

*The search for policy coherence:  
Australian regional governance in a Federal  
framework, 1996-2007*

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## **Abstract**

Governing for sustainability creates complexities and challenges for governments and communities. In turn, there are calls for more effective forms of regional governance and renewed efforts in seeking to harmonise and integrate social, economic and environmental imperatives. This new context necessitates a re-examination of coherence as a foundation for policy development and implementation.

The task of this thesis is to examine ways of governing for coherence and sustainability in a regional context in the Australian Federal Government policy framework. The time frame of the study is post World War II (WWII) with a specific focus on the period 1996 to 2007. The study has undertaken desk-based research and consultation comprising in-depth interviews and focus groups. Two case studies of New South Wales and the Riverina region are used to examine both policy and operational issues regarding regional governance. Overseas cases, using experience from the United Kingdom and the European Union, have also been examined and analysed with regard to regional governance strengths and weaknesses.

The contribution this study makes is to show how greater policy coherence can be created as a step towards more sustainable outcomes for regional communities across the nation. The specific contribution of this research is in creating a model of policy coherence which responds to the federated form of governance which has shaped Australian experience, practice and existing policy on regional governance. In particular, this model provides a means to focus policy development by incorporating both horizontal and vertical approaches to joining up government and offers the potential for the development of a nationally consistent approach to regional governance in Australia.

# Certificate of Authorship of Thesis

Except where indicated in footnotes, quotations and the bibliography, I certify that I am the sole author of the thesis submitted today entitled –

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I further certify that to the best of my knowledge the thesis contains no material previously published or written by another person except where due reference is made in the text of the thesis.

The material in the thesis has not been the basis of an award of any other degree or diploma except where due reference is made in the text of the thesis.

The thesis complies with University requirements for a thesis as set out in

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The views expressed in this thesis are those of the author and cannot be considered to represent those of the Department of Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development and Local Government or of the Australian Government.

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## Acronyms

AAP	Australian Assistance Plan
ABS	Australian Bureau of Statistics
ACCs	Area Consultative Committees
ACLG	Australian Council of Local Government
AFFA	Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries Australia
ALGA	Australian Local Government Association
ANAO	Australian National Audit Office
ATC	Australian Transport Council
BCDE	Broadband, Communications and the Digital Economy
BTRE	Bureau of Transport and Regional Economics
BRCWG	Business Regulation and Competition Working Group
CAF	Council for the Australian Federation
CAP	Common Agricultural Policy
CCWWG	Climate Change and Water Working Group
CDATs	Community Drug Action Teams
CMA	Catchment Management Authorities
COAG	Council of Australian Governments
CoR	Committee of Regions

CRDB	Capital Region Development Board
CWA	Country Women's Association
DA	Development Assessment
DAFF	Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry
DBERD	Department of Business, Economic and Regional Development
DCC	Department of Climate Change
DEEWR	Department of Employment, Education and Workplace Relations
DEST	Department of Education, Science and Training
DEWHA	Department of Environment, Water, Heritage and the Arts
DEWR	Department of Employment and Workplace Relations
DHA	Department of Health and Ageing
DIAC	Department of Immigration and Citizenship
DIIRD	Department of Innovation, Industry and Regional Development
DIISR	Department of Industry, Innovation, Science and Research
DITRDLG	Department of Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development and Local Government
DLG	Department of Local Government
DNRW	Department of Natural Resources and Water
DoCS	Department of Community Services
DOFA	Department of Finance and Administration
DOFD	Department of Finance and Deregulation
DoH	Department of Health
DoHA	Department of Health and Ageing
DOTARS	Department of Transport and Regional Services
DPC	Department of Premier and Cabinet
DPI	Department of Primary Industries
DRET	Department of Resources, Energy and Tourism
DSD	Department of State Development
DSRD	Department of State and Regional Development
DTI	Department of Trade and Industry
DURD	Department of Urban and Regional Development
eDAIS	electronic Development Assessment Interoperability Specification
EESC	European Economic and Social Committee
EPB	Economic Prosperity Boards

ERDF	European Regional Development Fund
ESDP	European Spatial Development Perspective
ESF	European Social Fund
ETS	Emissions Trading Scheme
EU	European Union
EURATOM	European Atomic Energy Community Treaty
FACSLIA	Department of Families, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs
FAG	Financial Assistance Grants
FaHCSIA	Department of Families, Housing, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs
FMA	Financial Management Accountability
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GNI	Gross National Income
GO	Government Offices
HAF	Housing Affordability Fund
IAA	Indigenous Affairs Arrangements
ICCs	Indigenous Coordination Centres
INTERREG	Inter-regional programmes
IORA	Information On Regional Australia
IRSF	Integrated Regional Strategic Framework
ISRD	Institute of Sustainable Regional Development
IRS	Integrated Regional Strategies
JSC	Joint Steering Committee
JUG	Joined up Government
LAA	Local Area Agreements
LAC	Local Area Command
LAU	Local Administrative Units
LEPs	Local Environmental Plans
LGAs	Local Government Authorities
LGO	Department of Premier and Cabinet's Local Government Office
LGP	Department of Local Government, Planning, Sport and Recreation
LGPMC	Local Government and Planning Ministers' Council
LOGJOG	Local Government and Joint Officers' Group
MAA	Multi-Area Agreement/s

MCMA	Murrumbidgee Catchment Management Authority
MCU	Major Cities Unit
MIA	Murrumbidgee Irrigation Area
MTISP	Ministerial Taskforce on Integrated Strategic Policy
NAP	National Action Plan for Salinity and Water
NHHRC	National Health and Hospitals Reform Commission
NHT	Natural Heritage Trust
NPM	New Public Management
NRLB	National Regional Leaders Board
NRM	Natural Resource Management
NSRF	National Strategic Reference Framework
NSF	National Strategic Framework
NSS	National Statistical Service
NSW	New South Wales
NT	Northern Territory
NUTS	Nomenclature des Unités Territoriales
NWI	National Water Initiative
OECD	Organisation of Economic Community Development
OIPC	Office of Indigenous Policy and Coordination
PBS	Portfolio Budget Statements
PCM	Policy Coherence Model
PLGC	Premier's Local Government Council
PM&C	Prime Minister and Cabinet
POG	Planning Officials' Group
PSA	Public Service Agreement
PVGF	Provincial Victoria Growth Fund
QLD	Queensland
RA <sub>s</sub>	Regional Assemblies
RACC	Riverina Area Consultative Committee
RCC	Regional Coordination Committee
RCCC	Regional Consultative Communities Council
RCMG	Regional Coordination Management Groups
RCN <sub>s</sub>	Regional Coordination Networks
RCP	Regional Coordination Program

RCP	Rural Communities Programme
RDA	Regional Development Australia
RDAs	Regional Development Agencies
RDBs	Regional Development Boards
RDC	Regional Development Council
RDO	Regional Development Organisation
RDV	Regional Development Victoria
REDF	Regional Economic Development Fund
RESs	Regional Economic Development Strategies
REROC	Riverina East Regional Organisation of Council
RFE	Riverina Federal Electorate
RIVROC	Riverina Regional Organisation of Council
RLB	Regional Leaders Board
RLF	Regional Leaders' Forum
RMRCP	Riverina Murray Regional Coordination Program
ROCs	Regional Organisations of Councils
RP	Regional Partnerships Programme
RPA	Regional Partnership Agreements
RPISC	Regional Policy Implementation Steering Committee
RRDB	Riverina Regional Development Board
RSDF	Regional Sustainable Development Framework
RSP	Regional Solutions Programme
RSS	Regional Spatial Strategies
RTC	Rural Transaction Centres
SA	South Australia
SASP	South Australia Strategic Plan
SCORD	Standing Committee on Regional Development
SEQ	South East Queensland
SFF	Strategic Framework Fund
SNR	Sub-national Development and Regeneration
SPC	Special Premiers Conferences
SR	Sustainable Regions Program
SRAC	Sustainable Regions Advisory Committee
SRAs	Shared Responsibility Agreements

SRSA	Stronger Regions: Stronger Australia
SWOT	Strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, threats
TAFE	Technical and Further Education
TAS	Tasmania
UK	United Kingdom
UN	United Nations
UTAS	University of Tasmania
VIC	Victoria
WA	Western Australia
WCED	World Commission on Environment and Development
WOG	Whole of Government
WWICC	Wagga Wagga Indigenous Coordination Centre
WWII	World War II