

REGIONS RISING CANBERRA // POLICY HACK

POPULATION STRATEGY

Policy Hack Question: For regional Australia to play a stronger role in our national population strategy, what changes need to be made?

BACKGROUND

While regional Australia's population size does not match that of the major capital cities, regional Australia is a major contributor to the national economy, the country's culture and identity.

What keeps people committed to a life in regional Australia and what attracts people to choose a life outside the major capitals? What are the major factors that contribute to people's decision to leave regional Australia? What needs to happen for regional Australia to maximise its strengths and ensure that we can build the appealing, adaptable and viable communities that people want to live in and contribute to in the long term?

Internal migration is the major component of population change in regional Australia and a major contributor to population growth and the offset of population decline within the regions – over 400,000 capital city residents chose to move to a regional area between 2011 and 2016.

While the majority of those people relocated to coastal regional cities within a two hour drive of the major capitals, people also moved to a diverse range of regional areas including inland regional cities; mid-sized towns that act as industry and service hubs; and regional heartlands more geographically isolated from the major capitals.

Nationally, young people 20-29 years old are the most mobile, yet movement from major capital cities to regional areas of Australia peaks in the 30-39 and 60-69 age groups. These age groups represent a workforce that can bring a range of skills and experiences to regional communities. Some of these people will move to regional Australia with their families, which helps bolster school enrolments and participation in community activities, along with meeting labour force demands.

People moving to regions are looking for a better quality of life, weighing up considerations like job prospects, commuting time, house prices and liveability. Sydney has had net outflows of Australian residents over the last four years, indicating dissatisfaction for many with the lifestyle on offer.

Important inhibitors to a move to the regions are perceptions about a lack of long term job prospects, social infrastructure (especially health and education) and cultural vitality.

Can addressing these inhibitors increase the number of people wanting to live in regional Australia?
Can improving regional city and town infrastructure contribute to increases in the flow of people out of congested major cities without the need for individual relocation incentives?

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[National Population Plan for Regional Australia](#)

[The Missing Workers](#)

[Article: Regional centres a solution to big Australia issue](#)

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OTHER INFORMATION

RAI Team Leader:

Richard Beaton

RAI Facilitator:

Beth Orton

For more information about the Population Strategy Policy Hack:

Call the RAI on 02 6260 3733 or email info@regionalaustralia.org.au