



**Regional
Development**

Regional Development Australia
and Regional Development Victoria

HUME



An Australian Government Initiative

Regional Development Australia Hume
Submission to the Inquiry into Regional Development and
Decentralisation

Introduction

Hume Regional Development Australia (RDA) welcomes the opportunity to provide a submission to the Australian Government Inquiry into Regional Development and Decentralisation.

Hume RDA is an independent advisory body that incorporates membership for a range of regional leaders from business, community and local government.

Hume RDA's goal is to facilitate economic development in the region through job creation, investment attraction and driving innovation for the Hume Region.

The Hume Region covers over 40,000 square kilometres, making up approximately 17% of Victoria's total land area. The region has a population of approximately 286,000¹ residents with an anticipated growth rate of 1.6% over next two decades. Approximately 98,500² jobs have supported generation of gross regional product of \$14.691 billion³ and output estimated at \$30.424 billion which is 3.81% of total output of \$798.214 billion in Victoria and 0.88% of total output of \$3.438 trillion generated in Australia.⁴

Figure 1: Hume Region



The region comprises 12 municipalities which includes three interconnected regional cities as well as a network of diverse regional centres and towns. The region has some of Australia's most productive agricultural land and has ready access to four capital cities within 24 hours as well as direct access to 68% of Australian markets by road or rail through two national transport corridors.

¹ Australian Bureau of Statistics, Regional Population Growth, Cat. 3218.0 (2016 revised data - released on 31 July 2017)

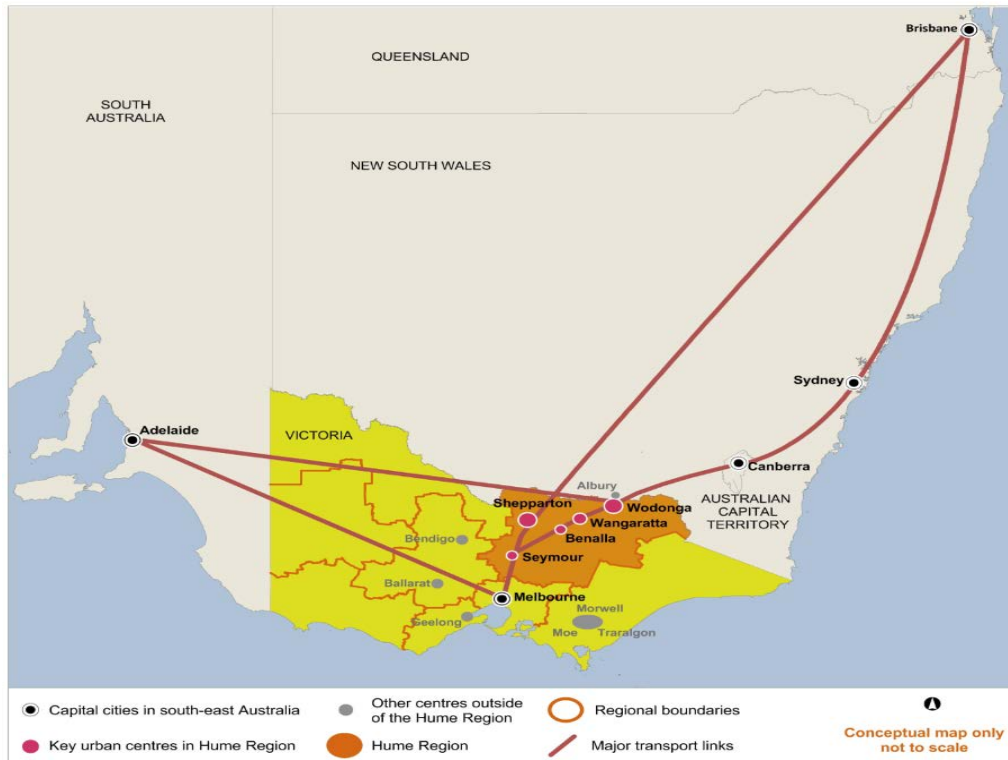
² [REMPLAN](#) data incorporating Australian Bureau of Statistics' (ABS) June 2016 Gross State Product, 2013 / 2014 National Input Output Tables and 2011 Census Place of Work Employment Data.

³ Latest REMPLAN data incorporating Australian Bureau of Statistics' (ABS) June 2016 Gross State Product, 2013 / 2014 National Input Output Tables and 2011 Census Place of Work Employment Data.

⁴ Latest [REMPLAN](#) data incorporating Australian Bureau of Statistics' (ABS) June 2016 Gross State Product, 2013 / 2014 National Input Output Tables and 2011 Census Place of Work Employment Data.



Figure 2: National Transport Context



Source: *Hume Regional Growth Plan (2014)*

Critical Elements for Decentralisation and Regional Development

Hume RDA believes there are a number of critical elements required to support decentralisation:

- Must be to a strategic re-location – there is a rational and leveraging opportunity arising from it
- There is a need to encourage private enterprises to invest and establish alongside government in areas outside capital cities
- There must be a tripartite approach – all three levels of government working in a coordinated manner
- Requirement for a package of incentives – income tax, government activation of enabling infrastructure, immigration settlement
- Determine if there is a potential to co-locate with relevant state government entity
- Assist local government in ensuring regional areas are ready for decentralisation by being liveable alternatives to metropolitan locations because good infrastructure, transport and digital connectivity is in place complimented by effective and stable service delivery in particular for education and health
- Address transport/digital connectivity/limited service provision shortfalls
- Capable skills ready workforce that is supported by appropriate tertiary education/training provision to assist with skills development, good access to range of higher education and training options
- Ensure all planning settings are in place – land availability, planning barriers addressed.



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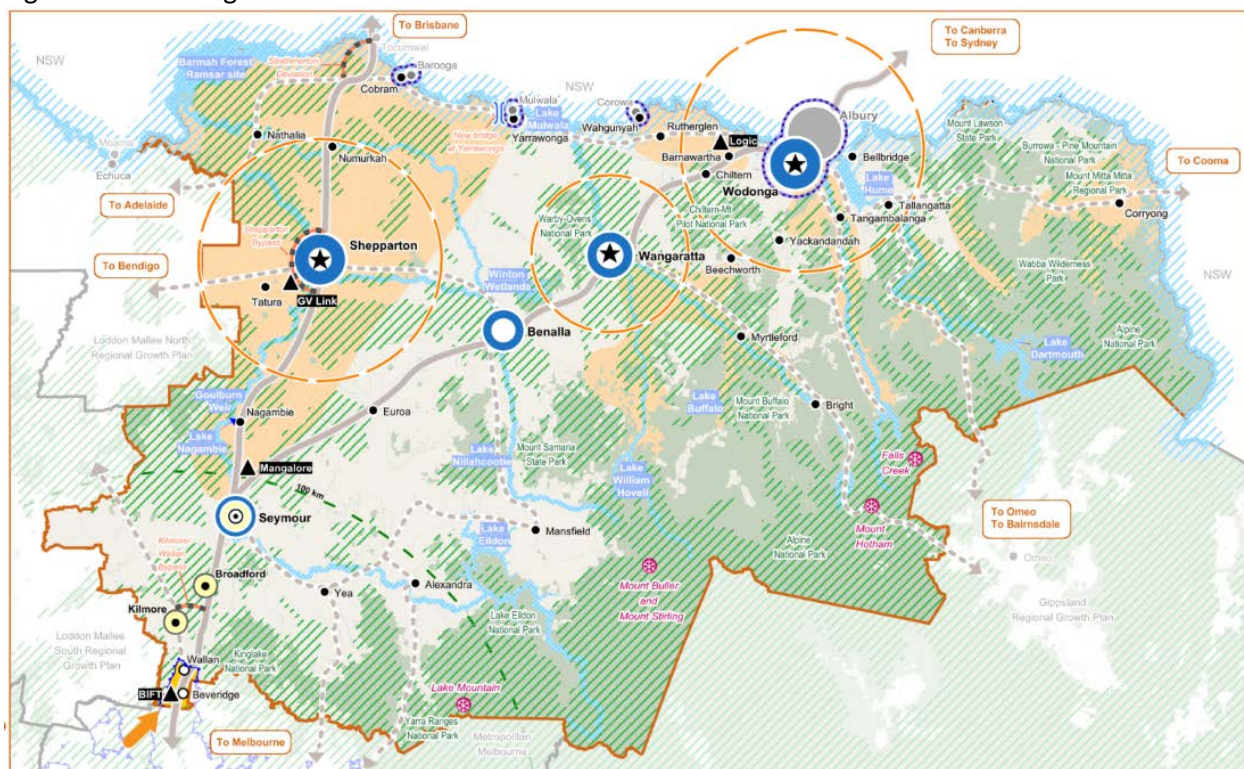
Why Hume Region

The Hume Region can play a role in driving regional development and supporting decentralisation. To strengthen and expand regional economies need to think beyond capital cities and surrounding large regional cities. For example in Victoria Melbourne is surrounded by Geelong, Ballarat and Bendigo and given the commuter distance to Melbourne these cities lie within a dormitory radius. Decentralisation must look beyond this radius to where the dormitory pull is not a factor so that communities and their economies can flourish as independent regional localities.

Hume RDA recognises that there is potential for one of the Hume Region's regional cities to host a Commonwealth entity which would stimulate a significant increase in economic outcomes for the city and surrounding neighbouring local government areas. Each regional city has in place strong social infrastructure and services which is attracting significant government and private investment to improve liveability, amenity, connectivity and access to services/employment.

Each regional city has the capacity to accommodate population growth which could maximise use of existing infrastructure and service provision as identified in *Hume Regional Growth Plan* (2014). The three regional cities currently act as high functioning regional hubs/service centres for network of smaller settlements making services and facilities reasonably accessible to most communities within the region and also to a wider catchment such as southern Riverina of New South Wales. Each regional city currently accommodates major health and learning facilities including universities and TAFEs.

Figure 3: Hume Region Growth Plan



Source: *Hume Regional Growth Plan* (2014)



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We recognise that our region's regional cities have a number of attributes including access to human capital, housing, transport and green urban spaces to support the national *Smart Cities Plan* to ease congestion and affordability in capital cities through maximising regional cities unique advantages and supporting their long term growth.



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