THE EVOLUTION OF AUSTRALIAN TOWNS

Bureau of Infrastructure, Transport and Regional Economics (BITRE)

Geoff Frost
Three important settlement shifts

1. Loss of inland towns
2. Rise of regional centres
3. Coastal growth - increasing focus of amenity
Towns by population – 1911

BITRE analysis of ABS Census of Population and Housing 1911, 1961 and 2006
Towns by population – 2006

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Three important drivers of change

1. **Industrial development**
   - Loss of inland towns

2. **Better transport and centralisation processes**
   - Rise of regional centres

3. **Longer life expectancy and higher wealth**
   - Coastal growth - increasing focus of amenity
1. Industrial development

Employment by Industry*

Share of total

- Services
- Agriculture
- Manufacturing
- Mining

* Data are interpolated between 1900 and 1910
Sources: ABS; RBA; Withers, Endres and Perry (1985)
2. Personal transport and centralisation

On-road vehicle stock

Changed markets
Re-enforcement factors for centralisation
3. Wealth and life expectancy - Amenity

• Amenity is a range of attributes:
  • Natural - the coast or rivers etc
  • Access to goods and services
  • Family

• Different things to different people.
Time series measures of wealth, 1960–2005

Source: BITRE (2008)
The balance of locational decisions

- **Decision makers:** Industry owners and Managers
  - Motivator: Business Profit

- **Decision makers:** Individuals and households
  - Motivator: Personal and family wellbeing

- Industry Conditions

- Amenity
Issues for towns

What are the important things that you want:

– A place for people to work?

– A place to live?

– Access to services?

These things don’t have to be all in one place
Net migration flows 2006 - 2011
## Migration to and from City of Wodonga 2006 to 2011

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>To City of Wodonga</th>
<th>From City of Wodonga</th>
<th>Net internal migration</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Greater Albury-Wodonga</td>
<td>1950</td>
<td>1600</td>
<td>350</td>
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<tr>
<td>Capital city</td>
<td>2150</td>
<td>2350</td>
<td>-200</td>
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<td>Coastal city</td>
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<td>-20</td>
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<td>310</td>
<td>-30</td>
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<td>Inland city</td>
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<td>390</td>
<td>40</td>
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<tr>
<td>Inland country</td>
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<td>720</td>
<td>640</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Remote</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>-10</td>
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<tr>
<td>Overseas</td>
<td>640</td>
<td>~450</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Towns by population – 2006

BITRE analysis of ABS Census of Population and Housing 1911, 1961 and 2006

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