



Prosperity for every piece

SUBMISSION CONSULTATION PAPER THE FAR WEST INITIATIVE

Presented by
Cr Bob Wheeldon
Chair
restofnsw inc.

restofnsw inc.

restofnsw inc. has the exclusive aim of advocating for policies that bring prosperity to communities outside of the Sydney Basin.

We advocate for policies that will make regional NSW:

- a great place to live and visit;
- grow healthy food for domestic and international markets;
- develop our resources in harmony with agriculture and communities;
- achieve improved environmental outcomes without sacrificing communities or productivity; and
- a union of many diverse local economies.

THE FAR WEST IS NOT ONE SIZE FITS ALL

The Far West Initiative Consultation Paper aims to ‘improve the outcomes for the people of Far Western NSW’ by addressing challenges and problems across the area. This is where the Consultation Paper falls short, by grouping a handful of problems as being uniform across the entire Far West. Wentworth for example does not face the same aboriginal non-employment rate as Bourke.

Although the Consultation Paper does identify one challenge as ‘having issues with one size fits all approaches’ it does little to offer substantive solutions beyond creating another layer of Government.

The development of a stand alone Far West Environmental Plan does have merit although **restofnsw** envisage problems that may arise such as

- Adding an additional layer of approval processes by developing sub-regional or shared approaches to approvals could be off putting for development especially if the statutory body does not meet as often as council.
- A set of new standard instrument definitions would have to be developed for the entire Far West which could go on for extended of periods of time.
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LESS GOVERNANCE NOT MORE

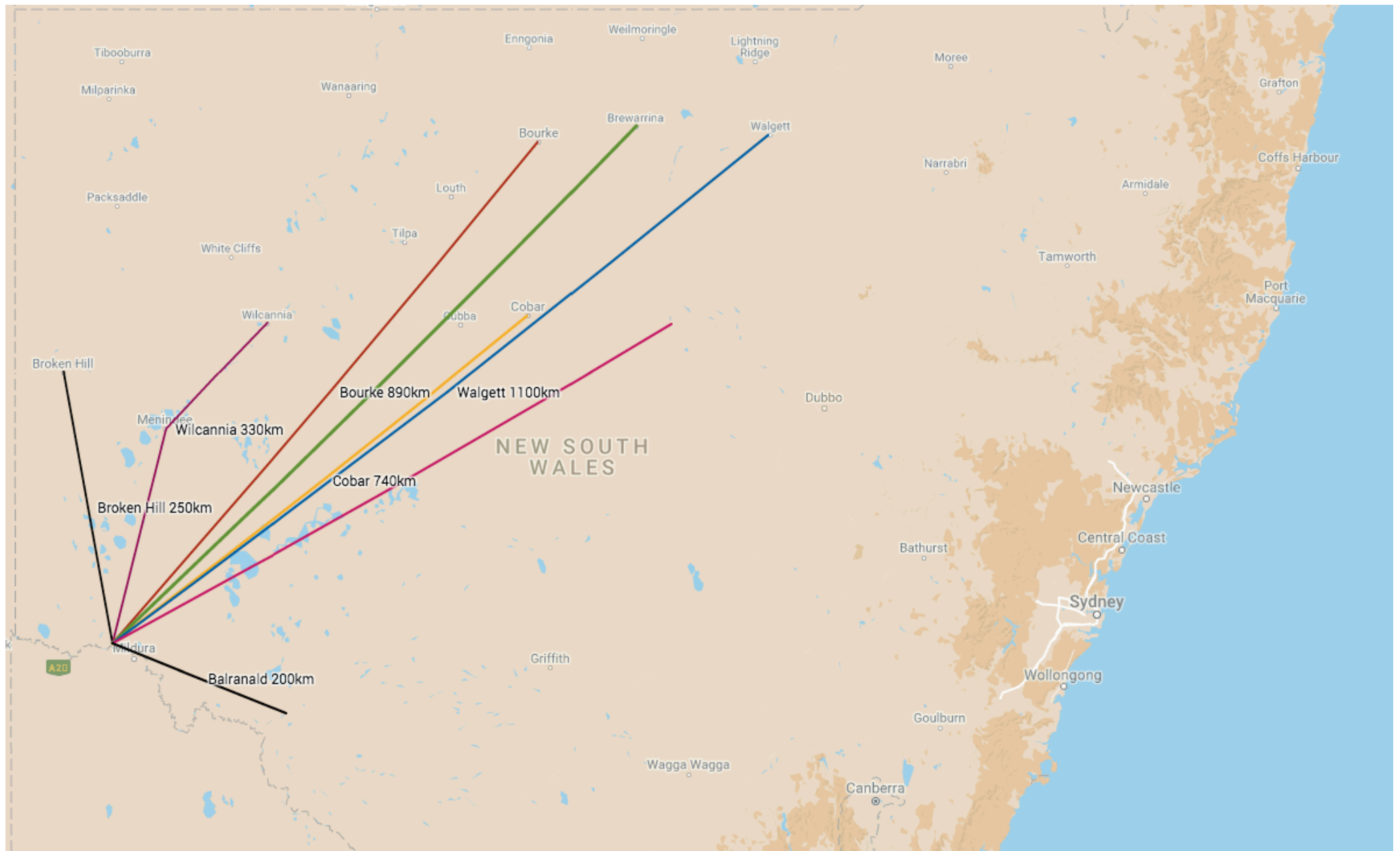
restofnsw inc. believes the Consultation Paper overlooks alternative key reform approaches that would likely cost far less compared to the suggested reforms such as establishing a new region-wide statutory entity. **resofnsw** has continually maintained that reforming Western Lands Act 1901, The Native Vegetation Act 2003 and regional planning would deliver almost immediate results for Far West communities rather than creating additional bureaucracies that are impractical to adequately address issues in specific regions of the Far West.

The statutory entity sounds good on paper but in reality is less efficient than what we

have currently. **restofnsw** proposes that the consultation committee look at logical opportunities for sub regions to cooperate with one another rather than the entire Far West trying to collectively achieve a number of goals. The far south-west region of Wentworth for example is far better suited to cooperate with Mildura across the river. The below map illustrates the impracticality for Wentworth to connect with other regions that are up to 1100km's away. It makes no sense to travel hundreds of kilometers away when Mildura is 1km over the river and is already more connected socially, economically and practically.

The consultation paper proposes one way to plan for economic development is for the Statutory body to 'Lead development of a Far West Economic Plan' whereby councils would translate that plan into actions for their own LGA's. The consultation paper also suggests the statutory body and/or councils could employ economic development staff.

restofnsw believes this solution is somewhat counter intuitive by further delaying economic development by undertaking more 'plans' and more 'meetings' when there are logical solutions waiting to be used. For example Wentworth already has a lot of development potential by being in close proximity to Mildura, there is not a lot of need for grand economic plans when it is already at the footsteps. It makes sense for Wentworth to plan for its own economic development.





SUBMISSION INQUIRY INTO REGIONAL PLANNING PROCESSES IN NSW

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WHY DO SYDNEY AND REGIONAL NSW NEED DIFFERENT PLANNING APPROACHES

Regional NSW comprises 80 million hectares. Western NSW comprises about 40 million hectares and contains less than 100,000 people. Given regional NSW is such a large area there are many opportunities for development where there is minimal land use conflict. To be very conservative the greatest amount of land that will ever be developed for human non-agricultural purposes in regional NSW is say 80,000 hectares or 0.1% of the land mass. On the other hand almost all available land in Sydney is already fully developed and consequently there is a large amount of land use conflict.

Most regional communities support economic development while there is a split in Sydney communities over whether more development is desirable or not. In the opinion of restofnsw inc. it is perverse then that the State Government encourages development in areas of cities where the residents don't want further development (eg. North Shore Sydney) and discourages development in parts of regional NSW that want and need development (eg. Western NSW). The NSW Department of Planning should be addressing matters of planning of the whole State, not just Sydney.

Notwithstanding these differences NSW Planning takes a standardized approach of best shown by the "Standard Instrument" LEP. The religious zeal with which the Department has pursued the Standard Instrument despite the numerous objections of rural Councils is a triumph of process over substance. The Standard Instrument may work in Sydney but it has caused numerous acknowledged LEP errors, which the Department has acknowledged by "Error Planning Proposals" (see attached document for 13/14 years). Many mapping errors are yet to be fixed because of the costs and time associated with correcting these errors.

NEED TO USE PLANNING AS A TOOL OF ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT IN REGIONAL NSW

restofnsw inc. believes the NSW Department of Planning and Environment has, perhaps unintentionally, hampered prosperity in regional NSW by:

- Favours development in already over-developed Sydney;
- Not adequately considering opportunities for growth in border areas, in particular along the Murray River border to Victoria (see attached document Comparative Murray Population Growth);
- Taking a bureaucratic approach to town planning with a rigid insistence on strategic plans and rural studies;
- Stripping existing dwelling rights from existing lots without strategic justification;
- Including environmental overlays on rural land without detailed environmental reports to justify the same;
- Locating Department of Planning Regional Offices up to 800km away from the areas they service (eg. Dubbo servicing Wentworth); and
- Preventing existing rural communities from diversifying to make their townships and existing infrastructure sustainable.

These actions have been contrary to due process, the NSW 2021 Plans, EPA Act Objectives and the NSW Government election promise to “turbocharge the regional economy”.

NSW uses planning policy to achieve economic development goals in Sydney as indicated by:

- All ten of NSW Planning’s “Priority Projects” being located in Sydney¹
- Housing Acceleration Fund predominantly allocated to Sydney; and
- Forcing Councils to have population densities/units local communities don’t want.

NSW Planning should:

- Suspend rollout of the Standard LEP instrument which does not serve needs of regional NSW and acknowledge and correct the errors in its rollout; and
- Close Department Planning Regional Offices with resources to be re-directed to Council’s Local Planning Departments. The Planning Department should limit its role in regional planning to areas where it can add value to the local Council or the local Council is evidenced to be behaving inappropriately.

¹ <http://www.planning.nsw.gov.au/Plans-for-Your-Area/Priority-Growth-Areas-and-Precincts>

FAILURE TO PRIORITISE OR IMPLEMENT REGIONAL GROWTH PLANS

While announced with much hype there has been little if any progress on regional growth plans². Existing plans on the NSW Government website are a collection of motherhood statements. Similarly the Jobs for NSW programme has been ineffective.³

There is no clear vision for growth in regional NSW beyond these motherhood statements. Across the USA there are multiple regional cities with populations of many

millions that house major corporate head offices. Significant growth in regional cities should be a vision of the NSW Government.

NSW should fund our best architects to help Councils master plan Regional Cities so as to encourage visionary ideas and the integration of tourism, investment, infrastructure and planning policies.

LACK OF INFRASTRUCTURE INVESTMENT

Infrastructure spending is dominated by Sydney projects⁴. Businesses in the **restofnsw** cannot be expected to be competitive when their respective communities are receiving minimal infrastructure funding and Sydney is receiving billions.

restofnsw believes the attention being given to Sydney mega projects such as the Westconnex freeway, Northwest rail, stadiums and Barangaroo Casino are at the expense of infrastructure for food production and important economic development in the restofnsw.

The main regional infrastructure expenditures such as new hospitals are federally funded and the State is mainly spending money on Sydney transport projects.

The \$966million Housing Acceleration Fund⁵ is largely spent in Sydney notwithstanding the median Sydney property price being circa \$1million. Where is the equity in that?

² <http://www.planning.nsw.gov.au/Plans-for-Your-Area/Regional-Plans>

³ <http://www.industry.nsw.gov.au/invest-in-nsw/why-sydney-and-nsw/jobs-for-nsw/jobs-for-regional-nsw>

⁴ <http://www.restofnsw.org/infrastructure-equity.html>

⁵ <http://www.planning.nsw.gov.au/About-Us/Our-Programs/Housing-Acceleration-Fund>

PLANNING AND DPI TO CONSOLIDATE AND STREAMLINE PLANNING REFERRALS

NSW Planning are happy to allow development of the majority of the fertile and finite agricultural land in the Sydney Basin but are vehemently against the same sort of development in the 80 million hectares in regional NSW.

Development Applications and Planning Proposals in regional NSW will be referred to up to four DPI offices for comment being DPI re agricultural land issues, NSW Office of Water, NSW Fisheries and Local Land Services.

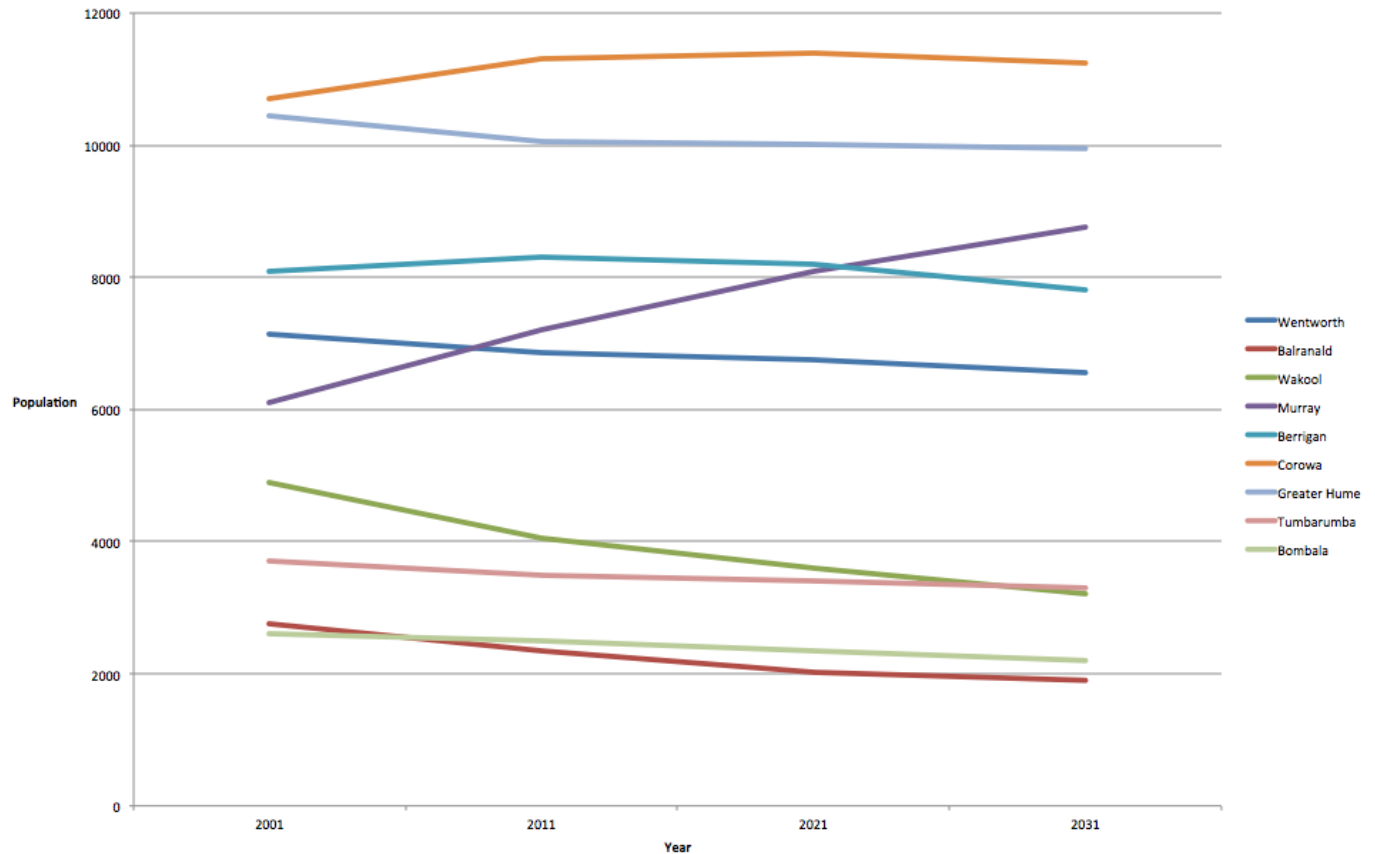
DPI (in conjunction with Department of Planning) should consolidate and streamline these referrals (or delegate to Council) as:

- ❑ LEPs already requires Council to consider these issues
- ❑ The DPI offices generally oppose all regional development
- ❑ The DPI offices are remote from the regions and inadequately consider local issues

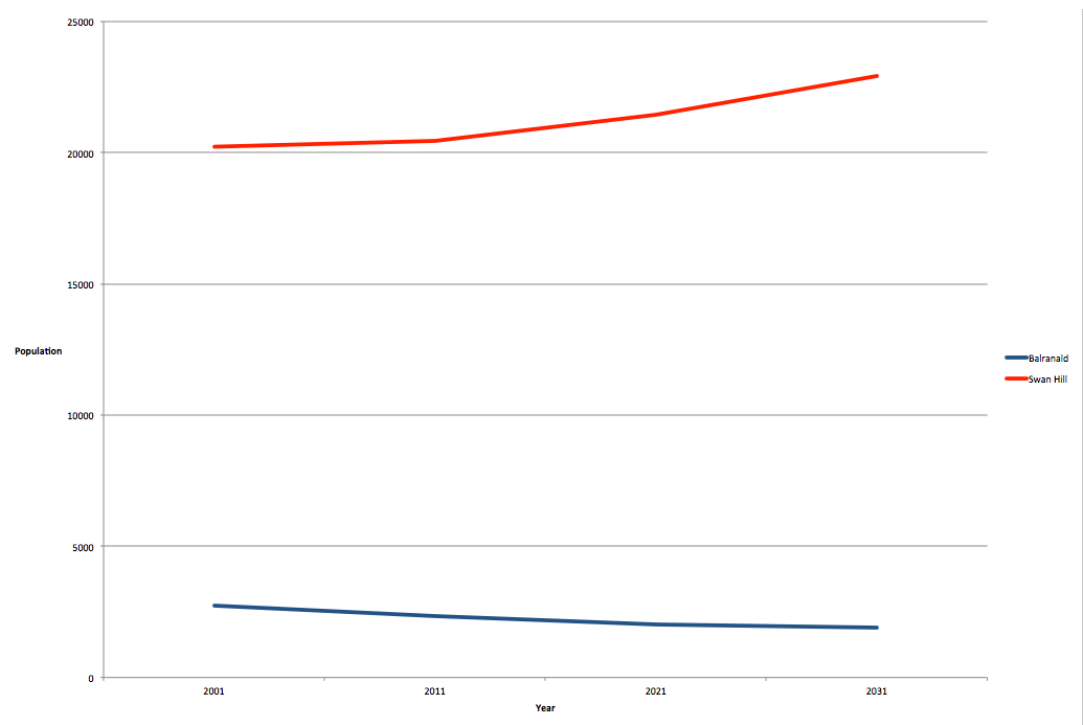
COMPARATIVE POPULATION DATA ON THE MURRAY

All along the Murray, towns and regional centers are losing out to their Victorian counterparts. The below graphs give a clear illustration to the population changes in Victoria and New South Wales. (Blue=NSW, Red = VIC).

In almost all cases the NSW LGA's are stagnant or falling while the Victorian LGA is growing.



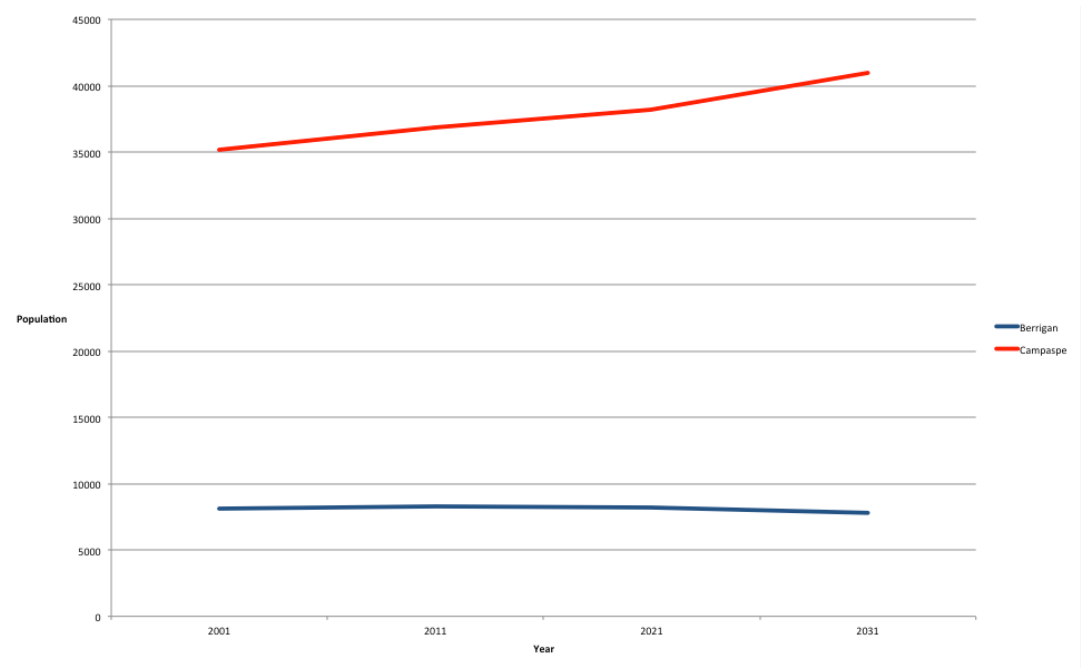
Balranald NSW Vs Swan Hill VIC



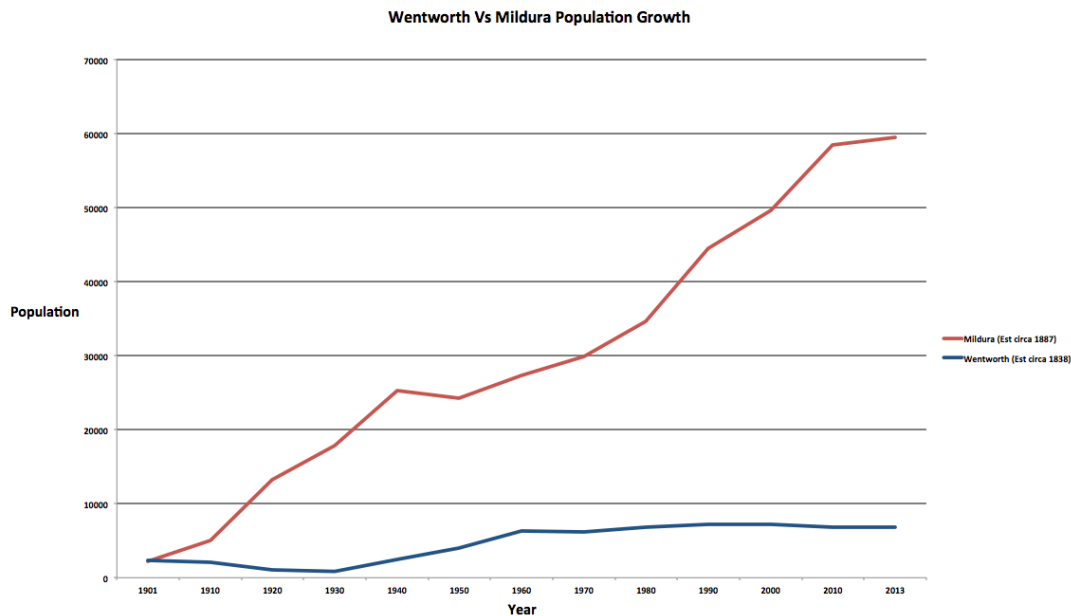
Wakool NSW Vs Gannawarra VIC



Berrigan NSW Vs Campaspe VIC



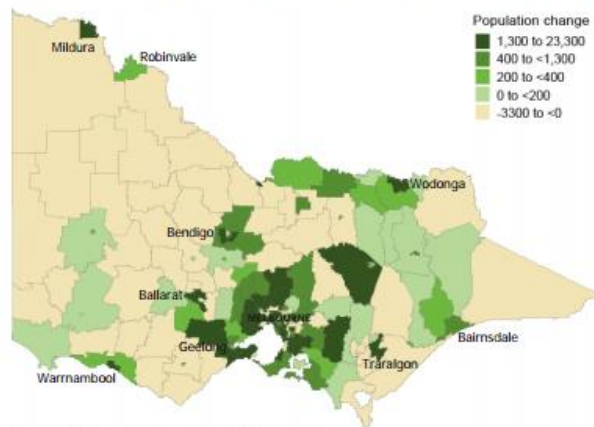
Wentworth Vs. Mildura



There is a particularly striking differential between Wentworth and Mildura. The NSW Department of Planning & Environment projects the Wentworth LGA population to decrease from 6850 in 2011 to 6550 in 2031.⁶ However the Victorian departmental equivalent projects Mildura's population to increase from 54,666 in 2011 to 64,288 in 2031.⁷

As can be seen from the image below the Murray border area contains some areas of Victoria that are growing quickly.

Figure 3: Population change in Statistical Local Areas of Victoria 2001 to 2006



Source: ABS Census data, time series profile (enumerated)

⁶ <http://www.planning.nsw.gov.au/en-au/deliveringhomes/populationandhouseholdprojections/yourarea.aspx>

⁷ <http://www.dpcd.vic.gov.au/localgovernment/find-your-local-council/mildura>

LEP ERRORS

LGA	PP Number	Date Lodged	Stage	Correction required
Broken Hill	PP_2014_BRO KE_001_00	09/07/2014	With P/E For gateway determinatio n	Correction- needed for the purpose of the Zone SP1 Special Activites (Mining) to ZONE Special Activites (Mining and Extractive Industry)
Cessnock	PP_2014_CESS N_004_00	26/06/14	Approved at gateway and with RPA for implementat ion	Mapping correction- Adjust map to correctly identity the Local Government boundary between Cessnock and Singleton
Cootamundra	PP_2014_COO TA_001_00	17/06/14	Approved at gateway and with RPA for implementat ion	Correction of anomalies - removal of heritage item destroyed by fire
Gosford	PP_2014_GOS FO_009_00	11/06/14	Approved at gateway and with RPA for implementat ion	Correction of word in LEP- Change word 'or' to 'and' (CIL.4.3A(3)(a))
Armidale Dumeresq	PP_2014_AR MID_002_00	4/06/14	Approved at gateway and with RPA for implementat ion	Mapping and listing information corrections

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Manly Council	PP_2014_MANLY_001_00	8/05/14	Approved at gateway and with RPA for implementation	Correct mapping anomalies and drafting errors
Gosford	PP_2014_GODFO_003_00	7/05/14	Approved at gateway and with RPA for implementation	Correction of property descriptions and locations of items
Fairfield	PP_2014_FAIRF_003_00	7/05/14	Approved at gateway and with RPA for implementation	Correct historic anomaly
Conargo	PP_2014_CONCAR_001_00	7/05/14	Approved at gateway and with RPA for implementation	Mapping corrections
Strathfield	PP_2014_STRAT_002_00	7/03/14	Approved at gateway and with RPA for implementation	Remove item from heritage listing. (Heritage assessment undertaken)
Warringah Council	PP_2014_WARRI_001_00	5/03/14	Approved by Minister or Delegate	Fix drafting error
Singleton	PP_2014_SINGL_001_00	21/03/14	Approved at gateway and with RPA for implementation	Corrections to LEP to update and correct mapping

Cessnock	PP_2014_CESS N_001_00	19/03/14	Approved at gateway and with RPA for implementation	Rectify a heritage layer drafting error and change heritage item naming
Gosford	PP_2014_GOS FO_002_00	18/03/14	Approved at gateway and with RPA for implementation	Definition of 'Flood planning level
Port Stephens	PP_2014_POR TS_002_00	12/03/14	Approved by Minister or Delegate	Correct an error on the minimum lot size mapping.
Canterbury	PP_2014_CAN TE_002_00	10/03/14	Approved at gateway and with RPA for implementation	Correct a mapping anomaly
Leichhardt	PP_2014_LEIC H_003_00	7/03/14	Approved at gateway and with RPA for implementation	Remove items which were listed in error or no longer have heritage significance from the LEP
Queanbeyan	PP_2014_QUE AN_002_00	25/02/14	Approved at gateway and with RPA for implementation	Correct mapping anomalies and misdescriptions
Murray	PP_2014_MU RRA_001_00	14/02/14	Approved at gateway and with RPA for implementation	Rectify issues/errors in the LEP - including land rezonings, lot size map changes, land use tables, heritage conservation changes, insertion of new additional local provisions

Deniliquin	PP_2014_DEN IL_001_00	14/02/14	Approved by Minister or Delegate	Correct mapping error
Greater Taree	PP_2014_GTA RE_001_00	5/02/14	With P/E For gateway determinati on	Slight correction in mapping error
Wyong	PP_2014_WY ONG_001_00	4/02/14	Approved at gateway and with RPA for implementat ion	Revise current flood mapping
Port Macquarie	PP_2014_POR TM_001_00	16/01/14	Approved at gateway and with RPA for implementat ion	Mapping correction, heritage listing - item correction
Kiama	PP_2014_KIA MA_001_00	13/01/14	With P/E For gateway determinati on	Correct a mapping anomaly
Dubbo	PP_DUBBO_0 03_00	20/12/13	Approved at gateway and with RPA for implementat ion	Rectify anomalies in land use table, rectify mapping errors
Wolloondilly	PP_2014_WO LLY_001_00	19/12/13	Approved at gateway and with RPA for implementat ion	Correct an error on the heritage map
Tenterfield	PP_2013_TEN TE_002_00	16/12/13	Approved at gateway and with RPA for implementation	Correct errors contained within the existing Schedule 5 Environmental Heritage