



MEDIA RELEASE

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National State of the Regions Report Highlights Need to Support Innovation and Resilience in Regional Areas

The National State of the Regions Report, commissioned by the Australian Local Government Association (ALGA), has found that support to foster innovation is required to build new economic opportunities and resilience in regional and rural communities.

Innovation is a key driver for economic growth, but it tends to be concentrated in Australia's metropolitan capitals and inner cities, with struggling rural and remote regions at risk of being left behind.

Yesterday, ALGA released the *State of the Regions 2018-19: Trade, Jobs, Growth and Inequality*, the 21st edition of the Report prepared by National Economics and ALGA, ahead of the National General Assembly of Local Government in Canberra.

The Report examines Local Government's role in regional economic development and provides a detailed regional assessment of the opportunities and barriers to regional economic growth and productivity gains. It builds upon the accumulated knowledge from previous reports, providing a coherent framework for analysing regional development.

The Report found that productivity and innovation is happening in the inner cities, fed by a wide variety of cultural, lifestyle and recreational choices and easy access to opportunity for social interaction. Further infrastructure support, particularly telecommunications, transport, community and cultural infrastructure is needed to help regional areas attract innovators or 'knowledge workers' and their families to rural and remote regions.

The President of ALGA, Mayor David O'Loughlin, said it was clear from the report that more action is needed to help set up the right conditions to boost all of Australia's regions.

"The three tiers of government must work together to address the infrastructure deficiencies that are making it difficult for the hinterlands to increase their productivity and grow their knowledge economies" he said.

LGAT President, Mayor Doug Chipman said as the findings of the Report were highly relevant to Tasmanian communities, noting our largely regional population.

"The data in the State of the Regions report reflects what is largely understood about Tasmania. That is, we have amongst the lowest household disposable incomes in the country and the lowest percentage of the workforce with a post school qualification."

Mayor Chipman said that while all Tasmanian regions have accelerated their population growth rates over the past two years when compared with the previous 4 years, we have still continued to decline as a share of national population, economic activity and productivity.

“There is a need to supercharge local area productivity in our rural and regional areas through strategies and infrastructure investment to prevent a further widening of the gap in prosperity between our regional areas and metropolitan centres,” he said.

**For media enquiries, please contact
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