

To whom it may concern

Re: Regional Capitals Australia - Draft National Urban Policy Consultation

Thank you for the opportunity to respond to Regional Capitals Australia – Draft National Consultation.

The Fraser Coast Regional Council (FCRC) is supportive of the development of a policy which outlines the Government's objectives to create more liveable, equitable, productive, and resilient urban areas as well as support sustainable growth of cities and regions across Australia.

The Fraser Coast has been experiencing significant growth that exceeds national averages and is likely to continue because of mass immigration into our cities, coupled with the rising cost of living and housing affordability (or lack thereof) pushing large numbers of residents to regional areas such as ours.

In doing so, this growth is posing severe infrastructure challenges for us to both plan and deliver the necessary physical and social infrastructure.

When considering the relative disadvantage of communities across Australia, the Fraser Coast, despite being one of Australia's fastest growing communities has levels of disadvantage which are so extreme that the only places with higher levels of disadvantage are discrete remote Indigenous communities. This disadvantage results from above average levels of aged pensioners, high rates of disability, low levels of educational attainment and high levels of unemployment leading to overall levels of family income which are significantly below any State or National averages.

We would like Regional Capitals Australia to respectfully consider and understand the extensive growth of regions such as the Fraser Coast. For example, we note in the proposal that the focus is on top 20 regional growth areas, with Hervey Bay currently at 27. However, if you combine the Fraser Coasts two major hubs, Maryborough, and Hervey Bay we are comparative to Albury/Wodonga.

The rapid growth we are experiencing, poses an issue for the region as it comprises of two principal centres, rural townships and numerous coastal townships and villages, which in combination (the sum of its parts) are contributing to rapid urban sprawl on multiple development fronts requiring infrastructure support.

We would recommend that consideration is given to looking at those regions outside the top 20 and who are experiencing significant growth and sharing funding appropriately. This is particularly critical to regional areas such as ours, that are exceeding growth projections and threatening our ability to keep ahead of both the physical and social infrastructure needs.

The Fraser Coast Regional Council has a strong focus on sustainable planning to address urban growth and has identified the need for additional local infrastructure investment, however it will be imperative for State and Federal funding to support this focus.

We welcome the opportunity for further consultation.

Yours sincerely



Gerard Carlyon  
Director Strategy, Community and Development

**Contact Officer:** Justine Cooper  
**Phone:** 1300 79 49 29  
**Docs Reference:** # 5023326