

Facts and Figures on Regional Australia

Fact or research finding	Reference
Population and economy	
<p>As at June 2012, 34% of Australia's population (7.7 million people) resided outside greater capital city areas and 30% lived outside major cities.</p>	<p>Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) (2013) <i>Population by age and sex, regions of Australia, 2012</i>. Cat. No. 3235.0</p> <p>ABS (2013) <i>Regional population growth, Australia, 2012</i> Cat. No. 3218.0</p>
<p>Despite common misconceptions, the population in regional Australia is rising. Between 2007 and 2012, the population outside of Australia's major cities rose by 6.6%.</p> <p>It is projected that the Australian population will grow by 30% between 2007 and 2026, with 32% growth in capital cities and 26% growth outside capital cities.</p>	<p>ABS (2013) <i>Regional population growth, Australia, 2012</i> Cat. No. 3218.0</p> <p>ABS (2008) <i>Population Projections, Australia, 2006 to 2101</i> cat. No 3222.0 (Based on Series B projections)</p>
<p>Average annual regional population growth over the five years 2005-10 was highest in satellite cities (within 150km of a capital city) and coastal cities, with slower rates of growth in inland cities and other rural and regional areas.</p>	<p>Daley, J. and Lancy, A., 2011, <i>Investing in regions: Making a difference</i>, Grattan Institute, Melbourne.</p>
<p>Regional economies are based on a diversity of industry sectors, with the majority of employment concentrated in the services, health, education, and infrastructure sectors.</p>	<p>Bureau of Infrastructure, Transport and Regional Economics (2008) <i>About Australia's Regions</i> Department of Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development and Local Government</p>
<p>Regional Australia is the major source of Australia's export earnings accounting for 67% of our national exports.</p>	<p>Regional Australia Institute analysis based on ABS data for 2011</p>
<p>Regional Australia also plays a critical role in the Australian tourism industry, which makes a direct contribution to Australia's GDP of \$35 billion per year. Around 45% of tourism expenditure occurs in areas outside of Australia's capital cities.</p> <p>In 2012-2013, it is estimated that 21% of international adult visitor overnight stays and 64% of domestic overnight stays occurred in regional areas.</p>	<p>Department of Resources, Energy and Tourism (2012) <i>Tourism industry facts and figures at a glance September 2012</i></p> <p>Tourism Research Australia (2013) <i>Regional forecasts – tables June 2013</i></p>

Higher education attainment and aspiration

There is a significant differential in higher education attainment between city and regional Australians, with the differential increasing with distance from a major city. In 2011, 31% of people aged 25-64 who lived in major cities held a Bachelor degree or above. This figure declined to 18% for Australians living in inner regional areas, to 15% for outer regional areas and down to 12% for very remote areas.

ABS 2011 Census community profiles (internal analysis); and

ABS (2008) *Australian Social Trends*, 2008 cat. No 4102.0

The proportion of people with Bachelor degrees or above grew strongly across Australia between 2006 and 2011 (the two most recent census periods). However, the rate of growth was slightly higher in regional and remote areas compared with the major cities. The rate of growth increased by 17% in major cities and outer regional areas, by 18% in inner regional areas, and by 20-21% in remote and very remote areas, albeit off a low base.

Parents in less geographically accessible regions have relatively low expectations for their children's future education levels, when compared to parents in major cities.

Australian Institute of Family Studies (2011) *Families in regional, rural and remote Australia*, Fact Sheet 2011.

Young people in regional Australia continue to be less likely to aspire to a higher education. While 63% of young people in metropolitan areas intend to enrol in higher education, only 39% in provincial areas and 32% in remote areas intend to do so.

Australian Council for Educational Research (ACER) (2010) *Australian Regional Higher Education: Student Characteristics and Experiences*

Regional students

Regional universities represent the only choice for many regional students who do not have the mobility to study elsewhere.

- Students at regional higher education institutions are twice as likely as students at outer urban institutions to be caring for dependents. They are also likely to be older than their urban peers and more likely to be female, Indigenous and from a low socioeconomic background.
- Many regional students are turned away from acquiring a higher education when their only choice is to move to the city: the higher costs of living and the separation from networks of family and friends are major factors.

Many regional universities are major providers of distance education, enabling regional students to access higher education while remaining in their communities.

ACER (2011) 'Higher education & community benefits: The role of regional provision', *Joining the Dots*, Research briefing, Vol 1, No. 5, September 2011

Lewis et al., 2007 as referenced in ACER (2011)

In 2012, RUN universities enrolled more than 44,700 domestic students on an external basis, and more than 55,400 on an external or multi-modal basis.

Students who study in regional areas tend to remain in regional areas after graduation and provide a ready supply of professionals to fill critical regional roles

- Five years after completing their course, 66% of graduates from regional higher education institutions remain in regional areas for employment
- These most likely to remain in regional areas are individuals with longstanding regional connections
- Those remaining in regional areas are employed across the full range of industry sectors, with the highest percentages employed in education, and health and community services.

ACER (2011)

Students who leave regional areas to study in an urban institution are unlikely to return

- 74% of regional students remain in cities after graduation

Hillman and Rothman (2007)
referenced in ACER (2011)