

REGIONAL INFRASTRUCTURE POLICY



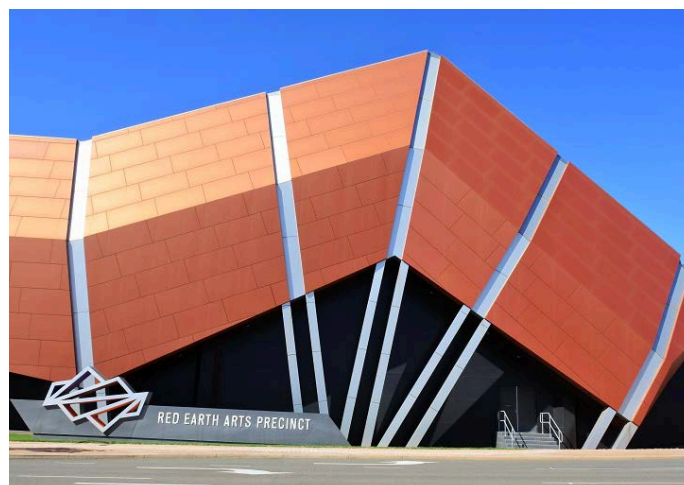
Regional Infrastructure Policy

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

1. 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.
2. Funds be exclusively allocated to regional communities: excluding suburban and metropolitan project.
3. Review the stated intention to allow State Government to access Federal funding: that has been traditionally reviewed for Local Government.
4. 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).
5. 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.
6. Funding caps should set the federal contribution at: between \$10-50 million and reflect accurate population planning statistics for regional capitals.
7. Council resources: should be able to be used to carry out infrastructure delivery as an in-kind contribution.
8. 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