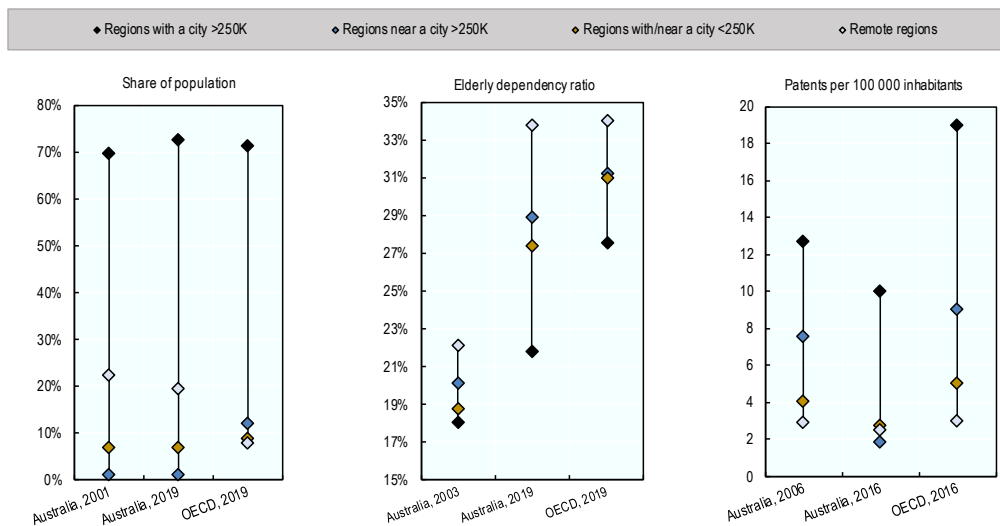


# Australia

## Statistical profile

Figure 1. Statistical profile



	Population growth 2008-2019 (%)	Growth in employment 2008-2017 (%)	GVA per worker (1 000 USD ppp)	GVA manufacturing (%)	Hospital beds per 1 000 inhabitants
Regions with a city >250K	2.3 (0.7)	1.8 (0.9)	NA	NA	NA
Regions near a city >250K	1.7 (0.3)	1.8 (0.5)	NA	NA	NA
Regions with/near a city <250K	1.8 (0.2)	1.0 (0.0)	NA	NA	NA
Remote regions	0.8 (0.5)	0.5 (0.2)	NA	NA	NA

Note: OECD average is presented in parenthesis. Data for unemployment rate are from 2017. The OECD average by order in the table has been made with 33, 25 countries with available data. Employment growth measured as employment in the workplace.

Source: (OECD, 2020<sup>[1]</sup>) OECD Regional Statistics (database), <http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/region-data-e>.

## Policy framework and Institutional setting of rural development

### Rural Definition

- ❖ Australia has a number of definitions and criteria to identify 'rural' and 'regional', however the most common standard national definitions are those developed by the Australian Bureau of

Statistics in the Australian Statistical Geography <https://www.abs.gov.au/ausstats/abs@.nsf/mf/1270.0.55.005>. This typology defines metropolitan, inner regional, outer regional, remote and very remote areas, and urban areas and localities of various sizes, but does not specify a 'rural' definition as separate typology in itself. Additional to this national standard, specific agencies or levels of administration can apply different criteria to distinguish regional or rural areas, as suits their administrative boundaries and responsibilities.

### **National rural policy**

- ❖ As indicated above, Australia approaches the matter of "rural" policy under the wider concept of regional policy. Each major agency of the national administration develops and applies regional policies within their areas of responsibility focussed on the needs of those living outside the main metropolitan centres (for example, in employment or education). The full range of policies is monitored and co-ordinated through the lead agency, the Department of Infrastructure, Transport, Cities, Regional Development and Communications. Within this large number of initiatives, there is an increasing focus on place-based policy co-ordination, for example in the Regional Deals model, which leverage regions' strengths and respond to their specific needs by bringing together all levels of government to collaborate and align initiatives and investments.

### **Lead ministry(ies) and other co-ordination bodies in charge**

**Table 1. Main institutions in charge of rural development policies at the national level**

Ministries/Departments (most important first)	Role
Department of Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development and Communications	Co-ordination, policy, programs

**Table 2. Main institutions in charge of rural development policies at the subnational level**

Institutions	Role
State-level government agencies	Policy implementation

### **Key objectives in rural policy and delivery mechanisms**

- ❖ Australia's rural development policy allocates a high degree of importance to economic areas, followed by environmental matters (Table 3). Table 4 shows the main priorities of rural policy for Australia.
- ❖ The main delivery mechanisms to implement rural policies are dedicated grants programmes.

**Table 3. Relevance of sectors in rural development policy**

Policy areas	Weight on rural policy	Average OECD
Economic	60%	40%
Environment	30%	30%
Social	10%	30%

*Note:* Self-reported responses from country delegate to the question: "Please grade from 1 to 10 the importance rural development policies in your country assigns to economic, social and environmental areas".

*Source:* OECD (2018), "Responses to the institutional survey on rural policy in OECD countries".

**Table 4. Relevant objectives in rural development policy**

Top objectives	Programmes	Main financial mechanisms to support the strategy
Agriculture	Drought support, business support, National Water Infrastructure Fund	grants, subsidies, loans, regulation
Support to private sector, jobs and investment	Regional Employment Trials, Regional Growth Fund	funding
Environmental sustainability	Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999 (EPBC Act), Murray Darling Basin Authority Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority	funding
Accessibility- via transport/ broadband	National Broadband Network project Roads of National Significance Melbourne to Brisbane Inland Rail	service delivery, infrastructure construction
Quality of life/well-being of rural residents	Regional grants programs such as the Building Better Regions Fund and the Stronger Communities Programme	grants

*Note:* Objectives presented are the objectives with higher scores in the survey responses.

*Source:* OECD (2018), "Responses to the institutional survey on rural policy in OECD countries".