WODONGA: AUSTRALIA’S MOST COMPETITIVE INLAND CITY

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Finding Competitiveness

• Becoming the most competitive inland city
  ○ How the world is changing
  ○ How global change will impact Australia
  ○ Wodonga’s response
How the world is changing

- The rise of the global middle class
  - Insatiable global demand
  - Mass urbanisation and industrialisation
  - Rapid social and economic change
  - Revolutionise trading and investment patterns
How the world is changing

- **Raw materials**
  - Five times total pre-2000 mineral consumption
  - 100,000 new skyscrapers

- **Energy**
  - Electricity demand up 80 per cent
  - Global vehicle fleet to double to 1.7 billion
How the world is changing

- **Food**
  - Global food demand up 50 per cent
  - Hunger for middle class products:
    - Milk, red meat, fibre and processed foods

- **Services**
  - 262 million enrolled in higher education
  - 1.6 billion international tourist arrivals
Where is demand coming from?
How will this impact Australia?

- Amazing opportunities for Australia
- Unleashing an archipelago of prosperity
  - Urban centres
  - Farms
  - Mines
  - Gas wells
- A sustained and uplifting second gold rush
What kind of nation is Australia?

- Why an archipelago?
- What kind of nation is Australia really?
What kind of nation is Australia?

- Maps routinely define us
  - Physical
  - Natural
  - Political
- What glows in the dark?
What kind of nation is Australia?

- Australia is not a continental nation
- It is a demographic and economic archipelago
- 100 urban islands of 10,000+ people
  - 85+ per cent of the population
  - 80+ per cent GDP
  - 75+ per cent of the workforce
- Wodonga is one of those islands
• Why does any of this matter?
• These changes will transform our nation
• The global demand surge will revolutionise Australia’s way of life
• Our demography, economy and living standards will irrevocably change
How will this impact Australia?

- The demand surge has the power to build and crush development dreams
- How?
- Momentum will rule this century
- If your urban centre or industry is not tied into the surge, you risk growing slower than your competitors
- Slow growth risks ‘real or perceived’ economic stagnation...which will be the ‘death touch’ this century!
What can Wodonga do?
Our most competitive inland city

- Becoming the most competitive inland city
- What does a competitive city look like?
  - A city that understands its past, present and future
  - A populace who knows where opportunities are
  - A government which undertakes constant reform
Understanding oneself

- A ‘pearl’ of the 19th and 20th century
- One of many on a necklace called ‘the Hume’
- Wodonga (Belvoir) was once...
  - A customs post
  - An inland port
  - A rail terminus
Understanding oneself

Today it is evolving into a ‘feature stone’ of the 21\textsuperscript{st} century...

- An integrated intermodal trade, logistics and communications hub
- A major regional manufacturer and food processor
- A leading educator, trainer and business centre
Sensing opportunity

- Opportunities will be abundant due to Wodonga’s diverse economic base
- Two major paths worth pursuing:
  - Exporting products and services
  - Providing service, product and labour support to export orientated businesses
Undertaking reform

The local reform challenge will be threefold:

- **Trawling vs. spearfishing**
  - Improving knowledge of target markets
  - E.g. Gladstone

- **Proximity vs. connectivity**
  - Perfecting island-to-island travel, transport and communications
  - E.g. Albury Airport

- **Talking vs. doing**
  - Implementing a bold and decisive vision
  - E.g. SA Government
Reform ideas

- Attract entrepreneurs and investment
  - Undertake a marketing campaign to attract regional attention
  - Simplify business start-up conditions
  - Modernise cross-border industry regulation
  - Provide advanced NBN communications
  - Encourage flexible workforce arrangements
  - Keep business taxes competitive
Reform ideas

- Boost the local talent base
  - Develop and implement a bolder workforce strategy
  - Retrain the workforce to meet future demand
  - Invest in local trainers and teaching equipment
  - Provide and promote an active social scene and night life
  - Offer family friendly workplace conditions
  - Closely monitor housing affordability and rates
Reform ideas

- Upgrade connectivity
  - Develop and cost a regional / international connectivity plan
  - Ensure efficient and uninterrupted road and rail access to Australia's major cities and ports
  - Boost rail yard productivity and operability
  - Lift airport awareness and accessibility
  - Encourage efficient cross-city mobility
Summary

- The world is rapidly changing due to the rise of the global middle class
- Australia’s unique traits and settlement pattern means it will be irrevocably changed by this process
- Wodonga can ride this wave of prosperity, but its community must be proactive and engaged
- Reform must be a constant feature in Australia’s most competitive inland city
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