

REGIONAL
INFRASTRUCTURE
POLICY



Regional Capitals Australia

Regional Capitals Australia (RCA) was formed in 2012 to represent the interests of Australia's regional capital cities. Our objective is to ensure these needs are reflected in national policy and funding priorities.

Regional capital cities perform a 'capital city' role within their regions, providing a central point of access to essential services, commerce, employment and education. These services are accessed by local residents as well as those in surrounding towns and rural areas.

Regional capital cities also provide a liveable alternative for people and businesses wishing to escape Australia's congested metropolitan cities. Every year regional capital cities generate \$225 billion, or more than 16 per cent of national economic activity.

All RCA members have a growth agenda and stand ready to ensure a growing Australia means a stronger and more equitable regional Australia.



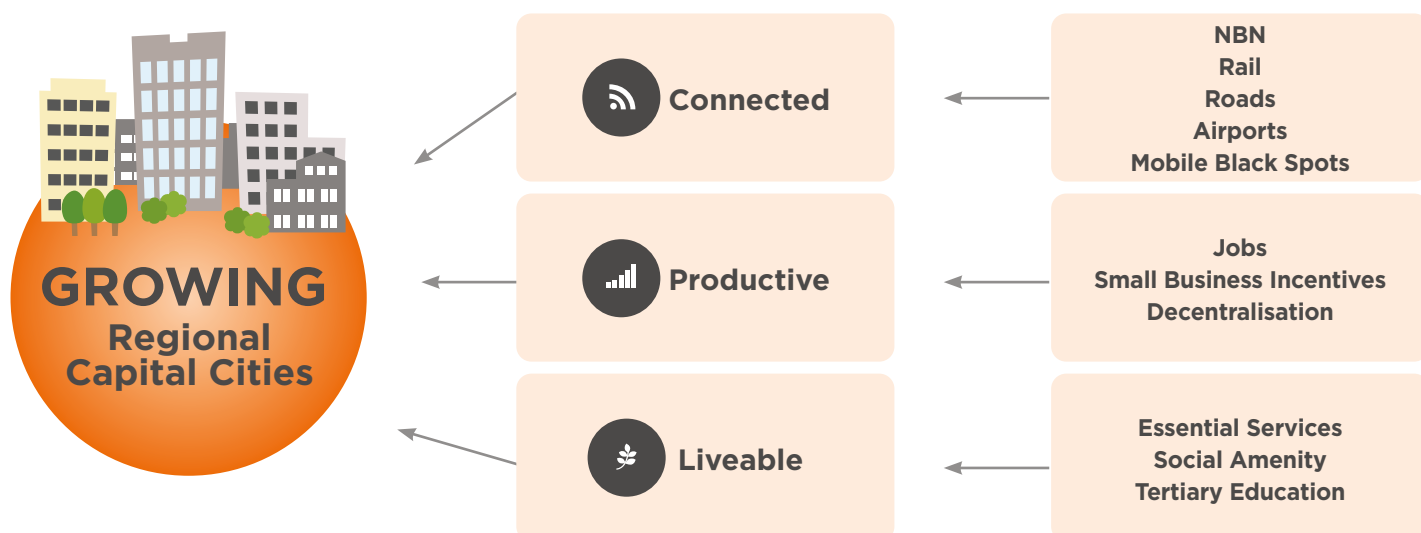
Policy Platform

The following outlines Regional Capitals Australia's framework to grow regional capital cities that are:

1. **Strong service centres:** that continue to be a central point to access essential infrastructure, services, business, employment and education;
2. **Easing the metropolitan congestion:** encouraging regional migration and decentralisation options for new and existing residents and businesses can take the pressure of major metropolitan capitals; and
3. **An affordable alternative:** providing affordable housing and industry industrial land options for families and business seeking to avoid the inflated housing markets of the major metropolitan capitals.

To achieve this vision we must continue to build regional capital cities that are:

1. **Connected:** with roads, rail, airports (and services), broadband and mobile telecommunications;
2. **Productive:** with diverse economies that can be built with government and private sector decentralisation and skilled labour shaped through strong tertiary and continuing education opportunities; and
3. **Liveable:** with high levels of essential services, social amenities and a continued supply of affordable housing options.



Regional Infrastructure Policy

Regional Capitals Australia recognises the new infrastructure and regional funding policies and programs set to be introduced by the Australian Government that will continue to assist rural and regional Australia.

These programs include the creation of the:

- Growing Regions Program and the Precincts and Partnerships Programs (investing a further \$1 billion).

The core of liveable and productive regional capital cities are assets and services that support the development and growth of communities so they are places where people and communities can thrive.



Recommendations

- Commit to continued funding of the recently established Growing Regions Program to enable infrastructure projects that target regional economic and population growth: \$1 billion over 4 years.
- **Funds be exclusively allocated to regional communities:** excluding suburban and metropolitan project.
- **Review the stated intention to allow State Government to access Federal funding:** that has been traditionally reviewed for Local Government.
- **Reliable and consistency of funding that includes:**
 - A commitment to **annual rounds** of funding;
 - Applications are sought at a **specific time every year**;
 - **Consistent program guidelines** so projects can be planned for that will meet these guidelines and co-contributions can be secured;
 - **A two-step process** (Expression of Interest, then Full Application) to ensure resources are not wasted on projects that will not fit the focus of the fund; and
 - The success or otherwise of a funding application should be **known prior to Local Government budgets being finalised** (May).
- **To ensure the diverse needs of regional capital cities:** guidelines should support the development of a broad range of projects, including (but not limited to):
 - Enabling infrastructure for housing development;
 - Supporting population growth;
 - Facilitating education, employment and skills opportunities;
 - Tourism infrastructure;
 - Arts and culture infrastructure; and
 - Enabling infrastructure to support adaptation to climate change and emergency management.
- **Funding caps should set the federal contribution at:** between \$10-50 million and reflect accurate population planning statistics for regional capitals.
- **Council resources:** should be able to be used to carry out infrastructure delivery as an in-kind contribution.
- **Support for business case development:** should be considered with the growing pressure on councils to produce productive, social and liveable infrastructure (many in a rate capped/pegged environment).

Refer appendix A: Regional Capitals Australia – Funding Guidelines Paper



For More Information:

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