

# Regional Development

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AUSTRALIAN DEMOCRATS ACTION PLAN  
REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT  
MODERN ECONOMY

*The Democrats see thriving rural and regional communities as critical to Australia's future. But rural and regional Australia is doing it harder than ever before – dealing with drought, interest rate hikes, skills shortages and higher Australian dollar. Economic growth in regional Australia has slowed dramatically compared to 13 years of growth with an economy in full throttle. The imbalance between regions shows that a 'one size fits all' approach to development and employment will only reinforce regional disadvantage and differences.*

## Our Action Plan

*“Australia is in danger of becoming a two-track economy, where the big cities are doing well, but the regional areas are increasingly left behind.”*

**Senator Lyn Allison**

The Democrats support the following initiatives to improve job prospects in regional Australia:

- A national plan for decentralisation with the aim of limiting the growth of capital cities, and improving the economies, education, job opportunities and services for rural Australians.
- Set targets to decentralise Government Departments, private sector services, energy generation, higher education, manufacturing and health service delivery.
- Invest in regional health, education, community services, aged care and youth employment to attract and retain workers and their families.
- A significant increase in national investment in infrastructure, with emphasis on transport, communications, water, environment and education infrastructure to improve the productivity of regional businesses. Substantially improve rail infrastructure services to all regional centres.
- Roll out community base health centres through out rural areas.
- Promotion of value-adding of rural produce in regional centres.
- Promotion of regionally based renewable energy industries utilising solar, wind and agricultural by-products.
- Co-ordinated national effort to increase investment to result in improved natural resources management, reducing salinity and land and water degradation.
- Increased funding and assistance to community-based regional development organisations to promote business opportunities in the regions.
- Business incubation and clusters to reduce duplication and costs while strengthening and promoting innovation, productivity and marketing.



Other ACTION PLANS are available online at  
[www.democrats.org.au](http://www.democrats.org.au)

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- Major regional employment strategies and a co-ordinated policy effort to reduce regional unemployment to below 5%.
- Leadership programs (including a young leaders program) to develop skills and capacities for business and community.
- Promotion of volunteering, recreation and community programs (sport and arts facilities and local amenities).
- Government promotion and support for Small Business Development Banks to provide finance at reduced rates for investment in economically disadvantaged regions.
- Tax credits modelled on successful US and EU schemes to encourage business investment and job creation in economically disadvantaged regions.
- Restoration of requirements for local content in TV, radio and print media.
- In addition to initiatives outlined in the Democrats 'Unemployment Action Plan', 'Indigenous Employment Action Plan', 'Telecommunications Action Plan', 'Mature Aged Workers Action plan'.

## The Issues

Innovation, entrepreneurial activity and effective leadership skills are essential for sustainable economic and resilient growth in Regional Australia which will increasingly need to adapt to change not least through climate change impacts. Solutions to meet specific community needs have to be developed by the regions themselves and through cooperation between the community, business and government (federal, state and local). Need to develop regional assets and increase value generated from agricultural – this needs a competitive, educated and skilled workforce, modern infrastructure (transport and IT), natural resources, as well as providing a good standard of living.



### CONTACT US

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