

URBAN RURAL & REMOTE AREAS



Definition



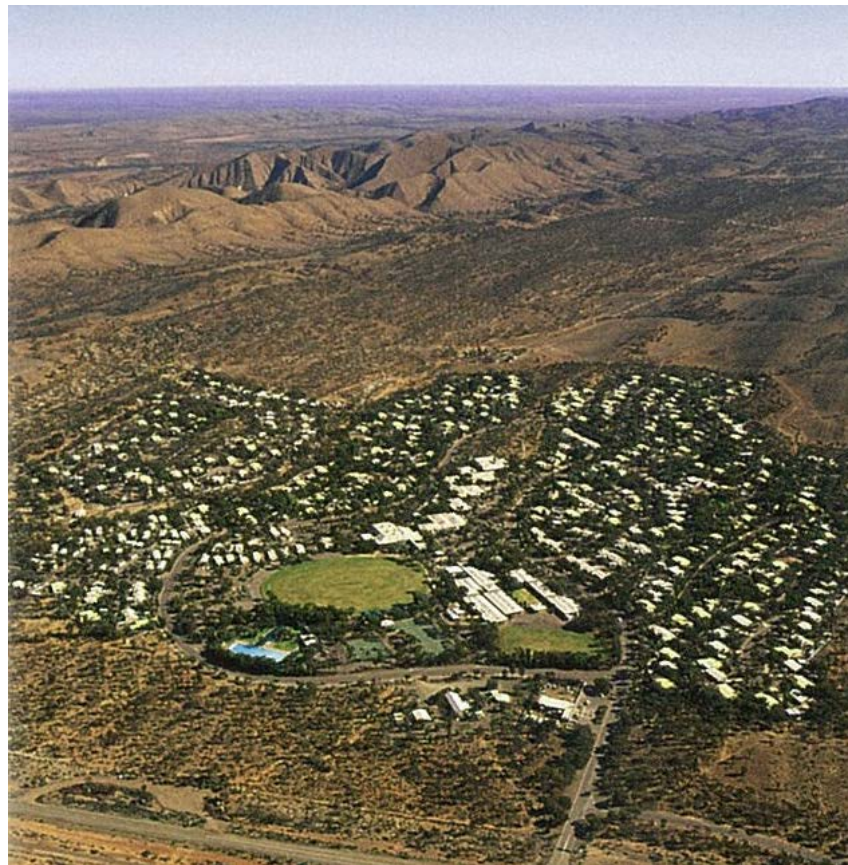
Urban settlements are large centres of population dominated by built features such as houses, apartment buildings, factories, shopping centres and transport **infrastructure**. Urban settlements also have a wide range of consumer and business services and are major centres of employment. In Australia, urban settlements are defined as population clusters of 1000 or more people, with a density of at least 200 people per square kilometre.



Rural areas are centres of agriculture and provide a small range of goods and services. There are two types: clustered and dispersed.



Remote areas are those places that are a long way away (isolated) from the main centres of population. E.G. Australia's mining communities.



YOUR TASK

9.3

Urban or rural

There are advantages and disadvantages to any of the places in which people choose to live. In this unit we focus on urban areas and rural and remote communities.

Urban areas

Most Australians now live in large cities, usually near the coast. Because of their large populations, cities are able to provide a wide variety of services. For example, the largest hospitals are all located in big cities because that is where the need is greatest. Large cities also provide a range of entertainments and recreational activities not found in smaller centres. Urban areas also have better employment opportunities. This is one of the key advantages of living in an urban area.

Some Australians dislike living in cities, however, and **tree changes** and sea changes have become popular forms of escape.

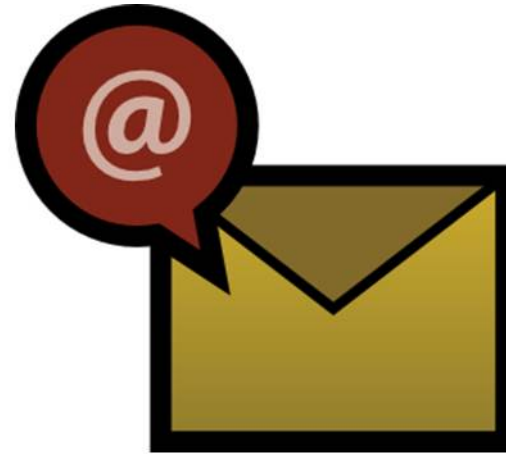
Overcrowding is one of the main disadvantages of city living. A large population means that there is higher demand for housing, and this causes prices to rise. Traffic and public transport congestion are other problems. Heavy traffic also leads to increased air pollution. Other concerns include a perception that crime is more common in cities.

Rural and remote areas

The environment is one of the key advantages of living in rural and remote areas. There are fewer people, cars and factories. As a result, rural areas tend to be cleaner. Fewer people means more space. The demand for housing is often lower, resulting in cheaper house prices and more affordable rent.

As the distance from the city increases and areas become more remote, populations shrink and access to services declines. This is the key disadvantage of living in rural and remote areas. Australians living in very remote regions, such as far northern Western Australia, may have to travel hundreds of kilometres to the nearest shop. Health care can be so far away that doctors fly to their patients (see Figure 9.8)!

9.8 People living in remote Australia live so far from health services that they rely on the Royal Flying Doctor Service for their health care.



Check Your:

Save to:





YOUR TASK

Draw a chart to show the advantages and disadvantages of living in each of the three areas:

	Urban	Rural	Remote
+			
-			

Urban

Rural

Remote

YOUR TASK

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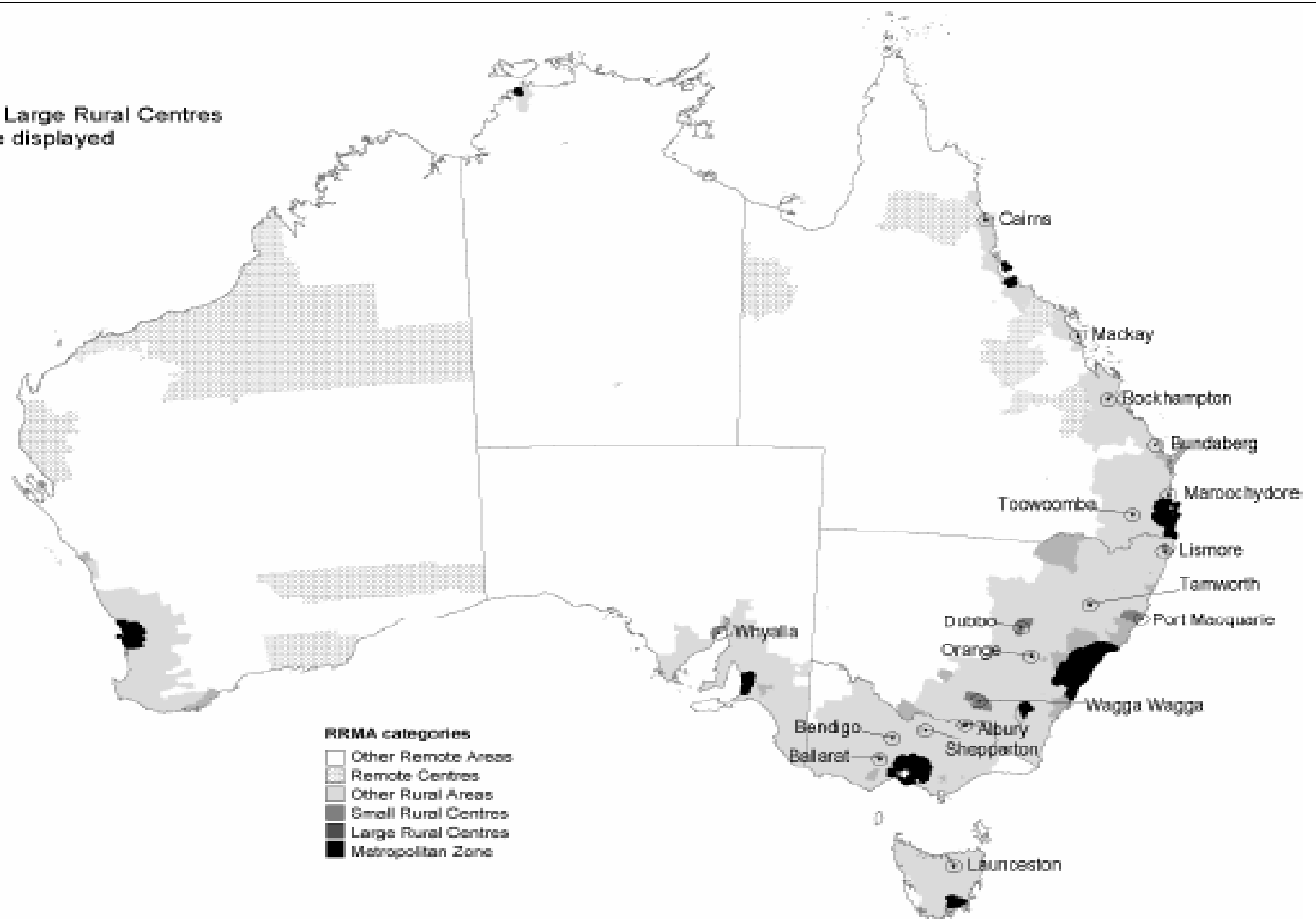
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Use reading strategies:

- Underline new vocabulary
- Highlight key words
- Identify key dates and people – circle them

All Large Rural Centres
are displayed



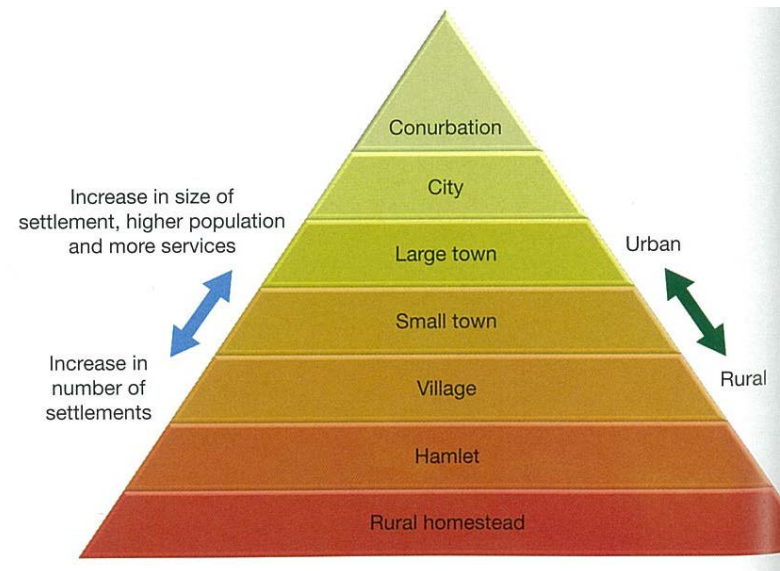
Source: DoHA.

Figure 1: RRMA areas of Australia

Classification by size

Figure 9.2 shows a way of classifying settlements of different sizes. Categories are:

- **rural homestead**—an isolated settlement consisting of one house
- **hamlet**—a settlement with only a few houses and few, if any, services (suppliers of goods and services)
- **village**—a settlement with a few services such as a church, a hotel and a small shop
- **town**—a larger settlement with several shops, banks, places of worship, a high school, supermarkets, doctors, dentists and a small hospital. In Australia, a town is a settlement with a population of more than 250 people. Figure 9.3 shows an example of a town
- **city**—a very large settlement with an advanced transport infrastructure (suburban railway system and airport), shopping centres, cathedrals, large hospitals, museums, educational institutions (one or more universities) and a central business district with office blocks
- **conurbation**—an extremely large settlement that was originally two separate cities.





RURAL DECLINE IN AUSTRALIA

LEARNING OUTCOMES

Recognise that rural settlements are changing.

Identify the factors that have created rural change.

Explain the ways in which some communities are responding to the decline of their towns.

Rural settlements in Australia depend on their area's economic health. Generally, a rural settlement's economy is based on the farming activity surrounding the town, but it could also be a mine or a tourist attraction. For example, if the farmers are not doing so well and they cannot afford to spend, then the shopkeepers suffer and jobs may be lost. If a mining company closes down for any reason then the effect on the town will be dramatic. The factors which cause rural settlements to decline are depicted in the table below.

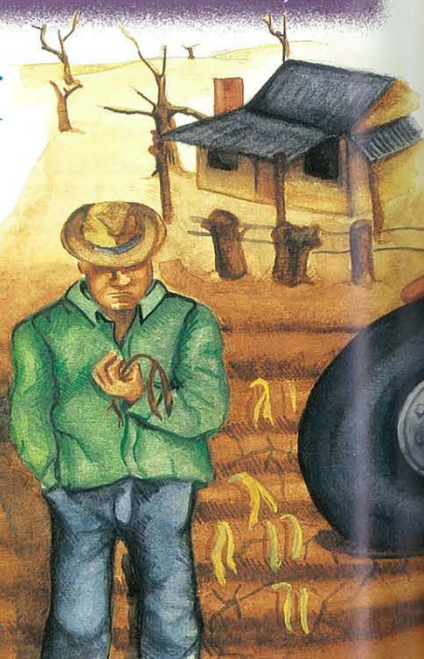
Some reasons for the decline of rural towns in Australia

Economic factors	Social factors	Political factors
Farm debt is increasing as interest rates rise. Farm income is decreasing as farmers compete with overseas imports. Farmers are forced off their land because of increasing debt. Farmers are battling with outdated machinery and technology. Commodity prices have fallen (especially wool and wheat). A major employer in town decides to close up (e.g. a mining company). A bank decides to relocate to a bigger urban centre in the district.	Schools become centralised. School leavers seek better employment and education opportunities in larger towns/cities. Older generation dies, younger generation not interested in living in a small town. Better transport and communication means that smaller towns are by-passed.	Governments don't provide tax incentives to live out of the main towns/cities. Government services become centralised, leaving the small towns with few services.

JACK'S STORY

I was born in Warrnambool in 1928. I lived on a farm at Southern Cross with my parents and seven brothers and sisters. What a great childhood we had! We had ponies to ride and spent days trapping rabbits, going fishing and playing football. We had to ride a pony or walk into Illowa to school. Dad grew potatoes and onions. Other farmers had milking cows and sheep. In the 1930s and 1940s, Koroit was a thriving town. There was a main street with the milk cooperative and butter factory, two doctors, churches, four hotels, the saleyards and every type of shop you needed. The picture theatre came in 1950. The co-op and the hospital were the main employers. In 1942, we moved to Melbourne. Because of the Depression, farmers couldn't get fair prices for their produce, so we had to move to the city to find work. Life was very different in the city. I'm 70 now and still make regular trips back to Koroit. Increased mechanisation on the farms and better transport meant that in the 1960s and 1970s, Koroit shrunk in importance in the district. But lately some city people from Warrnambool are starting to move back to Koroit. It's only a short distance to town. Those people are lucky to be living in 'God's own country'.

Mr. S. J. Smith



The town that refuses to die

by KAREN MICHELMORE

The tiny rural town of Cummins is slowly fading away — but its residents are not prepared to go without a fight.

Over the past two years the Eyre Peninsula town has seen a steady decay of services, facilities and business activity, and a resultant fall in population.

Once a thriving community, Cummins now 'boasts' a population of just 747.

It is the hub of SA's most productive agricultural precincts and one of the region's biggest livestock producers. But in the past 12 months there has been a steady increase in the number of young people and businesses leaving the area — and community leaders say they don't know why.

In that period the commuter airline to Cummins closed, two banks closed, a shoe shop and drapery store shut their doors, the SA Co-operative Bulk Handling Service depot closed, Telstra and the Engineering and Water Supply depots closed, and now ETSA is reviewing its country facilities.

Residents have vowed to fight back and more than 200 of them met last night to discuss how they could keep their town on the map.

Led by the Cummins and District Enterprise Committee, residents, business people and farmers gathered at the Cummins Community Centre to raise money to get the town back on track.

Residents are already pledging money and for every dollar raised by the community, the State Government will contribute a dollar, up to \$20 000, under the new Community at Work Program to boost employment growth and economic activity. The Lower Eyre Peninsula District Council has already contributed \$2000.

The committee's convener, Mr Jeff Pearson, said this was the ideal opportunity to do something positive for the long-term benefit and survival of Cummins.

The program, Cummins on Track, aims to: REVITALISE and improve existing businesses and attract new business.

INCREASE visitor numbers and tourist expenditure in the town.

INTRODUCE a new tourism event — the Kalamazoo rail car races along the railway line.

CREATE industry development.

RETAIN current services and infrastructure and stop the population decline.

PROMOTE local advantages of the community and enhance the community spirit.

The Eyre Regional Development Board's executive officer, Mr Vance Thomas, said the meeting was the beginning of a positive campaign to turn around the decline in services, businesses and population.

Mr Pearson said the problem was 'quite bewildering'.

'It has become quite evident that we need some of these kids to stay at home and take up life on the farm,' he said.

Cummins fact file

Key rural centre which plays an integral role in servicing the commercial, community and recreational needs of lower Eyre Peninsula.

Located about 40 minutes' drive from Port Lincoln, has a population of 747, making it Eyre Peninsula's fourth largest town after Ceduna, Tumby Bay and Streaky Bay. The district was settled in the 1840s by pastoralists. The town grew in the early 1900s when the railway was extended from Port Lincoln. Per capita, the district is one of the State's most productive agricultural precincts, with an annual production value of \$15 million to \$18 million for its wheat and barley crop alone.

1. Read the news article opposite.

- (a) Name the factors that have brought about rural decline in Cummins, as stated in the article.
- (b) Sometimes rural decline can have a depressing effect on the community. Do you think that this is the case in this town?
- (c) What have the people in this town tried to do to prevent the decline of their town?
- (d) How could governments help to stop the flow of young people out of the town?
- (e) How could the government help to encourage people to move to smaller towns? Do you really think that this is a viable possibility? Explain your answer.



2. Read Jack's Story.

- (a) Is this a story about rural decline? If so, what factors were involved back in the 1930s?
- (b) What factors have stopped Koroit from becoming a ghost town?
- (c) According to Jack, what was the main economic function of Koroit in the 1930s? What impact did the Depression have on this town?
- (d) Obtain a detailed map of western Victoria. How many of the places in Jack's story can you locate?
- (e) What is the future of Koroit?

