



SEGRA 2010

# MEDIA RELEASE

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Attention News Editors / Chief of Staff  
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

## **SUSTAINABLE ECONOMIC GROWTH FOR REGIONAL AUSTRALIA (SEGRA) “Speaking Up for Regional Australia”**

Established in 1997, the **SEGRA** Conference is the only single national forum for regional development professionals, business, government and academics, dedicated to vibrant and viable regional Australia, to discuss issues and solutions for the future.

**SEGRA** 2010 will be held in Townsville 19-21 October with the theme ‘Regions: delivering a Big Australia’.

### KEY FACTS ABOUT REGIONAL AUSTRALIA

Regional Australia includes:

- Country/Rural
- Coastal
- Remote

Only 3 per cent of Australia’s land mass is urbanised.

Outside of the capital cities there are only 18 urban centres having populations over 60,000.

Townsville is the largest city in Australia north of the Sunshine Coast, with a population of 185,000.

85 per cent of Australia is defined as remote, holding only 5 per cent of the population.

95 per cent of the remaining population lives in 15 per cent of the land, comprising cities and their rural hinterland.

Indigenous Australians own, control or have management arrangements for approximately 20 per cent of the continent – which is expected to grow through native title determinations.

In 2006 regional Australia contributed 67 per cent of Australia's export income, largely through mining and agriculture.

Key issues currently on the agenda for **SEGRA**:

- Connectivity – transport and internet
- Population – how big should Australia be and how best to govern if the bulk of the population ends up living on the coast? Is it possible to lure people to live inland? Are the State's managing regional policy and easing the pressure on capital cities through policy initiatives?
- Sea-change and tree-change regions are struggling with population influx and demands on infrastructure. How best to cope?
- Access to health and education for regions
- Transparent accounting to limit cost shifting between levels of government (spatial accounting model negotiated by Oakeshott and Windor will help with transparency)
- Building vibrant and resilient regional communities, that will be able to attract and retain a skilled workforce
- Tax incentives to curtail fly-in, fly-out workforces
- A new paradigm for regional governance – encouraging governments to frame policy decision on regions, rather than responding to sectoral groups such as grazing, water, mining. Regions need cohesive, multi-disciplinary responses, with decision making devolved as close to delivery as possible, rather than piece-meal projects in reaction to single-issue pressure groups or industries (pork-barreling).
- Climate Change and the implications for land use. Should we be allowing housing estates to mushroom along the coastline, effectively covering our most valuable soils and arable land with McMansions? This will become more sensitive as the focus sharpens on global food and water security.
- Engaging Indigenous Australians and building economic security.

**SEGRA** is all about raising questions about the big picture for Australia, generating debate and providing a forum for innovative and creative solutions.

The **SEGRA** Conference brings together thought provoking keynote addresses by Australia's leading social, political, economic and environmental thinkers; exemplars of some of Australia's outstanding regional development success stories and providing a mechanism for building knowledge and dialogues amongst the community of regional development enthusiasts.

## **ENDS**

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:

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