

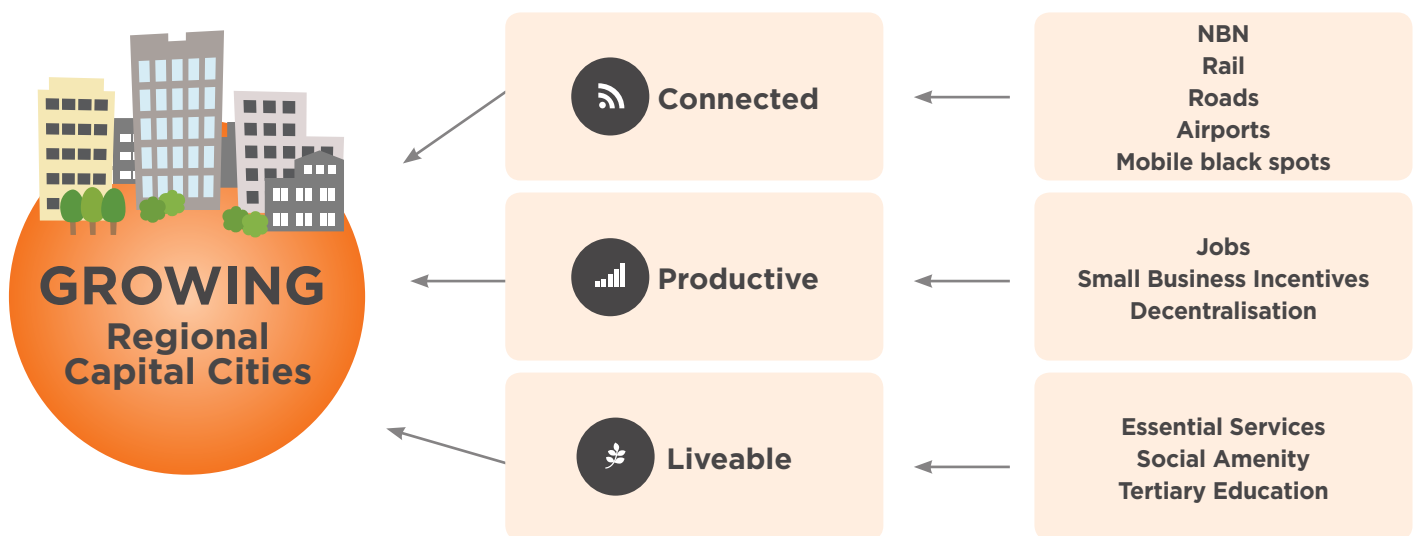
Regional Capitals Australia

Regional Capitals Australia (RCA) was formed in 2012 to represent the interests of Australia's 51 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 to 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. These cities are growing and an extra one million people will live in a regional capital city in the 5 years to 2020.

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



RCA's vision is to grow regional capital cities that are:

Strong service centres	Easing metropolitan congestion	An affordable alternative
------------------------	--------------------------------	---------------------------

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

 Connected	 Productive	 Liveable
---	--	--



Productive Regional Capital Cities

Australia's regions account for around 40 per cent of total national economic output and have a stabilising effect on Australia's economy.

Regional capital cities are the hubs through which the majority of Australia's primary production exports move. These cities are also employment hubs particularly for the service sector where demand is growing based on the needs of a growing population.

Regional capital cities will continue to be a key contributor to Australia's global competitiveness, but more must be done to ensure the cities are able to adapt to structural economic change and capitalise on emerging markets. Programs that attract a diverse range of employment options should be the investment priority of every level of government.

Decentralisation

Building productive regional capital cities requires investment to maintain liveable and affordable cities. It also requires a partnership with private investors and businesses that are committed to decentralise their operations.

The decentralisation of government departments and the corporate sector offers a unique opportunity to build on the economic capability of Australia's regional capital cities, while providing a new form of economic diversification.

There are numerous benefits of decentralisation for employees and employers including cost-savings, greater workforce participation, workforce diversity and increased business resilience.

Recommendations

- Continued identification of Federal departments (or segments of departments) that can relocate staff to regional capital cities;
- Provide a teleworking budget for the Australian Public Service and set yearly targets for each department, corporate entity and statutory authority to offer teleworking opportunities;
- Ensure corporate decentralisation is a key priority of new Regional Deals; and
- Explore tax incentives for businesses that aim to attract and retain operations in regional capital cities.



Regional Deals

In total, regional capital cities generate \$225 billion per annum, or more than 15 per cent of national economic activity. With the appropriate levels of investment and commitment by the three tiers of government via Regional Deals, there will be scope to expand upon economic output while having a long-term positive effect for Australia across a number of indicators.

Regional Deals represent an opportunity for genuine partnerships between the three levels of government, the private sector and the community to work towards a shared vision for productive, connected and liveable cities. By aligning planning, investment and the governance required to accelerate growth and job creation, stimulate urban renewal and drive economic reforms, Regional Deals stimulate prosperity and increase the liveability of regional capital cities.

Regional Deals are a new paradigm and investment model that has a proven track record of bringing regional stakeholders around the table to meet the challenges of growth as well as contributing to improvements for metropolitan cities.

As the nation's productivity continues to decline, the development of a network of socially and economically thriving regional capital cities should be the objective of all levels of government. Regional Deals should be seen as a mechanism to achieving this outcome.

Recommendations

1. Assign appropriate funding for the Department of Regional Development, Infrastructure and Cities to design a process to allow for the next round of Regional Deals; and
2. Commit to deliver 10 new regional deals over the period 2019-2023