

Media Release

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Shock proofing regional Australia

A resilient and prosperous regional Australia is integral to reducing dependence on the resources sector and building a diversified national economy according to the latest OECD report on regional growth.

An OECD delegation will be in Canberra tomorrow to discuss the report's findings at an international policy forum organised by the Regional Australia Institute (RAI).

The Institute's CEO Su McCluskey says the forum is an important opportunity to highlight the critical role regional Australia plays in the national economy and its future potential.

"The mining boom won't last forever. This means we need a broad based strategy for growth in all regions as part of future economic policy in Australia.

"It is clear that despite decades of strong economic performance, the economy remains highly vulnerable to major shocks."

Ms McCluskey says there are some profound messages in the OECD report - *Promoting Growth in All Regions* - which demand attention to put regional communities on a path to success.

- The OECD work shows that all regions can be important sources for national growth if we adopt the right policy approaches.
- It shows that the regions which have been the least vibrant and poorest performing in the past are often important sources of future national growth.
- A stunning 43% of aggregate growth across the OECD between 1995 and 2007 came from regions with much lower levels of development than the rest of their nation.
- The OECD shows that we can reduce the incidence of entrenched social problems and reduce our vulnerability to external shocks.

The RAI will host the International Policy Forum in Canberra on Friday 31 August at the Shine Dome to showcase the OECD's new directions for stimulating economic growth in regional areas.

Presenting will be head of the OECD's Rural and Regional Programme, Jose Enrique Garcilazo, who will give a Regional Outlook overview and discuss the findings of the OECD report.

OECD economist, Raffaele Trapasso, will speak about the benefits of linking renewable energy to rural development and policy analyst, Betty-Ann Bryce, will talk about a new rural paradigm in OECD regions.

“As the first national, independent, think tank for regional Australia, we are delighted to bring lessons and knowledge from overseas to our regional policy discussions”, says Ms McCluskey.

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Further information on the RAI is available at www.regionalaustralia.org.au