

## What is remoteFOCUS?

remoteFOCUS is a national initiative that aims to improve the way governments, govern, administer and engage with remote Australia.

In 2008 28 Australians with extensive experience of government, government administration and remote Australia discussed the apparent failure of current structures to deliver effective government to remote Australia.

## What is remote Australia?

Remote Australia occupies approximately 85% of the Australian continent. However, because of the nature of Australia's political system and demographic realities, remote Australia is often forgotten.

Many Australians view remote Australia in terms of extremes and fail to appreciate the looming social, economic and ecological crisis in remote Australia and the fact that it has significant consequences for Australia as a whole.

## What is the challenge?

The components of our challenge include:

- the difficulties faced by all levels of government in providing basic community services and infrastructure, even in areas of great and vital wealth production
- the lack of any real local authority over decision making and allocation of resources

**85%**  
The proportion of  
Australia that is remote

- the drift of the non-Indigenous population to more settled areas
- the severe stress on Indigenous culture and societal structures, and
- the risk of collapsing fragile ecosystems in the context of outmoded land management regimes.

Yet the region holds enormous and largely untapped economic and social potential. These include resources and agricultural development, Indigenous employment and training, Indigenous enterprise and wealth management, and cultural and eco-tourism as well as emerging and existing opportunities in areas such as climate.

## What the People say

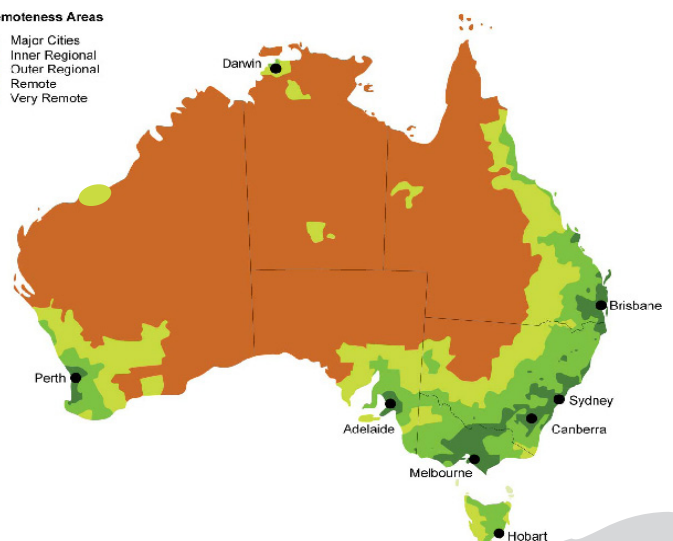
People of remote Australia consistently point us to four qualitative concerns that are not addressed under current government policy making and administration across remote Australia's regions.

People want:

1. A say in the decisions which effect them
2. More equitable and sustainable financial flows to remote Australia
3. Better services and a responsive public service with more local accountability
4. A story about Australia that includes them.

### Remoteness Areas

- Major Cities
- Inner Regional
- Outer Regional
- Remote
- Very Remote



It holds that without strategic reforms that address these concerns the effectiveness of government investments in achieving lasting change in remote Australia are severely constrained and remote Australia is not able to live up to its national potential.

Global and local trends contribute to the critical state of affairs of remote Australia however it is incorrect to characterise these as purely Aboriginal issues.

## What action is being taken?

remoteFOCUS has a national and a Pilbara dimension. Whilst many of the reform principles under consideration are national they have specific application in places like the Pilbara, or western Queensland or the Northern Territory..

Intensive dialogue that documents the experience of government by the people living in remote Australia and the innovative responses they generate to cope with their situation, is underway. A series of reform principles are being developed and tested arising from this evidence base.

A final document to be released nationally will draw out best practices from successful experiences and the community dialogue.

## Join the remoteFOCUS campaign

The remoteFOCUS campaign aims to engage people with concern for remote Australia in a dialogue to create a new future. If you share any of the concerns set out in this remote Australia challenge and you want to add your name in support, please contact:

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