



Regional Australia Impact Statement—Guidance for Drafters

July 2026

Purpose of the Regional Australia Impact Statement

A Regional Australia Impact Statement (RAIS) provides supporting analysis for a New Policy Proposal (NPP) or Cabinet submission (submission) to help decision makers understand how proposals affect individuals, organisations and communities in regional, rural and remote Australia (including Australian Government administered Territories). A RAIS demonstrates alignment with the Australian Government's Regional Investment Framework (RIF), which guides investment in regional Australia across government portfolios. This helps ensure proposals consider and respond to opportunities and challenges across Australia's diverse regional, rural and remote communities and economies.

Determining whether to complete a RAIS

If a policy is focused on, or will be implemented solely in, regional Australia, preparation of a RAIS demonstrates that the RIF principles, priorities and focus areas have been considered in the development of the NPP or submission.

This also applies where a policy applies to both regional and metropolitan Australia. For example, a RAIS may be useful where:

- A new grant program or funding arrangement is likely to include a large number of applicants, projects or beneficiaries in regional Australia.
- A proposal is being implemented nationwide, however specific consideration of regional implementation is needed.
- A grant program is intended to be open to applicants in the Australian Government administered Territories (Christmas Island, Cocos (Keeling) Islands, Norfolk Island and the Jervis Bay Territory), and implementation is dependent on the involvement of a State or Territory Government.
- The proposal is targeted at a specific region/s.
- The impact of the proposal will differ significantly between regional and metropolitan Australia, the proposal targets issues disproportionately affecting regional Australia, and/or the proposal may have significant secondary or unintended consequences on regional Australia.
- A proposed framework, strategy or significant policy statement intends to inform future government investments that will affect regions.
- There is a need to cover the wider implications of the policy for regional Australia, or a specific region. For example: tourism, employment opportunities, training, flow on benefits to other cohorts.

When a proposal already addresses regional impacts in detail, a RAIS may be completed in a summarised way that highlights those more detailed aspects already in the proposal, and the key issues supporting the intent of the RIF. Refer to your RAIS in the relevant section of the Impacts Table of your submission.

A RAIS is not necessary for an NPP or Cabinet submission that will have no or minimal impact on regional Australia, such as funding a facility in a capital city or seeking funding for departmental IT systems.

Regional Investment Framework

A RAIS should demonstrate how an NPP or Cabinet submission aligns with the Government's [Regional Investment Framework \(RIF\)](#). The RIF sets out how the Government expects regional investment to be delivered – valuing local voices, being informed by evidence, operating with integrity and coordinated across governments.

A RAIS provides an opportunity to outline how a proposal aligns with this approach, including the RIF principles and priority focus areas of people, places, services, and industries and local economies.

Alignment with the Regional Investment Framework

You can demonstrate alignment with the guiding principles of the RIF by showing how the proposal:

- Supports the Government's ambition of 'no one held back and no one left behind'.
- Has been developed or will be delivered in a collaborative way across the Commonwealth, and with State and Territory Governments, in a place-based way.
- Demonstrates that local communities have been consulted or there are avenues for local people or regional organisations to inform the proposal further (including, for example, through Regional Development Australia committees).
- Recognises the unique features, strengths and opportunities of a region or regions, including where the proposal supports regions undergoing economic change or transition.

You can also articulate how the proposal falls into one or more of the four priority focus areas under the RIF: people, places, services, and industries and local economies.

Investing in people

Investing in people includes working in partnership with First Nations people¹, advancing gender equality, supporting people with disabilities, respecting cultural and linguistic diversity and considering impacts across factors including age, financial status and sexual orientation and gender². Issues to consider may include whether the proposal:

- builds the human capital of a region including providing access to education, training and leadership building opportunities.
- impacts some demographics differently than others, informed by an understanding of the demographic makeup of the areas being targeted, and what additional supports may be needed to ensure equity of access.

¹ For support in engaging with First Nations stakeholders and communities, please contact the National Indigenous Australians Agency (NIAA) via FirstNationsImpacts@niaa.gov.au

² If your proposal is anticipated to have a different or disproportionate impact based on gender, please ensure you have engaged with the Office for Women via GIA@pmc.gov.au

Investing in places

Investing in places is essential to the liveability and resilience of regional Australia. You may consider whether the proposal:

- will leverage, impact or is dependent on the unique attributes of affected regional communities including geographic, environmental, disaster affected, and cultural attributes
- creates or reduces infrastructure which impacts amenity, service delivery, community/social connection, cultural or heritage significance in regional Australia
- appropriately considers the connecting infrastructure in or across regions, which may include public and private transport, telecommunications and services which help people connect in their region
- aligns with existing local or State/Territory Government funding/plans.

Investing in services

Investing in services enhances equality across regional Australia, including health, communications, water, and community services, to ensure no one is held back or left behind. It is important that policymakers understand who is using the services and can ensure all cohorts and communities have access to them. You may consider whether the proposal:

- addresses a gap in regional service provisions, including where delivery may be fragmented or affected by thin markets
- impacts, or is dependent upon, supporting infrastructure in regional communities
- allows for travel times, transport modes and distances to make the service accessibility reasonable and manageable for regionally-located people
- relies on the capacity of local governments.

Investing in industries and local economies

Investing in industries and local economies is crucial to enabling regions to thrive. You may consider whether the proposal:

- diversifies the local economies or industries in regional Australia
- builds resilience for local businesses from impacts of disasters in regional Australia, or due to other disruptions such as impacts of climate change or the transition to a net zero economy
- contributes to job creation/diversification, regional employment opportunities³, and/or a highly skilled workforce, in particular the employment opportunities for First Nations people
- has employment implications in regional Australia relating to rates and types of employment (seasonal, part-time or self-employed, fly-in fly-out (FIFO) and drive-in drive-out (DIDO) workers)
- opens up investment and trade, or affects businesses (small-to-medium in particular) in regional Australia
- is targeted at regions in economic decline or transition, including regions subject to coal and gas fired power station closures or other net zero transition related impacts
- supports sustainability and promotes resilience
- supports businesses to contribute to energy transformation.

Policy makers should consider how the proposal fits with the broader economic context of a region. This may include consideration of factors such as:

- Does the proposal take into consideration existing policies and initiatives across government that support regional development?
- Does the proposal leverage other State, Territory or Commonwealth Government investment to support strategic investment in regional growth and ensure equitable access to services?

³ Consider the [Indigenous Employment and Supplier-use Infrastructure Framework](#)

- Does the proposal support businesses, entrepreneurs and industry to build resilience, develop and grow and/or invest and establish in regional Australia?
- Does the proposal build upon the existing competitive advantages of a region?
- Does the proposal support the competitive advantages of a region – e.g. the opportunities afforded by the energy transition? Does the proposal contribute to promoting regional Australia and/or facilitate population growth?
- Does the proposal remove barriers to innovation and growth in regional Australia?
- Does the proposal align with other strategic interests and investment in the region, e.g. defence or environmental interests?

Your RAIS does not need to duplicate information contained within First Nations or Gender Impact statements.

Where in regional Australia will this proposal have impacts?

Include a statement outlining the geographical impact of the proposal. This may be a high-level statement or give detail, depending on your proposal. Considering the following may assist you:

- Are specific regions and/or local governments targeted under the proposal or expected to be differentially affected?
- Might there be impacts of a different scale or type between regions?
- Is the proposal expected to impact a large number of applicants, projects or beneficiaries located in regional Australia?
- Is the proposal a national program which affects regions differently to urban areas?
- Is the proposal intended to apply in the non-self-governing territories of Christmas Island, Cocos (Keeling) Islands, Norfolk Island and the Jervis Bay Territory?
- Does the proposal impact regions in Northern Australia as per the Northern Australia boundary?
- You may include a map of affected region(s), if appropriate.

You should consider the direct and indirect impacts of a policy, as well as whether it may have different impacts or need to be implemented differently in or across regional Australia. Where it supports your proposal, you should consider identifying any dependencies affecting the successful implementation of the policy across diverse contexts. For example, a proposal may:

- be dependent on local government capacity in the regions or access to a service or enabling environment in order to be implemented
- target issues disproportionately affecting regional Australia or Northern Australia in particular
- be dependent on State or Territory government, support, co-contributions or regulatory mechanisms, noting the non-self-governing territories do not have a state-level Government
- propose a framework, strategy, negotiating mandate or significant policy statement intended to inform future government investment decisions that will affect regions.

If this is the case, the RAIS may address how the policy proposes to address and account for these impacts. The RAIS may also consider and outline any linkages to other programs and existing funding that complement the proposal.

Note: Where proposals are based in or have a significant impact on Northern Australia, alignment with the Government's Northern Australia Agenda should also be considered. The Northern Australia Agenda is designed to deliver sustainable and resilient economic and social development in the north. The Australian Government defines Northern Australia as all of the Northern Territory and those parts of Queensland and Western Australia that intersect with the Tropic of Capricorn, as well as the Indian Ocean Territories of Christmas, Cocos and Keeling Islands.

Frequently Asked Questions

Does a RAIS cover part of an omnibus/PBS/one of many proposals in a submission?

If multiple NPPs in a submission require a RAIS, they may either be consolidated into one RAIS, or one RAIS could be included for each relevant NPP. Ultimately, the decision about the approach to take (separate or consolidated RAIS) is made by the lead agency.

Is a RAIS essential if the NPP is requesting an extension of an existing program?

Where an existing program is being extended, a RAIS may provide further support for the proposal by outlining the benefits or impacts in regional Australia. However, the decision to develop a RAIS will remain with the relevant agency.

What if the proposal is too early in the process to identify impacts?

If the proposal is early in the policy development, a RAIS may still be useful to outline the approach that will be taken to support the principles of the RIF.

Is there a template?

Yes – please refer to the RAIS webpage for a simple template that can be used for your submission. As drafters are best placed to know the content of the submission, and determine the relevant impacts for a RAIS, the template is provided as guidance only.

What should be included in the Impacts Table?

The Impacts Table should include a summary statement of overall expected regional impacts and key regional considerations, and include reference to where your RAIS is located in the submission (e.g. at Attachment X).

What is the recommended length of a RAIS?

A RAIS can be as short as one or two pages, depending on the proposal, and whether or not the proposals has significant regional impacts, or already address regional impacts substantially in the body of the proposal. The length of your RAIS will depend on the nature of the NPP and how the RAIS is best presented to support a proposal. The RAIS should adequately address regional impacts that are anticipated by your NPP in order to support Cabinet's decision-making process.

What is the definition of 'regional'?

As there is no one single definition of regional Australia, the RAIS process does not prescribe a definition of 'regional'. Agencies should apply the most suitable definition that is appropriate to their policy and program objectives. Such boundaries may often be derived from the suite of Commonwealth statistical boundaries, for example the Australian Bureau of Statistics Greater Capital City Statistical Areas..

Where are the Northern Australia Boundaries?

The Australian Government [defines Northern Australia](#) as all of the Northern Territory and those parts of Queensland and Western Australia that intersect with the Tropic of Capricorn, as well as the Indian Ocean Territories of Christmas, Cocos and Keeling Islands.

How do the Australian Government-administered territories differ from other parts of regional Australia?

The non-self-governing territories of Christmas Island, Cocos (Keeling) Islands, Norfolk Island, the Jervis Bay Territory, the Ashmore and Cartier Islands, and the Coral Sea Islands are administered by the department on behalf of the Australian Government. There is no state-level government in these territories. Most state level services are delivered through Service Delivery Arrangements with a state or territory Government, directly by the private sector under contract, or by the department.

Policymakers should engage early with the Territories Division of the Department of Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development, Communications, Sport and the Arts to manage impacts and implementation issues.

The territories of Heard Island and McDonald Islands and the Australian Antarctic Territory are administered by the [Australian Antarctic Division](#) of the Department of Climate Change, Energy, the Environment and Water.

Does my RAIS need a reference number or approval ID?

No, the RAIS does not need a reference number. In the Impacts Table you may write “Refer to Regional Australia Impact Statement at Attachment [X]”.