



Submission to the Senate Rural & Regional Affairs & Transport  
References Committee Inquiry into

# AUSTRALIA'S HIDDEN METROPOLIS

The Future Role and Contribution of Regional Capitals to Australia

April 2015

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## Australia's Hidden Metropolis

Collectively Regional Capitals are home to 4.5 million Australians. They are increasingly urban places with economies and employment profiles that mirror and are often deeply connected to our major metropolitan cities.

Although Regional Capitals are distributed around the nation and service and support our diverse regions, collectively they should be considered as a major city with a population base equal to our largest cities. Their emergence has been the most significant part of Australia's urbanisation pattern for more than 30 years.

Regional Capitals are also fundamental to our economy. They are at the forefront of Australia's capacity to compete in key industries such as manufacturing and services and have a central role to play in providing for a productive and successful ageing Australia. They also provide a source of economic diversity and resilience to the Australian economy and society that is essential in uncertain economic times.

While Regional Capitals are major contributors to our economy, the Regional Australia Institute (RAI) believes that overall they are underperforming in terms of growth, innovation and dynamism when measured against their potential. Key constraints on their growth include:

- The lack of a coherent urban development policy and ambition for these places, resulting from their distribution around the country and position as second or third tier settlements in each state or territory.
- Human capital, technology and innovation constraints not present in our five major cities.
- The lack of capacity and a genuine mandate for Regional Capitals to lead their own development with the support of state and federal Governments.

The RAI however is not advocating that a singular national policy with prescriptive initiatives should be developed to facilitate the development of Regional Capitals.

The diverse range of situations and strengths and weaknesses in Australia's regional capitals demands a different approach. One size does not fit all and the facilitation of smart, locally led development strategies is the priority for the future of Regional Capitals and regional Australia as a whole.

## Introduction

The Regional Australia Institute (RAI) welcomes the opportunity to provide a submission to the Senate Rural & Regional Affairs & Transport References Committee Inquiry into the Future Role and Contribution of Regional Capitals to Australia.

The specific terms of reference to which this submission most closely relate are:

- a. an assessment of current demographic trends and the changing role of regional capitals;
- d. investment challenges and opportunities to maintain or grow regional capitals, including infrastructure, community and human services, communications and natural resources; and
- e. incentives and policy measures that would support sustainable growth in regional capitals;

This submission provides some information that the RAI believes are important for the committee's consideration. The RAI would be pleased to provide further supporting information for the Committee's consideration.

### About the Regional Australia Institute

Independent and informed by both research and ongoing dialogue with the community, the RAI develops evidence-based policy and advocates for change to build a stronger economy and better quality of life in regional Australia – for the benefit of all Australians.

The RAI was specifically formed to help bridge the gap between knowledge, debate and decision-making for the potential and future pathways of regional Australia. It exists to ensure local, state and federal policy makers, researchers, business and members of the community have access to the information they need to make informed choices about the future of regional Australia.

### Submission Contacts

Su McCluskey – Chief Executive Officer

Jack Archer – Deputy Chief Executive Officer

## Regional Australia and Regional Capitals

The Senate Committee inquiry title refers to 'Regional Capitals', however the RAI notes that the terms of reference do not define 'Regional Capitals'.

The Regional Capital Australia organisation – made up of a number of regional local governments – defines a 'Regional Capital' as:

*"...a regional city, located outside the state metropolitan urban growth boundary. A regional capital provides a central point to access essential infrastructure, services, business, employment and education for local residents as well as those in surrounding towns and rural areas. These cities perform a 'capital city' role within their regions."*<sup>1</sup>

'Regional Capitals', as defined above, are hubs for surrounding areas as well as being the largest population centres but their extent and diversity is not clearly defined.

To help navigate the diversity of Australia's regions and understand trends and differences between places, the RAI has classified local government areas according to one of four types – the *Foundations of Regional Australia*. The four classifications are: Regional Cities, Industry and Service Hubs, Connected Lifestyle Areas and Heartland Regions.<sup>2</sup>

See Figure 1, Foundations of Regional Australia.

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<sup>1</sup> <http://www.regionalcapitalsaustralia.org/>

<sup>2</sup> These classifications, developed as a means of communicating to LGAs - the representatives of regional communities - their key competitive characteristics, do not directly align to the membership of Regional Cities Australia or directly to the ABS Statistical Geography Standard. This submission provides some evidence based upon the organisation's work in developing the [In]Sight: Australia's regional competitiveness index. The Australian Statistical Geography Standard includes a classification Significant Urban Areas which is also useful for consideration of regional areas. The classifications include Greater Capital Cities, Significant Urban Areas and 'not in any significant urban area'.

# FOUNDATIONS OF REGIONAL AUSTRALIA



Figure 1: Foundations of Regional Australia  
Source: RAI

'Regional Cities' and 'Industry and Service Hubs' are the areas relevant to this inquiry and all of our analysis draws on these groups characteristics.

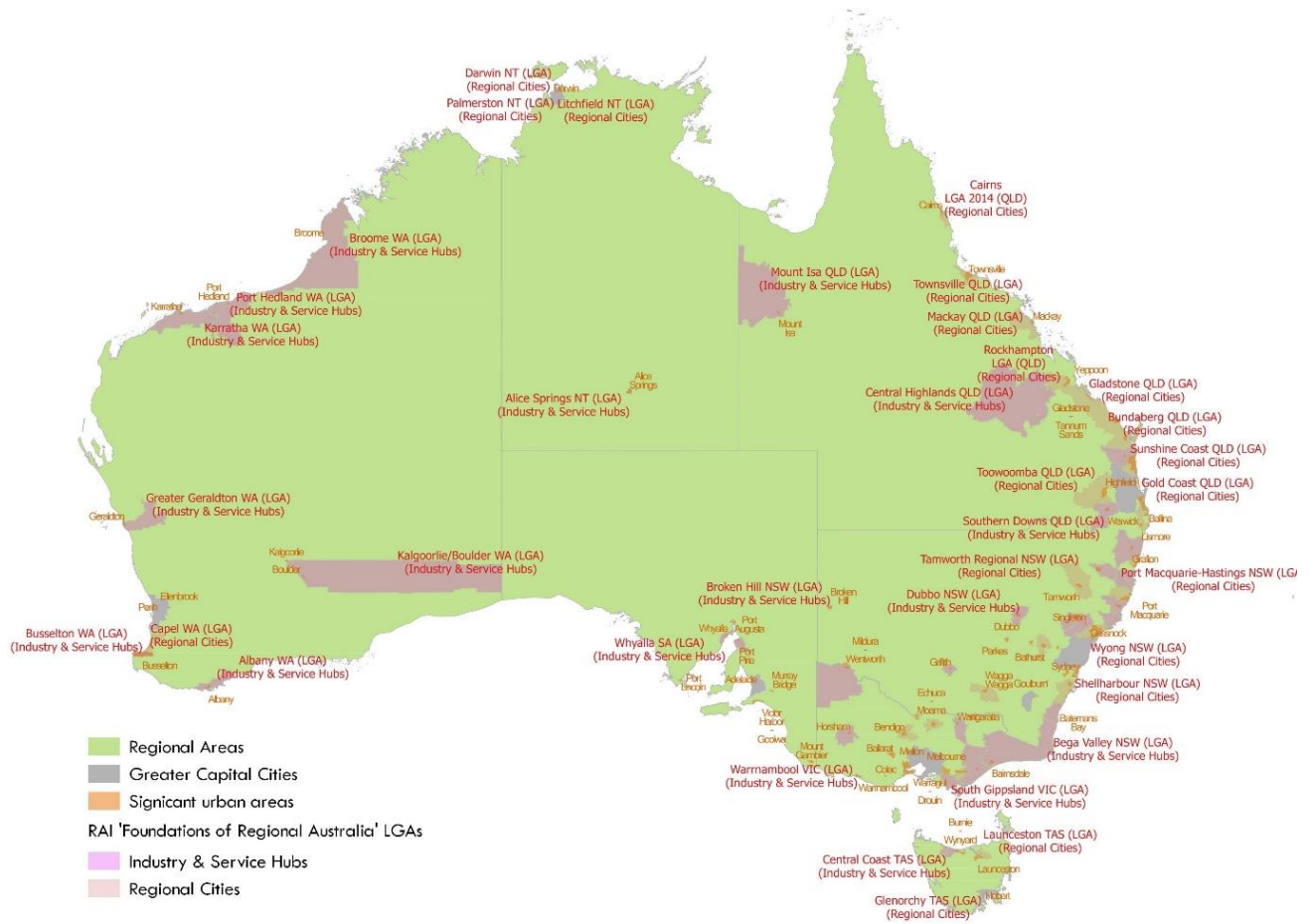


Figure 2: Representations of Regional Australia

## Demographic Trends

The inquiry's terms of reference include:

- a. *an assessment of current demographic trends and the changing role of regional capitals;*

The demographic trends shaping Regional Capitals are the functions both of the decisions of individuals and of the processes of economic development which lead to the centralisation of economic activity within urbanised population centres.<sup>3</sup>

Two key demographic trends relevant to the changing role of regional capitals should be central to the Committees consideration of Regional Capitals. These are: (1) urbanisation and (2) ageing.

### Urbanisation

It is well-recognised that Australia is one of the most urbanised societies on earth. According to the World Bank's development index, in 2014 Australia ranked 25<sup>th</sup> with 89 per cent of its population living in urban areas.<sup>4</sup>

Within regional Australia there has been a fundamental, systematic and long-term trend for the increasing concentration of Australia's population towards urban areas – areas that include 'regional capitals'. According to the Bureau of Infrastructure, Transport and Regional Development (BITRE), the trend has been 'not just toward capital cities, but also to larger regional areas'<sup>5</sup>. Within regional areas, therefore, the key change has been from a preponderance of small towns and relatively few larger regional centres:

'The dominance of small towns and villages has been completely reversed and the larger regional centres now predominate.'<sup>6</sup>

Urbanisation outside the major capital cities has arguably our most significant regional demographic trend. According to the BITRE, '[In 1911] large regional towns were rare and there were few large urban areas outside of the main capitals. The largest town in 1911 was Ballarat with 38 686 people, a population only exceeded by the five mainland state capitals.'<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> Refer to the World Bank's global trend for urbanisation statistics summarised in the Appendices.

<sup>4</sup> The World Bank Ranks Australia at 25<sup>th</sup>, with 89% of the population categorised as living within urbanised areas.

<sup>5</sup> The evolution of Australian towns, page 63.

<sup>6</sup> The evolution of Australian towns, page 64.

<sup>7</sup> The evolution of Australian towns, page 61.



The greatest shift from small towns and villages towards urbanised regional and metropolitan centres occurred prior to 1971. There has in fact been relatively little change over the last few decades in the proportions of the national population living in the three main sections of state categories identified by the ABS. Over the period prior to 1971 the greatest gains in population share were within the capital cities, however in more recent decades their growth has stabilised. From 1971 to 2006 the population of capital cities increased by just 2 per cent compared to an increase of 8 per cent for regional cities.<sup>8</sup> This fact has been missed in our discussion of Australia's urbanisation.

More recently the pattern of settlement in regional centres has not been consistent: coastal centres are growing faster than those inland, a trend at least partly attributed to the sea change phenomenon and also changes in the patterns of work. In more remote areas there have been significant fluctuations with these areas only experiencing positive growth from 2006.<sup>9</sup>

These patterns of development are the have given rise to the 'regional capitals'. They sit firmly apart from the traditional demographic narrative. In order for them to ensure their future, regional capitals must consider how they can drive urban development to accelerate their performance. This will involve moving beyond a primary or secondary industry development and supporting infrastructure focus and adapting elements of successful metropolitan development strategies to the Regional Capital context.

## Ageing

The extent to which age patterns varies between regions is of critical significance to their regional development.

The ageing trend is most pronounced in regional Australia. Baby Boomers (people born between 1945 and 1961) are especially important for regional Australia, comprising 28 per cent of the population and 39 per cent of the workforce.

As identified by the RAI recently, 59 Australian communities are already living the future predicted by the latest Treasury Intergenerational Report<sup>10</sup>. Each of these communities has a senior dependency ratio of 37% or greater. This level is equivalent to the report's projection of 2.7 people aged 15-64 for every person 65+ in 2055.<sup>11</sup>

Regional cities, such as the city of Port Macquarie and inland in towns like Grenfell in Western NSW, are at or above the levels of ageing forecast by the Intergeneration report, and are in the midst of dealing with the pressures and opportunities an aged population presents. These two centres are

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<sup>8</sup> The evolution of Australian towns, page 67.

<sup>9</sup> For the listing of population growth by Significant Urban Areas 2001 to 2011, see the Appendices. Refer also to the recently released ABS statistics *Regional internal migration estimates, Statistical Area Level 2 - 2006-07 to 2013-14*, ABS Catalogue 3412.0

<sup>10</sup> <http://www.treasury.gov.au/PublicationsAndMedia/Publications/2015/2015-Intergenerational-Report>

<sup>11</sup> <http://www.regionalaustralia.org.au/archive-blog/blog-2055-is-already-here-for-some-australian-communities/>

examples of two particular dynamics arising from the retirement of the baby boomers – (1) their return to agriculturally-based communities and (2) their retirement to ‘sea-change’ communities along the coast.<sup>12</sup>

Affected by both ageing in place and residential mobility, there is considerable variation in patterns of ageing between local areas. The RAI has identified three patterns in particular:

**High Ageing in Place** - regions clustered in rural areas with older age profiles that Baby Boomers are staying in. These regions are managing the transition of a large portion of their workforce into a new stage of their life while also seeking to maintain and develop their region.

**High Aged Migration** - regions with average existing age structures that Baby Boomers are moving to, predominantly in south-western Victoria and Western Australia. These regions must engage with new residents and identify how the resources and energy they bring with them will change the community’s future.

**Fastest Rate of Ageing** - regions that Baby Boomers are both staying in and moving to which are clustered along the east coast of Australia and around Adelaide. These regions are experiencing the most intense level of change. These regions must engage with new residents while also facilitating the transition of current Baby Boomers into their next stage of life.

Such variations are important to better plan services, communities, infrastructure and support systems for both the current and future generations of older people in regional Australia. The success of investment in Regional Capitals as health and other social services centres will be at the heart of enabling regional Australia and Australia as a whole to adapt to the ageing challenge.

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<sup>12</sup> <http://www.regionalaustralia.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2014/11/Talking-Point-Super-Boomers-FINAL.pdf>

## Contribution to Economic Growth

Regional Australia is of fundamental importance to the national economy. If the collective output of regional Australia in 2013 was removed from the national picture, the Australian economy would only be the size that it was in 1997<sup>13</sup>.

In 2013, regional Australia collectively added output roughly the size of the Finland and Singapore economies *combined* to the economic output of our major metropolitan areas. Output per capita in our Regional Cities in 2013 was on par with that of the Netherlands, while output per capita in our Industry and Service Hubs was comparable to that of Luxembourg. Without regions, Australia would no longer be in the top 10 countries in terms of economic output in the world.

Our regional communities have also been an important source of stability for the national economy in the recent period of uncertainty. After reaching a local trough in 2003, regional Australia's share of national economic output has generally increased over time. While the rate of growth in regional Australia slowed from 2004-11, the stability of regional Australia's growth saw it expand at a greater average rate than our major metropolitan areas over this time.

Regional Capitals, contribute substantially to the country's economic strength. The regions are responsible for one third of total employment, just over one-third of our economic output, around two thirds of our exports by value. Regional Capitals are also home to almost one-quarter of all Australians.

In 2013, Regional Australia was at the forefront of output per worker in around one third of industries, with Regional Capitals – that is, Regional Cities and Industry and Service Hubs – at the frontier of output per worker in the mining, construction, logistics, manufacturing and health care industries.

Regional Australia wrested the advantage in manufacturing output per worker from metropolitan areas only relatively recently. This gain in output per worker is indicative of the relative efficiency with which regions have been able to utilise scarcer labour resources to generate economic activity in these key sectors as well as in traditional strengths such as agriculture.

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<sup>13</sup> Regional Australia Institute, forthcoming

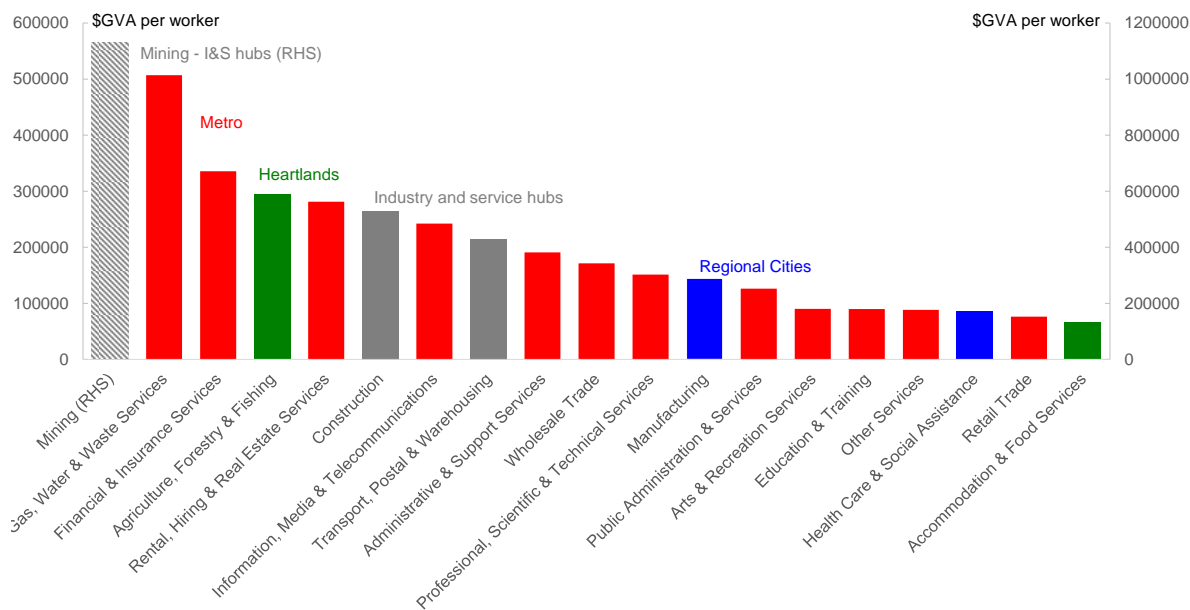


Figure 3: 'Frontier' gross value added (GVA) output per worker in 2013 by regional type  
Source: PwC, RAI calculations

Regional Capitals also have labour costs in general than our metropolitan areas. This cost advantage is often overlooked and represents untapped potential in our Regional Capitals for Australia's future economic performance.

Like Australia as a whole, regions have done well through their connection to the mining expansion. However, once the effect of the recent mining output expansion is removed from the picture, Regional Capitals exhibit lower output per capita than our major metropolitan regions. This shortfall – around \$10,000 per person – is a consistent feature in the historical data.

In considering future policy setting for Regional Capitals this suggests that Regional Capitals may be underperforming relative to their potential. Stronger policy settings combined with local energy and initiative may provide opportunities for delivering stronger growth in the future and reducing this persistent performance gap.



## Competitiveness of Regional Capitals

Given the diversity of economic and demographic situations in Australia's Regional Capitals, policy development should not consider that a 'one size fits all approach' will be successful. However the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and challenges for different regions have often been poorly understood and communicated over time in national policy debates and decision making.

Regional communities are not homogenous or static. The drivers of regional economies are also changing. They may be especially subject to the longer-term trend away from goods production towards a predominance of services in jobs growth and economic activity.

*[In]Sight* – Australia's regional competitiveness index provides a comparative perspective on the competitiveness of each Australian LGA and region. The existing competitiveness profile for Regional Cities and Industry and Service Hubs (Figure 4 below) shows a high average ranking for the endogenous growth drivers of human capital, innovation, and technological readiness, and in the enabling driver of infrastructure.

Regional cities score very highly on the Institutional Foundations theme however this is clearly a constraint for regional development in Industry and Service Hubs.

Regional Cities and Industry and Service hubs score relatively highly on infrastructure and essential services, reflecting their roles as significant regional centres. However, both classifications of regional cities score below the national average in the economic performance indicators of economic fundamentals and Labour Market Efficiency. This emphasises the recent underperformance of regional capitals as engines of jobs growth.

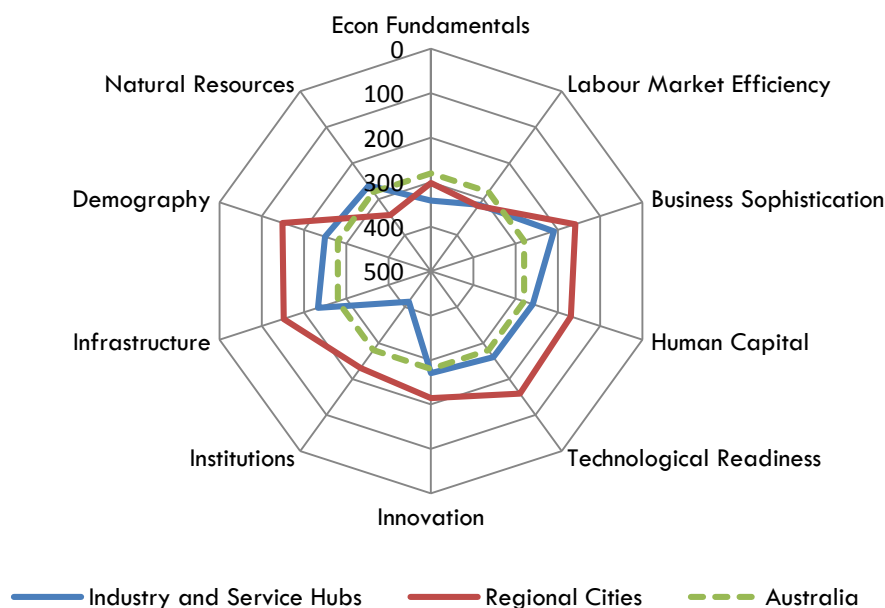


Figure 4: Average ranking on *[In]Sight*, Regional Cities and Industry and Service Hubs LGAs compared to national average, 2013

## Investment Challenges & Opportunities

In considering ‘investment challenges and opportunities to maintain or grow regional capitals’<sup>14</sup>, the Regional Australia Institute wishes to highlight three areas of focus for regional development within regional capitals.

### Development of Human Capital

The skills, health and education of a region’s workforce are fundamental to its competitiveness. Strong human capital enables communities to be more productive, to innovate and to respond to changes in the economy.

There are vast differences between the education and health outcomes for people in regional Australia. The greatest disparities emerge in primary and secondary educational outcomes and in the distribution of people with university qualifications.

<b>Human Capital</b>	<b>Regional Cities</b>	<b>Industry &amp; Service Hubs</b>	<b>Connected Lifestyle Areas</b>	<b>Heartland Regions</b>	<b>Metropolitan</b>
University Qualifications	15.9%	13.0%	15.2%	10.4%	30.9%
Technical Qualifications	36.5%	35.6%	36.0%	30.4%	28.4%
Lifelong Learning	46.3%	46.0%	43.8%	42.6%	45.6%
Early School-Leavers	56.2%	60.1%	58.7%	62.7%	37.1%
Health	59.1%	60.8%	57.4%	63.3%	51.7%
English (language) proficiency	94.1%	93.3%	94.9%	93.3%	90.7%
Early Childhood	26.7%	28.3%	23.2%	27.0%	22.9%
Primary School Performance	58.2%	53.5%	56.8%	45.6%	69.5%
Secondary School Performance	31.5%	27.9%	27.8%	21.7%	44.2%

*Table 1 [In]Sight Human Capital Competitiveness Indicators*

The RAI considers that addressing these fundamental aspects of competitive disadvantage are one of the most significant structural challenges facing Regional Capitals. Investing in the basics of human capital is central as is the capability and performance of regional education providers.<sup>15</sup>

Development pathways that provide the capacity for Regional Capitals to compete for a larger proportion of high skilled positions is particularly important for their future development.

<sup>14</sup> The inquiry’s terms of reference include: ‘investment challenges and opportunities to maintain or grow regional capitals, including infrastructure, community and human services, communications and natural resources’

<sup>15</sup> For further information, refer to <http://www.regionalaustralia.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2015/01/Insights-for-Competitive-Regions-Human-Capital.pdf>

## Technological Readiness

The technological readiness of a region's workforce and economy are fundamental to its competitiveness. Communication technologies are now essential to efficient commercial practices and productivity. They are transforming global trade dynamics, propelling Australia's previously isolated regional economies into national and international markets.

*[In]Sight: Australia's regional competitiveness index* reveals a wide gap between the communication technologies available for people in regional Australia. Regional capitals, as for regional areas more generally, are at a clear disadvantage in comparison to metropolitan areas in terms of access and quality.

<b>Technological Readiness</b>	<b>Regional Cities</b>	<b>Connected Lifestyle Areas</b>	<b>Industry &amp; Service Hubs</b>	<b>Heartland Regions</b>	<b>Metropolitan</b>
Internet Connections	76.8%	75.3%	72.7%	64.7%	80.9%
Employment in technology-related industries	5.6%	4.7%	4.1%	2.3%	11.5%
Employment in ICT & Electronics	1.3%	1.0%	0.8%	0.3%	2.8%
Mobile Coverage	90%	87%	75%	69%	97%
Mobile Internet	4.4	3.1	3.3	2.0	5.1
Broadband Coverage	5.9	5.1	5.3	4.5	7.5

*Table 2: [In]Sight Human Capital Competitiveness Indicators*

Access to communications technology and the capacity to utilise it are central to economic development in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. The physical location of a person or a product is increasingly less important in the Australian and international business environment. Reliable mobile coverage is a must for efficient business communications and high-speed digital communications are undoubtedly significant driver of competitive businesses.

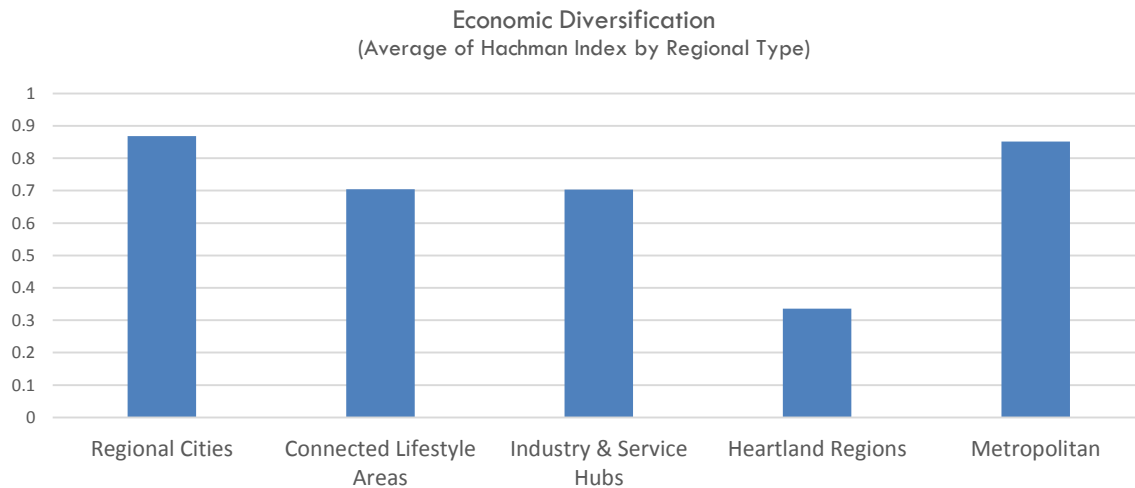
Given the relative competitive disadvantages summarised above, improving regional businesses capacity to engage with the broader economy through equitable access to communications infrastructure is central. This has been one of the greatest constraints on the recent performance of Regional Capitals.

## Economic Diversification

A key challenge to maintaining economic strength is the development of a diverse economy. Relatively large populations and diverse local economies are key characteristics that enable places to respond to the business cycle in much the same way as the major metropolitan areas.

However the diversification challenge is often misunderstood in Australian regional development, through the assumption that greater diversity is the challenge throughout regional Australia.

The RAI's analysis shows that Regional Capitals are the most economically-diverse of regional economies and the employment profile for Regional Cities aligns closely to the profile of metropolitan Australia. As summarised below, the RAI's LGA-based classification of Regional Cities compares similarly to Metropolitan LGAs in terms of economic diversification.<sup>16</sup>



*Figure 5: Index of Economic Diversification by Local Government Areas in Regional Australia. Source: RAI [In]Sight Regional Competitiveness Index*

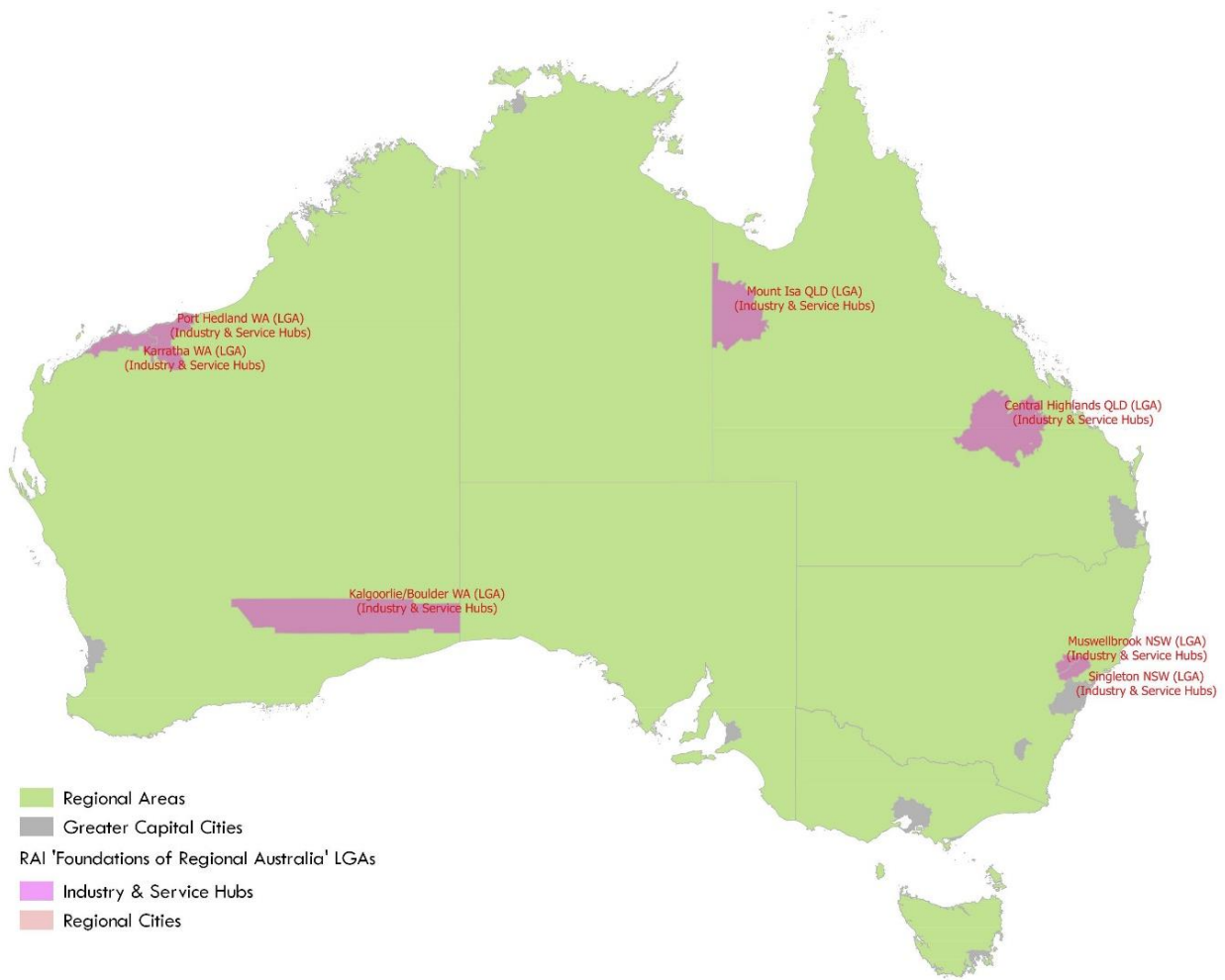
For most Regional Cities, the challenge is not to grow further diversity but to drive performance by finding and nurturing specialisations that reflect their position in the economy, relationship with the surrounding regions and existing capacity. The focus in northern Australia's regional cities on the development of 'Tropical Services' is one example where regional cities are looking to this opportunity.

However this does not mean that diversification does not remain a challenge in some Regional Capitals. For a number of Australia's Industry and Service Hubs, the development of economically sustainable communities is a key challenge, especially those dominated by commodity-price sensitive primary industries including mining and agriculture.

Regional Capitals identified by the RAI (at LGA level) as having particularly low economic diversification are those that service the mining sector and include Mount Isa (QLD), Central Highlands (QLD), Port Hedland (WA), Singleton (NSW), Karratha (WA), Muswellbrook (NSW) and Kalgoorlie/Boulder (WA). These areas will be challenged to find other opportunities or face long and severe recessions as the mining industry's contribution to growth declines.

<sup>16</sup> The Hachman index has been used within the RAI's [In]Sight Regional Competitiveness Index to calculate the economic diversification indicator. The index accounts for disparity between the economic structure of a region and that of a reference economy. Values closer to one would mean that the region's economic structure is very diverse. Values closer to indicate that the region does not have a diverse industrial structure as compared to the nation. For further information, refer to <http://www.regionalaustralia.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2015/01/InSight-2014-User-Guide.pdf>





*Figure 6: Low economic diversification, mining-dependent LGAs*

## Translating Capacity and Potential into a Better Future for Regional Capitals

### Support Growth from Within; Support Regions to Grow Themselves

This inquiry's terms of reference include:

- e. *incentives and policy measures that would support sustainable growth in regional capitals;*

Rather than submitting a wish-list of specific incentives and policy measures, the RAI emphasises the imperative for policy to develop the capacity of regions to grow from within and to provide the flexibility and resources for regions to lead their own development.

Regions that can grow by first utilising their internal resources are likely to be more successful in the long run as they build capability to meet the needs of existing markets, expand or enter new markets and respond to changing economic and social pressures. In contrast, regions which overly rely on external help from governments to drive change will remain more vulnerable to changing policy and economic conditions.

Under this approach, the growth of a region is built through enhancement of competitive advantage and improving the ability of local firms to apply regional resources effectively in existing, expanding or new markets. In particular, long term growth in 'regional capitals' will be realised through improving human capital, technological readiness, innovation in business, strong institutional foundations and well-designed infrastructure (including social infrastructure such as schools, medical and healthcare).

Well-designed inputs from State and Federal governments in a range of policy areas can enhance or facilitate a region's inherent potential if delivered in a flexible way that builds the capacity of regions to chart their path to economic success.

## Appendices

### Foundations of Regional Australia

	Regional Cities		Industry and Service Hubs
New South Wales	Albury Ballina Bathurst Regional Cessnock Coffs Harbour Lake Macquarie Lismore Maitland Newcastle	Orange Port Macquarie- Hastings Port Stephens Shellharbour Shoalhaven Tamworth Regional Tweed Wagga Wagga Wollongong	Armidale Dumaresq Bega Valley Broken Hill Clarence Valley Dubbo Eurobodalla Great Lakes Greater Taree Griffith Kempsey Muswellbrook Nambucca Singleton
Victoria	Ballarat Greater Bendigo Greater Geelong Greater Shepparton Latrobe Wodonga		East Gippsland Horsham Mildura South Gippsland Wangaratta Warrnambool Wellington
Western Australia	Bunbury Capel Harvey Mandurah		Albany Broome Busselton Greater Geraldton Kalgoorlie/Boulder Karratha Port Hedland
Queensland	Bundaberg Cairns Fraser Coast Gladstone Gold Coast Ipswich	Mackay Noosa Rockhampton Toowoomba Townsville	Central Highlands Gympie Mount Isa Southern Downs
Tasmania	Clarence Glenorchy Hobart Launceston		Burnie Central Coast Devonport
Northern Territory	Darwin Litchfield Palmerston		Alice Springs
South Australia			Mount Gambier Port Pirie City and Districts Whyalla

## Global Urbanisation

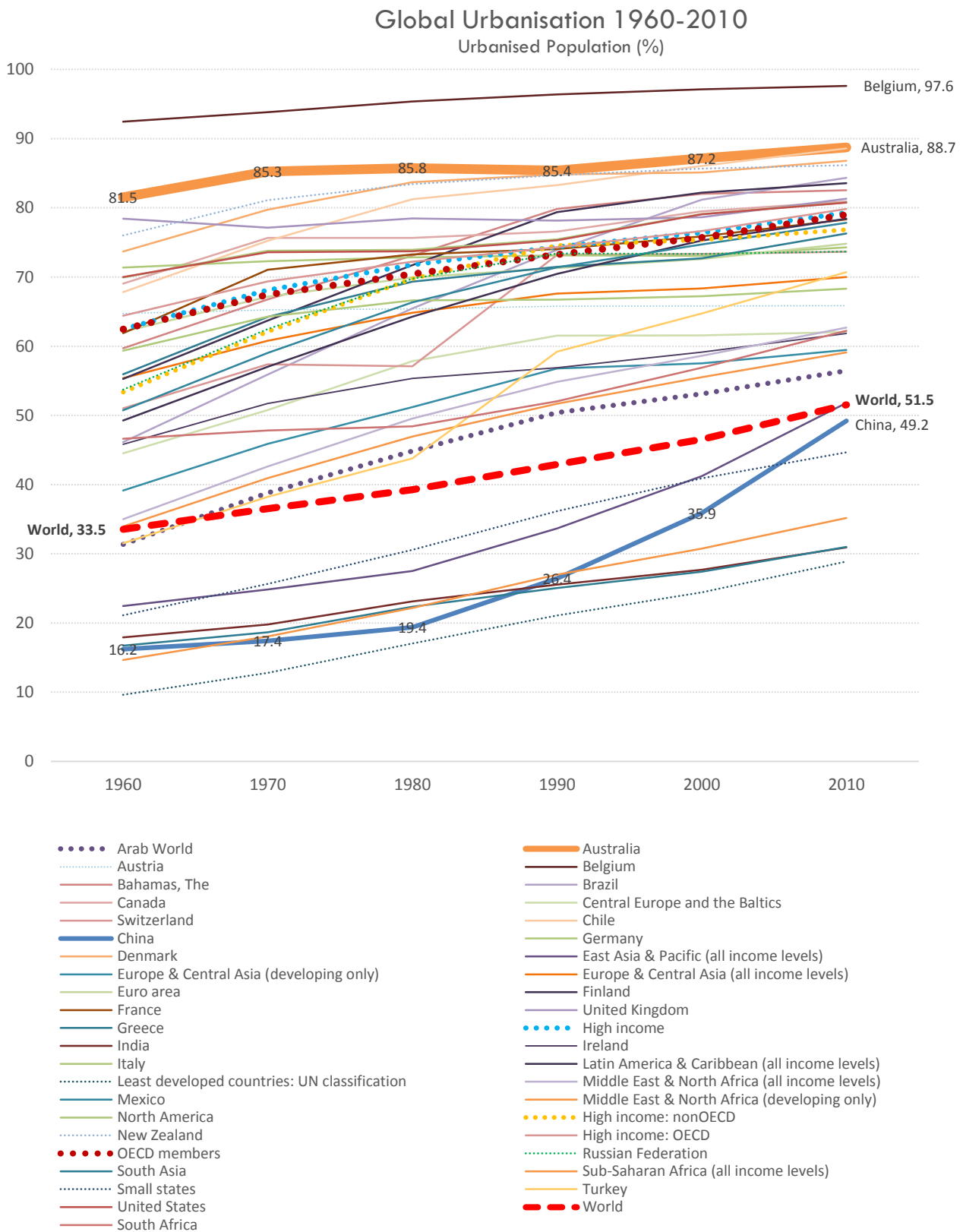


Figure 7: Source: World Bank Development Indicators  
([http://data.worldbank.org/indicator/SP.URB.TOTL.IN.ZS/countries?order=wbapi\\_data\\_value\\_2010%20wbapi\\_data\\_value%20wbapi\\_data\\_value-first&sort=asc&display=default](http://data.worldbank.org/indicator/SP.URB.TOTL.IN.ZS/countries?order=wbapi_data_value_2010%20wbapi_data_value%20wbapi_data_value-first&sort=asc&display=default))



## Population Change by Significant Urban Area 2001 to 2011

Source: ABS Regional Population Growth Catalogue No 3281.0, 2013.

Significant Urban Areas	State	Estimated Resident Population 2001	Estimated Resident Population 2011	Estimated Resident Population Change 2001 to 2011
Ellenbrook	WA	10,498	30,068	65.1%
Highfields	QLD	10,403	17,182	39.5%
Karratha	WA	10,559	17,007	37.9%
Torquay	VIC	10,225	15,497	34.0%
Hervey Bay	QLD	34,110	49,835	31.6%
Melton	VIC	34,398	48,792	29.5%
Yeppoon	QLD	12,256	16,815	27.1%
Busselton	WA	23,134	31,475	26.5%
Emerald	QLD	10,035	13,632	26.4%
Bunbury	WA	50,366	67,866	25.8%
Gold Coast - Tweed Heads	QLD	433,224	581,036	25.4%
Cairns	QLD	105,373	139,212	24.3%
Sunshine Coast	QLD	213,217	281,005	24.1%
Victor Harbor - Goolwa	SA	18,599	24,422	23.8%
Mackay	QLD	60,706	79,658	23.8%
Townsville	QLD	131,046	167,603	21.8%
Brisbane	QLD	1,624,386	2,056,390	21.0%
Gladstone - Tannum Sands	QLD	34,128	43,165	20.9%
Warragul - Drouin	VIC	24,085	30,287	20.5%
Perth	WA	1,423,216	1,772,899	19.7%
Murray Bridge	SA	13,841	17,071	18.9%
Gympie	QLD	16,273	19,964	18.5%
Broome	WA	10,980	13,314	17.5%
Bacchus Marsh	VIC	14,540	17,488	16.9%
Melbourne	VIC	3,374,856	4,013,186	15.9%
Bundaberg	QLD	58,113	69,096	15.9%
Echuca - Moama	VIC	16,540	19,659	15.9%
Batemans Bay	NSW	13,827	16,352	15.4%
Camden Haven	NSW	13,784	16,267	15.3%
Darwin	NT	97,096	113,921	14.8%
Ocean Grove - Point Lonsdale	VIC	19,720	23,006	14.3%
Port Macquarie	NSW	37,204	43,275	14.0%
Drysdale - Clifton Springs	VIC	10,204	11,866	14.0%
Nelson Bay - Corlette	NSW	22,508	26,116	13.8%
Port Hedland	WA	12,409	14,372	13.7%
Gisborne - Macedon	VIC	16,042	18,570	13.6%
Ballarat	VIC	80,774	93,470	13.6%
St Georges Basin - Sanctuary Point	NSW	11,287	12,997	13.2%
Nowra - Bomaderry	NSW	30,105	34,612	13.0%
Canberra - Queanbeyan	ACT	352,686	404,957	12.9%
Geraldton	WA	32,124	36,884	12.9%
Bendigo	VIC	76,312	87,340	12.6%
Coffs Harbour	NSW	58,374	66,689	12.5%
Rockhampton	QLD	66,303	75,730	12.4%
Morisset - Cooranbong	NSW	20,051	22,644	11.5%
Sydney	NSW	3,760,800	4,233,699	11.2%
Bathurst	NSW	30,048	33,754	11.0%
Singleton	NSW	14,899	16,730	10.9%
Toowoomba	QLD	97,572	109,244	10.7%

Significant Urban Areas	State	Estimated Resident Population 2001	Estimated Resident Population 2011	Estimated Resident Population Change 2001 to 2011
Warwick	QLD	13,364	14,950	10.6%
Warrnambool	VIC	29,559	33,020	10.5%
Traralgon - Morwell	VIC	36,365	40,609	10.5%
Bairnsdale	VIC	12,080	13,458	10.2%
Albany	WA	28,557	31,791	10.2%
Geelong	VIC	159,583	177,588	10.1%
Shepparton - Mooroopna	VIC	42,835	47,571	10.0%
Wagga Wagga	NSW	49,075	54,137	9.4%
Maryborough	QLD	24,395	26,893	9.3%
Adelaide	SA	1,122,905	1,236,712	9.2%
Albury - Wodonga	NSW	76,451	84,195	9.2%
Kurri Kurri - Weston	NSW	15,222	16,741	9.1%
Newcastle - Maitland	NSW	378,068	415,628	9.0%
Central Coast	NSW	286,792	314,941	8.9%
Horsham	VIC	14,767	16,099	8.3%
Hobart	TAS	188,057	204,951	8.2%
Muswellbrook	NSW	11,222	12,222	8.2%
Mildura - Wentworth	VIC	44,593	48,505	8.1%
Mount Gambier	SA	25,999	28,279	8.1%
Launceston	TAS	79,379	86,051	7.8%
Tamworth	NSW	37,012	40,085	7.7%
Bowral - Mittagong	NSW	33,499	36,266	7.6%
Kalgoorlie - Boulder	WA	29,502	31,933	7.6%
Port Lincoln	SA	14,443	15,621	7.5%
Wollongong	NSW	260,655	281,700	7.5%
Forster - Tuncurry	NSW	18,852	20,273	7.0%
Griffith	NSW	17,397	18,683	6.9%
Ballina	NSW	22,845	24,469	6.6%
Cessnock	NSW	19,520	20,896	6.6%
Ulladulla	NSW	13,792	14,758	6.5%
Orange	NSW	35,324	37,785	6.5%
Devonport	TAS	28,434	30,384	6.4%
Ulverstone	TAS	13,892	14,747	5.8%
Burnie - Wynyard	TAS	26,395	28,019	5.8%
Mount Isa	QLD	20,181	21,417	5.8%
Alice Springs	NT	26,849	28,489	5.8%
Sale	VIC	13,676	14,441	5.3%
Dubbo	NSW	33,419	35,281	5.3%
Parkes	NSW	10,760	11,318	4.9%
Wangaratta	VIC	17,109	17,980	4.8%
Colac	VIC	11,432	11,981	4.6%
Port Augusta	SA	13,495	14,084	4.2%
Goulburn	NSW	21,460	22,202	3.3%
Grafton	NSW	18,513	19,051	2.8%
Armidale	NSW	22,969	23,471	2.1%
Whyalla	SA	22,003	22,471	2.1%
Lismore	NSW	28,715	29,294	2.0%
Taree	NSW	25,949	26,307	1.4%
Port Pirie	SA	14,322	14,281	-0.3%
Moe - Newborough	VIC	17,061	16,955	-0.6%
Lithgow	NSW	12,829	12,686	-1.1%
Broken Hill	NSW	20,929	19,151	-9.3%