REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT AUSTRALIA NETWORK

Reform options – from strategy to action

APRIL 2014

Regional Development Australia Network

Reform options – from strategy to action

Key Points

- Australia's regions have very different economic development opportunities. RDAs are a small, strategic investment by the Commonwealth to facilitate active and collaborative pursuit of these opportunities, led by people in the region.

- RDAs are unique in their direct connection to Commonwealth policy combined with an ability to independently facilitate regional level development initiatives. Leadership in key areas of regional economic opportunity that co-opts the resources or convenes power of the Commonwealth is important for all regions.

POLICY ISSUE
The future of the Regional Development Australia (RDA) network.

ABOUT THE RESEARCH
This policy brief combines available evidence on RDA Committee performance with the latest international knowledge about institutions for regional economic development.

- For RDAs to leverage their potential influence there is a need to move away from generic planning and high level catch all objectives, towards a focussed action agenda targeting each region's most important development priorities. The best performing RDAs are already seeking to achieve this shift, despite impediments.

- Leveraging the RDA network to target regional outcomes across the Commonwealth's suite of economic development initiatives is a key opportunity for reform. Elements of the Commonwealth infrastructure, employment, immigration and industry agendas need effective implementation at the regional level. RDAs should enable governments to leverage better value for money across these investments by ensuring they target specific regional issues.

Policy Implications

The Australian Government is currently examining implementation of its election commitments in relation to RDAs. The RDA network is well established in many regions and a measured approach to change will secure future gains. Reforms deepening the engagement of RDAs across the Commonwealth's economic development initiatives, including providing flexibility to collaboratively adjust settings to meet regional needs, will leverage future potential.

The RAI recommends that policy makers increase the value of the RDA network as both coordinators of Commonwealth economic development activities and strategic leaders of regional development across Australia. This should focus on using RDAs both as a mechanism to enhance the impact of Commonwealth economic development initiatives in regions whilst ensuring that RDAs are pursuing a focussed action agenda targeting high priority issues for each regions economic future.

These improvements, combined with targeted structural reforms to focus RDAs on core regional development objectives, will position the RDA network to demonstrate a measurable impact on business growth, jobs and economic development in the future.

Changes to the underpinning framework for the RDAs are also important to long-term success. Tightening the focus of the RDA Charter on economic development and moving from a strategy cycle to a focussed action agenda is crucial. Other changes to arrangements within States or to provide flexibility for RDAs to respond to different regional development contexts (eg remote versus peri-urban) may also enhance the impact of the network.

These recommendations reflect available evidence about the strategies being pursued by high performing RDAs. However, a collaborative process should be undertaken as part of a reform implementation process to ensure good decisions are made. This should prioritise the involvement of people in the network and their regions.

Context

Regional development policy has moved away from the notion that growth in regions can be driven by targeted external stimulus (such as government investment). It is now well recognised that regions that are focussed and organised to act independently or in cooperation with governments are more likely to be successful.

Institutions, such as RDAs, enable regions to act in their development interests, and as a result regional institutions are at the centre of this more devolved approach to policy. Formulating strategy, coordinating and mobilising other actors, setting frameworks and incentives, pooling resources and providing input to other levels of government are all acknowledged as important functions provided by regional and local institutions.[i] Under a framework which emphasises the need for regions to mobilise their own resources (a feature of policy for two decades in Australia), regional and local institutions are central to policy success[ii]. In Australia, the gap in size and scope between local governments and

state and federal government has made the regional level a focus for collaborative action across governments. RDAs are the latest iteration of this trend.

The current RDA Charter[iii] identifies the purpose of the RDA network as a partnership between the Australian, state, territory and local governments to develop and strengthen the regional communities of Australia. The Charter states that Regional Development Australia will be an important contributor to, and driver of:

- business growth plans and strategies, which will help support economic development, the creation of new jobs, skills development and business investment;
- environmental solutions, which will support ongoing sustainability and the management of climate change (including the impact of drought, flood or bushfires); and
- social inclusion strategies, which will bring together and support all members of the community.

Most of the 55 RDAs were established through a transition from predecessor Area Consultative Committees (ACCs)[iv]. Similar in cost and structure to ACCs, the RDA approach has placed a greater emphasis on independent leadership of regional action and reduced the focus on providing a 'shopfront' for government and role as advisor on program decisions.

The Coalition committed during the 2013 election to retain the RDA network with a series of reforms designed to help each region build partnerships, assess local needs and identify targeted initiatives[v]. There was also a commitment to establish local committees comprising local leaders drawn from the community, business and government to set the direction of each RDA office. In addition, RDAs would help regions navigate Australian Government funding programs. No announcements have been made about implementation of this reform approach to date[vi].

Apart from the commitment to establish local committees, these commitments are broadly aligned with the existing intent of the RDA network and their predecessor ACCs. As a result it is the detailed strategy for implementation of the Government's approach that will define its impact on regional economic development.

This policy brief provides an assessment of reform opportunities by combining the available evidence on RDA performance, including perspectives collected from discussions with and input from RDAs, with international evidence about the role and value of institutions in regional economic development.

Findings

How is the current RDA network enabling regional development?

While the general importance of regional and local institutions is reinforced by the latest international evidence on regional economic development[vii], the policy question for the Australian Government in relation to RDAs relates to the value add of this investment in a crowded regional development environment[viii].

Under their current Charter, RDAs are charged with three key activities:

- policy coordination and input (particularly in relation to the RDA Fund);
- local networking and leadership (through a range of regionally specific stakeholder engagement activities); and
- information and planning (through the production of regional strategies and other targeted research).

RDAs also bring a mandate and connection for regions to Government policy that is not provided by other organisations. Institutions are the 'soft infrastructure' of regional development. Leveraging this connection to Commonwealth economic development policy at the regional level is a primary source of value for RDAs.

There is currently no clear framework for measuring the impact of the RDAs in regions. An early academic assessment of the RDA network[ix] and previous work on regional institutions[x] suggests RDA performance should be viewed through their:

- facilitation of Commonwealth policy outcomes at a regional level;
- impact on the co-ordination of regional development policy between governments within regions;
- use of persuasive instruments to affect change in pursuit of regional economic opportunities; and
- contribution towards minimising policy failure (local or national) arising from information asymmetries.

Anecdotally, RAI's engagement with RDAs across the country suggests that the best performing RDAs may be:

- reducing the costs of policy development and implementation by bringing regional actors together to discuss issues and feeding this into Commonwealth and State processes;

- facilitating the development of action in areas of regional need that cannot easily be achieved by other parties;

- working to use their convening power to coordinate Commonwealth and State policy implementation in regions; and

- providing leadership to regions through information about economic development opportunities.

However, the anecdotal evidence underpinning these assertions also suggests that this performance is varied across RDAs. This variation reflects jurisdictional models, the presence of other actors at the regional level and the decisions and skill sets of the people leading each RDA.

To date there has been no public review of the performance of the RDA network. As a result, the success of RDAs against these criteria and broader impact in supporting regional economic development remains unclear. These anecdotal conclusions need to be properly tested before implementation decisions are made.

Reform options

While it is important to clarify RDA performance and impact across jurisdictions in a thorough manner to enable good decision making, it is possible now to chart some reform options. This will help to focus a review process on outcomes and future development of the network.

Given the commitments made by the incoming government, three broad directions could be pursued:

1. Continue the RDA network in its current form with a system of local committees integrated into the planning and decision making process (*Continue option*).

2. Return to an ACC type approach and reduce the emphasis of the network on acting as an independent agent of regional development (*Return option*).

3. Increase the value of the network as both coordinators of Commonwealth economic development activities and strategic leaders of regional development across Australia. (*Value option*).

Depending on the choice of direction, there are a range of practical changes that could be considered to the structure and function of the network. These are outlined in the sections below.

A stronger leadership role in Commonwealth economic development

There is no doubt that RDAs bring a mandate and connection for regions to Commonwealth policy that is not easily provided by other organisations. Any reform should seek to maximise the outcomes for regions and Commonwealth economic development policies from this connection.

While the role of the Commonwealth in macro-economic policy is often emphasised, across many portfolios, the Commonwealth is also engaged in economic development activities that are either delivered or targeted at a regional level. These include:

- dedicated regional infrastructure initiatives (eg Fair Share Fund, Infrastructure Australia);

- provision of business and entrepreneur support (Enterprise Connect, AusIndustry);

- employment services and initiatives (eg Job Services Australia, Regional Education, Skills and Jobs Coordinators);

- trade and investment facilitation (eg via AusTrade);

- education strategies (eg VET reform); and

- immigration (eg regional migration programs).

Some regions also have dedicated one-off initiatives targeting key economic issues (for example, the Geelong Infrastructure and Investment Fund[xi]).

The RDAs and their predecessors have traditionally had limited or no involvement in this broader range of economic development investments. The exception to this has been regional grants programs administered by the regional Commonwealth portfolio. For example, under the previous Government this focussed on the Regional Development Australia Fund and before this, ACCs had a leading role in the Regional Partnerships Program.

Enhanced regional input to the design and/or implementation of Commonwealth economic development investments should be more widely considered in the future. The regions have varying economic pathways, for example, at a simplistic level, Australia is currently experiencing major structural adjustment in manufacturing regions, consolidation of growth in mining regions, population growth and ageing in peri-urban and coastal regions and preparing for expansion of Asian demand in agricultural regions. Therefore, there is a risk that this broader suite of Commonwealth policies and programs provides only fragmented responses to local development challenges and opportunities, resulting in poor outcomes overall.

Some RDAs are already taking a pro-active role in bringing people involved in different Commonwealth initiatives together to discuss regional issues and approaches[xii]. Many others are developing skills, business support, education and immigration strategies alongside these centrally mandated investments.

The RDA Charter and increasing local legitimacy positions the RDA network as a natural leader of regional economic development. The merits of using RDAs as a mechanism for better coordination of these initiatives should be investigated. Options for providing greater flexibility in program delivery arrangements (for example through devolved resources or more responsive guidelines for services) so that regions can tailor implementation of Commonwealth initiatives to respond to local economic conditions should also be considered.

From strategy to action

As with most regional development institutions, a key activity for the RDA network has been the development of regional plans. These plans prioritise and guide RDA activities while also highlighting to others the highest priorities for regional economic development. Over several iterations, this planning process has been refined and the network provided with greater guidance from Commonwealth and State governments.[xiii]

Having a strategic perspective is crucial but in the end it is implementation that will drive change in the regions. RDA strategies generally carry no formal authority and have few resources to guide implementation. Often the issues highlighted are led by others in the region and the RDA has little opportunity to influence outcomes. In this environment the risk is that these strategies, which consume significant resources for the network, have little practical effect.

RDAs are managing this issue with a mixture of strategies. Where they do not have carriage of issues, they generally seek to inform processes and emphasise the importance of issues to the future of their region. The impact of this activity is difficult to measure and the role of RDAs in what could be perceived as lobbying for investment in their regions, as opposed to actively informing and facilitating processes remains unclear under the current framework.

RDAs are also taking action through a range of independent strategies. High performing RDAs are targeting three or four key issues and taking action through initiatives designed to achieve practical outcomes[xiv]. It is this process of translating strategy to action that will define the measurable impact of the network in regional economies. This is where the implementation of the commitment to introduce

local committee's into the RDA model could be considered. Local committees could help RDAs build consensus and support for a small number of priority actions to be actively led by the RDA. The risk that more committees will have the opposite effect by slowing down processes should also be considered.

Overall however the next phase of the RDAs should unashamedly focus on transitioning the network from strategy to action. Reforms that move beyond requiring strategy development and ensure that each RDA is working to implement a small number of practical priorities is essential to creating consistent and readily measurable outcomes from this Commonwealth investment.

Opportunities to improve RDA structure and function

To enhance the value of the network, there are a number of structural and functional changes that could be considered. These briefly include:

- The merits of maintaining environmental issues and social inclusion as primary objectives of the network are questionable compared to a tighter focus on economic development. The current approach provides the broadest possible mandate. Clearer guidance on the focus for RDAs, as well as a transparent performance framework to measure outcomes would improve the foundations for the network. Changes to the Charter to place environment and social issues as secondary objectives should be considered. This should not however exclude RDAs from working on environmental or social issues. Rather, the common threshold of involvement should be the significance of any issue to a region's economic future.

- Consideration of changes to the structure of RDAs to better integrate the network within existing state structures, to remove areas of duplication and increase coordination benefits at the regional level[xv]. This requires more detailed review, but Queensland and Western Australia are likely to be priorities. Opportunities to formalise and embed a productive working relationship with local governments are also important and the feasibility of this should be considered in jurisdictions where local government is not already a formal partner.

- RDA boundaries reflect state and local administrative boundaries. Better alignment of some RDAs to functional economic boundaries[xvi] could be considered. Establishing cross border organisations in some states, realigning boundaries within states and confirming whether one RDA for the Northern Territory and Tasmania is the right approach for the future will be important

- Managing RDA core business in remote, rural and metropolitan contexts is practically very different. Reform should consider the need for the RDA model to respond to the context and

challenges in different regions through structural and functional changes. In particular the challenges facing economic development in inner regional, outer regional and remote areas are quite different and the network may need more flexibility or resources to better respond to the context in different regions.

- Ensuring the right balance between business and government engagement in the RDAs is important. This is a factor in the selection of the Committees and in networks developed. Australian regional development has traditionally been government focussed, therefore reforms to bring stronger business leadership to the network may be worthwhile.

- The role of RDAs in informing other actors in regional development needs to be clarified. RDAs can provide information to government that assists policy design or decision making. RDAs can also provide information to regions on the economic development environment to stimulate understanding and action. The extent to which current arrangements facilitate this evidence-based influence pathway is unclear.

Go for value

Any review of RDAs will no doubt show that they remain a work in progress. In any diverse national network some organisations will be performing at a high level, while others will have limited impact. The question for the reform process is not whether this variation exists, but why the variation is occurring. Outcomes may be reflective of the limitations of the centralised framework under which the network operates, the performance of specific RDAs or wider factors in the regional economy. Identifying areas of underperformance and understanding the reasons for this is essential for a targeted approach to reform implementation.

A key message from international and local is experience is that effective institutions often take a decade or more to build[xvii]. While the focus of policy makers has often been on finding the 'perfect model' for RDAs, it is the quality of people involved, their networks and influence with decision makers and the knowledge they bring to a complex challenge that enables these organisations to be effective.

Constantly reshaping or abolishing organisations actively destroys the value of the network which has built on years of local engagement and activity[xviii]. In contrast, a measured approach to change, where centralised management structures are reformed to better enable the success of high performing parts of the network and to actively push poorer performers towards best practice can significantly enhance the value of the network over time.

On the evidence available, there appears to be a case for reform and improvement to the RDA network and the Australian Government has committed to this pathway. Noting that regions, and therefore RDAs are not homogenous, the challenge is to identify where the improvements need to be made across the network and how overall outcomes can be measured. Central reforms must however be designed in a way that allow RDAs sufficient flexibility and variance to meet the needs of different regions.

Considering the reform options described above, RAI recommends policy makers pursue the '**Value option**', leveraging a formal RDA review process in the design of reforms. This should focus on using RDAs both as a mechanism to enhance the impact of Commonwealth economic development initiatives in regions whilst ensuring that RDAs are pursuing a focussed action agenda targeting high priority issues for each regions economic future.

These improvements combined with targeted structural reforms to focus RDAs on core regional development objectives, will position the RDA network to demonstrate a measurable impact on business growth, jobs and economic development in the future.

Feedback from the RDA network on the reform proposals

In late March 2014, a draft of this policy brief was provided to each of the 55 RDA Committees seeking their input on the analysis of reform imperatives and proposals for change.

35 RDA Committees responded with input through individual or consolidated State level responses. Input was received from each State and Territory with multiple sources of feedback provided in each State (with the exception of Tasmania where there is only one RDA Committee). Input also spanned a range of regional contexts including metropolitan, peri-urban, outer and very remote regions.

This section provides a summary of the input received by the RAI from across the network.

Overall feedback and perspectives on the recommendation that the Government pursue the value option
RDA Committees provided strong support for the analysis and recommendations put forward by the RAI draft policy brief.

This included significant support for the recommended value reform option. Many RDA Committees saw this as consistent with the approach taken by them in practice and representing a significant

opportunity to enhance the outcomes from the network in the future. In supporting this option, one RDA also noted that:

- option one (the Continue Option) is inconsistent with the Australian Government's policy that was released pre-election; and

- option two (the Return Option) is also inconsistent with the pre-election policy documentation and does not offer a collaborative approach from all three levels of government, an aim that has been articulated by the Australian Government.

Some RDAs identified that realising the outcomes identified in the value option may require additional resources.

Several RDAs also reinforced the importance of continuity and certainty for the network, emphasising that major reforms and shifts in public presentation through changes to logos and committee membership can undermine the position reached after many years of hard work by individual RDA Committees.

A number of RDAs reinforced the need for a formal review process to be undertaken prior to changes being implemented.

A stronger regional leadership role for Commonwealth economic development

RDA Committees were open to providing greater coordination and leadership in their region for Commonwealth economic development investments. Many were actively engaging in these activities on an ad hoc basis or through one-off partnerships. The RDA Committee responses noted that:

- Flexibility was essential to provide an opportunity for centrally mandated initiatives to be adjusted to best respond to regional needs.

- To date the relationship with the Commonwealth has been limited by the 'silo' management approach by Australian Government departments, with each having differing spending priorities and perspectives on the regions. It was noted that these can sometimes be at odds with on-ground population and community dynamics.

- The relationship between RDA Committees and the Commonwealth as a whole could be enhanced by drawing on the valuable local intelligence in RDA Committees for input into government policy formulation.

- Departments with programs, initiatives, direct spends and/or projects in regions should provide RDAs with operational briefings. As well as information, RDAs could provide liaison and consultation work locally prior to and during delivery:

- Feedback from several RDA Committees indicates that they are looking to play a role in extending services to the regions. It was noted that Commonwealth officers for key programs are often city based (particularly in WA and SA). A formal connection of these programs with RDAs would enhance regional implementation without the need for employment of staff in each region.
- One RDA noted that a move to increase RDA Committee's role as 'government shopfront' and 'information service' should not be at the expense of other functions, particularly their current role in creating independent regional development initiatives that respond to regional issues.

- It was suggested that co-location of project tasked Commonwealth officers with the RDA Committees was an untapped opportunity. It was suggested that economies of scale in terms of office cost, information sharing and coordination would flow from this arrangement. This was identified as already occurring in some regions with benefits for both RDA Committees and co-located initiatives.

- Other RDA Committees noted existing partnerships with Australian Government organisations such as the Department of Social Services that had provided funding and capacity for the RDA Committee.

- Involvement by RDA Committees in large infrastructure programs was seen to bring both positives and negatives to outcomes depending on the arrangements in place:
  - Some RDA Committees saw involvement in smaller community based grants as preferable over larger infrastructure grants processes while others were enthusiastic about being involved in large infrastructure initiatives if they were resourced to manage processes well.
  - Allowing RDA Committees to provide facilitation, coordination, collaboration and mentoring of local bids to improve outcomes from Commonwealth programs was seen by many RDA Committees as the area of greatest potential contribution to future Commonwealth programs.
  - It was also suggested that Commonwealth grants application processes nationally (across portfolios) should be required to identify how the project seeking funding is aligned to the local RDA Committee Road Map.

Moving from strategy to action

RDA Committees were very supportive of the proposal to clearly transition the network from 'strategy to action'. Many RDA Committees suggested that they had already made this move and a diverse range of examples of initiatives underway were cited in support of this.

In supporting this reform pathway RDA Committees also noted that:

- There remains a need for regional economic development planning. This should feature five to ten year horizons, and the creation of a plan should not in itself be an outcome – it should merely be a starting point – a means to an end.

- In moving towards increased focus on the principle of 'strategy to action delivery', there should be consideration given to the 'authority' afforded to RDA Committees.

- RDA Committees would need additional resources to do this because the current model does not provide sufficient resources to support a proactive organisation that can respond to changing needs and community aspirations.

- Some RDA Committees also noted that they have been able to collectively leverage funding from third parties to deliver projects that tackle regional and cross regional issues.

Improving RDA committee structures and functions

RDA Committees were supportive of improvements to the structure and function of the network. In addition to the areas discussed below, several RDA Committees emphasised:

- the need for a continuous improvement focus across the network supported by a performance framework; and

- the benefits of reducing Departmental resources devoted to managing RDA contracts and transitioning to a more streamlined and proactive approach to support the development of the network over time.

The feedback reinforced the conclusion that imposition of a uniform national model was not a pathway to more effective outcomes. A range of views were expressed regarding the merits of the independent, not-for-profit model the RDA Committees work under in most States. The majority of responses emphasised the strengths of being able to act independently, leverage resources and support the community. Others felt that a statutory role or more formal authority was needed to enable the RDA Committees to achieve outcomes in the future.

Proposal for changes to the Charter to provide for a clearer focus on economic development

There was significant support for changing the Charter to provide for a clearer identification of economic development as the primary purpose of the RDA network.

A significant group of RDAs however suggested caution in achieving this through a narrow definition of regional economic development, particularly one that precludes action by RDA Committees in social or

environmental issues where they were fundamental to the future development of the region's economy. RDA Committees noted that:

- Flexibility to address regional social and environmental agendas where they are clearly regional priorities and link with economic development challenges should be retained.

- In some regions, particularly metropolitan and peri-urban regions, environmental and social issues are identified as key to long term economic development. It was noted that in these regions stimulating population and economic growth are often not the key challenges.

- It was also noted that some remote regions have few economic development opportunities but require engagement and understanding of their local issues to work towards better quality of life issues. RDA Committees should still have a role here in providing advice to government and undertaking community engagement.

RDA committee appointment processes

The need for improvements to the RDA Committee appointment procedures was raised by many RDA Committees. RDA Committees emphasised:

- the importance of ensuring the right balance between business and government engagement;

- each RDA committee should reflect and indeed work to support their regions individual situation;

- that the current process can sometimes result in lengthy delays. It was suggested that membership appointment could be streamlined to ensure greater responsiveness and timeliness;

- that the Australian standard for good governance[xix] of seven - nine members was often not met; and

- that appointments should continue to be skills-based, taking into account the individual's achievements/knowledge.

Suggested improvements to the current approach included:

- limiting political involvement in the process to either a Ministerial appointment of the Chair or devolution of appointments to an apolitical selection committee;involvement of the existing RDA Committee in shortlisting to ensure a workable group is appointed;

- strengthening local government engagement by creating dedicated Committee positions to be filled by agreement of local governments in the region; and

- establishing a maximum of nine committee members.

Relationship with local government

The importance and challenges involved in the relationship with local governments were raised by many submissions. These contributions emphasised the importance of continuing to build and strengthen this relationship under future reforms. RDA Committees noted that:

- where there has been little local government reform in recent times there is a propensity for lack of good communication and cooperation;

- RDA Committees need to add value and work more closely with local government, but many local governments only see value in this when RDA Committees are able to provide funding; and

- local government was excluded from the development of the current model in some States which has been a barrier to further engagement.

Differences in the model between States

There was significant commentary on arrangements and interactions with State government in the feedback received. In particular:

- better mechanisms for State government involvement were seen as imperative in NSW and QLD (particularly in QLD where there is no longer State support for the initiative);

- Victorian and South Australian RDA Committees were positive about their current structure; and

- the challenges of operating alongside Regional Development Commissions in WA were emphasised, noting that RDCs have a statutory basis and significantly greater funding but less independence and flexibility to operate in response to regional and community needs.

Need for a review of RDA boundaries

There was some support for a review of RDA boundaries in the feedback, although RDAs emphasised the need for regions to be involved in this process. RDAs who commented on this issue noted that:

- many RDA regions – as they do not broach state and territory boundaries – ignore natural economic regions, resulting in less than effective outcomes. RDA boundaries would ideally be based on natural, existing and well-defined economic zones;

- Local Government Areas should not be allocated to an RDA region that they do not have a natural affiliation with. Consideration should also be given to existing ROC[xx] boundaries – keeping in mind that some ROCs do not have regional economic development as one of the main purposes.

Supporting RDAs in different regions

RDAs expressed support for consideration of different needs in different regions. The challenges of operating in remote contexts was emphasised by many (including by non-remote RDAs).

Research Approach

This policy brief provides an assessment of reform opportunities by combining the available evidence on RDA performance (including perspectives collected from discussions with and input from RDAs) with international evidence about the role and value of institutions in regional economic development.

Acknowledgements and Disclaimer

The RAI would like to thank the members of the RDA network who provided feedback on development of this policy brief.

This brief is intended to help people think about their perspectives, assumptions and understanding of regional issues. The particularly challenging evidence environment for this policy issue should be noted by readers.

No responsibility is accepted by the Regional Australia Institute Limited, its Board or its funders for the accuracy of the advice provided or for the quality of advice or decisions made by others based on the information presented in this publication.

Contacts and Further Information

To discuss the policy briefing please contact the Regional Australia Institute on 02 6260 3733 or via info@regionalaustralia.org.au. Further information can be found at www.regionalaustralia.org.au.

End Notes and References

[i] Andy Pike Regional Studies Association presentation

[ii] OECD 2012 Promoting Growth in all regions, Tomaney J *Regions and the Institutional Turn*

[iii] Sourced from the RDA website http://rda.gov.au/node/244

[iv] Department of Transport and Regional Development Portfolio Budget Statement

[v] National Party Policy Platform 2013

vi As at 5/3/2014

vii OECD 2012 *Promoting Growth in all regions*, Tomaney J *Regions and the Institutional Turn*

viii RDAs do not act alone in regional development. Local governments are key players but work at a different scale. In different parts of the country Regional Organisations of Councils, Regional Development Organisations, Regional Development Boards and Regional Development Commissions play similar roles to the RDA network. There are also commonly independent bodies involved such as Committees for towns and other groups.

ix Brian Dollery , Jeremy Buultjens & Kim Adams (2011) *Enhancing Australian*

Regional Policy: A Conceptual Framework for Assessing the Role of Regional Development Australia, Space and Polity, 15:3, 241-255 http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/13562576.2011.692564

x A Beer and A Maude 2002 Local and Regional Economic Development Agencies in Australia, Local Government Association of South Australia

xi See http://www.ausindustry.gov.au/programs/regional-innovation/GRIIF/Pages/default.aspx

xii For example RDA Tasmania

xiii Australian Government Regional Economic Development Guide

xiv The range of RDA initiatives can be understood by reviewing www.rda.gov.au and individual Committee sites.

xv Arrangements under which RDAs operate vary in different states, particularly in their level of integration with state regional development structures and the formalisation of local government involvement in the network. Given that RDAs operate without formal authority, the effectiveness of RDAs is dependent on the strength of these (insert table) relationships.

xvi For more information see http://e1.newcastle.edu.au/coffee/functional_regions/

xviii This has been a key reflection for the UK following recent changes for Regional Development Authorities to Local Economic Partnerships and other initiatives. While the new initiatives are potentially effective, commencing with the abolition of the previous approach has meant that the new structures are beginning from scratch without the planning, networks and other experience held in the previous model. This is expected to substantially increase the cost of outcomes gained from the new arrangements and the time in which they will become effective compared to a transitional approach.

xix AS 8000-2003 Corporate governance – Good governance principles

xx Regional Organisation of Councils

Table 1. Structural arrangements for the RDA network by state

State	Model
NSW	Integration of the former Area Consultative Committees (ACC) and NSW State Regional Development Boards into RDA Committees (Incorporated Associations) Joint funding; joint ministerial appointment
Victoria	Transition of ACC to RDA committees (not incorporated), supported and administered by Regional Development Victoria, under contract with the Australian government Joint funding; joint ministerial appointment
Queensland	ACCs wound up and replaced by incorporated RDA committees (incorporated associations) Joint funding (Queensland government is making in-kind contribution); joint ministerial
WA	Transition of ACC network to RDA network (incorporated associations) Parallel and collaborative arrangement between RDA and WA State Regional Development Commissions Solely funded by Australian Government; single ministerial appointment (Australian Government)
SA	Three parties to MOU (Australian Government, state and the Local Government Association) Integration of the former ACCs and SA State Regional Development Boards into RDA committees (incorporated associations) Tripartite funding; joint ministerial and LGA president appointment
Tasmania	Three parties to MOU (Australian Government, state and the Local Government Association) Transition of ACC into RDA Committee (incorporated association) Joint Australian Government and state funding (Tasmanian in-kind); single ministerial appointment (Australian Government)
ACT	Integration of the former Capital Region Area Consultative Committee and the Capital Regional Development Board into RDA Committee (incorporated association) Joint funding; joint ministerial appointment

| NT | Transition of ACC to RDA Committee (incorporated association) |
| | Joint funding (Northern Territory government is making in-kind contribution); single ministerial appointment (Australian Government) |