RDA provide this information in the BP itself? • Does this section Include roles and responsibilities of executive positions? 	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
<p><u>Operational Parameters for the Coming Year</u> - Does the Business Plan:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide a summary of the RDAs budget, including all sources of funding? • Identify and explain any anticipated out-of-the-ordinary costs? • Detail significant third party contracts, including for each the level of funding, implications for operational costs and obligations arising? 	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
<p><u>Strategic Context</u> – Does the Business Plan:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • State how the Regional Plan and RDA Business Plan activities relate to regional development and other priorities of all three levels of government? • Identify the RDA Committee’s major stakeholders. No more than half a page? 	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
<p><u>Risk Management & Workplace Health and Safety</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Confirm the RDA maintains current plans. Suggested format at Attach. B.1. & B.2. 	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<p>Comment if necessary (note – any “No” answer above <u>must</u> be commented on):</p>		

Identification of RDA activities	Yes	No
<p>a) <u>Regional priorities</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Does the Business Plan provide a summary of key regional priorities (from Regional Plan)? • Has the RDA indicated if the regional priorities changed in the last year? 	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
<p>b) <u>Analysis</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Does the Business Plan include a discussion of the key & emerging issues, their nature & impact, and the role of the RDA in mitigating or taking advantage of these? • Has the RDA undertaken analysis to identify where the RDA can best make a difference, i.e., the RDA’s “value add” role in the region? If so please set out the results and identify how they shape the activities in this Plan? 	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
<p>c) <u>RDA activities</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Does the Business Plan provide a summary of the process used to identify RDA priority activities, i.e., those with an economic focus where the RDA takes a <u>lead</u> or <u>supporting</u> role. Was the RDA’s capacity to influence taken into account? 	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<p>Comment if necessary (note – any “No” answer above <u>must</u> be commented on):</p>		

Table of Outcomes, Activities and Key Performance Areas	Yes	No

Does the Business Plan list intended activities (identifying if the RDA is taking a lead or supporting role) in column A of the table at Attachment A.1.1?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Does the Business Plan consider how they could subsequently measure their contribution to meeting KPIs and Outcomes — (Refer Attachment A.1.2. for guidance on activities and their measurement (Columns B, C & D) which are to be filled out as part of the Annual Report on Outcomes)?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Comment if necessary (note – any “No” answer above <u>must</u> be commented on):		

Risk Rating Review	Yes	No
Does the Business Plan and Budget present any issues that would require the RDAs risk rating to be reviewed.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Comment if necessary (note – if “Yes” provide comments as to why)		

Appendix C: Consultation

Interviews of the Independent Reviewer

The Office of the Hon John Barilaro MP, Deputy Premier, Minister for Regional Development, Minister for Skills and Minister for Small Business

The Hon Matthew Groom MP, Minister for State Growth; Minister for Energy; and Minister for Environment, Parks and Heritage

The Hon Michael Gunner MLA, Chief Minister; Minister for Aboriginal Affairs; Minister for Northern Australia; Minister for Police, Fire and Emergency Services; Minister for Trade, Business and Innovation

Senator the Hon Ian Macdonald, Senator for Queensland

The Hon. Jaala Pulford MLC, Minister for Agriculture; Minister for Regional Development; Deputy Leader of the Government in the Legislative Council

The Hon. Terry Redman MLA, Minister for Regional Development; Lands; Minister Assisting the Minister for State Development

Head of Division, Office of Northern Australia

The Secretary, NSW Department of Premier and Cabinet

The Secretary, NSW Department of Industry

Acting Deputy Director-General Policy and Cabinet, ACT Chief Minister, Treasury and Economic Development Directorate

Deputy Secretary, Economic Skills and Regional Development, NSW Department of Industry

Executive Director, Regional Coordination, NSW Department of Premier and Cabinet

Chief Executive, Regional Development Victoria

Mr Adrian Beresford-Wylie, Chief Executive Officer, Australian Local Government Association

Dr Jennifer Cleary, RDA Chairs Reference Group

Mr Rob Kerin, Chairman and Executive Officer of Regional Development SA

Mr Jack Archer, Chief Executive, Regional Australia Institute

Professor Andrew Beer, Dean, Research and Innovation, University of South Australia Business School

Associate Professor Robyn Eversole, Director, Institute for Regional Development, University of Tasmania

Dr Caroline Perkins, Executive Director, Regional Universities Network

NSW Business Chamber

Tourism Accommodation Australia

Northern Melbourne RDA Committee

Northern Australia Alliance

Submissions to the Independent Review

Submissions received by the Independent Review of the effectiveness of the RDA programme:

Number	Author
1	Barry Haase, Administrator of Christmas Island and the Cocos (Keeling) Islands
2	Mr Christ��pher Su, Christmas Island resident
3	Confidential Submission
4	Mr John Howard
5	Dr James Cowley
6	Mr Mark Melrose
7	Regional Development Australia Riverina
8	Regional Development Australia Peel
9	Illawarra Innovative Industry Network
10	Regional Development Australia Adelaide Hills, Fleurieu and Kangaroo Island
11	Cr Kevin Mack Mayor, Albury City Council
12	Local Government of South Australia
13	Committee for Gippsland
14	Mr Roger Summerill
15	Mr Mark Sewell
16	Mr Nick Tzima, CCI Redcliffe Peninsula
17	Regional Development Australia Mid North Coast
18	Hilltops Council
19	Local Government of Tasmania
20	Australian Local Government Association
21	Wollongong City Council
22	Minister for Regional Development SA
23	Regional Development Australia Southern Inland
24	Regional Development Australia Northern Inland NSW
25	Central Local Government Region of SA
26	Southern Downs Regional Council
27	Northern Midlands Councils
28	Leeton Shire Council
29	Local Government Association of Queensland
30	Mananoa Regional Council

31	Regional Development Australia Sydney
32	Confidential
33	Regional Development Australia Hunter
34	Ms Kathy Bensted, Qld Chair of the CRG
35	Regional Development Australia Central Coast
36	Regional Development Australia Adelaide Hills, Fleurieu and Kangaroo Island
37	City of Onkaparinga
38	Centroc
39	Illawarra Pilot Joint Organisation
40	Regional Development Australia Tasmania
41	Regional Development Australia Kimberley
42	Regional Development Australia Murray Riverlands
43	Regional Development Australia Perth
44	Regional Development Australia Illawarra
45	Pyreness Shire Council
46	Institute for Public Policy and Governance
47	Regional Development Australia Murray
48	Regional Development Australia Central West
49	Confidential Submission
50	Regional Development Australia Darling Downs and South West
51	University of Wollongong
52	Mr Duncan Anderson
53	Confidential Submission
54	Regional Development Australia Hume
55	Orana Regional Organisation of Councils
56	Regional Development Australia Limestone Coast
57	Northern RDA Alliance
58	Regional Development Australia ACT
59	Regional Development Australia NT
60	Regional Development Australia Barwon South West
61	Regional Development Australia Mackay Isaac Whitsunday
62	Regional Development Australia Wide Bay Burnett
63	Regional Development SA
64	Regional Development Australia South West

65	Regional Development Australia Brisbane
66	Property Council of Australia
67	Regional Development Australia Melbourne East
68	Regional Australia Institute
69	FNQ Regional Organisations of Councils
70	NSW Business Chamber
71	Regional Development Australia Loddon Mallee
72	Regional Development Australia Townsville and North West Queensland
73	Canberra Region Joint Organisation (CBRJO)
74	Kiama Council
75	Regional Development Australia Barossa
76	Regional Development Australia York Mid North
77	Regional Development Australia Great Southern
78	Western Australian Department of Regional Development
79	Regional Development Australia Mid West Gasgoyne
80	Regional Development Australia Far North
81	Regional Development Australia Western Melbourne
82	Regional Development Australia FNQTS
83	Victorian Government
84	Confidential Submission
85	Regional Development Australia Wheatbelt
86	Regional Development Australia Northern Melbourne
87	Tourism Accommodation Australia
88	Northern Territory Chief Minister
90	Tasmanian Government



RDA National Forum Workshop Report



ORIMA Research Survey Report