

The impacts of **resource** sector growth in **regional** communities

stakeholder consultation
and recommendations

March 2013

Stage 2 and 3

Initiative of Regional Development Australia, prepared by CQUniversity Australia



Vision

Regional liveability is the key for sustainable resource communities

Acknowledgments

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Disclaimer

This study has been produced in collaboration between the three Regional Development Australia organisations of Mackay Isaac Whitsunday, Fitzroy and Central West and Wide Bay Burnett. CQUniversity's Sustainable Regional Development Research Programme was commissioned to undertake the desktop review and stakeholder consultation exercises, as well as to assist the RDAs in forming the recommendations and action areas emerging from the study.

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Project briefing statement

Background

The performance of the resource sector in Queensland is a key driver for growth at the regional, state and national levels. In the past decade, the strong performance of this sector has provided significant opportunities for regional economic development. However, simultaneously, this cumulative growth has placed pressure on local communities, including their economies, environment, and social wellbeing. There have also been recent concerns about slowdown in resource sector activity, and the possible impacts of this on regional sustainability.

Regional Development Australia (RDA) is a partnership between the Australian, State and local governments to support the growth and development of Australia's regions. The project partners included RDA Mackay Isaac Whitsunday (MIW); Fitzroy and Central West (FCW); and Wide Bay Burnett (WBB), who have agreed to collaborate with each other in order to respond appropriately to the challenges and opportunities faced by their regions. The purpose of this study was to use a partnership approach between three Regional Development Australia entities and CQUniversity to better identify, understand and plan appropriate responses to issues relating to resource sector development in regional Queensland. Specific aims for the study included:

- To identify the ways in which RDA may assist their communities to deal with unintended impacts of resource sector development, especially through advocacy on the community's behalf;
- To identify the ways in which RDA may assist their communities to engage fully with the resource sector economy for maximum benefit;
- To determine to extent to which cross-regional clustering of RDA efforts across may be useful in helping these 'resource-communities' to respond to the challenges of resource growth; and
- To identify other ways to promote the role of RDA as a lead agency for advancing the regional Australia agenda, and to maximise their effectiveness.

Project work commenced in June 2012 and was pursued in three phases:

1. a desktop review to synthesize information on the impacts of rapid development in the resource sector, especially those that are cumulative and cross-regional in nature;
2. the development and deployment of an online survey instrument, used to collect information from key regional stakeholders regarding their priority areas of concern, and suggestions for cross-regional solutions; and
3. the development of recommendations and specific actions areas for the RDA cluster to pursue, including an attendant delivery plan and communication strategy.

This report should be read in conjunction with the companion document that provides detailed findings from the desktop review exercise¹.

1 Kinnear, S., Kabir, Z., Akbar, Z., and Greer, L., 2012, *Identifying and managing cross-regional responses to the cumulative impacts of resource sector growth – phase 1 report: desktop review*, prepared for Regional Development Australia, CQUniversity Australia, North Rockhampton.

Strategic message

This study has emphasised that attention to liveability, family and social wellbeing; transport and development infrastructure; and workforce planning, skills and education is critical in responding to the growth of the resource sector.

A mix of options is needed in regional communities to help manage these cumulative and cross-regional effects.

Stage one: key findings from the desktop review

A comprehensive desktop review was conducted to document the known impacts of resource sector activity on the regional communities of MIW, FCW and WBB. The review was limited to publicly available information, with data being sourced from 58 research reports (including academic, community, industry and government studies), submissions to the Parliamentary Inquiry on fly-in, fly-out (FIFO) workforce practices, various regional planning instruments, as well as the prior work undertaken or commissioned by each of the three RDA committees. The review concentrated on information that was specifically relevant to the cumulative, regional and cross-regional impacts of rapid development in the resource sector within regional Queensland, with available data being grouped under a series of ten regional development themes:

1. Demographic and labour force shifts
2. Regional governance
3. Liveability, family and social wellbeing
4. Indigenous issues
5. Housing
6. Public health
7. Workforce planning, skills and education
8. Transport and development infrastructure
9. Water and energy
10. Environment and natural resource management

This exercise demonstrated that the regional impacts associated with resource sector activity included those from the environmental, social and economic spheres. The impacts reported were predominantly negative ones; however, this may reflect the reality that most research studies and regional planning initiatives are focussed on identifying challenges rather than reporting on positive situations.

Examples of positive impacts included stimulation of regional population growth and regional supply chains, and employment creation. The review also included information about on-ground projects that were being undertaken in each region, where these were relevant to addressing the impacts of resource sector activity.

Overall, there was much less information available about possible impacts on the Wide Bay Burnett region, compared with its northern neighbours: this is a likely reflection of WBB being only a recent entrant to the resource sector economy, and that the involvement (to date) has occurred largely through mobile workforce provision, rather than hosting of resource development sites.

The two key findings from the desktop review were that there is a vast diversity of impacts that are being experienced by regional communities, and that many of these are interlinked; yet there is a lack of empirical data about the precise nature and extent of many of these impacts. This lack of data has already been acknowledged as a key barrier in terms of formulating regional responses (either policy and/or on-ground programs)².



² Commonwealth of Australia, 2013, *Cancer of the bush or salvation for our cities? Fly-in, fly-out and drive-in, drive-out workforce practices in Regional Australia*, Report by the House Standing Committee on Regional Australia of the Inquiry into the Use of Fly-In, Fly-Out (FIFO) workforce practices in regional Australia.

Stage two: key findings from the stakeholder consultation

The stakeholder consultation phase involved the development and delivery of an online survey, distributed to over 300 key regional stakeholders across regions of MIW, FCW and WBB in late 2012. A total of 108 respondents participated in the survey, with good representation across all three regions.

The survey was focussed on collecting information about perceptions and experiences around the impacts of resource sector development, using the same regional development themes as adopted in the desktop review.

The areas that were of the highest priority included:

- Liveability, family and social wellbeing
- Housing
- Transport and development infrastructure
- Workforce planning, skills and education

The areas that were of least priority included:

- Indigenous issues
- Regional governance
- Water and energy

However, the overlap across many of the themes must also be acknowledged; for example, many stakeholders noted that the cumulative impacts across items such as infrastructure, health and housing each combined to create poor outcomes in terms of overall liveability.

Overall, participants indicated that the region's current regional development performance were:

Best in the areas of:

- Environment and natural resource management
- Regional governance
- Demographic and labour force shifts

Worst in the areas of:

- Housing
- Transport and development infrastructure
- Workforce planning, skills and education

Based on the survey responses, stakeholders appeared to agree that collaboration was of high value; and that business participation was important in further dialogue and/or solution seeking about regional impacts. Meanwhile, respondents disagreed that 'investment in infrastructure is the best way to solve impacts', in the context that other options, or a mixture of options, may instead being preferable.



The regional stakeholders supported a mix of actions by RDA in responding to the challenges of resource sector growth. The most popular options included on-ground activities in the areas of public health, liveability and housing; and investment in the areas of infrastructure, Indigenous issues and water and energy. This contrasts with historical data that shows that applications for the Regional Development Australia Fund (RDAF) in the three regions have been heavily focused on community infrastructure, and less so in those areas that the community indicated as important to them.

The least support was given for policy change and/or stakeholder workshops: however, this contrasted with responses collected from participants in the later stages of the survey, which were heavily populated by ideas about policy change as a key solution to many regional challenges.

Participants consistently rated state and local Government as key players in regional development. Generally, participants cited communication, engagement and collaboration as the key role for RDA, combined with advocacy, and – to some extent – direct funding of regional initiatives. However, many respondents also indicated concerns about visibility and resourcing of RDA and the need to clarify its roles, responsibilities and capabilities.

The open-ended response component of the survey yielded a rich source of information about the challenges and opportunities across the three regions. Stakeholders were able to articulate a range of issues – particularly in the areas of liveability, housing, transport and workforce planning – ranging from the specific (e.g., loss of a particular officer or support program) to broad structural issues (e.g., wage disparities, skills shortages and fragmentation of the community).

In agreement with the desktop review, many of the impacts that were cited from resource sector development were negative, with comparatively few positive impacts being identified. It was also noted that impacts could flow from both the peak periods of resource sector activity, as well as the (more recent) downturn being experienced in some communities. Also, it was evident that the experiences of the Wide Bay Burnett region contrasted with those of its northern neighbours (MIW, FCW) in many cases.

A large number of solutions were put forward by the community as ways for RDA (and others) to help regions respond better to the challenges of resource sector activity. It is important to note that the 'solutions' presented in this document are entirely based on the participants' own responses; with no assessment in terms of the validity, feasibility or effectiveness of any particular 'solution', from either the RDAs or CQUniversity's perspective. However, to refine the large body of material that had been contributed, the ideas were grouped into the six categories of:

1. Areas for policy development and/or reform
2. Key investment areas
3. Leadership, collaboration and innovation
4. Research, monitoring and evaluation areas
5. Education, extension and engagement; and
6. On-ground initiatives.

Policy reform was consistently the largest grouping across the ten themes; and the suggestions here included those relevant for the three tiers of government as well as for practice change in industry. On-ground programs and regional investment were also strong categories, although this varied by theme.



► Stage three: responding to the impacts of resource growth: recommendations for RDA

Following the desktop review and stakeholder consultation exercises, a series of recommendations were developed for (and by) the participating RDAs, being mindful of the common issues shared by all three regions, as well as their individual and unique circumstances. In order to discern the best ways to leverage effort across all three partner regions, this exercise required a careful consideration of the existing operating context and resourcing of RDAs; as well as strategic alignment with current government policy (where possible).

The latter acknowledged the recommendations already presented in the Commonwealth Inquiry into FIFO workforce practices. The development of the recommendations was targeted to cross-regional, collaborative efforts by the RDAs. It was also strongly focussed on responding to the cues given by stakeholders in terms of the priority areas for actioning, with these being (in order of importance):

- Liveability, family and social wellbeing (including affordable housing);
- Transport and development infrastructure; and
- Workforce planning, skills and education.

Where possible, the recommendations were also framed around the six 'solution areas' that were indicated as desirable by the regional stakeholders. In total, thirteen recommendations arose from the study, with some being specific for the RDAs of MIW, FCW and WBB; some directed towards a broader group of RDAs in regions servicing the resource sector, and others being applicable for RDAs nationally.



In order of appearance in the report, these recommendations are:

Taking a collaborative and cross-regional approach

Recommendation 1: that a network of RDAs from regions that service the resource sector should be formed (e.g., to create a 'resource sector cluster') to share knowledge and best practice with respect to seeking collaborative solutions that address the regional development issues associated with resource sector growth.

Involvement in policy development and/or reform

Recommendation 2: that RDA have an increased role in Australian and State policy development; including being involved in generating the evidence base, increasing awareness about policy positions, and bringing forward ideas for policy reform that better meets the needs of regions that service the resource sector.

Recommendation 3: that the RDA resource sector cluster spearhead a debate about the different kinds of regions that are engaged, or wish to engage, with the resources sector, and the positive and negative impacts that resource sector growth will have on each. In particular, there is a need to ensure that policy decisions and investment flows properly consider the implications for regions that host operations, as well as those that provide mobile workforces.

Facilitating key investment

Recommendation 4: that consideration be given to the structure and/or application process of the RDAF mechanism, and/or programmes of similar nature, to ensure that the applications received through this programme better reflect the preferences of regional stakeholders in terms of infrastructure investment, and encourage cross-regional collaboration and innovation where possible.

Recommendation 5: that the RDA resource sector cluster work closely with the three tiers of government and the private sector, to develop a more strategically planned approach to delivering social and community infrastructure that aligns with regional priorities.

Leadership, collaboration and innovation

Recommendation 6: there is a need to map, contrast and compare the expectations of the Australian and State governments, the RDA Committees, and the community with respect to the role and deliverables of RDAs, with the objective of clarifying the role of RDA as a lead agency on regional issues.



Research, monitoring and evaluation

Recommendation 7: RDAs should be provided with direct support from the Australian and State offices responsible for collecting, collating and/or analysing statistical information about resource sector activity and socio-demographic and socio-economic trends in regional Australia.

Recommendation 8: RDAs should play a strong role in encouraging and facilitating research on regional issues, by drawing on their local knowledge to help identify regional research gaps.

Education, extension and engagement

Recommendation 9: that the RDA resource-region cluster conducts regular consultation in order to generate longitudinal information on the issues, challenges and trends associated with resource-sector growth. This should be undertaken in a manner that is as inclusive as possible, but which also respects the risk of over-consultation in some regions.

Recommendation 10: RDAs in MIW, FCW and WBB should continue to focus on partnerships with local government (including Regional Organisations of Councils) as the preferred method of tackling regional agendas, and to help create an effective interface with the community.

Recommendation 11: there is a need for RDA in MIW, FCW and WBB to build closer partnerships with business and industry in creating solutions to the impacts of resource sector growth, particularly with respect to transport and development infrastructure.

On-ground initiatives

Recommendation 12: the resource-sector cluster of RDAs in MIW, FCW and WBB should focus its efforts into those areas that are ranked as high priority by regional stakeholders. In 2013, these comprise:

- Liveability, family and social wellbeing issues (including affordable housing)
- Transport and development infrastructure; and
- Workforce planning, skilling and education.

Examples of specific actions under each of these priority themes are described more fully in Tables 6 and 7 of the report.

Recommendation 13: The RDA resource sector cluster should develop a methodology and/or best practice for capturing and testing solutions put forward by the community, regarding ways in which to reduce impacts and maximise the benefits of resource sector development in regional Australia.



Next steps

The study has emphasised that attention to liveability, family and social wellbeing; transport and development infrastructure; and workforce planning, skills and education is critical in responding to the growth of the resource sector. A mix of options is needed in regional communities to help manage these cumulative and cross-regional effects.

Action 1: We will review their Roadmaps and identify deliverables in their business plans that will progress the recommendations of this report.

In the first instance, the RDAs involved in this study intend for the recommendations to be actioned through the 2012-13 annual revision of their Regional Roadmap and business planning documents.

Action 2: We will meet with Australian and State governments specifically to discuss the strategic role of RDAs, and the public's perception of the work of RDA.

However, the recommendations arising from the report are expansive, and their implementation is likely to require a review of the RDAs roles and responsibilities, including how the committees are resourced.

Action 3: We will meet with Australian and State governments to communicate the project results and determine what responses will be necessary in each of the key portfolio areas.

Furthermore, the participant RDAs are also determined that the study be used to establish spirited dialogue with the three tiers of government and industry, regarding how each group plans to work with RDA in order to pursue more sustainable outcomes for the regional communities that service the resource sector in Queensland.

Action 4: We will prepare Terms of Reference for an RDA resource-sector cluster and identify who will be invited to join.

Finally, an invitation will be extended through the national RDA network to join a 'resource-sector cluster' that will focus on reducing the impacts of, and maximising the benefits of, the resource sector in regional Australia.

Action 5: To establish a 'place-based' strategy for the three RDA regions of MIW, FCW and WBB.

Future development of the 'place-based' strategy of 'strengthening the social fabric of resource communities through liveability'.

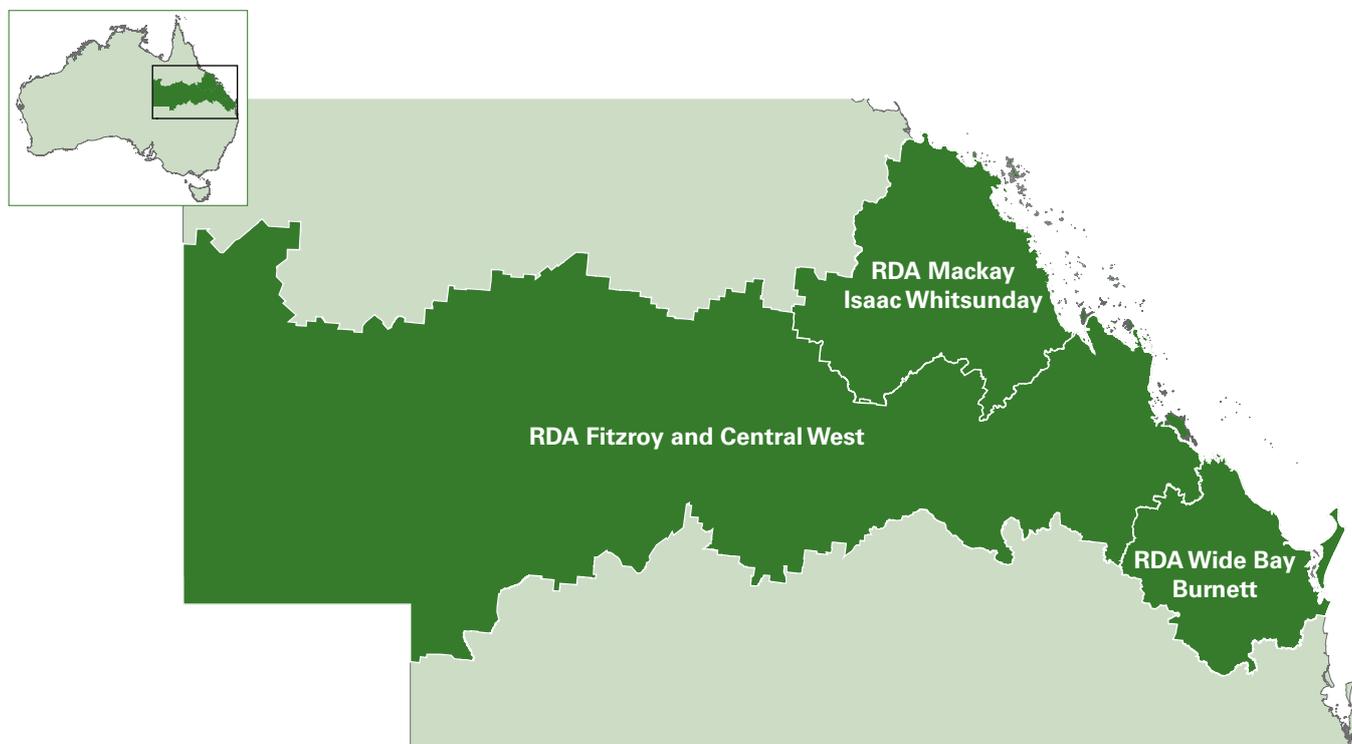


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Abbreviations

ABARES	Australian Bureau of Agricultural and Resource Economics
ABS	Australian Bureau of Statistics
BREE	Bureau of Resources and Energy Economics
CQU	CQUniversity Australia (Central Queensland University)
DA	Development approval
Dept.	Department
DIDO	Drive-in, drive-out
DRALGAS	Department of Regional Australia, Local Government, Arts and Sport
DSDIP	(Queensland) Department of State Development, Infrastructure and Planning
EIS	Environmental Impact Statement
e.g.	For example
FCW	Fitzroy and Central West
FIFO	Fly-in, fly-out
govt (non-govt)	Government (non-government)
Inc.	Incorporated
JSA	Job Services Australia
MIW	Mackay Isaac Whitsunday
na	Not applicable
NFPs	Not-for-profit organisations
NRM	Natural resource management
OESR	Office of Economic and Statistical Research
QRC	Queensland Resources Council
R&D	Research and Development
RDA	Regional Development Australia
RDAF	Regional Development Australia Fund
RTA	Residential Tenancies Authority
RTOs	Registered Training Organisations
SME	Small and medium enterprises
WBB	Wide Bay Burnett

1.0 Introduction

1.1 The impacts of the resources sector in regional Queensland

The Queensland resources sector includes a range of extraction, processing and transport operations, including coal and minerals extraction; coal seam gas and liquefied natural gas production; coal- and renewables-based power generation and ports, as well as the construction activities associated with the development of these sites. Queensland is the amongst the world's largest producers of lead, zinc, silver and copper; has extensive high-quality coal resources, and a rapidly expanding number of coal seam gas wells (QRC, 2013).

The economic contribution of the resources sector to the state, as well as to the nation, is immense: one study showed that in 2010-11, one in every five dollars of the Queensland economy were related to resources-sector expenditure; and one in eight jobs in the state were resource-sector based (QRC, 2013). However, the resources sector is also recognised as being characterised by cyclical growth, being as it is heavily influenced by global macroeconomics. In the past decade, strong demand for Queensland's resources from the developing Chinese and Indian economies has driven high growth rates in the resources sector. However, the more recent global financial crisis and European debt crisis has resulted in

the slowdown of growth in many advanced countries, and the historically high Australian dollar has impacted negatively on growth in the resources sector (BREE, 2012). The most up-to-date forecasts suggest a softened outlook for the Australian resources sector in 2012-13, with increased export volumes but decreased total value overall (BREE, 2012).

This introduces a conundrum for regional centres in Queensland: when the state's resource sector is driving rapid growth, it provides strong opportunities for regional economic development, but it simultaneously puts pressure on local communities, including their economies, environment and social wellbeing. Added to this is the problem of falls in commodity prices or other stimulants to resource sector activity, which can lead to sudden declines in activity, thus leaving regional communities vulnerable to further economic and social consequences.

In delivering sustainable solutions for regional Queensland, it is imperative that the impacts of rapid economic and population growth are well known, particularly in the context of the cyclical growth of the sector and the potential for cross-regional impacts. This is especially the case for the cumulative impacts³ that may be associated with resource development during times of peak intensity.

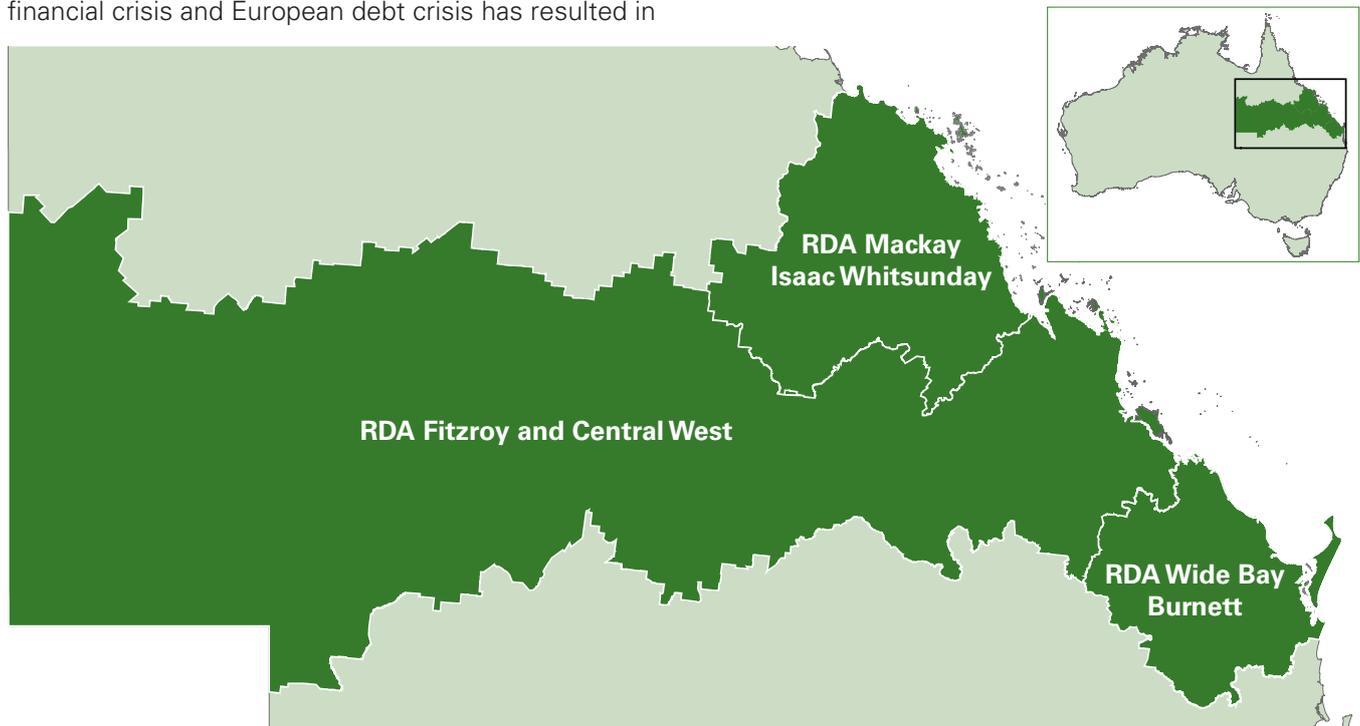


Figure 1 The study area: an RDA cluster comprising regional communities servicing the resource sector.

³ Defined as 'the successive, incremental and combined impacts of one, or more, activities on society, the economy and the environment' (Franks et al., 2010, p. 10).

2.0 Desktop review: regional impacts from resource sector growth

1.2 Regional Development Australia

Regional Development Australia (RDA) is a partnership between the Australian, State and local governments to support the growth and development of Australia's regions. In Queensland, RDAs each collaborate with their Local Government Authorities and key regional stakeholders to pursue the regional development agendas that are relevant to their region; including the appropriate responses to emerging economic, social and environmental impacts.

Regional Queensland includes a group of communities that experience many common regional development issues, particularly those related to the activities of the resource sector. Here, it is important to note that these include not only those RDAs with resource operations within their hinterlands (e.g. Mackay Isaac Whitsunday; Fitzroy and Central West), but also those who are engaged, or wish to engage, with the resource sector economy, through supply chains and/or workforce participation (as evidenced by the Wide Bay Burnett situation) (Figure 1).

Given the extent of resource sector development that is occurring in Queensland, the purpose of this project was to use a partnership approach between three RDA committees and CQUniversity, to better document, understand, and plan the response to the key pressures resulting from rapid growth of the resources sector. Within this, a special focus was placed on the potential for cumulative impacts and the need for cross-regional collaboration; that is, sharing information and leveraging the available resources in order to respond to impacts most effectively. In terms of project outcomes, the subsidiary aims were:

- To identify the ways in which RDA may assist their communities to deal with unintended social impacts;
- To identify the ways in which RDA may assist their communities to engage fully with the resource sector economy for maximum benefit;
- To determine the extent to which cross-regional clustering of RDA efforts may be useful in helping regional communities to respond to the challenges of resource growth; and
- To identify other ways to promote the role of RDA as a lead agency for advancing regional Australia, and to maximise their effectiveness.

The first stage of this project involved a desktop review to identify and synthesise information on the cumulative, regional and cross-regional impacts of rapid development in the resource sector (coal mining, energy, construction and other areas), in the communities of Mackay Isaac Whitsunday (MIW), Fitzroy and Central West (FCW), and Wide Bay Burnett (WBB). This was done for a series of ten thematic areas, which were identified as key areas for cumulative impacts, as well as reflecting the common issues shared by the three regions, in responding to the current and projected accelerated growth in the resources sector. The ten areas were:

1. Demographic and labour force shifts
2. Regional governance
3. Liveability, family and social wellbeing
4. Indigenous issues
5. Housing
6. Public health
7. Workforce planning and education
8. Transport and development infrastructure
9. Water and Energy
10. Environment and natural resource management

The full details of the project scope and key definitions, and the outcomes of the desktop review, can be found in the companion document⁴. However, for the purposes of this report, a refined version of the gap analysis is supplied overleaf (Table 1).

Overall, there is much less documented information about the impacts on the Wide-Bay Burnett, which is a comparatively recently player in wide-scale resource development and/or servicing of the resources sector.

The desktop review also indicated that whilst there are a range of reporting and on-ground activities already being pursued in the region, there is also a need to collect more information about challenges and opportunities. In particular, the views and ideas of regional stakeholders are acknowledged as key drivers for guiding RDA activities. Consequently, the second and third stages of this project were focussed on stakeholder consultation and the distillation of priority action areas by which RDAs can work cross-regionally in order to respond to the challenges presented by rapid growth in the resource sector.

4 Kinnear, S., Kabir, Z., Akbar, Z., and Greer, L., 2012, *Identifying and managing cross-regional responses to the cumulative impacts of resource sector growth – phase 1 report: desktop review*, prepared for Regional Development Australia, CQUniversity Australia, North Rockhampton.

Table 1 Summary of findings: gap analysis and the impacts of resource sector activity on regional communities in Queensland (MIW, FCW and WBB).

(Note: This information is drawn from the phase 1 desktop review.)

Theme Area	Key findings
Demographic and labour force shifts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There is a lack of integrated modelling for the purposes of long-term population forecasting. New models are needed that are based on both life-cycle demographic characteristics as well as the cyclical nature of resource sector activity (e.g. multiplier effects of workforce statistics). • Proper quantification of the non-resident (FIFO/DIDO) workforce remains an ongoing issue.
Regional governance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There is a large array of planning effort being undertaken, but this appears to lack cohesion. • There appears to be a lack of consistency in governance frameworks, for example, across resource industries; Australian, state and local governments, and the community. • Local Government consistently report being placed under increasing pressures to deal with resource sector growth, yet are not being properly resourced to cope.
Liveability, family and social wellbeing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There are many anecdotal reports of declining liveability issues relating to resource-based communities, with only limited academic work/empirical data being available. This is resulting in most policy being developed without an adequate evidence base, and/or as a result of political pressure. • There has been a tendency to collapse the 'social' indicators into measures of hard infrastructure (such as buildings). However, liveability issues are amongst the most frequently cited impacts of resource sector activity. Hence, there is a need for separate subjective and objective measures of liveability and well-being of regional communities, especially under different geographical scale or different sizes of communities. • Most studies on liveability is about 'perceived' liveability but not real liveability, so there is a need to explore this gap for communities that service the resources sector.
Indigenous issues	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There are a range of reports available on the interaction between resource sector development and Indigenous people and their culture, but most work has been done outside of the Central Queensland region – tailored datasets and findings are in scarce supply. • There is a strong sense of commitment to increased participation levels for Indigenous peoples in the resources sector, as well as better cultural outcomes overall in resource-based communities. Despite this, engagement efforts in regional communities within Central Queensland do not appear to be as mature as those in other places (e.g. the Pilbara).
Housing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Housing remains a 'hot issue' in many communities, with anecdotal reports of extreme pressures on housing availability and affordability. • A number of research reports are already available which track the drivers and pressures on housing, yet policy development still appears to be slow in responding. Few studies have been done on the impacts of house prices on population increases. • There is a lack of integrated housing model for a long term forecast based on life cycle demographic characteristics and the cyclical nature of resource sector activity.

Theme Area	Key findings
Public health	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There appears to be a shortage of ‘real’ data on public health, with much of the information relating to public health pressures being anecdotal. However, these data may be captured relatively easily, for example, by collecting postcode information from patients, or by conducting research that allows the experiences of regional health practitioners to be documented and analysed • The cumulative health impacts of the resource sector include employee, resident and wider community risks
Workforce planning, skills and education	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Very few studies have been conducted on how the health sector has been operating in terms of providing optimum level of services. • Workforce planning has received reasonable attention in MIW, FCW and WBB, with several commissioned reports. Skills and training remain a key issue of interest across the region. • There is still a need to understand specific occupational needs across different sectors; and to understand the role of specific subgroups in workforce planning (e.g. aged, women, disability, Indigenous). • The potential for shared skills development (e.g. between mining and agriculture) could be explored. • There is a need for whole-of-region solutions to workforce planning, based on a collaborative approach across stakeholders.
Transport and development infrastructure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There is a lack of information about disaster management (e.g. severe flooding) and its relationships with regional infrastructure. • There is a lack of information about the integrated infrastructure planning and development across the regions and subregions. For example, this might include a demand modelling study for the Bruce Highway, including identifying the necessary steps to improve its current condition. • The capacity and functionality of regional airports is a key issue in some areas, particularly due to growth in FIFO service requirements. • Strategies to ensure safe and efficient travel need to be of high priority in the region. For example, to date, there have been no studies of ‘active transport’ systems within the local community (e.g. pedestrian pathways or bikeways), which should have a priority given the strong linkages with both human health and well-being outcomes. • Next to nothing could be sourced about the cumulative, resource development-based impacts and drivers for ICT infrastructure.
Water and energy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There is a lack of assessment of cumulative impacts with regard to transport infrastructure, which results largely from the limited scope of current EIA and/or SIA processes. • There is a lack of information about the integrated water resource management and development across the regions.
Environment and natural resource management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There is a lack of publicly available information about environmental impacts related to mining activities (including air, water, and land). • There is a lack of information about integrated environmental management across the Central Queensland region.

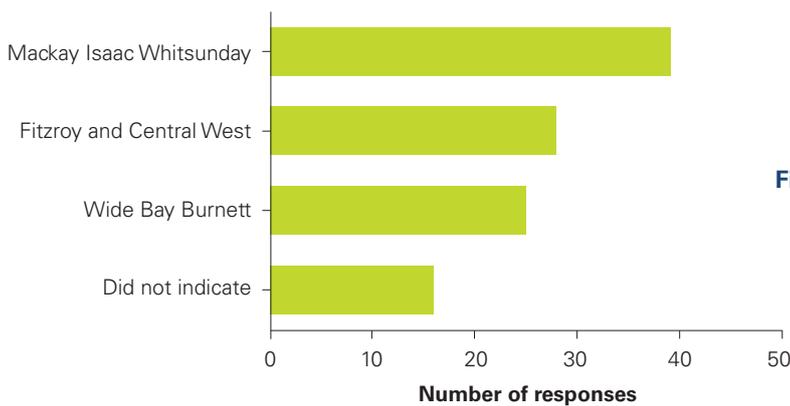
3.0 Stakeholder consultation exercise

3.1 Method

The stakeholder consultation phase involved the development and deployment of an online survey instrument. This was used to collect information from key regional stakeholders regarding their priority areas of concern, as well as suggestions for cross-regional solutions. The structure and content of the survey was informed by the desktop study, with the same ten thematic areas being used to explore the challenges and opportunities for regional development in resource-based communities.

A complete version of the survey, as received by the stakeholders, is provided in Appendix A. This instrument was offered in an online format, as this was considered the most accessible and easy option for most stakeholders. Invitations to participate in the survey were issued to a broad range of stakeholders, using the existing networks that had already been developed by the RDA officers in each region. Invitations were issued to over 300 stakeholders, comprising approximately 122 in MIW, 120 in FCW and 90 in WBB. The survey was open for participation for approximately three weeks from 15 October through 4 November 2012.

The following section presents the key results from the stakeholder consultation, with a focus on the whole-of-region footprint. Individualised result statements have also been prepared for each of the three participating RDAs, and these can be found in Appendix B.



3.2 Respondent profile

A total of 108 respondents took part in the survey, with 90 respondents working through to the end of the questionnaire (a completion rate of 83.3%). There was good representation of all three regions in the survey. Participant breakdown by location was generally even, with MIW accounting for 36% of responses, FCW 26% and WBB 23%, respectively (Figure 2). A further 15% of respondents did not indicate their region.

There was good representation of government (33%), community (24%) and industry (21%) participants, with a further 10% coming from peak representative groups (i.e., community or industry). The mining, manufacturing and administrative services sectors accounted for almost half of the industry-based responses; but there were six sectors that had no participation at all, including the key economic players such as the construction and transport industries (Figure 3).

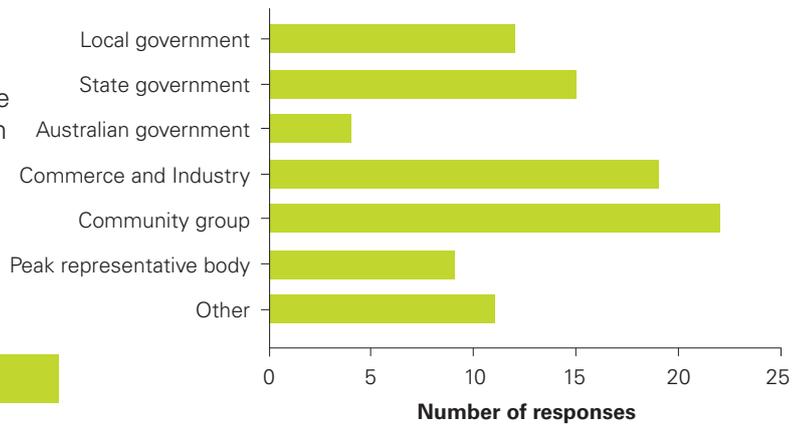


Figure 2 Summary of participants by region of origin (left) and entity type (above).

Note: Scores will not necessarily add to 108, as not all respondents answer these questions.

5 Using the 'surveymonkey' toolbox

6 This included approaches to representatives from the Australian, state and local government; regional development organisations; commerce and industry (either direct to business operators, or through peak bodies); Indigenous groups; and to social and community organisations

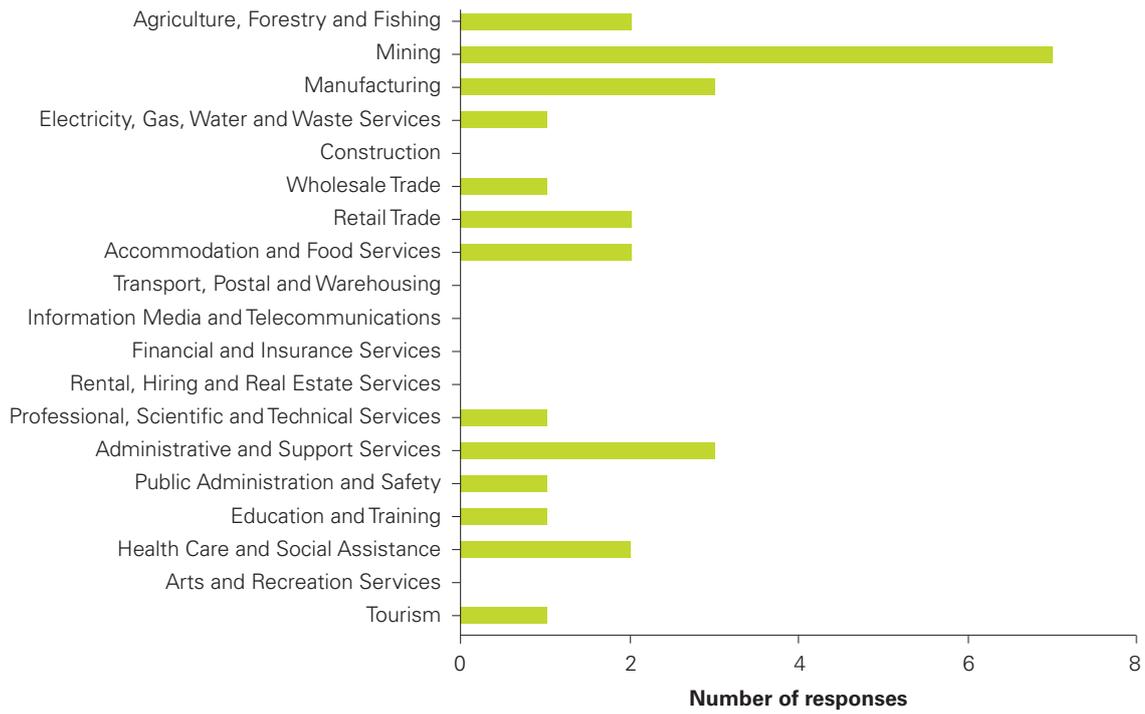


Figure 3 Summary of participant by region by industry/sector representation.
 Note: Scores will not necessarily add to 108, as not all respondents answered these questions.

3.3 Priority areas for addressing cumulative impacts

Of the ten themes provided to participants, the areas of liveability and social wellbeing; housing; transport and development infrastructure, and workforce planning were consistently rated as priority issues across the MIW, FCW and WBB regions (Figure 4). The areas that were of least priority included Indigenous issues, governance, and water and energy supply.

However, it is important to note that respondents were not provided with a definition for each of the ten thematic areas. Thus, the low priority attached to themes such as ‘governance’ could signal that participants weren’t clear on what the topic referred to. Furthermore, it is acknowledgement that themes were arbitrarily chosen, and are not exhaustive or mutually exclusive, which introduces further difficulties with interpretation.

There was also some variation in prioritisation of themes amongst the regions; with the Wide Bay Burnett region recording a different sequence of priority themes compared with its northern neighbours.

- in the MIW region, the stakeholders placed greatest emphasis was placed on liveability, housing and transport and development infrastructure, with Indigenous issues being ranked of least importance;
- in the FCW region, a similar sequence was observed, with the areas of greatest importance for stakeholders being housing, followed by liveability, followed by transport. None of the FCW participants selected Indigenous issues as their greatest priority;
- in the WBB region, liveability issues scored highly, followed by workforce planning, then transport infrastructure.

Nevertheless, in considering these results, a number of ‘priority themes’ were adopted as key areas in which collaborative work amongst the RDAs should be focussed. These were identified by selecting those theme areas that were clearly leading in terms of overall ranked importance⁷. For the whole-of-regional footprint, the following four themes were thus marked as priority:

1. Liveability, family and social wellbeing
2. Housing
3. Workforce planning, skills and education
4. Transport and development infrastructure.

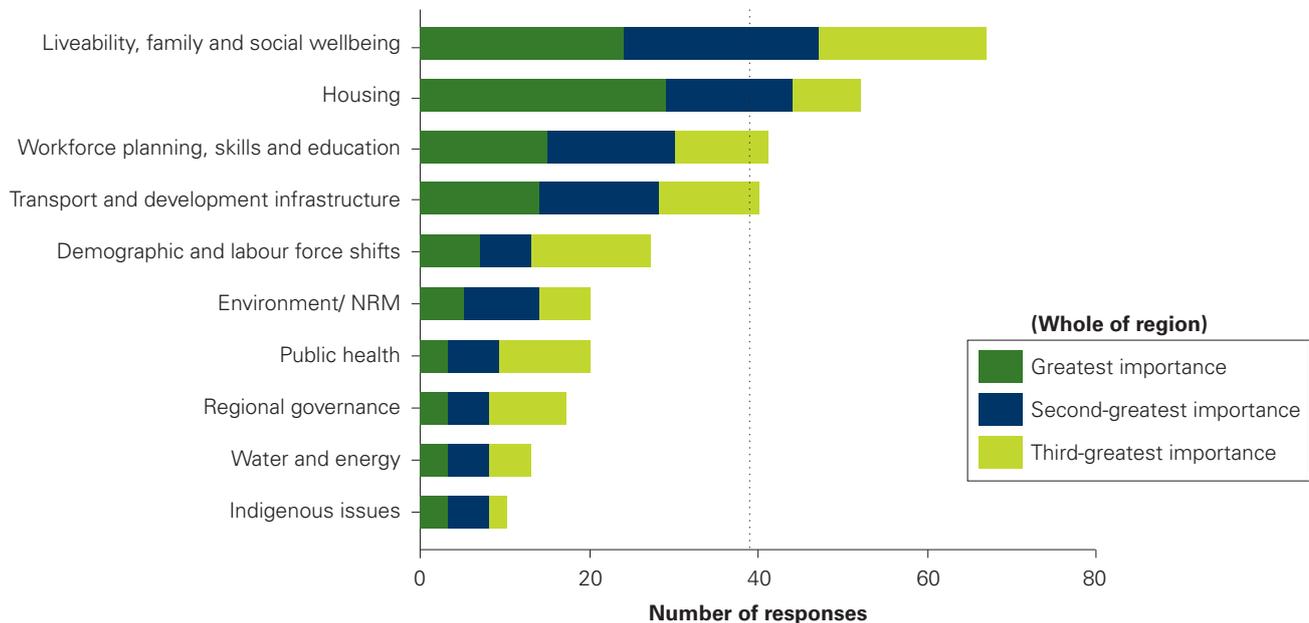


Figure 4 The level of importance given to each of ten regional development areas by stakeholders (MIW, FCW and WBB regions combined).

Themes scoring to the right of the dotted reference line were later designated as ‘priority themes’ for the RDA cluster.

⁷ Selecting an arbitrary cut-off point, such as using the ‘top three’ themes, was considered problematic, since this may exclude some items that ranked very closely together in terms of importance. The alternative was to scan the dataset for those items that formed the leading ‘cluster’, as illustrated by those to the right of the dotted reference line in Figure 4.

3.4 Perceptions about current regional performance

Respondents were asked to indicate how they felt their region was currently performing in each of the ten theme areas. Overall, participants felt that regional performance was worst in dealing with issues related to housing, transport and development infrastructure and workforce planning; and best in the areas of environment, governance and demography (Figure 5).

This supports the results captured elsewhere in the survey, where respondents consistently gave a priority ranking to those areas in which they also reported that the current response was poor. A notable exception to this was in the areas of public health and Indigenous issues, which were rarely selected as ‘priority issues’, despite many respondents indicating that the current response for these particular issues was poor.

When the results were disaggregated by RDA region, again, there was some divergence in the way that stakeholders reflected on the issues across the three regions:

- in MIW, respondents felt that Indigenous and water/energy issues were being handled less effectively; whereas responses around workforce planning issues were being reasonably well performed;
- for FCW, the areas of poorest performance included transport, housing and water; but respondents also indicated a good deal of uncertainty around whether demographic planning issues were being handled appropriately; and
- participants in WBB indicated that the areas of poor regional performance were transport, housing and public health; whilst performance was comparatively good in Indigenous issues, environment/natural resource management concerns and demography.

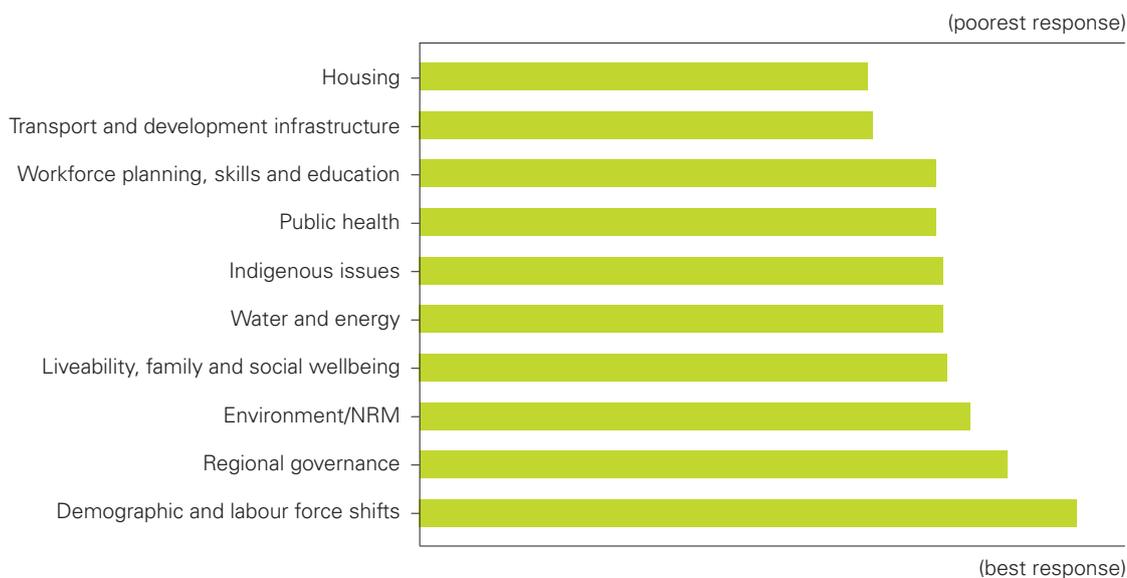


Figure 5 Participant’s perceptions about the current performance of the MIW, FCW and WBB regions (all RDA areas combined) in responding to issues related to resource sector growth.

3.5 Opinions on key statements about dealing with regional impacts

Participants were provided with a number of statements about regional development, collaboration, and the influence of resource development activities (Figure 6).

Across the entire sample, respondents *agreed* most strongly with the sentiments about the value of collaboration; business participation in further dialogue/ solution seeking about regional impacts, and concerns that further growth in the resource sector is likely to be linked with regional impacts.

By contrast, respondents *disagreed* with the ideas that 'regional communities have enough opportunities to collaborate'; and that 'investment in infrastructure is the best way to solve impacts'. They also indicated that, overall, the impacts of resource development are relatively well known.

Notably, the greatest uncertainty (as indicated by the number of 'don't know' responses) tended to occur around whether or not the respondent's own organisation would be willing to commit effort and/or resources to help address impacts; as well as the role of RDA in helping communities to address impacts (almost 10% of participants indicated 'don't know').



Figure 6 Participant's opinions about key statements relating to cumulative and cross-regional impacts related to growth of the resource sector in the MIW, FCW and WBB regions.

3.6 Preferences for the nature of the regional response

Participants were asked to indicate the type(s) of response(s) they felt would be most valuable in addressing each of the ten impact areas, with more than one approach being allowable in each theme.

A mixture of initiatives was supported, but the most popular options included on-ground activities in the areas of public health, liveability and housing, as well as investment in infrastructure (Table 2). Meanwhile, respondents were least likely to show support for policy change and/or stakeholder workshops.

The focus given to infrastructure issues is interesting given that it conflicts with the outcomes of Section 3.5

above, where respondents disagreed with the idea of investment in infrastructure being the best way to solve impacts. The particular kinds of infrastructure spend called for by the stakeholders was also of note: this included a focus on transport, Indigenous and water/energy assets.

RDA already has significant involvement in infrastructure spending, through assessments of the RDAF (Regional Development Australia Fund) proposals lodged within their regions⁸. A review of the submissions lodged in each of the RDA regions since the introduction of RDAF shows a clear trend for proposals in the areas of liveability (Table 3). On the one hand, this agrees with the survey results whereby stakeholders consistently rated liveability issues as being of high priority.

Table 2 The preferred nature for regional development responses, including the top three theme areas in which particular types of responses should be initiated, as indicated by participants.

Results are collated for the MIW, FCW and WBB regions (all three RDA areas combined).

Response type (most popular to least popular)	Priority areas for focussing the response
On-ground activities (20.5% of responses)	Public health Liveability, family and social wellbeing Housing
Investment in Infrastructure (19.6% of responses)	Transport and development infrastructure Indigenous issues Water and energy assets
More research (15.3% of responses)	Transport and development infrastructure Workforce planning, skills and education Public health
Increased access to information (15.0% of responses)	Regional governance Workforce planning, skills and education Indigenous issues
New or changed policy (14.7% of responses)	Workforce planning, skills and education Liveability, family and social wellbeing Water and energy assets
Stakeholder workshops (14.7% of responses)	Workforce planning, skills and education Transport and development infrastructure Housing

⁸ The RDAF program is explicitly for the purposes of supporting the infrastructure needs of regional Australia.

Table 3 Nature of project proposals (expressions of interest) lodged under RDAF rounds 1-4 (2010-12), for three RDA regions.

Proponents and specific project details have been withheld for confidentiality reasons. Submitted projects may be listed under more than one category.

	Mackay Isaac Whitsunday	Fitzroy and Central West	Wide Bay Burnett
Liveability, family and social wellbeing	5 (playground/child care/sporting and/or cultural facilities)	32 (daycare, sporting facilities, community facilities)	5 (community services hub, leisure facility, lifestyle facility, civic centre, neighbourhood centre)
Transport and development infrastructure	2 (road/bridge upgrades)	4 (roads, aviation)	4 (aviation, car parking, railway)
Housing	1	1 (youth housing)	
Indigenous issues [^]	-	2 (information centre, water infrastructure)	1 (cultural centre, sewerage treatment, town revitalisation)
Public health	2 (hospital, aged care)	1 (aged care)	3 (aged care, patient/GP accommodation, respite centre)
Economic development	3 (town revitalisation, events)	1 (tourism)	5 (forestry, tourism/events, town revitalisation)
Environment	-	1 (waste management)	1 (conservation/protection)
Water and energy	-	4 (municipal water treatment and water supply)	2 (sewerage facilities)

[^] Defined either as those that involved Indigenous culture (e.g. Indigenous tourism), or that were lodged by/within Aboriginal Shires.

However, comparatively fewer applications have been received in the areas of economic development, water and roads, and only three have been specifically related to Indigenous issues.

This suggests a possible disconnect between the public's perception of the intent of the RDAF programme compared with the desired infrastructure needs of regional communities; or potential flaws

in the applications process whereby high-priority initiatives (from the stakeholder's perspective) do not survive the EOI process leading to a full application. However, this may be a complex situation, given that a lack of capacity in existing regional organisations could also contribute to fewer applications in otherwise high-priority areas.

3.7 Preferred involvement of key groups

When thinking about the different stakeholder groups that might be involved in responding to impacts, participants felt that the most important groups overall were state and local government, with Australian government and regional business and industry ranked as the least important (Figure 7). However, when the results were differentiated by region, it was evident that participants from FCW felt differently compared with the other two regions: here, it was the Australian rather than the local government who were regarded as key players in the regional development space.

The stakeholder’s focus on local government as key players in advancing the regional development agenda is of particular note for two reasons. Firstly, it supports the existing position of the RDAs in MIW, FCW and WBB, who have demonstrated a strong commitment to working with local government, as evidenced through their *Regional Roadmaps*. Secondly, it signals the critical importance for local government authorities to be better supported; particularly with respect to the difficulties of responding to complex development approvals from resource proponents (refer also to comments under regional governance in Section 3.9.1).

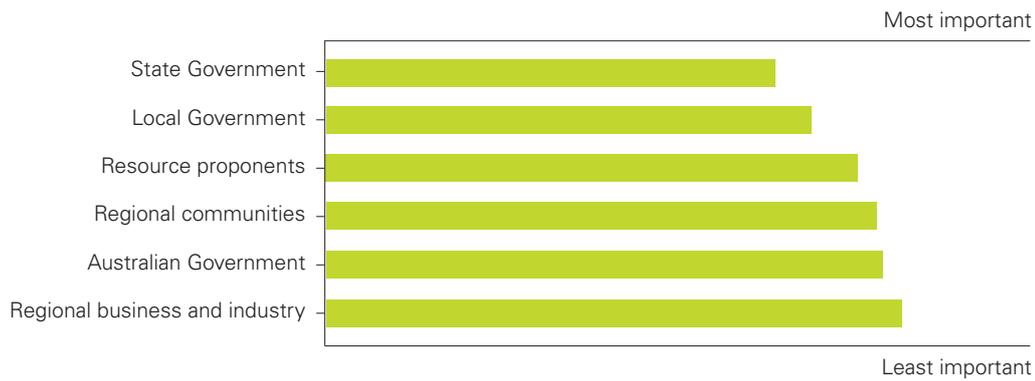


Figure 7 Relative importance of different stakeholder groups in responding to regional impacts related to resource sector growth (as indicated by participants).

3.8 Expectations about the role of RDA in the region

According to the DRALGAS (2012), the formal roles of all RDAs are to:

- consult and engage with communities;
- promote and participate in regional programs and initiatives;
- provide information and advice on their region to all levels of government; and
- support informed regional planning.

However, recent work by Buultjens et al. (2012) has identified that RDAs themselves have struggled to resolve their roles in their regions (including the resourcing implications of these). This has made it difficult for them to establish authority, be drivers of regional leadership, and to respond effectively to community expectations.

Given this, participants in this study were specifically asked to describe the ways in which RDA could help their region best respond to the impacts associated with resource sector activity. Approximately two-thirds of participants answered this question, and a diverse range of responses were given. The textual responses given by all participants were analysed for common themes, and then each particular response was coded to one or more thematic areas (i.e., a discourse analysis was performed).

This showed that the most common responses favoured activities such as communication, engagement and collaboration with regional communities (including the business sector (Table 4, Figure 8)). Participants also strongly favoured an advocacy role for RDA, particularly that of lobbying for the region to increase success in Australian and State government investment programs. The need for regional reporting and research, and on-ground action was also highlighted.

Table 4 Participants' response type and frequency regarding the role of RDAs in MIW, FCW and WBB.

Theme area	Number of responses
Communication, engagement and collaboration	19
Advocacy (investment/funding)	12
Regional forecasting/statistics/reporting and research	12
On-ground action (proactive; strategic)	12
Coordination (both resourcing and facilitation)	9
Better visibility / clarity of RDA responsibilities	6
Encourage understanding / promote regions	6
Generate ideas / perform proof of concept	6
Advocacy (policy reform; policy development)	5
Host conference/forums/workshops	5
Provide (direct) funding	5
Provide information re: govt programs/initiatives; consultations	5
Service integration (whole-of-government; non-government organisation)	3
Attract regional business/investment	2
Support not-for-profit organisations	2
Support local government	2
Indigenous engagement	1

3.9 Identifying key issues

Using the regional development themes that respondents has chosen as 'priority areas', each participant was asked to describe – using up to 10 lines of text – the key problems they experienced in these areas, and then to suggest possible solution(s) for these. These open-ended responses yielded a rich source of information about the challenges and opportunities across the three regions, and the possible pathways for addressing these. A summary of the impacts and challenges posed in each of the ten theme areas is provided below; the descriptions for the solutions then follows in Section 3.10.

3.9.1 Regional governance

The role, contributions and resourcing of local government featured prominently in participants' thoughts about regional governance systems. For example, as one participant wrote:

“Regional governance in many areas is already fragile - a result of the limited talent pool, available resources and particular geography... Local government [are] having to manage complex DA's [development approvals] then managing significant increases in population without the rates or income streams in place”

Overall, the key governance issues included:

- restrictions on the power/independence of local government;
- succession issues following local/state elections;
- the need for greater democracy;
- the complexity of growth issues;
- (under-)resourcing;
- dissatisfaction about consultation being driven from Brisbane;
- lack of regional unity;
- lack of regional leadership; and
- lack of oversight for resource sector activity.

3.9.2 Demographic and labour force shifts

The 'demography' category presented a mixed bag of challenges, with many participants contributing ideas about the drivers for the population trends being observed in their communities. The key examples here included (roughly in order of importance):

- housing unaffordability;
- wage disparities;

- declining liveability (violence, crime, traffic congestion, low community participation through sport);
- high unemployment, skills shortages, labour shortages and high labour costs;
- lack of services and community infrastructure;
- problems with low socio-economic base in the region (*);
- cyclical growth;
- use of mobile workforce (FIFO/DIDO) for labour supply;
- lack of training providers;
- aging population; and
- land use planning (encroachment by camps).

Many of these responses echoed sentiments given in the other thematic areas such as housing, infrastructure, and skilling and training. However, there were also some contrasts within the dataset, which probably reflect the 'heterogeneity' of the three regions under study. For example, whilst participants from Mackay Isaac Whitsunday and Fitzroy and Central West noted problems with skills shortages and inability to source labour (particularly in the services industries), Wide Bay Burnett participants were likely to cite difficulties with high unemployment (see * above).

Participants commented particularly strongly about the social impacts of resource development, for example:

“Many people now work in the community but do not treat it like their home. They come and go depending on the work but seem to feel no responsibility for how they behave in the community”

“...the impact of FIFO/DIDO/BIBO has not been meaningfully acknowledged by Australian and State Government or the mining industry. This is magnified as industry develops projects in an isolated rather than a cumulative manner...”

3.9.3 Liveability, family and social wellbeing

The liveability, family and social wellbeing topic was very well subscribed to, with approximately 65 responses. The key focus areas for this theme were those of housing unaffordability (including access to rental properties and mortgage stress); the strain of isolation on FIFO partners, with family breakdown and disruption; the high cost of living, and the lack of services (especially in the areas of health and community services).

Unaffordable housing and cost of living issues were closely related in many cases, for example:

“the increased housing and labour costs has a ripple effect that ultimately impacts on the overall cost of living in the host community...community groups struggle to attract members to fill their committees, which is particularly crucial as these volunteer committees are an essential part of their governance structures and effects their statutory viability to attract funding and support”

There was also a strong focus on issues around the loss of community identity that is brought about by the dramatic changes accompanying resource development, such as:

“moving from cohesive community stable demographics since settlement, to fragmented itinerant population with no sense of “belonging or community””

“at one time the town was a great place to live ... today we are governed by utes and there [sic] beeping alarms, fighting in the hotels ... to sum it all up, those who don't live here treat the town as a door mat”

“a small town with one recreation spot, the local weir – the locals had protocols and expectations for the area, these were overpowered by resource workers and this created enormous angst and division.”

The existing, and widening, gap between the ‘haves and have-nots’ was also cited by many. Some comments highlighted the dysfunctionality of the region in being able to translate opportunities into outcomes. For example, despite being physically situated in Central Queensland's resources heartland, “the Rockhampton region has one of the highest number of jobless families, youth unemployment and welfare dependants.” There was also good indication that the liveability problems associated with resource development are indeed cross-regional in nature:

“the inability of government at the local, state and federal level to maintain the social capital of the region at a commensurate level to the population is causing a range of social wellbeing issues too numerous to list...this impact has now spread from our region to other regions in Queensland”

Other points made by participants included concerns about:

- substance abuse, violence, crime, unwanted pregnancy;

- increased levels of commuting, lack of public transport, road safety issues;
- infrastructure lacking and/or deterioration;
- regional attraction/retention;
- lack of recreation options and arts/cultural activities;
- investment uncertainty;
- increased disposable income;
- reduced volunteerism;
- lack of specialised support for increasing numbers of migrants;
- labour shortages and uncertainty over contract positions, work/life balance;
- poor town planning decisions;
- lack of engagement with Indigenous people;
- profiteering; and
- unemployment, disadvantage.

Whilst almost all comments focussed on the negative impacts of resource sector activity, there was one exception:

“increased [FIFO] passengers have assisted in getting more airline seats available for the region which has a positive effect on the tourism market”

3.9.4 Housing

From the data provided under housing, it was clear that there are close overlaps between housing and liveability, as well as between these and demographic trends. Easily the most predominant concern with respect to housing was the (un-)affordability of rents and house prices. This was followed by problems with housing availability (including the poor mix of options, particularly at the lower price end), and the flow-on impacts to attraction/retention, services and overall liveability. For example:

“the lowest paid are the first impacted - retirees, pensioners, and other people on welfare are forced out ... Quick fix workers' housing (e.g., dongas) becomes long term as the housing situation fails to improve. This creates an 'us and them' mentality and fosters resistance from the local community”

“a family member had to get out of Gladstone – [it's] too expensive for normal earner. They [Gladstone] lost a teacher and coach... just moved to Brisbane”

“affordable housing is virtually non-existent; the average working family has no chance”

There were also concerns about the income disparities and how this created need for social housing, support and crisis accommodation:

“high rents, low incomes. People being attracted to the area by promises about the mining industry and finding out it’s just not so... seeking more emergency relief...for which there is none close by”

Other issues of note included:

- pressure on services to help people locate accommodation;
- insecurity of tenure (short leases);
- rental inflation caused by rent subsidisation (by resource companies);
- displacement driven by high prices - loss of social and support networks;
- real estate agents profiteering (e.g. bond return);
- lack of access to government housing programs (e.g. Bond Loans);
- market growth outpaces supply;
- increased reliance on camps (mobile workforce);
- imbalance in incentives for development (for low-cost options);
- high risk of homelessness;
- block-booking of motels for resource workers; and
- development of new estates into bushland.

For the Wide Bay Burnett area only, there were also suggestions that resource sector development in neighbouring regions (but not in WBB) was implicated in a decline in local property market, and, in turn, a loss in business confidence.

3.9.5 Public health

The public health area is an example of a regional development issue where participants were able to identify impacts related to both the upswing and downturn of the resource sector cycle. The impacts identified by participants also included both positive and negative outcomes. In times of high resource sector activity and growth, the negative impacts on regional communities included:

- staff attraction/retention in both the private and public sectors (e.g. due to housing unaffordability);
- lacking funding;
- lacking services (particularly for specialist care);
- lacking infrastructure (e.g. hospital parking);

- increased service demand (hospitals, GPs, ambulances);
- substance abuse and flow-on implications (violence); increase in rates of sexually transmitted diseases;
- increased mental health issues (youth);
- increased health risk and/or vulnerability linked with poor community participation (social network, sports); and
- deteriorating health of mining employees.

Within substance abuse, a specific concern was raised levels of amphetamine use, brought about by the need to return to mining sites ‘clean’: the current drug sampling procedures using by resource sector employers appear to prompt higher amphetamine use compared with cannabis, given the widely held belief that the latter is easily detectable and remains in the blood system for extended periods.

One participant noted that the increased demand for services, combined with the low staffing levels, has led to “a focus on acute service provision, not disease prevention”

Some positive impacts of resource development on public health issues were also identified: these included donations to improve health infrastructure, and the introduction of new skills (e.g. through professional emergency response teams). By comparison, during a resource industry downturn, regional communities noted an increase in suicide rates (attempted or successful).

There were also some issues raised by participants that may be important for regional development, but which are not necessarily linked with resource sector activity. For the public health theme, these included:

- the high transport and accommodation costs, and inconvenience, of travelling to obtain specialist consults;
- disadvantaged people not able to access (afford) specialist procedures; and
- staff decline due to State government shedding.

Many of the issues identified by participants matched with those identified during the desktop study (refer to the phase 1 report). However, it seems actual data to support these claims are not yet available: it would be useful to substantiate the claims through collecting or accessing (for example) waiting times for services, hospital bed availability, counts for suicide attempts or hospitalisations for substance abuse, within resource communities.

3.9.6 Workforce planning, skills and education

The area of workforce planning, skills and education was one of the most popular themes in which stakeholders described problems and suggested solutions, with over 40 responses recorded. Three common themes were predominant amongst these responses. The first key issue was the stripping of regional workers away from their existing careers, as they transition across to the resource sector in pursuit of higher wages, and the broader attraction/retention issues that this created. Competition for labour was repeatedly cited as a problem for regional small business, especially with respect to the leakage of newly-trained apprentices into mining-related employment:

“[there is] simply a dearth of employable people for both technical and unskilled roles. Things like a simple car repair are now difficult as most of the good mechanics have taken mine jobs”

“mining employers seem to prefer to poach employees ... [they] do not consider people who are currently unemployed”

The wage disparity between the resource sector and other sectors has also led to perceived overpayment for labour: for example, problems with an ‘increased pressure on wages to match [the] mining and resource sector, to hold staff, and to counter increased cost of living’.

Secondly, the need for better attraction/retention strategies across the region was highlighted by several respondents. This was particularly the case for the health and community services sector, as well as for programs with a focus on youth attraction.

The third key issue was the conundrum of having a regional skills shortage simultaneously with having high regional unemployment rates. Often, problems in this area were focussed on local training, for example:

- poor understanding of regional workforce needs, sector-by-sector, with a lack of available skilled workforce in agriculture, construction, mining and tourism;
- the need for a training focus on Australian workers to reduce unemployment (and welfare dependency);
- lack of strategic planning around workforce needs, leading to funding and training inefficiencies and competition in the training sector (e.g., amongst RTOs);

- absence of clear pathways/progression through training to gainful employment, and lack of exit strategies and employee support systems;
- the problem that the regional population too small to provide the requisite supply chain of workers;
- reliance on government funding, and risk of poor quality linked with funding cuts; and
- the lack of state government resourcing to allow support for employers in smaller regional cities (not coastal hubs).

A series of other points were also raised, which included:

- the anticipated changes in the workforce for people with a disability, driven by the National Disability Insurance Scheme);
- the anticipated changes to regional workforce needs, driven by the national aged care review;
- poor access to training and/or employment opportunities for the region’s disadvantaged;
- social impacts associated with mobile workforce (FIFO, DIDO) and problems with worker isolation in remote communities;
- impacts of unaffordable housing on apprenticeship rates;
- the impacts of changed policy in the area of Local Industry Participation Planning;
- people with low mobility, ability, and literacy and numeracy; and
- need for ‘new business’ in the area.

3.9.7 Transport and development infrastructure

The responses in this area focussed on increases in both industrial and residential development (driven by the resource sector); how these affect the standard and capacity of existing regional infrastructure; and the pressures that are being created for upgraded assets. The most common responses were those relating difficulties with road, rail and air transport infrastructure, with road issues being clearly dominant. These included:

- the need to cater for increased road traffic volumes due to urban growth;
- the need to cater for increased road traffic volumes between mine sites and service centres;
- the need to cater for changed traffic types (e.g., widened roads and bridge supports for heavy vehicles, fuel transport, wide loads);

- poor road conditions leading to safety and productivity issues (lack of passing lanes; poor visibility; all-weather reliability, poor signage; truck overturns, potholes, fatalities, business inefficiencies, fatigue-related accidents, need for bypasses, extensive delays due to roadwork);
- the need to improve (road) access, connectivity and reliability to regions hosting resource sector activities;
- impatience and inexperience of rural drivers around the increased heavy resource sector traffic; and
- limited public transport options (creating difficulties for workers; problems accessing health facilities).

Stakeholders were clearly disappointed and frustrated with the existing conditions:

“the roads were built to carry commuters and residents to and from the coast; today ... the roads are carrying massive mining equipment, B-Doubles and -Triples loaded with fuel, plus well over 3000 light vehicles per day, with little or no improvement (widening, strengthening) to the road infrastructure”

“extensive delays ... makes people frustrated and tired; the whole road system is totally inadequate for normal everyday travel, let alone extra impact from resource sector requirements”

The inaccessibility and/or deterioration of roads as a result of flood inundation was also noted; and whilst this problem does not originate from resource activity, it is linked with growth of that sector:

“if we had reliable flood free access to Brisbane, many more businesses would develop to cater for the mining industry”

There were several items related to rail and air transport:

- lack of direct flights - poor accessibility into the region;
- rail corridors have reached capacity, and non-resource commodities (e.g. agricultural products) cannot get access.

There was also a series of responses relating to the overall coordination and planning of transport (or lack thereof). The issues here included:

- lack of liaison between all levels of Government and resource companies on development timing;
- the need to upgrade transport to allow growth of industries that can support, or diversify away from, the resource sector (e.g. services, tourism); and

- poor linkages across transport modes (e.g. disconnect between arriving flights and bus/taxi availability).

Again, there was a clear sense of dissatisfaction from stakeholders:

“the Australian Government is investing substantially, [but] there is no grand plan beyond pothole repair”

Outside of transport infrastructure, there were also notes about other development needs, including:

- inadequate infrastructure for communications and connectivity, impacting both liveability and business growth;
- reactive planning of hospitals, schools/university/ TAFE, airport and rail infrastructure; and
- lacking social, economic, cultural, sports and recreational infrastructure.

Several respondents from the noted the serious infrastructure burden that has been placed on local government to keep pace with growth; in Wide Bay Burnett, there was a suggestion that local government is imposing excessive charges to address Australian and state government funding shortfalls and that this is a disincentive for exploration and development.

3.9.8 Water and energy

Responses in this section were provided by stakeholders from Mackay Isaac Whitsunday, or Fitzroy and Central West, only. With respect to water issues, responses from participants included:

- lack of water allocations and/or equitable distribution amongst users (urban, rural, mining);
- discharge from mining pits into waterways;
- lack of water delivery infrastructure as a constraint to resource sector growth (MIW); and
- upgrade of water and sewerage required for anticipated population growth.

Similar sentiments were also recorded with respect to energy assets, for example:

- concerns about meeting energy supply needs to avoid constraints to resource sector growth;
- lack of, and costs associated with, energy infrastructure impeding residential development; and
- poor reliability of power supply.

3.9.9 Indigenous issues

A range of problems were catalogued with respect to Indigenous issues. The key topics included:

- high unemployment and lack of coordinated training/employment opportunities;
- lack of direction (leadership) from Traditional Owner groups, and difficulty with engagement of the group as a whole;
- lack of skills and knowledge in enterprise development;
- fragmented community and/or family breakdown;
- substance abuse; gambling;
- lack of positive role models; and
- long history with the justice system.

However, it appeared that relatively few of these were mentioned in direct association with the impacts of resource sector development, but rather, reflected Indigenous development issues more broadly.

3.9.10 Environment/Natural resource management

In the environmental/natural resource management space, stakeholder's concerns were raised under two main groupings. The first involved criticisms about the overall approach to valuing and/or managing the natural environment in the context of resource development, for example:

- EIS (Environmental Impact Statements) process weighted too heavily to development (of the resource sector);
- penalties set too low to deter poor environmental performance; and
- short-term economic gains favoured over long-term environmental protection.

As noted in other theme areas, the problems in the Wide Bay Burnett region were of different nature to elsewhere in MIW and FCW: here, one participant objected to the environmental agenda 'crippling ... sensible conversations about new resource projects, resulting in no exploration or development options'. In general, the reverse was true of FCW and MIW.

In the second grouping, participants raised examples of problems in particular areas such as:

- reef damage and coastal management concerns;
- water quality (riverine, groundwater, ports, mining water releases (salinity));
- sustainability of water supply;
- poor NRM governance;
- management of country (cultural value);
- issues around conservation and rehabilitation (mine sites);
- coal seam gas development (especially fracking practices);
- dust; and
- lack of respect in public places (e.g. littering).

Unfortunately, many of the responses lacked specificity: for example, concerns about 'coastal management' or 'CSG development', without the attendant reasons (e.g., loss in coral cover, changes to the water table). Possibly, this information could be supplemented by inserting the results of the desktop study, although there would be no guarantee that these data matched with the problems or challenges actually being raised by the stakeholders.

The negative influence of weather extremes (natural disasters) was also noted as a problem in Fitzroy and Central West. This appeared to be raised in the context of climate change, but it is possible that the respondent was also referring to the potential for flooding events to be especially problematic if linked with levee bank failure on mine sites and/or the environmental implications related to mining water discharge from flooded pits.

3.10 Suggesting solutions

In similarity to the section on regional 'challenges', participants were also asked to provide open-ended responses about possible solutions that could be pursued for the region, in response to the pressures of resource sector growth. The textual responses from participants were analysed by grouping the suggestions based on an adaptation of those headings already used in Section 2.6. The final groupings were as follows:

- 1. Areas for policy development and/or reform:** this group mostly comprised suggestions about legislative and taxation reform, and new or revised directions for policy areas that impact upon regional futures. Policy was taken to mean either government policy, or business models/practice in the private sector.
- 2. Key investment areas:** notwithstanding that most regional development initiatives will require some level of resourcing, this grouping was used to categorise stakeholder comments about specific ideas for direct (dollar) investment in infrastructure and/or services.
- 3. Leadership, collaboration and innovation:** this grouping consisted of ideas about advocacy and lobbying to secure regional sustainability, partnership brokerage, and ideation (creating new paradigms about regional development in resource communities).
- 4. Research, monitoring and evaluation areas:** this grouping covers applied research and longitudinal data collection on key regional statistics, as well as the assessment of past funding and/or programming initiatives.
- 5. Education, extension and engagement:** this includes suggestions about awareness-raising and/or capacity building across residents, governance groups and the business/corporate community, and the engagement interface between RDA and its stakeholders.
- 6. On-ground initiatives:** this 'remnant' group contains examples of other programs, events or operating philosophies not captured in any of the above categories. Often, these suggestions were targeted at the community level, where the RDA role is more likely to be one of support, rather than as a leader/driver. Nevertheless, as on-ground initiatives were highly rated by stakeholders as the preferred type of response by RDA, identifying useful on-ground works remained a focus when the recommendations were being developed (see Section 4.2.6).

Using these groupings, a series of ten tables were constructed, one for each of the regional development themes explored by the survey (see Appendix C). It is important to note that these tables have been populated entirely based on the participants' responses; with no filtering or assessment in terms of the validity, feasibility or effectiveness of any particular 'solution'. Indeed, the ongoing challenge of determining what makes for an 'effective' solution is the basis for one of the recommendations provided in Section 4 of this report.

Of the six broad types of solutions that were raised, policy reform was consistently the largest grouping; with suggestions for the three tiers of government as well as for practice change in industry. On-ground programs and regional investment were also strong categories, but this varied with the theme area.

Considering all the responses, some of the suggestions put forward by stakeholders were sweeping statements (e.g., "shut down the mines"), yet others were quite specific and/or novel:

"introduce a community volunteering incentive scheme into the work conditions of staff" or "a company bonus (not money) for volunteering for community activities"

"schedule the release of trade qualified workers to undertake maintenance work for not-for-profit organisations and eligible low-income households in the host community"

"[require resource proponents and their employees to] have a community induction process to understand history, culture, environment and values much better"

"ensure that financial planning is included in induction training when accepting a position with the resource sector"

"require developers to donate a very small percentage of their properties to affordable housing (to be available for people who earn under an amount)"

"re-visit the fringe benefits tax on housing supplied by mining companies in remote areas"

"mining operations should be conditioned to supply power to the main grid during over supply from the dragline operations"

"promotion of staff exchange as a workforce development tool"

Several stakeholders made a point of noting that the cyclical nature of the resource sector growth was not a good justification for deferring government spend, or for reducing efforts about regional development:

“the current “cooling” of the coal industry and associated easing of accommodation pressures should be an opportunity to take stock and try to implement some realistic plans before the next “boom”.

It was of note that several suggestions were recurrent across multiple themes: these included sentiments about the need for collaborative partnerships across the three tiers of government, business, industry and the community; the need for red tape reduction; repeated calls for policy change around requirements for local procurement and housing for the non-resident workforce; and taxation reform. The latter had a clear focus on increased liabilities for resource sector proponents, with the raised revenue then being reinvested into the host communities in some fashion. In fact, a common theme through many responses was that mining proponents should be shouldering a greater burden of regional development in their host communities – through tax arrangements, formal development conditions and/or informal social licence to operate.

3.11 Study constraints

This research was qualitative in nature, and the stakeholder consultation involved relatively small sample sizes. Consequently, the results have been presented largely via basic graphical representations and discourse analysis, rather than through the use of in-depth statistical comparisons. Secondly, it is important to note the inherent bias in the survey responses: mostly, invitations for participation were sent to people who are already engaged with RDA in each region.

This particular research used the approach of working with ten broad areas of regional development, however, it must be acknowledged that these ten are not exhaustive, and nor are they mutually exclusive. Most of regional development is in fact multidisciplinary. Thus, when RDAs arrive at a priority theme of ‘liveability’ (for example), this will by necessity also include other areas such as health, housing, transport and more.

Finally, as mentioned earlier, the lists of regional challenges and possible solutions have been presented largely as they were received from the audience; and these have not been ground-truthed.

4.0 Developing the RDA response

The final project phase involved drawing together the results of both the desktop and stakeholder consultation phases, and using these to inform the development of recommendations for future RDA activities. These recommendations were focussed on identifying tasks that could be undertaken by an RDA resource-sector cluster (i.e., cooperatively across MIW, FCW and WBB; and/or by other RDAs who may have an interest in working on resource sector issues, such as the Pilbara or Hunter Valley). The study also highlighted some broader ideas that could be adopted by RDAs nationally.

The recommendations were prepared by analysing the evidence-base on regional impacts and possible solutions, and using this to direct future RDA efforts. Specifically, this involved identifying three priority themes and seven secondary themes, and then identifying the responses that made the best use of effective ‘cross-regional’ partnerships under each theme. However, determining the specific actions for each theme area required a careful approach: whilst the regional stakeholders articulated a range of possible pathways to respond to resource-sector growth, it was necessary to consider these in the context of:

- (a) whether pursuing any particular option is an RDA agenda, or whether it might be more appropriately driven by other organisations; and
- (b) whether the suggested options were in fact valid as effective strategies for responding to the impacts of resource sector activity.

The first point requires a good understanding of the pre-existing operating context for each of the participating RDAs, as well as the existing policy positions and expectations of RDA for the Australian and State government: both these are explored in Section 4.1 below. The second point is a complex challenge, and a specific recommendation for this is detailed later in Section 4.2.

4.1 Operating context

4.1.1 RDA in MIW, FCW and WBB

The three participating RDAs each share a similar operating context, given that they all operating under the same Australian and Queensland government structures. However, each RDA is also unique, reflecting a place-based approach whereby a tailored Regional Roadmap is developed and the RDA itself participates in a different mix of initiatives, depending on the relevance and value of each one

for the particular region. Obviously, then, forming recommendations about future work for RDA must respect that some work is already being undertaken (and that this varies by RDA region)

Table 4 describes each RDA in terms of the focal points of their Regional Roadmaps (that is, their regionally-specific priorities), and the key project work and/ or collaborations that each is involved in (that is, the active projects in their business plans). Of note from this table is that while the Regional Roadmaps share a common grounding in social, economic and economic goals; each RDA interprets these differently (e.g., a focus on 'innovation' or 'infrastructure' or 'education and training'.

4.1.2 Alignment with government policy objectives

In 2010, the Queensland government identified a series of future challenges for dealing with the cumulative impacts of development in resource communities (DEEDI, 2010). These included:

- uncertainty and unevenness of development;
- accurate and timely data;
- determining a hierarchy of regional centres;
- coordination and integration;
- sustainable resource management (land, water);

Table 5 Strategic focus and operating context for RDAs in MIW, FCW and WBB.

RDA Region	Operating context	Regional Roadmap strategic focus areas	Recent initiatives / participation
Mackay Isaac Whitsunday	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Covers 3 local government authorities • Participant in the Northern Queensland Strategy 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Developing the region's infrastructure 2. Sustainable Economic growth 3. Protecting natural assets 4. Creating a lifestyle region 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Central Queensland Resource Catchment Workforce Development Strategy • Rural Futures Statement • Local Government Leadership Forums • Social Planning Report
Fitzroy and Central West	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Covers 11 local government authorities • Participant in the Northern Queensland Strategy • Central Queensland Statutory Planning currently underway 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Create social value 2. Strengthen regional economic contribution 3. Optimise environmental outcomes 4. Develop a culture of regional policy and innovation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Central Queensland Workforce Development Strategy • Central Queensland Resource Sector Indigenous Employment Pathway Strategy • Facilitating Small Business Innovation and Growth – Profiling of Rockhampton's SME cohort • Regional decision-making tool
Wide Bay Burnett	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Covers 6 local government authorities 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Strengthening our Regional Profile 2. Driving Economic Prosperity and Job Creation 3. Fostering Natural Resource Management and Sustainability 4. Advancing Education and Training 5. Supporting our Community and Social Wellbeing 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Resource Sector Workforce Mobility Study 2013 • Workforce Development Jobs and Skills Matching Study 2013 • Economic impact study of resource sector workers in the Wide Bay Burnett • Community impact study of resource sector workers in the Wide Bay Burnett

- building capacity and capability of local business;
- diversifying the economy;
- monitoring and managing cumulative impacts; and
- maintaining liveability.

Many of these areas also emerged in the responses given by participants in the online survey used for this research.

In 2010-11, there was also strong state government focus on 'partnerships with industry, community and all levels of government'; which resonates with the current RDA national charter:

'... in consultation with the community, business, non-profit organisations and all levels of government, [RDA] will articulate local priorities, identify and align resources, engage stakeholders and promote solutions' (DRALGAS, 2013).

Taken together, this suggests RDA would have good alignment with government objectives, as well as with the community's preferences, where it elects to working closely on issues of resource sector growth. However, the conditions under which RDA might be best placed to lead, or support different agendas still require clarification.

4.1.3 Recommendations from inquiry into FIFO workforces in regional Australia

In August 2011, a House of Representatives Committee was tasked with a national inquiry into the use of 'fly-in, fly-out' (FIFO) and 'drive-in, drive-out' (DIDO) workforce practices in Regional Australia. During the 14-month lifespan of the Inquiry, over 200 written submissions were received, and a series of public hearings were staged. A final report was tabled in Parliament in February 2013. A full list of the 21 recommendations arising from that report is provided in Appendix D.

Given the context of this study, it is important to consider how well this list of recommendations translates to the MIW, FCW and/or WBB context, and in particular, to consider any insights from the Inquiry with regard to the role of RDA, in helping to respond to the impacts of FIFO and resource development.

Only one of the 21 recommendations specifically references RDA, calling for consultation between them and regional health groups, in order that a specific health focus is built into their Regional Roadmap.

Public health did not emerge from the survey data as a priority theme for MIW, FCW and WBB stakeholders; despite participants indicating that regional performance on public health was amongst the poorest of all regional development themes (see Section 3.4). However, many of the issues surrounding the health impacts of FIFO were listed under the liveability, family and social wellbeing theme, which ranked of highest priority.

Five of the 21 recommendations in the report called for new studied into various impacts of FIFO practices on regional Australia, including the areas of economic impacts and local government services and infrastructure; regional medical services; the health of FIFO/DIDO workers; impacts on children and family relationships, and the socio-economic impacts of establishing regional centres and FIFO source communities. Many of these are supported in terms of the types of problems that were identified by stakeholders from MIW, FCW and WBB. On the other hand, the participants (perhaps surprisingly) disagreed that more needed to be known about the impacts of resource development (see Section 3.5).

On the whole, many of the remaining recommendations are supported by this study, echoing some of the solutions put forward by regional stakeholders. This was particularly the case for those that speak of taxation reform, such as zoning arrangements (see Section 3.10).

4.2 Working strategically: recommendations for RDA ⁹

The primary purpose of this study was to examine the impacts that were being faced across the communities of MIW, FCW and WBB; and to determine if good opportunities existed for the respective RDAs to work together. Both the desktop review and the stakeholder consultation exercise demonstrated that the three regions share a number of concerns, and that there is general agreement about priority theme areas across MIW, FCW and WBB. Furthermore, it is likely that many of the solutions suggested by stakeholders could be more effectively pursued, resourced and/or delivered, if undertaken cooperatively across the Central Queensland region. Good examples of these include lobbying for policy change around affordable housing, strategic planning of road infrastructure, and the development of whole-of-region workforce strategy. Consequently, there should be real value in creating a formal grouping whereby RDAs can work together on issues of mutual interest, for synergistic outcomes.

⁹ Wherever possible, the series of 13 recommendations presented in this section have been based on the evidence arising from either the desktop review and/or stakeholder consultation phases of the study. Sections of the report containing relevant information for each recommendation are indicated in subscript following each statement of recommendation.

Recommendation 1: That a network of RDAs from regions that service the resource sector (e.g., a 'resource sector cluster') should be formed to share experiences, seek solutions and work collaboratively to create effective responses to the challenge and opportunities associated with resource sector growth in regional Australia.

Section 2; Section 3

Such a 'cluster' need not mean that particular RDAs lose their voice – as specific actions could still be pursued independently, according to regional need – but rather, that the cluster could act as a vehicle for achieving more effective (and potentially faster) regional outcomes. Importantly, the cluster could include representation by not only those RDAs with resource operations in their hinterlands (e.g., MIW, FCW), but also those who are engaged, or who wish to engage, with the resource sector economy, through supply chains and/or workforce participation (as evidenced by the Wide Bay Burnett situation).

Whilst not specifically evidenced in this study, an extension of the clustering concept could include the formation of cross-regional groups of RDAs for other purposes. This may involve RDAs working in geographic groups (i.e., working with neighbouring RDAs) as well as functional groups (e.g. teaming up with RDAs who have similar regional challenges/opportunities). This could see the emergence of RDA leadership groups focussed on (for example) 'food bowl' regions, manufacturing regions, tropical Australia or others. In some cases, it may also be possible to invite non-RDA entities into these clusters, for example, where there are industry or community organisations who share the same priority agendas; however, this should not eclipse leadership role of RDA.

Secondly, putting 'clustering' aside, this study has shown that RDAs are presented with a difficult set of circumstances, as they attempt to meet the sometimes divergent expectations of government, industry, business and the community; and with a minimum of operational resources and human capacity. For example, there are several instances of contradiction within the stakeholder survey results, concerning what are truly the region's 'priority issues' and what nature of responses are required to address them .

If the work of RDA is to be of ongoing value to regions and the stakeholders in regional development, then a strategic approach that balances these challenges is required. Below, the six main areas of responses are considered in terms of the ways that RDA might best be able to wrest value for their region, as well as fulfilling their charter.

4.2.1 Policy development and/or reform

The area of policy development is of particular importance to RDAs who are looking to work 'cross-regionally'. It is through combining the experiences of more than one region together that arguments for policy change can become stronger, and by challenging each other's thinking that ideas about changed policy can become more robust. Furthermore, a successful policy change is likely to result in impact on more than one region at a time, thus maximising the impact factor of RDA's work. Working toward policy development and/or reform fits well with the RDA brief to 'consult and engage with communities' as well as to 'provide information and advice on their region to all levels of government'.

To do this effectively, RDAs could:

- prepare (or commission) regular policy-related documents and/or case studies that illustrate the unintended implications of policy decisions on the region, ideally using an empirical (evidence-based) approach.
- work with industry bodies to help ensure that they are engaged with policy debate – for example, stage gatherings where new policy directions are explained, and to solicit feedback (e.g. for the National Food Security paper, or Australia in the Asia Century).
- generate thought pieces that suggest possible new policy directions to encourage debate and further policy development, tailored for regions.

Recommendation 2: that the RDA have an increased role in Australian and State government policy development; including being involved in generating the evidence base, increasing awareness about policy positions, and bringing forward ideas for policy reform that better meets the needs of regions.

Section 2; Section 3

10 As one example, stakeholders rated 'policy change' as amongst the least popular response option in one section of the survey (see Table 1); but then put forward a range of suggestions for solutions that could only be effectively advanced by working within the policy domain (see Appendix C). Also, the public health topic ranked poorly in terms of regional priority, yet stakeholders indicated that the performance to date in this area was poor, and one recommendation from the FIFO Inquiry was that health was to be a specific issue for RDAs to focus on.

Another issue with regards to policy development is that – to date – most effort in this area is very clearly focussed on ‘traditional’ resource communities: that is, on those regions that actually house resource operations. However, as the recent report from the Parliamentary Inquiry on FIFO has demonstrated, this is only part of the equation in terms of responding to the regional agenda, and that consideration must also be given to those communities that engage with the resource sector through (for example) labour provision¹¹. This issue is particularly pertinent in Queensland, where the Wide Bay Burnett region is being very proactive about pursuing further opportunities for labour force participation in the resource sector, particularly given their high levels of regional unemployment¹².

Also, the results of this study have demonstrated that the nature of resource sector impacts may be quite different across different regions, particularly those that service the resource sector from a distance: for example, in WBB, this has included concerns about unemployment, reduced business confidence and investment and/or decline in property values. This suggests that there is a need for the debate about impacts of, and solutions to, resource sector development in regional Australia to be expanded beyond regions hosting construction and/or operations. Using such a definition would have broad benefit: it would provide the service communities with a better chance to engage with the resource sector economy, and, in doing so, may help to reduce some of the impacts experienced in traditional communities. As one cross-regional example, this may involve sourcing workforce from an area such as Wide Bay Burnett, where there are high levels of unemployment, in order to relieve the pressure of labour shortages and wage disparities being experienced in the north.

Recommendation 3: that the RDA resource sector cluster spearhead a debate about the different kinds of regions that are engaged, or wish to engage, with the resources sector, and the positive and negative impacts that resource sector growth will have on each. In particular, there is a need to ensure that policy decisions and investment flows properly consider the implications for regions that host operations, as well as those that provide mobile workforces.

Section 3.9.2; Section 3.9.4; Section 3.9.6

4.2.2 Facilitating key investment

Direct investment was the second most important element that the communities of MIW, FCW and WBB asked for from their RDA; however, RDAs are not provided with a budget that would allow direct resourcing of community projects. Rather, RDA functions as a gatekeeper for the RDAF programme, and can promote other investment programs and encourage regionally-based proponents to access them. For example, the existing situation from MIW, FCW and WBB suggests that the application and evaluations process may need adjusting, to ensure that the projects submitted are both feasible and that they respond as well as possible to the stated community preferences.

Furthermore, given that this study has also indicated that the MIW, FCW and WBB regions share many common issues (and perhaps common solutions in having these addressed), a novel suggestion may be to consider how to encourage innovative and *cross-regional* projects to be applied for through RDAF. Admittedly, this would require a change in the RDAF process to allow for RDAs to identify potential collaborators, and to bring them together (e.g. in a workshop environment) to develop up proposals; however, it could also introduce the opportunity for synergistic effects in multiple regions, thus increasing the efficacy of the RDAF spend.

Recommendation 4: that consideration be given to the structure and/or application process of the RDAF mechanism, to ensure that (a) the applications received through this programme better reflect the preferences of regional stakeholders in terms of infrastructure investment, and (b) that innovative, cross-regional collaboration is possible.

Section 3.6, Section 3.10

Secondly, one of the strong themes in the ‘investment’ solutions suggested by stakeholders, was the need to be more strategic. The importance of ‘Royalties for Regions’ (or other iterations referring to strategic regional investment funds) was also repeatedly mentioned by stakeholders. It is of note that the change in state government in 2012 led to the introduction of the Royalties for

11 That report was purposely arranged into chapters on ‘fly-in’ as well as ‘fly-out’ communities

12 This includes a series of works such as the Resource Sector Workforce Mobility Study, Workforce Development Jobs and Skills Matching Study, The economic impact study of resource sector workers in the Wide Bay Burnett, and a community impact study of resource sector workers in the Wide Bay Burnett.

Regions program, which is designed to provide investment for community infrastructure, roads and floodplain security projects (DSDIP, 2013). Unlike the Australian government's RDAF procedures, the program guidelines for Royalties for Regions do not compel RDA involvement in, or assessment of, the expression of interest or business case preparation. Rather, proponents are 'encouraged to partner with' organisations including RDA committees. Program eligibility is also limited to those local government areas that host resource sector operations, but not others that service the sector¹³. In the absence of structural change to this problem, RDA may best be able to broker 'key investment' for their communities by working in strategic partnerships with government and industry.

Recommendation 5: that the RDA resource sector cluster work closely with the three tiers of government and the private sector, to develop a more strategically planned approach to delivering social and community infrastructure that aligns with regional priorities .

Section 2, Section 3.6, Section 3.9.3, Section 3.9.10

4.2.3 Leadership, collaboration and innovation

This research work has demonstrated the willingness of RDA to engage with a broad stakeholder set, as described in the RDA charter. It has also identified a number of specific areas in which the participating RDAs (both individually and collectively) can pursue further work within their communities. However, the work also highlighted some inherent difficulties in the work of RDAs, as they assist regions in responding to the challenges and opportunities of resource sector development. Firstly, some uncertainty/confusion remains around RDA's role(s), with an apparently poor alignment across the government, community and industry's expectations of RDA and what they are resourced for. The ability to engage broadly and deeply – that is, reaching across all sectors – appears to be an ongoing problem, particularly given the time-intensive nature of engagement, and the limited resources that RDAs may have to devote to this area. Given that the stakeholder consultation results showed some disconnection between the perceived roles of RDAs, compared with what they are actually resourced for, there is a need to map, contrast and compare the expectations of the Australian and State governments, the RDA Committees, and the community with respect to the role and deliverables of RDAs.

13 For example, in 2012-13, this does not include any local governments within the Wide Bay Burnett region.

Recommendation 6: there is a need to map, contrast and compare the expectations of the Australian and State governments, the RDA Committees, and the community with respect to the role and deliverables of RDAs, with the objective of clarifying the role of RDA as a lead agency on regional issues.

Section 3.8

Furthermore, in helping to better position RDA in the landscape of regional development and governance, it may also be useful for RDAs to undertake formal mapping of the key stakeholders for priority theme areas, and then work with them by providing feedback to strategy development. When this kind of input is provided across multiple regions, opportunities to 'cross-fertilise', share new ideas, exchange of best-practice information can help to stimulate more innovative approaches to tackling complex regional development issues.

4.2.4 Research, monitoring and evaluation areas

The research and evaluation area may be closely linked with the policy development area above, given that collecting an evidence base is critically important in gauging the impacts of current policy, and of modelling the likely implications of policy change. The need for greater research into the issues facing resource-regions was also strongly acknowledged in the report from the FIFO Inquiry, with five of the 21 recommendations being specifically about addressing research gaps. For the communities of MIW, FCW and WBB, information gaps around the pressures on public health are particularly noticeable, with most of the existing information being anecdotal (see table 1).

In relation to data and population numbers, and their relationship to infrastructure and services provision in regional Australia, there is value in ensuring RDAs have direct support from the office of the ABS, ABARES, BREE and OESR (and/or similar offices in other states), in order that they can current and credible information about their regions, for use in lobbying and advocacy.

Recommendation 7: RDAs should be provided with direct support from the Australian and State Government offices responsible for collecting, collating and/or analysing statistical information about resource sector activity and socio-demographic and socio-economic trends in regional Australia.

Section 3.9.2

RDA is not funded to undertake large research projects directly, and, under current resourcing arrangements, it seems unlikely that a discretionary investment pool would be made available for RDAs to (for example) seed research projects within their region. Thus, it may be more strategic to focus on encouraging investment from government and the private sector to resource critical research activities. Here RDA can assist by articulating regional research needs and defining project scopes, where possible. For example, this may include RDAs being able to use their local knowledge to help inform the priority research themes used by the Rural Industries R&D Corporation, and other bodies relevant to regions and their industries/communities. RDAs can also play a useful role in facilitating research partnerships that will result in the development and/or trialling of new solutions to the impacts being experienced by resource communities.

Recommendation 8: RDAs should play a strong role in encouraging and facilitating research on regional issues, by drawing on their local knowledge to help identify regional research gaps.

Section 3.10

4.2.5 Education, extension and engagement

Given that regional engagement is a central role for RDAs, activities that promote a greater understanding of regional needs and impacts with regards to resource sector activity are critically important. It is also very important that any communication (either to government or to community and industry) about regional needs and impacts is underpinned by a strong evidence base. This study has provided a rich source of information that the RDA cluster can use to lobby and advocate for regions, and to prioritize RDA responses. It may be useful to consider an annual re-deployment of the survey instrument (or similar), and to prepare an accompanying trend analysis, which could then complement the annual refresh of the *Regional Roadmaps*. The publication of factsheets or regional reports for particular issues and/or industry sectors may also be a useful extension exercise.

However, it is also important to note that over-consultation ('consultation fatigue') may be a problem. Furthermore, whilst this particular study obtained generally good representation from the whole-of-region overall, this was not always the case at the sectoral level, with some key industries missing. In

particular, there were some gaps in terms of industry representation (e.g. construction, transport), which suggests that engagement with these sectors may need to be increased in the future. There was also low levels of participation from Australian government: this is perhaps not surprising given that most Australian government departments do not have a physical footprint in the regions (notable exceptions being DISSTRE (Enterprise Connect, AusIndustry), DEEWR, Department of Human Services (Centrelink) and the Department of Defence). It is important that RDAs continue to work on identifying and consulting with the 'silent majority', and for the potential resourcing implications of this to be considered.

Recommendation 9: that the RDA resource-region cluster conducts regular consultation in order to generate longitudinal information on the issues, challenges and trends associated with resource-sector growth. This should be undertaken in a manner that is as inclusive as possible, but which also respects the risk of over-consultation in some regions.

Section 3.2, Section 3.6, Section 3.10

One of the recurring themes from the responses gathered in this study was that local government is an essential player in addressing regional development issues, particularly as many of the adverse impacts of resource sector growth are related with the provision of local government infrastructure and services. Secondly, participants indicated that business and industry are also important in creating solutions to impacts. However, it must be acknowledged that many of the comments received about 'business and industry' actually related to roles and solutions specifically for resource sector proponents (e.g. regarding provision of housing). Thirdly, the desktop review indicated that engagement on Indigenous issues could be matured to match the standard of that being achieved in other areas (e.g. the Pilbara)(see Table 1).

As the RDAs in MIW, FCW and WBB look to fulfil their 'partnerships' charter, there should be a clear focus on working with local government and business and industry. It is already the case that local government are close partners, with the Regional Roadmaps in MIW, FCW and WBB each drawing on the community plans prepared by the local government authorities in their region. However, more could be done to engage with business and industry, particularly on theme areas

that most impact business confidence and prosperity, such as red tape reduction, workforce planning and skills. This could also include leveraging the role of regional universities, given the substantive role that these institutions can play in improving socio-economic outcomes in their regions¹⁴.

Recommendation 10: RDAs in MIW, FCW and WBB should continue to focus on partnerships with local government (including Regional Organisations of Councils) as the preferred method of tackling regional agendas, and to help create an effective interface with the community.

Section 3.7

Recommendation 11: There is a need for RDA in MIW, FCW and WBB to build closer partnerships with business and industry in creating solutions to the impacts of resource sector growth, particularly with respect to transport and development infrastructure.

Section 3.5, Section 3.10

4.2.6 On-ground initiatives

In determining the on-ground initiatives, a key focus was to define what areas the participating RDAs might collaborate on, as well as what form this collaboration might take. Here, it was acknowledged that on-ground initiatives are typically amongst the most visible – but also the most resource-intensive – of the tasks that are carried out by RDA committees. Given the inevitable human and financial constraints experienced by RDAs (particularly those with geographically large regions and/or dispersed populations), there was a need to refine the array of possible on-ground actions offered in the survey into a succinct list.

Ideally, this list should be compiled to offer the best combination of working collaboratively and cross-regionally, as well as demonstrating a focus on responding to the stated preferences of community stakeholders. Consequently – and taking cues from the consultation results of this study – priority was given to identifying on-ground initiatives in the theme areas that were ranked of highest importance by the stakeholders.

Recommendation 12: The MIW, FCW and WBB cluster of RDAs should focus its efforts into those areas that are ranked as high priority by regional stakeholders. In 2013, these comprise:

- (a) Liveability, family and social wellbeing issues (including affordable housing)
- (b) Transport and development infrastructure; and
- (c) Workforce planning, skilling and education.

Section 3.3, Section 3.9.3, Section 3.9.4, Section 3.9.6, Section 3.9.7, Section 3.10

Specific on-ground actions for each theme were then distilled by applying four criteria to narrow the list of suggestions already provided by the stakeholders:

1. Is the solution one that responds to a *cross-regional challenge*, and is the solution likely to provide an opportunity to leverage two or more of the regions' resources together? Given that the focus of this particular project was on cross-regional cooperation, this was a key criterion for guiding RDA's future activities. Ideally, priority activities should include those that offer the ability to leverage effort, funding etc. for synergistic outcomes.
2. Is the solution one that is a realistic part of *RDA's agenda*? That is, does it reflect the role of RDAs as described in their charter, and/or is it within their sphere of influence?
3. Does the solution align well with the objectives already found in one or more of the *RDA Roadmaps*?
4. Does the solution *align well with current government policy*, or does it introduce a new policy discussion that is needed?

It was acknowledged that these four categories were not necessarily mutually exclusive.

In developing the recommendations for future RDA work in MIW, FCW and WBB, the project team also chose to focus on activities that can be addressed in a three-year timeframe, and which reflected those areas that RDAs could influence directly. The outcome of the assessment exercise is provided overleaf. Table 6 concentrates on the priority theme areas, with three action areas identified for each. The remaining seven theme areas are examined in Table 7: given that these were of secondary importance, only one key issue has been provided per theme.

14 A study is currently being prepared by the Regional Universities Network with regards to this.

Using ongoing collaboration amongst the MIW, FCW and WBB RDAs to determine the value of particular solutions is likely to be useful, as new ideas for tackling the impacts of resource sector growth continue to emerge. However, the stakeholder responses also indicated the complexity of the situation in resource communities, with many of the ten theme areas having overlapping or synergistic effects (e.g. between housing, liveability, and labour force attraction/retention). There were also a range of challenges cited that do not necessarily originate from resource sector activity, and yet feature as critical topics for resource communities: this was particularly evident in the areas of Indigenous issues, public health and the environment/NRM theme. It is therefore important to also consider these when developing solutions and responses, especially where compounding pressures are expected (for example, the effects of natural disasters on land and water environments, presenting alongside land management/water quality issues associated with coal mining).

Compounding these problems is also the additional uncertainty/confusion around what are in fact, appropriate regional responses. For example, the stakeholder consultation indicated that many stakeholders in MIW, FCW and WBB appear to favour 'visible' action in the form of on-ground programs and/or stakeholder events, with the perception being that much of the 'talk' around regional development

issues is unproductive. However, when asked for specific examples of changes that would reduce the (negative) impacts of resource sector growth, there was a heavy focus on items that would require policy change or new business models: typically, these would result only after effective lobbying and/or networking amongst the three tiers of government as well as business, industry and the community.

Overall, identifying the most useful of on-ground actions is an extraordinarily difficult situation, and one that might benefit from the development of a clear methodology for assessing the feasibility of ideas and their likelihood of real return in regional communities. This may include working with RDA boards to ensure they have a thorough understanding of decision-making in regional development, and what constitutes a 'good' project in the theoretical sense: when combined with their stock of pre-existing local knowledge, this would be a powerful way to ensure actions are as strategic, and as effective, as possible.

Recommendation 13: The RDA resource sector cluster should develop a methodology and/or best practice for capturing and testing solutions put forward by the community, regarding ways in which to reduce impacts and maximise the benefits of resource sector development in regional Australia.

Section 3.6, Section 3.10

Table 6 On-ground actions in priority themes areas: the issues, solutions and collaborative opportunities by which RDA can assist resource communities to deal with growth.

(This table was compiled by group discussion amongst the participating RDAs).

Issue (as defined by stakeholders)	Possible solution (as defined by stakeholders)	Cross-regional, collaborative opportunities for RDA
THEME: LIVEABILITY, FAMILY AND SOCIAL WELLBEING		
Lack of understanding and absence of social mapping across the three regions	Provide a one stop shop point of access to all of the community services in each of the three regions	Advocate to the Australian, State and local government for a central point of reference for community services
Lack of social infrastructure to support families living in a region	Development of social infrastructure for families, led by resource sector proponents	Examine social infrastructure across the regions, and help facilitate better delivery and coordination of these assets by Australian, State and local governments
Lack of primary health services	Provide greater incentives for GP and health care providers to move to the region and service remote areas (e.g., through affordable housing)	Advocate to the State Government to mandate minimum regional service times for health care providers and/or provide incentives for regional residency
Lack of affordable housing	Work with the resource sector to establish FIFO hubs in affordable housing areas (e.g., WBB can assist in providing affordable housing options)	Work with neighbouring RDAs to identify solutions that are both regionally and cross-regionally effective
THEME: TRANSPORT AND DEVELOPMENT INFRASTRUCTURE		
Issues with adequacy of infrastructure - poor roads, increased traffic	Improved road quality to ensure driver safety and greater productivity	Work with neighbouring RDAs to promote key statistics and issues (e.g., fatigue management for workers driving to mine sites)
Lack of coordination/ collaboration between Australian/State governments and the private sector	Develop and implement a long-term infrastructure and investment plan	Help coordinate discussions between the Australian and State government, as well as the private sector, on strategic infrastructure planning and investment
Proximity of airports to resource communities	Develop an Aviation Strategy for FIFO	Discuss an aviation strategy for the MIW, FCW and WBB regions in the context of the national aviation strategy
THEME: WORKFORCE PLANNING, SKILLS AND EDUCATION		
Lack of understanding of the future workforce of the resource sector	Additional work needed to understand the ongoing workforce needs of the resource sector	Ensure complementary data and information about workforce and skilling is collected across the three regions
Lack of local skilled workforce due to the poaching of skilled workforce by the resource sector	Development of a Queensland Workforce Development Strategy for the purpose of utilising skilled and semi-skilled workers with common skill sets across industries	Further engagement with RTO / JSA networks to implement industry-led training solutions for real job outcomes
Lack of skilled and qualified resource sector workers	Increase training opportunities and apprenticeships for a skilled resource sector workers	Work with resource sector employers to understand the employment and training needs and assist with industry-led training solutions

Table 7 On-ground actions in other theme areas: examples of key problems, solutions and collaborative opportunities by which RDA can assist resource communities to deal with growth.
(This table was compiled by group discussion amongst the participating RDAs).

Issue (as defined by stakeholders)	Possible solution (as defined by stakeholders)	Cross-regional, collaborative opportunities for RDA
THEME: HOUSING		
Lack of affordable housing options, particularly for families and workers in industries other than the resource sector	To investigate the opportunity to increase FIFO-DIDO in areas that have higher housing and affordability options	Continue promoting the community's concerns to all levels of government and any responsible authorities (e.g. Economic Development Queensland). [Note: As housing affordability is largely driven by market forces, many of the suggestions put forward by stakeholders are not in RDA's purview. However, some housing issues will be addressed through the liveability theme (see table 6)]
THEME: ENVIRONMENT AND NATURAL RESOURCE MANAGEMENT		
Lack of coordinated approach to the approval process	All levels of Government to collaborate towards better environmental outcomes regarding resource communities; and reduce the level of red tape regarding the approval processes.	Encourage greater collaboration towards a more efficient approval process
THEME: INDIGENOUS ISSUES		
Lack of opportunity for Indigenous people to work in resource sector	For better coordination of employment strategies with individual training and employment organisation	Engage with training and employment organisations to achieve better outcomes for Indigenous people
THEME: PUBLIC HEALTH		
Managing the impact for growth of the resource sector on key community infrastructure such as hospitals, allied health and community services	To use more current statistical population data to increase the level of health services affecting communities	Advise the Australian and State government on key issues relating to the regional health sector, and encourage investment in health-related research. [Note: Following the release of the report from the Parliamentary Inquiry into FIFO work practices, RDAs are also expected to build a health focus into their Regional Roadmaps, and to work closely with Medicare Local on regional health issues.
THEME: REGIONAL GOVERNANCE		
Greater understanding of Australian, State and Local government roles in regional governance	To map the role and responsibilities of Federal, State and Local governments relating to the resource sector and resource communities	RDA to help promote the roles and responsibilities of the relevant agency
THEME: WATER AND ENERGY		
Ensuring the sustainable supply of clean water and energy to support the future needs of local communities	Undertake relevant research to understand the future capacity requirements for water and energy consumption.	RDA to work with regional peak bodies to promote the importance of planning of future demands on sustainable water and energy supply and infrastructure

Issue (as defined by stakeholders)	Possible solution (as defined by stakeholders)	Cross-regional, collaborative opportunities for RDA
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THEME: DEMOGRAPHIC AND LABOUR FORCE SHIFTS

Lack of understanding of population growth patterns, particularly with respect to the non-resident workforce (FIFO, DIDO) patterns and the full extent of impacts on the region including overburdened services, wage disparities and community breakdown; difficulties in managing the aging population; and attracting youth and families	Real-time data collection; facilitate information exchange between regional planners and resource sector proponents (forecasts for construction and operational workforces); explore options for wages re-adjustment; partnership approaches for regional marketing (attraction/retention and resettlement);	RDA to support the key research that will be required to properly quantify the issues being faced in particular resource communities
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4.3 Follow-up studies

The results of both the desktop review and the stakeholder consultation suggested several avenues for follow-up studies. For example, this might include:

- Expanding the knowledge base about the impacts of resource sector growth to include other regions, especially those who may not have operations physically located in their community, but who engage with the resource sector economy
- Conduct a study into the provisions of existing social impact management plans, and of existing government policy relevant to social impacts, to consider the ways in which these might better align with each other. This project could be operationalised following meetings between RDA and key government and industry participants, as described in Section 5.0 below.

- Conduct specific 'action-based' research that includes the lead staff dealing with community engagement/social impacts from each of the resource sector proponents in MIW, FCW and WBB. For example, this may involve bringing those staff together to workshop ideas for better alignment across and within social impact management plans.
- Explore a methodology by which RDAs can begin collate and test ideas sourced from their stakeholders, in terms of ways to reduce the adverse impacts of resource sector growth on regional communities.

These studies would also complement those that have been already called for in the report from the Parliamentary Inquiry.

5.0 Delivery Plan

In the first instance, RDA intends that the recommendations and actions arising from this study (i.e., the collaborative responses that were identified for the priority and secondary theme areas in tables 5 and 6) will be delivered by

- integrating the data and key findings into the 2013-14 annual *Regional Roadmap*;
- mapping the actions into to the RDA business plan for each region; and
- identifying the lead stakeholders for each action area, in order that RDA can work strategically and cooperatively to deliver solutions across the region.

However, the recommendations arising from the report are expansive, and their implementation is likely to require a review of the RDAs roles and responsibilities, including how the committees are resourced.

Given the current focus on regional Australia, and on the impacts of resource sector development in particular, RDA are also determined that the study be used to establish spirited dialogue with the three tiers of government and industry, regarding how each group plans to work with RDA in order to pursue more sustainable outcomes for the MIW, FCW and WBB communities.

Once the report and its recommendations have been endorsed by the RDA committees and the members of the project steering committee, the strategy for achieving this dialogue will include:

- distributing the study to industry (the resources sector), with an expectation of feedback regarding the recommendations, together with a description of how each proponent expects to manage the socio-economic impacts of resource sector development on the communities of MIW, FCW and WBB;

- distributing the study to the three tiers of government, with an expectation of feedback regarding the recommendations, together with information about the planned policy responses that will help manage the socio-economic impacts of resource sector development on the communities of MIW, FCW and WBB. This will include a dedicated programme of meetings with key ministerial staff in the relevant Australian and State government portfolio areas; and
- dissemination of the study throughout the RDA network, accompanied by an invitation to join a 'resource-regions' cluster that will focus on reducing the impacts of, and maximising the benefits of, the resource sector in regional Australia. It is important to reiterate that such a cluster will include not only regions that host resource development activities, but also those that wish to engage with the resource sector more broadly.

Additional feedback from the community will be also sought via engagement with local government authorities, given that these are the best placed to manage the community interface.

6.0 References

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Appendix A: Stakeholder survey instrument (as delivered online)

Q1: In this survey, we would like to know about the impacts that your region is experiencing as a result of activity in the resource sector. This might include positive or negative impacts, and the issues related to both growth and decline in the resource sector. The menu below lists ten areas in which impacts might be experienced. We would like you to identify, in turn, the top three areas in which impacts are being felt. First, could you please select the area that is of MOST concern to you, in terms of impacts from resource sector activity?

- Regional governance
- Demography (population growth and labour force patterns)
- Liveability, family and social wellbeing
- Indigenous issues
- Housing
- Public health
- Workforce planning, skills and education
- Transport and development infrastructure
- Water and energy assets (supply and infrastructure)
- Environment / natural resource management

Q2: Could you please describe the kinds of impacts that your region is experiencing in this area?
(Open ended response)

Q3: And would you be able to suggest any solutions to the impacts in this particular area?
(Open ended response)

Q4: Next, could you please select the area that is of second-highest concern, with respect to impacts from resource sector activity? (identical menu to that used in question 1)

Q5: Could you please describe the kinds of impacts that your region is experiencing in this area?
(Open ended response)

Q6: And would you be able to suggest any solutions to the impacts in this particular area?
(Open ended response)

Q7: Finally, could you please select the area that is of THIRD-highest concern, with respect to impacts from resource sector activity? (identical menu to that used in question 1)

Q8: Could you please describe the kinds of impacts that your region is experiencing in this area?
(Open ended response)

Q9: And would you be able to suggest any solutions to the impacts in this particular area?
(Open ended response)

Q10: Now, we would like your views on how your region is currently performing, in terms of addressing impacts from resource activity. Could you please indicate your region's current performance in each of the ten areas, by ticking one answer in each row.

		Very poor	Poor	Neutral	Good	Very good	Don't know
1.	Appropriate regional governance systems						
2.	Understanding demography (population growth, labour force patterns)						
3.	Addressing liveability, family and social wellbeing issues						
4.	Addressing Indigenous issues						
5.	Addressing housing issues						

6.	Addressing public health issues						
7.	Addressing workforce planning, skilling and education issues						
8.	Addressing transport and development infrastructure issues						
9.	Addressing issues about water and energy assets (supply and infrastructure)						
10.	Addressing environment/natural resource management issues.						

Q11: Again, thinking about the impacts associated with the resource sector activity in your region, could you please indicate the extent to which you agree or disagree with the following statements? Please use only one tick in each row.

		Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
1.	Business and industry are important in creating solutions to cumulative impacts						
2.	Declining activity in the resource sector will be associated with new kinds of impacts						
3.	Declining activity in the resource sector will decrease the pressure in some impact areas						
4.	Further growth in the resource sector will increase the level of impacts in our region						
5.	Further growth in the resource sector will introduce new types of impacts in our region						
6.	Impacts include opportunities as well as challenges						
7.	Investing in hard infrastructure is the best way to solve cumulative impacts						
8.	My organisation would be willing to invest resources to help address cumulative impacts in our region						
9.	My organisation would be willing to participate in future discussions cumulative impacts in our region						
10.	New skills are needed for our region to be able to respond to impacts						
11.	Policy change is the only effective way to address cumulative impacts due to resource sector development						
12.	Regional communities have enough opportunities to collaborate with each other to address impacts						
13.	Regional Development Australia has an important role in helping communities address impacts						
14.	The impacts experienced in our region are similar to those experienced by other regions						

15.	The impacts experienced in our region are similar to those experienced by other regions						
16.	We don't know enough about the impacts of resource development in our region						

Q12: RDA would like to identify the kinds of solutions that would work best to address the impacts associated with resource sector activity. Could you please indicate the types of initiatives that you think would help in addressing each impact area? You can select more than one option, so please tick all that apply.

THEME AREA	Increased access to information	Increased understanding through research	Increased on-ground activities	Investment in infrastructure	Stakeholder workshops to find solutions	New or changed policy initiatives
Regional governance						
Demography (population growth, labour force)						
Liveability, family and social wellbeing						
Indigenous issues						
Housing						
Public health						
Workforce planning, skilling and education						
Transport & development infrastructure						
Water and energy assets						
Environment/Natural resource management						

If you would like to suggest any other solutions, please briefly describe them here

Q13: We would like you to think about who should be involved in responding to the impacts of resource sector activity. Could you please rank the following groups in terms of their importance in addressing the impacts felt in your region? Please rank from 1-6 using 1 as the most important.

	1	2	3	4	5	6
Local government						
State government						
Federal government						
Resource proponents						
Regional communities						
Regional business and industry						

Q14: We would like to know your thoughts about the role of Regional Development Australia in helping your region to respond to the impacts associated with resource sector activity. Could you please describe the best way that RDA can help your organisation, business or sector to tackle these impacts?

Q15: Please indicate the region you are principally located or interested in:

- Mackay, Isaac Whitsunday
- Fitzroy Central West
- Wide Bay Burnett

Q16: Please describe your industry/sector:

- Local government
- State government
- Federal government
- Commerce and Industry
- Community group
- Peak representative body
- Other: Please describe

Q17: Please indicate your sector:

- Agriculture, Forestry and Fishing
- Mining
- Manufacturing
- Electricity, Gas, Water and Waste Services
- Construction
- Wholesale Trade
- Retail Trade
- Accommodation and Food Services
- Transport, Postal and Warehousing
- Information Media and Telecommunications
- Financial and Insurance Services
- Rental, Hiring and Real Estate Services
- Professional, Scientific and Technical Services
- Administrative and Support Services
- Public Administration and Safety
- Education and Training
- Health Care and Social Assistance
- Arts and Recreation Services
- Tourism

Q18: You have reached the end of the questions. Thank you for completing this survey. Please feel free to add any other comments you may have regarding the impacts related to resource development in your region.

Appendix B: Stakeholder consultation – regional results statements

Mackay Isaac Whitsunday

Stakeholder statistics

A total of 39 stakeholders participated in the survey for MIW, with approximately one-third of these being representatives of commerce and industry (Figure 1). For the non-government participants, mining and manufacturing appeared to be the most strongly represented sectors, however, a large proportion of participants did not indicate their sector (Table 1).

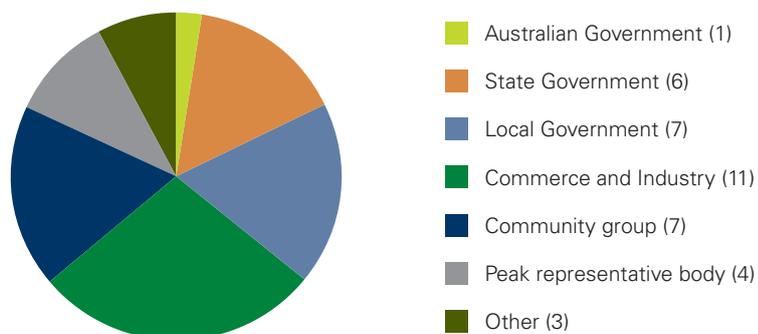


Figure 1 Stakeholder participation for Mackay Isaac Whitsunday

Table 1 Stakeholder representation by sector for Mackay Isaac Whitsunday

Sector	Number of responses
Mining	6
Manufacturing	3
Electricity, Gas, Water and Waste Services	1
Wholesale Trade	1
Accommodation and Food Services	1
Professional, Scientific and Technical Services	1
Public Administration and Safety	1
All others	0
Total responses	14 (out of a possible 39)

Priority regional development areas

Stakeholders in MIW nominated housing as the item of greatest importance to the region (Figure 2, green bars). However, when all results were collected together, the five themes of liveability, family and social wellbeing; housing; transport and development infrastructure; workforce planning, skills and education; and demography were each indicated as key areas of importance.

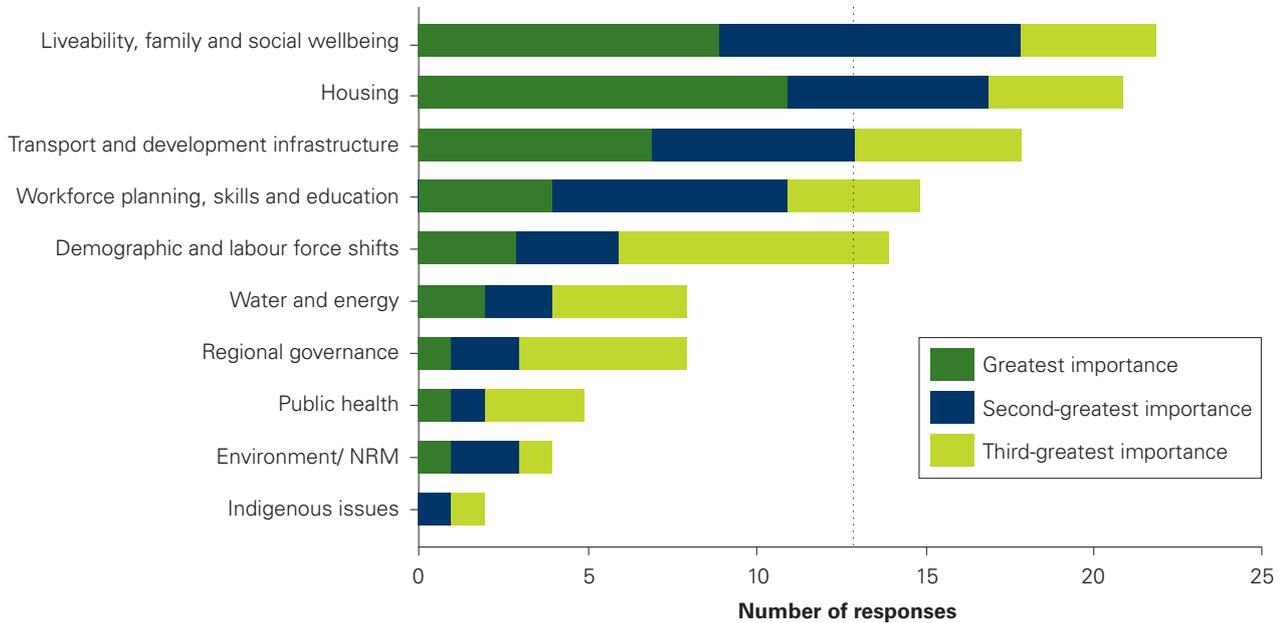


Figure 2 The level of importance given to each of ten regional development areas, as indicated by stakeholders from the MIW region.

Themes scoring to the right of the dotted reference line were later designated as priority themes for RDA-MIW.

Perceptions about current performance

Stakeholders believed that housing, transport and development infrastructure, and Indigenous issues were the areas being most poorly responded to in the MIW region (Figure 3). Conversely, the region's responses to issues such as demographic change and governance were likely to be well regarded.

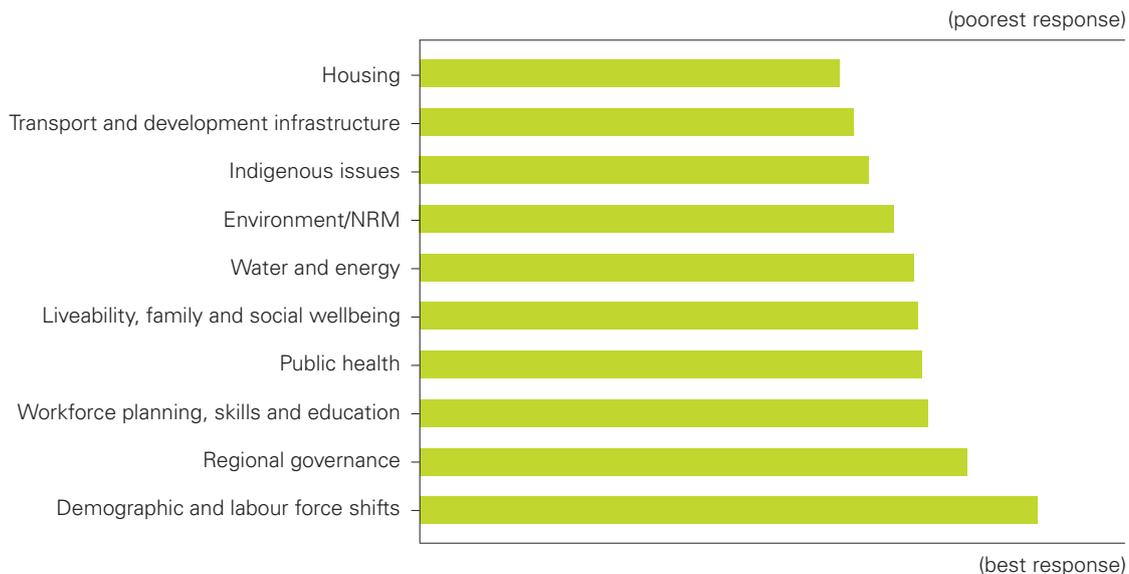


Figure 3 Participant's perceptions about the current performance of each region in responding to issues related to resource sector growth, for the MIW region.

Opinions about regional development statements

Stakeholders strongly agreed that collaborative initiatives were useful in addressing regional development issues in Mackay Isaac Whitsunday (Figure 4). They also indicated that business and industry (including their own business, where relevant) were important in creating solutions to the impacts of resource sector development. By contrast, most stakeholders indicated that their community didn't have enough opportunities to collaborate, despite those communities being knowledgeable about the impacts of resource development. There was some uncertainty about whether particular organisations should invest resources to assist with the regional response; whether the MIW region experiences different impacts to other regions, and the role of policy change in helping to tackle challenges and opportunities.



Figure 4 Participant's opinions about key statements relating to cumulative and cross-regional impacts related to growth of the resource sector in the MIW region.

Preferences for the types of regional response

With respect to the types of responses that should be initiated in the region, the most popular choice for stakeholders was investment in infrastructure, followed by on-ground activities (Table 2). By contrast, accessing information and undertaking further research rated poorly as possible ways to address the challenges of resource development. For infrastructure spending, the key areas identified for targeting included transport, housing, water and energy. The introduction of new or changed policy initiatives was most favoured in the areas of housing, public health and regional governance systems.

Table 2 The preferred nature for regional development responses, including the top three theme areas in which particular types of responses should be initiated, as indicated by participants from the MIW region.

Response type (most popular to least popular)	Priority areas for focussing the response
Investment in Infrastructure (21.1% of responses)	Transport and development infrastructure Housing Water and energy
On-ground activities (20.2% of responses)	Liveability, family and social wellbeing Public health Workforce planning, skills and education
New or changed policy (16.2% of responses)	Housing Public health Regional governance
Stakeholder workshops (15.3% of responses)	Workforce planning, skills and education Regional governance Demographic and labour force shifts
Increased access to information (14.1% of responses)	Environment/NRM Regional governance Indigenous issues
More research (13.0% of responses)	Environment/NRM Demographic and labour force shifts Regional governance

Preferred involvement of key groups

Stakeholders in the MIW region indicated that the state and local government were the most important players in tackling regional issues related to resource sector development, with regional communities and regional business and industry being least important (Figure 5).



Figure 5 The relative importance of different stakeholder groups in responding to regional impacts in the MIW region.

Expectations about the role of RDA

Participants from MIW were very strongly in favour of RDA's role being around communication, engagement and collaboration (Table 3). Other common responses included a role in providing regional statistics and reporting and advocacy (especially advocacy for regional investment attraction).

Table 3 MIW Participants' response type and frequency regarding the role of RDAs

Theme area	Number of responses
Communication, engagement and collaboration	12
Regional forecasting/statistics/reporting and research	5
Advocacy (investment/funding)	4
Better visibility / clarity of RDA responsibilities	4
Coordination (both resourcing and facilitation)	3
Encourage understanding / promote regions	3
Host conference/forums/workshops	3
On-ground action (proactive; strategic)	2
Generate ideas / perform proof of concept	2
Provide (direct) funding	2
Support Local Government	2
Advocacy (policy reform; policy development)	1
Provide information re: government programs/initiatives; consultations	1
Attract regional business/investment	1
Support non-for-profits	1
Leadership	1

Fitzroy and Central West

Stakeholder statistics

A total of 28 stakeholders participated in the survey for FCW, with an even spread of representation across government and non-government bodies (Figure 1). For the non-government participants, agriculture and health care and assistance were the most strongly represented sectors, however, a large proportion of participants did not indicate their sector (Table 1).

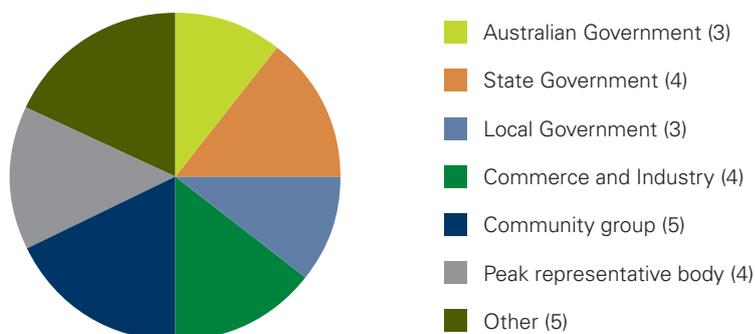


Figure 1 Stakeholder participation for Fitzroy and Central West

Table 1 Table 1 Stakeholder representation by sector for Fitzroy and Central West

Sector	Number of responses
Agriculture, Forestry and Fishing	2
Health Care and Social Assistance	2
Mining	1
Retail Trade	1
Administrative and Support Services	1
Tourism	1
All others	0
Total responses	8 (out of a possible 28)

Priority regional development areas

Stakeholders most often nominated housing as the issue of 'greatest importance' in the FCW region (Figure 2, green bars). However, when all results were tallied together, the issues surrounding liveability, family and social wellbeing were nominated as the most importance overall, followed by housing, and then transport and development infrastructure.

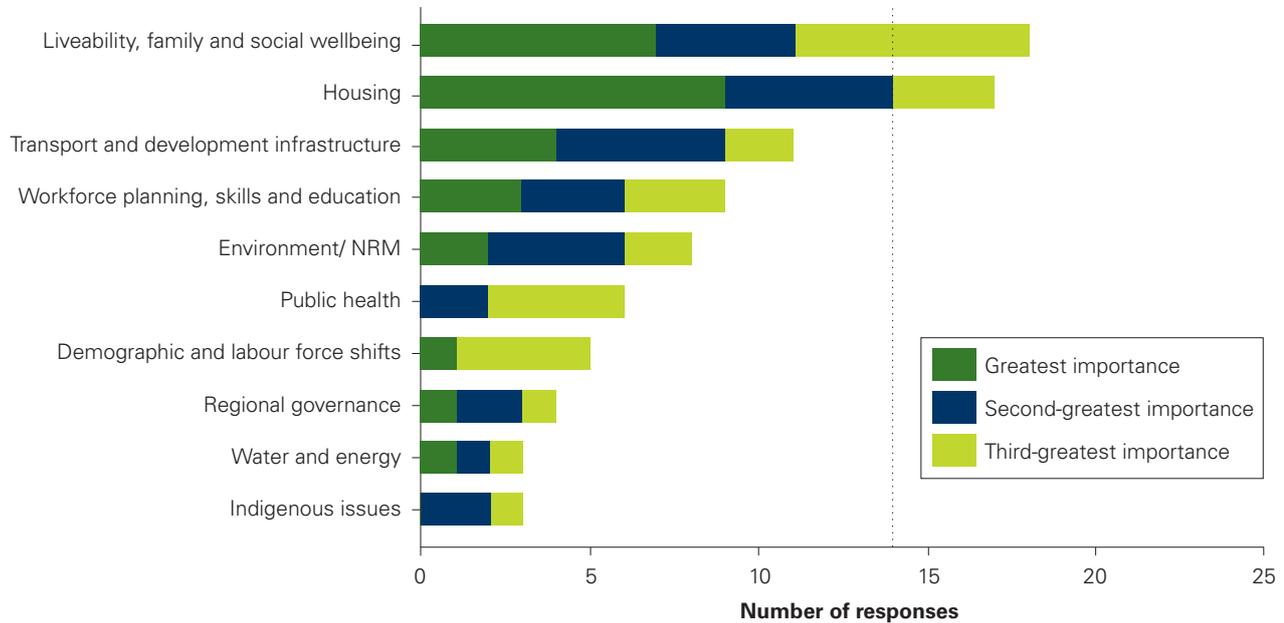


Figure 2 The level of importance given by stakeholders to each of ten regional development areas for FCW. Themes scoring to the right of the dotted reference line were later designated as RDA-FCW 'priority themes'.

Perceptions about current performance

Stakeholders believed that transport and development infrastructure, housing, and water and energy issues were the areas being most poorly responded to in the FCW region (Figure 3). Conversely, the region's responses to issues such as demographic change and governance were likely to be well regarded.

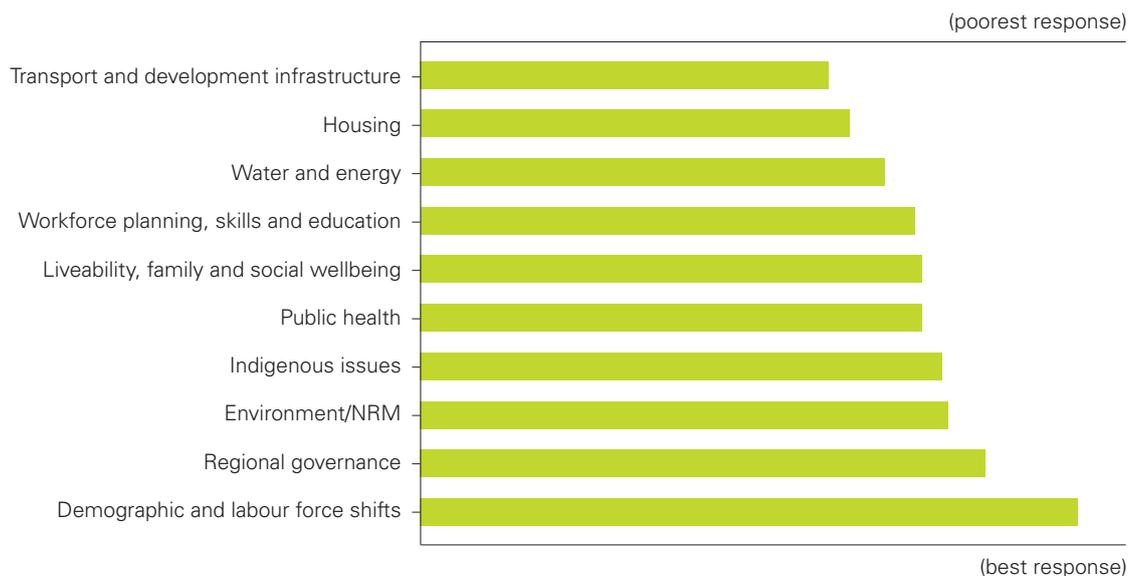


Figure 3 Participant's perceptions about the current performance of each region in responding to issues related to resource sector growth.

Opinions about regional development statements

Stakeholders strongly agreed that business and industry were important in creating solutions to the impacts of resource sector development, and that collaborative initiatives were likely to be useful in addressing regional development issues in Fitzroy and Central West (Figure 4). However, most stakeholders indicated that their community lacked opportunities to collaborate; and that policy change was not effective as a solution for issues relating to resource sector development. There was some uncertainty about whether particular organisations should invest resources to assist with the regional response; and the role of the RDA in assisting the region to become more sustainable.



Figure 4 Participant's opinions about key statements relating to cumulative and cross-regional impacts related to growth of the resource sector in the FCW region.

Preferences for the types of regional response

With respect to the types of responses that should be initiated in the region, the most popular choice for stakeholders was on-ground activities, followed by investment in infrastructure (Table 2). By contrast, stakeholder workshops and engaging with policy change rated poorly as possible ways to address the challenges of resource development. For infrastructure spending, the key areas identified for targeting included transport, housing, water and energy.

Table 2 The preferred nature for regional development responses, including the top three theme areas in which particular types of responses should be initiated, as indicated by participants from the FCW region.

Response type (most popular to least popular)	Priority areas for focussing the response
On-ground activities (21.3% of responses)	Indigenous issues Workforce planning, skills and education Liveability, family and social wellbeing Public health
Investment in Infrastructure (20.3% of responses)	Transport and development infrastructure Housing Water and energy
More research (16.2% of responses)	Demographic and labour force shifts Environment/NRM Workforce planning, skills and education
Increased access to information (15.2% of responses)	Regional governance Indigenous issues Workforce planning, skills and education
New or changed policy (14.0% of responses)	Environment/NRM Liveability, family and social wellbeing Workforce planning, skills and education
Stakeholder workshops (12.8% of responses)	Liveability, family and social wellbeing Environment/NRM Workforce planning, skills and education Indigenous issues

Preferred involvement of key groups

Stakeholders in the FCW region indicated that the state and local government were the most important players in tackling regional issues related to resource sector development, with regional communities and regional business and industry being least important (Figure 5).



Figure 5 The relative importance of different stakeholder groups in responding to regional impacts in the FCW region.

Expectations about the role of RDA

Participants from FCW were keen to see their RDA play a proactive and strategic role in the region's development, with a strong focus on communication, engagement and collaboration (Table 3). Other common responses included a role in providing regional statistics and reporting and advocacy (especially advocacy for regional investment attraction). This profile of responses was reasonably similar to that recorded for FCW.

Table 3 FCW Participants' response type and frequency regarding the role of RDAs

Theme area	Number of responses
On-ground action (proactive; strategic)	6
Communication, engagement and collaboration	5
Regional forecasting/statistics/reporting and research	5
Advocacy (investment/funding)	5
Coordination (both resourcing and facilitation)	4
Advocacy (policy reform; policy development)	3
Encourage understanding / promote regions	2
Generate ideas / perform proof of concept	2
Provide (direct) funding	2
Service integration (whole-of-government; non-government organisations)	2
Other: 'respond', 'leadership'	2
Better visibility / clarity of RDA responsibilities	1
Host conference/forums/workshops	1
Attract regional business/investment	1
Indigenous engagement	1

Wide Bay Burnett

Stakeholder statistics

A total of 25 stakeholders participated in the survey for WBB, with an even spread of representation across government and non-government bodies (Figure 1). Only five participants indicated their sector, which included the areas of administrative and support services (2), retail trade (1) and accommodation and food services (1).

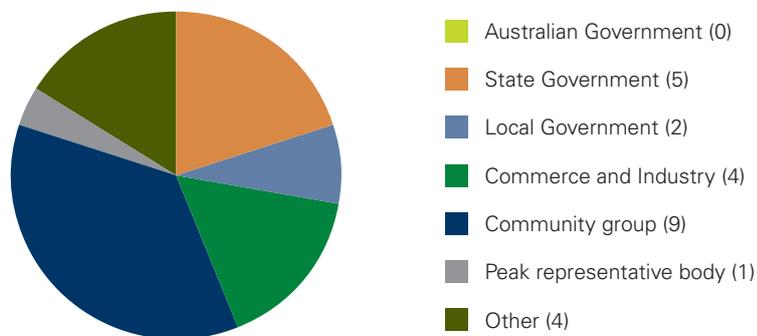


Figure 1 Stakeholder participation for Wide Bay Burnett

Table 1 Stakeholder representation by sector for Wide Bay Burnett

Sector	Number of responses
Accommodation and food services	1
Administrative and support services	2
Education and training	1
Retail trade	1
All others	0
Total responses	5 (out of a possible 25)

Priority regional development areas

Stakeholders in WBB nominated liveability, family and social wellbeing as the item of ‘greatest importance’ to the region (Figure 2, green bars). However, when all the results were collated together, the items of workforce planning, skills and education as well as transport and development were also added as key areas of importance.

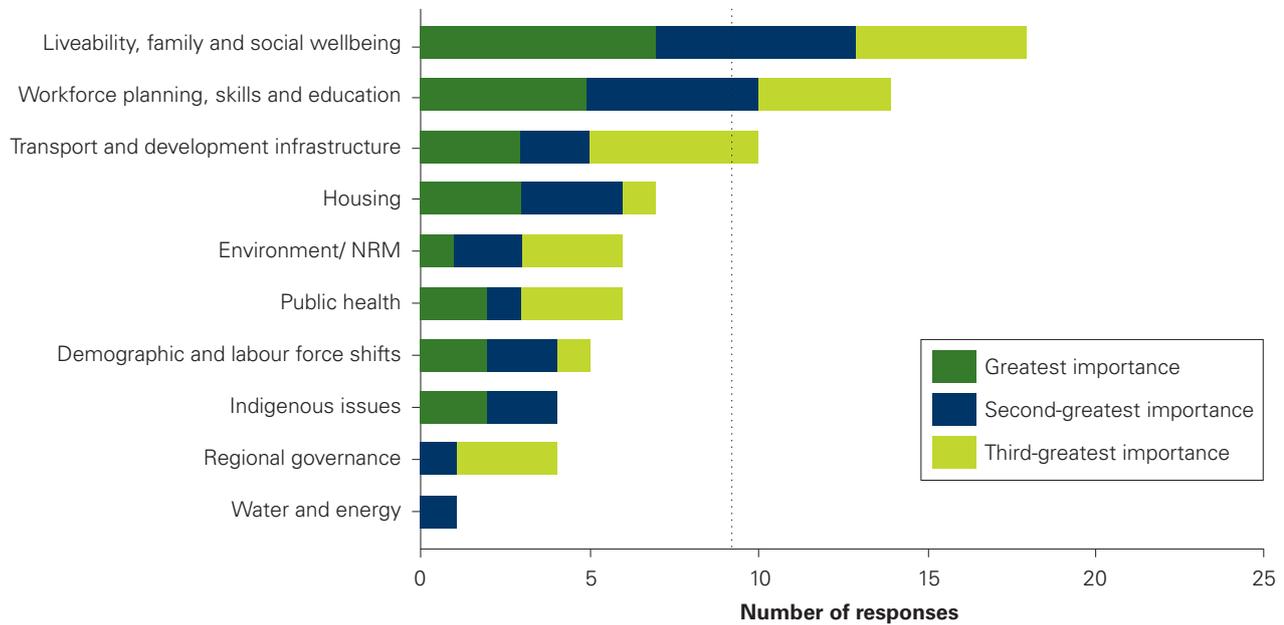


Figure 2 Stakeholder summary: the level of importance given to each of ten regional development areas. Themes scoring to the right of the dotted reference line were later designated as RDA-WBB ‘priority themes’.

Perceptions about current performance

Stakeholders believed that housing, transport and development infrastructure, and workforce planning were the areas being most poorly responded to in the WBB region (Figure 3). Conversely, the region’s responses to issues such as demographic change and governance were likely to be well regarded.

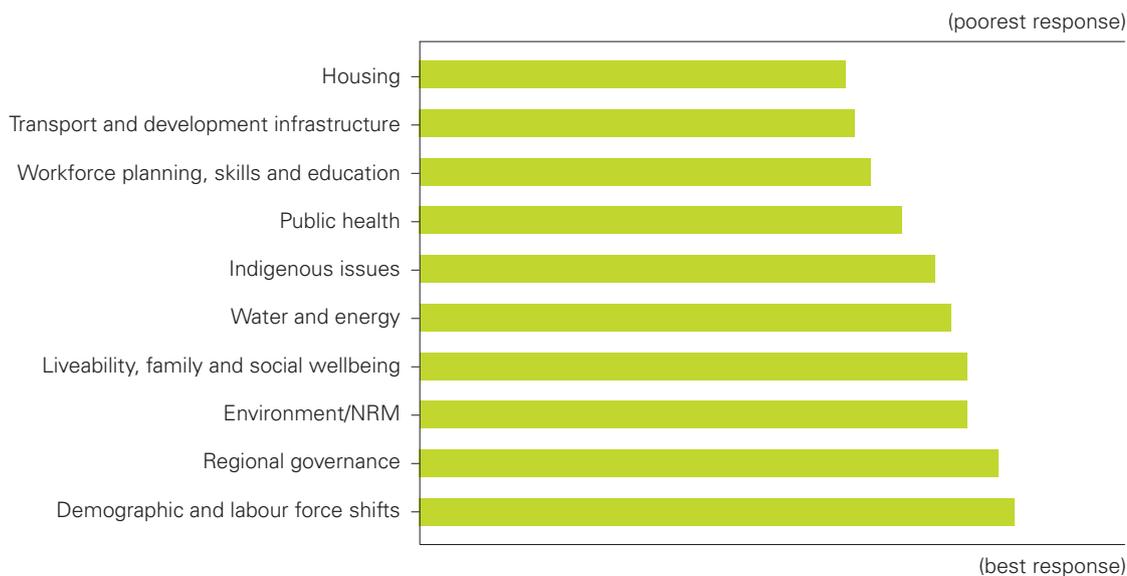


Figure 3 Participant’s perceptions about the current performance of each region in responding to issues related to resource sector growth.

Opinions about regional development statements

Stakeholders strongly agreed that collaborative initiatives were likely to be useful in addressing regional development issues in the Wide Bay Burnett region; and that business and industry were important in creating solutions to the impacts of resource sector development (Figure 4). Many stakeholders indicated that their community lacked opportunities to collaborate; and that declining resource activity would not necessarily decrease the development pressures in the region. There was some uncertainty about whether particular organisations should invest resources to assist with the regional response; and the role of the RDA in assisting the region to become more sustainable, however, these results should be interpreted with care as most related to very small sample sizes (e.g., 2-3 responses).



Figure 4 Participant's opinions about key statements relating to cumulative and cross-regional impacts related to growth of the resource sector in the WBB region.

Preferences for the types of regional response

With respect to the types of responses that should be initiated in the region, the most popular choice for stakeholders was on-ground activities, followed by investment in infrastructure (Table 2). By contrast, stakeholder workshops and engaging with policy change rated poorly as possible ways to address the challenges of resource development. For infrastructure spending, the key areas identified for targeting included liveability, housing and transport infrastructure.

Table 2 The preferred nature for regional development responses, including the top three theme areas in which particular types of responses should be initiated, as indicated by participants from the WBB region.

Response type (most popular to least popular)	Priority areas for focussing the response
On-ground activities (19.7% of responses)	Public health Indigenous issues Liveability, family and social wellbeing
Investment in Infrastructure (17.6% of responses)	Liveability, family and social wellbeing Housing Transport and development infrastructure
More research (16.8% of responses)	Workforce planning, skills and education Environment/NRM
Increased access to information (15.8% of responses)	Regional governance Liveability, family and social wellbeing Workforce planning, skills and education
Stakeholder workshops (15.7% of responses)	Liveability, family and social wellbeing Indigenous issues Regional governance Environment/NRM Demographic and labour force shifts
New or changed policy (14.2% of responses)	Transport and development infrastructure Regional governance Environment/NRM Indigenous issues

Preferred involvement of key groups

Stakeholders in the WBB region indicated that the state and local government were the most important players in tackling regional issues related to resource sector development, with the Australian government and regional business and industry being least important (Figure 5).



Figure 5 The relative importance of different stakeholder groups in responding to regional impacts in the WBB region.

Expectations about the role of RDA

Participants from WBB were keen to see their RDA play a proactive and strategic role in the region's development, especially through information provision and advocacy (Table 3). Other common responses included a role in providing regional statistics and reporting and advocacy (especially advocacy for regional investment attraction).

Table 3 WBB Participants' response type and frequency regarding the role of RDAs

Theme area	Number of responses
On-ground action (proactive; strategic)	4
Provide information re: government programs/initiatives; consultations	4
Advocacy (investment/funding)	3
Other: 'develop the region', 'remove red tape', 'remain independent'	3
Communication, engagement and collaboration	2
Regional forecasting/statistics/reporting and research	2
Coordination (both resourcing and facilitation)	2
Generate ideas / perform proof of concept	2
Advocacy (policy reform; policy development)	1
Encourage understanding / promote regions	1
Provide (direct) funding	1
Service integration (whole-of-government; non-government organisations)	1
Better visibility / clarity of RDA responsibilities	1
Host conference/forums/workshops	1
Support not-for-profits	1

Appendix C: Solutions for regional governance development challenges in the communities of MIW, FCW and WBB

Note: The items appearing in this table are a refined list of the original suggestions as provided by participants in the stakeholder consultation (online survey), and are provided for information purposes only. As such, these 'solutions' should not be interpreted as RDA's or CQUniversity's position in terms of what the appropriate responses to social impacts in resource communities may be.

Regional governance

Mode of response	Area for actioning	Specific examples (where available)
Policy development and/or reform	Increased role and power for local government Increased role for RDA Australian/State program delivery	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Adopt realistic planning horizons • Greater accountability for funding of community services
Investment	Appropriate resourcing of governance bodies	
Leadership, collaboration and innovation	Partnership approaches between government and industry	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Agree on infrastructure priorities
Research, monitoring and evaluation	Create an annual 'Regional Resource Sector Activity Report'	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Survey workers and their families regarding social impacts
Education, extension and engagement	Governance training in Local Government	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Focus on new staff in Councils
On-ground programs	Encourage community interest and participation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Futures forum with expert panel

Demographic and labour force shifts

Mode of response	Area for actioning	Specific examples (where available)
Policy development and/or reform	Housing policy regards provision for resource sector staff Land planning and development policy Adjusted business models in the resource sector	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Camps to be created for construction workforces only; housing of operational workforces should be within the township • Release of new/more affordable land parcels • Red tape reduction • Address wage disparity between mining and other industries
Investment	Community infrastructure and services	
Leadership, collaboration and innovation	Drive a long-term approach to commercial and sustainable growth Establish/encourage Public Private Partnerships Encourage collaboration	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • PPPs for management and maintenance of key infrastructure • Engineer continued/expanded industry and RTO partnerships
Research, monitoring and evaluation	Procure and report key demographic statistics	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Obtain accurate representation of the impacts and residential population
Education, extension and engagement	Regional marketing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Three-way campaign through proponents, council and state government; attraction/retention for industries other than mining • Strategic use of media and maintain a positive media presence for the region
On-ground programs	Delivery of skilling and training programs Introduce flexible programs to help integrate FIFO/DIDO into the community Promote workforce flexibility	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide skills, training and pathways to enter the resource sector • Run club sports acknowledging rostering constraints; provide housing choice • Establish/encourage 'mummy hours'

Liveability, family and social wellbeing

Mode of response	Area for actioning	Specific examples (where available)
Policy development and/or reform	Planning and development policy Housing market intervention Taxation incentives / subsidies Social corporate responsibility legislation Strategies for Social Impact Management Plans Tighten legislation to protect the disadvantaged Mobile workforce policy Improved government service delivery Red tape reduction for private enterprise Law and order	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Greater development of Local Government-based community planning • Require proponents to invest in social infrastructure (accommodation, family centres, shopping and sporting complexes) • Build “real value” in living in rural and remote Australia through substantial tax benefits; re-examine the fringe benefits tax on supplied housing; tax breaks for low and middle-income families, introduce a community tax for funding local infrastructure; subsidies for families • require resource proponents and their employees to have a community induction • reduce opening times at licensed premises • conditions for payday lenders and/or equipment rental suppliers; anti-profiteering legislation for rental providers • Reduce the allowable number of non-resident workers • optimise operating efficiencies, focus on vulnerable/at-risk groups • Re-examine carbon tax, development fees • Increased police presence and stronger penalties
Investment	Expand royalties for regions Establish national/state investment fund Increased community, housing and transport infrastructure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Return a defined percentage of royalties to social and community wellbeing projects • Create an available pool of funds to head off critical issues when resource projects are announced [See also the items in housing and transport tables for additional detail]
Leadership, collaboration and innovation	Advocacy Collaboration	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support an increase in flexible working arrangements and child care initiatives • Partnering with private enterprise to meet the rapid nature of growth
Research, monitoring and evaluation	Social impact studies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create benchmarks for community wellness • Obtain objective/valid statistics about impacts
Education, extension and engagement	Improve visibility/action on Indigenous issues Education programs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establish Indigenous Advisory Panel • Include financial planning in induction training for the resource sector
On-ground programs	Capacity-building Establish/sustain community organisations and support networks Early intervention and health promotional services Growth in tourism and entertainment options Work on attraction/retention for private business and investment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Small business assistance • Family and/or mother’s support group, migrant and refugee networks, financial counselling, resourcing for RentConnect, education programs for teenage parents • Positive parenting, vocational training, recreational and sporting activities, healthy eating, sexual education for children, drug and alcohol information for children, mental health, and spiritual connectedness.

Indigenous issues

Mode of response	Area for actioning	Specific examples (where available)
Policy development and/or reform	[None listed]	
Investment	Training places	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide training linked to job outcomes
Leadership, collaboration and innovation	Joint Venture models Consultation/Review Collaboration	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Encourage Indigenous groups/individuals to partner with those already in business • Focus on Indigenous services and workforce • Cooperation between mining/heavy industry and government for a coordinated approach to Indigenous workforce participation
Research, monitoring and evaluation	[None listed]	
Education, extension and engagement	[None listed]	
On-ground programs	Support for establishing commercial operations Intensive support and training systems	

Housing

Mode of response	Area for actioning	Specific examples (where available)
Policy development and/or reform	Housing supply Land use and development Market intervention/regulation Social/housing policy review Red tape reduction	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Proponents to have responsibility for worker's accommodation • Development approvals to include housing provisions for contract as well as permanent staff • 'Legacy housing': require a percentage of workers' accommodation be so designed and constructed as to provide lasting infrastructure for the host community • Increase availability and affordability of land; require developer donations to establish affordable housing; address native title issues surrounding the townships to enable expansion and growth; improving planning time lines; reducing development costs • Capping rent rise amounts, regulation of rental charges • review of Bond Loan income limit decisions; triggers for reassessment/relocation due to change in household size, expanded criteria for social housing
Investment	Reinvestment of royalties Funding to establish/expand community centres	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Direct funds towards affordable housing projects in resource communities • Provide for emergency relief funding ; counselling services on site; programmes to improve job prospects
Leadership, collaboration and innovation	Partnerships across business/mining/government Innovation Foster cultural change	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Focus on housing access for the most disadvantaged • Develop collaborative approaches amongst Council, developers and planners • Bring forward ideas on emergency accommodation solutions • To focus on outcomes rather than process
Research, monitoring and evaluation	Monitoring of homelessness risk Regional analysis Role of Residential Tenancy Authority (RTA)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Focus on hot spots (e.g. Gladstone), involve real estate agents • Evaluation of government programs (community housing) to support and influence investment and development; informed planning • Examine ability of RTA to response to unacceptably high rental increases
Education, extension and engagement	[None listed]	
On-ground programs	Establish housing support organisations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Community-based housing action group • Create organisation prior to workforce arrival

Public health

Mode of response	Area for actioning	Specific examples (where available)
Policy development and/or reform	Area for actioning Housing policy Health service delivery Red tape reduction Public sector workforce policy Private practice	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Affordable housing programs for health staff • Required employee health checks to be undertaken by specialist mining staff, not GPs; resource proponents to fund or co-fund medical positions based on staff number • Bulk billing for cataract surgeries • Introduce minimum rural/regional service requirements for health professionals (as per teachers, police officers) • Enable right to private practice as part of hospital duties
Investment	Increase resourcing for hospital services and infrastructure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increased senior doctors, beds, Emergency Departments and Pathology services
Leadership, collaboration and innovation	Create clusters for community health service Lobby for collaborative investment to attract/retain health champions	
Research, monitoring and evaluation	Review of criteria used for intake and referral models to avoid service gaps to some patients	
Education, extension and engagement	Use of social media for awareness/ education programs	
On-ground programs	Attraction/retention incentives Re-introduce an ATODS position Preventative health services and education programs Increased mental health services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wage incentives to entire health workers to regional areas; roster-based systems • (Alcohol, tobacco and other drugs service)

Workforce planning, skills and education

Mode of response	Area for actioning	Specific examples (where available)
Policy development and/or reform	Service points Articulation arrangements Workforce planning Taxation reform Training places Refugee policy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Base departmental officers in resource communities • Reinforced school to industry pathways • planning around workforce participation, skilling, qualifications and diversification; up-skilling opportunities in the school system • Incentivise on-the-job training by companies through tax breaks; support research and development linked with tertiary qualifications • Target training towards resident regional youth • Specific skills initiative and placement of refugees into the region (e.g., agricultural sector)
Investment	Place-based funding for skilling Improved funding opportunities for small business Establish post-mining futures fund	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Favour local solutions over broader national programs, favour specific skill sets and work readiness programs • Levy of 0.25% on profits
Leadership, collaboration and innovation	Collaboration for integrated service delivery models Networks and liaison Advocate for local supply chains Innovation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Build Communities of Practice • Foster regional working partnerships amongst resource companies, local communities, Councils, Chambers of Commerce and industry groups • Increased industry participation in strategic workforce planning; ensure training translates to actual employment opportunities • Resource companies be encouraged to utilise regional services and supply chain opportunities • Leverage digital communication and collaboration technologies to employ skilled staff remotely and/or to partner with other firms.
Research, monitoring and evaluation	Establish a regional workforce development strategy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Explore cross-sectoral skills clustering
Education, extension and engagement	Careers Expo Better information dissemination	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Information booth regarding tertiary options for regional high school students
On-ground programs	Training programs Development/access programs for disadvantaged Secondary and tertiary education Mentoring for SMEs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Partnership training, leadership training, workforce planning and development training, social enterprise tools, flexible training models, workplace trainer positions • Focus on the unemployed, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander, other minority groups • Improved teacher to student ratios (particularly for adult learners)

Transport and development infrastructure

Mode of response	Area for actioning	Specific examples (where available)
Policy development and/or reform	<p>Transport planning</p> <p>Public transport licencing</p> <p>Telecommunications</p> <p>Signage review (roads)</p> <p>Red tape reduction</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increased connectivity between transport modes (air/road) • Use of 20 year forward planning as opposed to decadal • Suspend licences where there is no activity and a bus monopoly exists • Greater accountability for private providers of fixed line and mobile communications
Investment	Roads infrastructure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Greater proportion of funding to be obtained from mining proponents • Allocation of resource royalties and associated taxes for essential hard infrastructure • Provide greater funding to local government for repair and maintenance • Fast-tracking of roads upgrades (Increase in overtaking lanes; replacement of narrow timber bridges, widening of road shoulders)
Leadership, collaboration and innovation	<p>Foster development of local supply chains</p> <p>Government funded task force</p> <p>Foster collaborative government partnerships</p> <p>Negotiate public private partnerships</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reduce the need for cross-regional transport • Development of a knowledge base for local building (construction) trade • Three tiers
Research, monitoring and evaluation	[None listed]	
Education, extension and engagement	Educate commuters	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Promote and incentivise car-pooling programs
On-ground programs	<p>Develop public transport infrastructure</p> <p>Dedicated health transport</p> <p>Workforce transport</p> <p>Reduce pressures on the road systems</p> <p>Establish a website/network for community drive share</p> <p>Additional air services into/out of regional centres</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bicycle paths, walking lanes on bridges • Wheelchair accessible charter bus for patient transfers • Develop transport options for mobile workforce (e.g. proponent supplies shuttle service for employees) • Mining freight to be carried in smaller elements and constructed on site, local repair of mining machinery, return to rail-based fuel transport, increase rail capacity

Water and energy

Mode of response	Area for actioning	Specific examples (where available)
Policy development and/or reform	Environmental policy Energy policy Water policy Taxation reform Red tap reduction (development)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Higher penalties for wrongdoing; greater scope for protection of valuable natural assets within the legislative setting • Incentivise domestic roof-top solar electricity • Tripartite focus on water security • Treatment and reuse scheme for industrial discharge waters • Greater water allocations to urban areas • Remove the LPG tax to encourage gas adoption in passenger vehicles; offer rebates and/or offer tax relief for hybrid vehicles (gas or electric) particularly in the road trucking sector • Streamlining of government approval processes for major projects
Investment	Funding for water infrastructure	
Leadership, collaboration and innovation	[None listed]	
Research, monitoring and evaluation	Research	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Examine the reliability and sustainability of diesel alternatives
Education, extension and engagement	[None listed]	
On-ground programs	Energy supply	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fast track residential connections for new development areas

Environment and natural resource management

Mode of response	Area for actioning	Specific examples (where available)
Policy development and/or reform	Environmental policy Environmental licence conditions Settlement/Land use planning Red tape reduction	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Focus on protection of reef, riverine and ground water quality • Legislated change to 'polluters pay' • Slowing the pace of dredging; tighten requirements for de-watering of mines following floods • Prohibit development in low lying areas • Population re-distribution to alleviate coastal crowding by supporting rural areas • Streamlined conditions and governance
Investment	[None listed]	
Leadership, collaboration and innovation	Consultation with the Indigenous community Innovation: regional economic transition	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consultation with the Indigenous community • Reduced dependence on coal and gas to favour renewable/non-extractive industries
Research, monitoring and evaluation	Research for renewable energy alternatives	
Education, extension and engagement	Education programmes in rural/regional areas	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Foster greater understanding about exploration licences, job opportunities; and the economic contribution of the resource sector
On-ground programs	[None listed]	

Appendix D: Recommendations from the Commonwealth Inquiry into the use of FIFO workforce practices

1.	<p>The Committee recommends that the Commonwealth Government fund the Australian Bureau of Statistics to establish a cross-jurisdictional working group to develop and implement a method for the accurate measurement of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the extent of fly-in, fly-out/drive-in, drive-out workforce practices in the resource sector; and • service populations of resource communities.
2.	<p>The Committee recommends that the Commonwealth Government, in consultation with state and territory governments, review allocation of funding for communities that receive fly-in, fly-out/drive-in, drive-out workforces so that funding is based on both resident and service populations.</p>
3.	<p>The Committee recommends that the Commonwealth Government commission a comprehensive research study to determine the actual economic impact on the demand for and consumption of local government services and infrastructure from fly-in, fly-out/drive-in, drive-out workforces.</p>
4.	<p>The Committee recommends that the Commonwealth Government commission a study of the impact of non-resident workers in regional resource towns on the provision of medical services and as a result of this study develop a health policy response that supports the sustainability of regional medical services.</p>
5.	<p>The Committee recommends that the Commonwealth Government charge the Australian Small Business Commissioner to enhance the capacity of small businesses in resource communities to participate in servicing the demands of the resource sector.</p>
6.	<p>The Committee recommends that the Commonwealth Government identify areas where local governments affected by fly-in, fly-out/drive-in, drive-out work practices would benefit from enhanced skills sets and develop training programs to meet the needs of councillors and senior staff in local government.</p>
7.	<p>The Committee recommends that the Commonwealth Government task the National Housing Supply Council to urgently develop and implement a strategy to address the supply of affordable housing in resource communities and report to the House of Representatives by 27 June 2013 on the progress of this strategy.</p>
8.	<p>The Committee recommends that the Commonwealth Government commission a comprehensive study into the health effects of fly-in, fly-out/drive-in, drive-out work and lifestyle factors and as a result of this research develop a comprehensive health policy response addressing the needs of fly-in, fly-out/drive-in, drive-out workers.</p>
9.	<p>The Committee recommends that the Commonwealth Government develop a best practice guide for employers with significant non-resident workforces aimed at assisting them to develop their own family support programs.</p>
10.	<p>The Committee recommends that the Commonwealth Government commission research on the effect on children and family relationships of having a long-term fly-in, fly-out/drive-in, drive-out parent.</p>
11.	<p>The Committee recommends that the Commonwealth Government commission research into the economic and social impacts of establishing regional centres as fly-in fly-out source communities.</p>
12.	<p>The Committee recommends that the Commonwealth Government review the Fringe Benefits Tax Assessment Act 1986 to examine the:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • removal of impediments to the provision of residential housing in regional communities; • removal of the exempt status of fly-in, fly-out/drive-in, drive-out work camps that are co-located with regional towns; and • removal of the exempt status of travel to and from the workplace for operational phases of regional mining projects.
13.	<p>The Committee recommends that the Commonwealth Government review the Fringe Benefits Tax Assessment Act 1986 to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • remove the general exemption for fly-in, fly-out/drive-in, drive-out workers from the 12-month limit of payment of the living away from home allowance; • enable specific exemptions for construction projects that have a demonstrated limited lifespan; and • enable specific exemptions for projects in remote areas where the fly-in, fly-out/drive-in, drive-out work practice is unavoidable.
14.	<p>The Committee recommends that the Commonwealth Government review the Zone Tax Offset arrangements to ensure that they are only claimable by permanent residents of a zone or special area.</p>

15.	<p>The Committee recommends that the Commonwealth Government review the Zone Tax Offset to ensure:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • that it provides reasonable acknowledgement of the cost of living in remote Australia; • that the zones are based on a contemporary measure of remoteness; • that the zones are based on up-to-date census figures; and • that it includes a mechanism for regular review to ensure that the offset reflects accurate population figures.
16.	<p>The Committee recommends that the Commonwealth Government charge the Australian Electoral Commission to develop an electronic voting system for voters living or working in remote areas to facilitate easier access and ensure more accurate population figures are recorded.</p>
17.	<p>The Committee recommends that the Commonwealth Government charge the Productivity Commission with investigating a more appropriate form of governance for remote Australia that is flexible and responsive.</p>
18.	<p>The Committee recommends that the Commonwealth Government establish a dedicated secretariat ...with responsibility for consulting with state governments and the resources industry in order to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • compile nationally consistent data regarding the impact of fly-in, fly-out workforces on housing, infrastructure, healthcare, education, social services and future planned resource development; • develop a regional social and infrastructure impact methodology that will assist resource companies and local governments in assessing the impact of current and planned resource projects including cumulative impacts; • develop regional infrastructure plans; and • develop, promote and coordinate community benefits agreements.
19.	<p>The Committee recommends that the Commonwealth Government develop strategies and targets for achieving fair access to health services for people living in regional and remote areas recognising the use of fly-in, fly-out/drive-in, drive-out health services, providing for appropriate funding and infrastructure support.</p>
20.	<p>The Committee recommends that the Commonwealth Government require each Regional Development Australia committee, in consultation with regional health groups such as Medicare Locals, to have a health focus in its strategic plan, specifically focussing on long-term workforce and infrastructure planning and the role that fly-in, fly-out/drive-in, drive-out medical practitioners will play in future service delivery, with a primary aim to increase residential service delivery.</p>
21.	<p>The Committee recommends that the Commonwealth Government develop initiatives to encourage the provision of tertiary education providers to resource communities.</p>



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