



SEGRA 2011

MEDIA RELEASE

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Attention News Editors / Chief of Staff
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

COUNTRY BUMPKINS EMERGING AS THE NEW 'COOL' CITIES

Confronting a low carbon future, Australia's capital cities are complex and cumbersome, and are already groaning under the strain of population overload.

Australian capitals could soon be outshone by their 'country cousins' who are throwing off their lacklustre image and presenting attractive alternatives.

A network of new generation of cities is emerging; they have a vision, professional and informed leadership, the capacity to be nimble and innovative, and they are starting to galvanise each other.

"Over four million people currently live in regional cities – the equivalent population of Perth and Adelaide combined," says Associate Professor of Urban Planning Rod Duncan, of Deakin University.

"These mid-sized cities are substantially under-represented in public debate, policy formulation and research at present, but they are achieving growth rates higher than metropolitan cities in many cases, and they could be the key to transforming our major cities for the future."

Associate Professor Duncan says mid sized cities dubbed 'Midicities' can capitalise on their potential - attracting 21st century, post-carbon industries, investment and populations – by sharing intelligence and working together.

He says they also need to attract the attention of governments and policy makers.

"We are launching the Midicities for the Future concept at the SEGRA (Sustainable Economic Growth for Regional Australia) conference in

Geelong 25 – 27 October, to fortify the network of mid-sized cities across the country.

“Already New South Wales has Evocities, a marketing collective of regional cities and Western Australia has Super Towns, so there is a loose framework at a State level, but there is much to gain from a national network.”

Cities such as Bendigo, Ballarat in Victoria, Orange and Armidale in New South Wales and Ipswich in Queensland would fit the Midicities profile.

Associate Professor Duncan also believes Midicities will be critical testing grounds for the transformational change needed for future urban living, in capital cities in particular.

“A variety of innovate approaches are paying dividends in these Midicities, and offer precedents that can inform the efforts of metropolitan cities embarking on the daunting challenge of transforming to sustainable, post-carbon futures.”

The SEGRA conference is a national forum examining issues and opportunities confronting regional Australia.

The full conference program is available at www.segra.com.au

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FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT

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