NATIONAL AND REGIONAL PLANNING OF TOWNS AND COUNTRYSIDE

L'AMENAGEMENT SUR LE PLAN NATIONAL ET REGIONAL DES VILLES ET DE LA CAMPAGNE

AUSTRALIA
THE Commonwealth of Australia has an area of approximately 3,000,000 sq. miles, 50 per cent. greater than the whole of Europe. Its present population is, however, approximately only 7,500,000. The country is divided into six separate States, namely, New South Wales, Victoria, Queensland, South Australia, Western Australia and Tasmania, with an area known as Northern Territory coming under the direct administration of the Commonwealth Government. This is also the case with certain adjoining islands.

About one-third of the country is within the tropical zone, the remainder being within the temperate zone. Australia is, however, less subject to extremes of weather than are regions of similar area and latitude in other parts of the world.

For the purposes of regional planning each State has determined regions within its own boundaries as shown in Plate I. Australian regions are not large geographical entities, but are mainly units based upon existing local administration within the framework of Commonwealth and State governmental systems.

National and regional planning in Australia may be described as the conscious effort to guide the development of the resources of the nation and their use in productive enterprise, in order to provide a rising national income and improved standards of human welfare.

When in 1942, invasion of Australia seemed imminent, plans for the organisation of the country to meet the emergency revealed many difficulties which showed that a regional organisation of Government machinery was essential for strategic and defence needs. A certain amount of work had already been done on these lines in preparation for the post-war era. It had been found that in addition to the planning associated with the overall aspects of economic policy directed towards the maintenance of full employment and financial stability in the post-war period of transition from a wartime to a peacetime economy, a complex administrative machinery would have to be evolved to handle the major post-war tasks. Each of these, as well as being a national concern, presented problems of a specific regional character.

The real starting point of regional planning of Australia on a broad basis was a conference attended by the Prime Minister of Australia and the Premiers of the respective States in 1944, when it was agreed that the State Governments should proceed to plan development on a regional basis. Further conferences were held in 1945 and 1947 and it is now possible to see how the scheme is developing.

The Development of Regional Planning

The technique of regional planning adopted in Australia as a basis for the development and conservation of its resources and for decentralisation involves:

* This paper has been prepared from information provided by the Director of Regional Planning of the Ministry of Post-War Reconstruction, Canberra.
(i) delineation of regions throughout the States and Territories of Australia;
(ii) survey of the resources of each region, mainly through the assembly of existing data in a form which will enable possibilities for regional development to be assessed;
(iii) bring together information on regional resources to assess the resources of each State in the first instance and ultimately the nation as a whole;
(iv) encouraging functional departments and local government councils to plan for conservation and development of resources on a regional basis;
(v) decentralisation of the planning of the regions through representative local regional bodies, thus enabling the people themselves directly to participate in planning their regions;
(vi) relating the development of each region in the first place to State and ultimately to national economic policy;
(vii) adequate administrative machinery to enable the Commonwealth and each State to organise regional planning within their respective fields.

It was considered desirable that any new organisations should not conflict with the legal authority of governmental bodies. It was felt that if regional planning were to be at grips with local problems, the first essential was that private citizens and local organisations interested in the affairs of each region, together with municipal and shire councils and Government departmental representatives who lived and worked within the region, i.e., the persons most intimately concerned with conservation and development of regional resources, should be given both the opportunity and responsibility of active participation in planning the use of the resources of their own region. During the war and in post-war years the interest of the individual citizen in problems associated with post-war planning of Australia's development had been very evident. Regional development committees have now been formed in order to provide a local body within the region. These are in contact with persons who wish to express ideas concerning local development, to assess the value of these ideas, to formulate plans about the use of the regional resources, to provide information and advise State authorities on regional matters. The committees do not interfere with or duplicate the work of municipal and shire councils. Each region is usually a group of municipalities and shires and as councils are represented on the committees, there is an avenue for joint discussions of problems confronting local government authorities.

The co-ordination of regional planning activities within each State is achieved by the Authority appointed by the respective State Governments. These authorities maintain continuous and direct contact with the regional committees. The interrelation of regional bodies and the Commonwealth Government on regional planning has received much discussion. The Commonwealth has favoured direct contact with local interests, but has agreed to meet the States' wishes that the channel of communication should be through each State Government. Each State has therefore appointed a regional planning liaison officer to facilitate this arrangement.
The question of possible executive powers for these committees has been raised on many occasions. Planning authorities with powers such as T.V.A. in the U.S.A. do not readily fit in with the Australian governmental organisation. If executive powers were given to regional committees, there would be a conflict of responsibilities between the committees on the one hand, and local government authorities or State or Commonwealth Governments on the other. Regional planning touches on so many aspects of government that it is not possible to place complete control in the hands of any body other than the constitutionally appointed Government authority.

The system of fitting regional development committees in with the existing pattern of government in an advisory and planning capacity has so far been considered the most acceptable method of approaching the regional planning problem.

Regional planning requires a long-range view. The primary objective of each regional committee in the present stage is research, accumulation of information and preparations of broad outlines of a regional plan which should be directed towards the full development of the resources of the region and maintaining the maximum population of the region, whilst at the same time raising their standards of welfare. If these tasks are carried out effectively the success of the regional committees, and hence their future status, is assured.

Relations with Local Government Authorities

It has already been pointed out that where possible, regions consist of groups of local government areas and that the regional planning committees do not possess executive authority. The committees have, however, the nominees of the local authorities among their members. The committees are thus adequately advised of the viewpoint of the local government authorities, when carrying out their functions.

The regional committees can provide a very useful co-ordinative service in bringing together municipal and shire councils for mutual discussion of regional problems, and advising councils within each region of developmental plans which may be evolved. The councils are able to supply valuable information about resources, and details of local works programmes are necessary for the planning work of the committees.

Relations with State Governments

The State Governments' departmental representatives on the regional committees provide the first contact between the committees and the State departments. Thus private citizens, local councils and the State Government are all represented in one body which is able to have first-hand liaison with State departments. Actual plans are implemented by the municipal or shire council, or the State or the Commonwealth Government within their respective powers.

Relations with the Commonwealth Government

Commonwealth controlled territories are at present non-selfgoverning and although development of these territories is being approached on a regional basis and preparatory regional planning work is in progress, the under-developed and sparsely populated nature of the territories (excluding
Australian Capital Territory)* has made the formation of regional committees for these areas impracticable at present. State Governments have agreed to make the advice of regional committees within their control available to the Commonwealth Government on regional aspects of policy and administration.

**Australian Regions**

The size of Australian regions varies from State to State as will be seen from Plate I and the following table of regional areas, which excludes territory directly administered by the Commonwealth Government.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>State</th>
<th>Area (sq. miles)</th>
<th>No. of Regions</th>
<th>Average Area of Regions (sq. miles)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>New South Wales</td>
<td>309,432</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>15,471</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Victoria</td>
<td>87,884</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>6,760</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Queensland</td>
<td>670,500</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>37,250</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South Australia</td>
<td>380,070</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>19,003</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Western Australia</td>
<td>975,920</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>60,995</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tasmania</td>
<td>26,215</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>4,369</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The size of the regions depends on the factors taken into account by the State committees responsible for delineation of the regions. Generally, these factors were:

(a) **Physical characteristics.**—It was preferred where possible to constitute regions which possess a fundamental unity in topography, such as a clearly defined water catchment and a distinct pattern of resources which lie within the bounds of the region; it seemed particularly desirable that regional boundaries should not cut across important physical resources.

(b) **Economic activity.**—An endeavour was made to preserve within each region complete types of economic activity with particular relation to the importance of the central city or town as an economic centre.

(c) **Social factors.**—Consideration was given to the need to provide for and promote community of interest within each region; it may be said that the chief objective of regional planning is to achieve for each region an optimum in social and economic welfare.

(d) **Regional and other boundaries.**—It was found that where a region may be defined in terms of its physiography there may be some small difference between the "natural" boundary and the boundary of the local government areas included in the region. When this occurred consideration was given to all the factors involved in determining the boundaries and it was possible in most regions to include whole local government areas. This facilitates the collection of regional statistics and helps to ensure that the interests of shire and municipal

* Australian Capital Territory is a small area of approximately 900 square miles principally designed to accommodate Canberra, the Capital City of the Commonwealth.
councils are not split between two or more regions. Thus with few exceptions, Australian regions consist of groupings of local government areas.

Regional Planning by the Commonwealth Government

Regional planning by the Commonwealth Government is carried out by the regional planning division of the Department of Post-War Reconstruction. This has two main functions:

(a) Responsibility for Commonwealth interests in regional planning.—The Division endeavours to stimulate the development of regional planning in Commonwealth Territories and in the States, and assists to implement the agreements which were reached at the Premiers’ Conference in October, 1944. This involves the following:

(i) Regular contacts with State authorities responsible for regional planning and the exchange of reports on the progress which is being made.

(ii) Contacts with Commonwealth authorities on the use of regions for Commonwealth administration and on regional planning aspects of soldier settlement, secondary industry, employment planning and other matters which are the responsibility of the Commonwealth.

(iii) The distribution to State and Commonwealth authorities of information on developments in regional planning both in Australia and overseas.

(iv) The compilation of bibliographies of resources data and the establishment of a resources library.

(v) Advice to the Commonwealth Survey Committee and National Mapping Council on priorities for air photography and mapping.

(b) Specific regional planning projects.—The Division participates in projects for the development of specific regions in collaboration with Commonwealth and State authorities responsible for the Territory or State in question. The Division generally performs secretarial work on interdepartmental or Commonwealth-State planning and investigation committees, research and the formation of proposals for development.

Regional Planning in New South Wales

This was the first of the Australian States to consider regional planning, and it has developed it more extensively than any other State in the Commonwealth.

As the most populous of the States with its rapidly developing secondary industries, it was ripe for planning on a regional basis.

Recommendations put forward by the twenty regional committees cover a very wide field and include slum clearance, decentralisation of Government departments, development of river resources, planning of agricultural development, generation and distribution of electricity, setting
up of regional libraries and the provision of technical education in certain areas where such facilities were lacking.

Each regional committee in New South Wales has a membership of twelve of whom six are appointed representatives of municipalities and shires, and the other six include three or four senior officers of State Government departments resident in the region and two or three members who are prominent in commerce or secondary industries of the region. The tenure of office for committee members is three years.

In the three regions of the Western Division there are no shires, and six members represent municipalities and Pastures Protection Boards.

The co-ordination of planning activities between departments and relations with regional development committees is carried out by the Division of Reconstruction and Development of the State Premier’s department.

Regional Planning in Victoria

In this State a central planning authority to provide overall co-ordination of regional planning has been set up, which arranges the constitution of regional committees and maintains close liaison with all parties interested.

The regional committees in this State have been formed on a similar basis to those referred to for New South Wales.

A standard form of preliminary report and resources survey has been adopted by the central planning authority of Victoria, these reports being prepared in three parts, namely: (a) Physical resources, (b) economic resources, (c) services and utilities.

Regional Planning in Queensland

Each of the eighteen regions in Queensland has been defined as a portion of the State with some community of interests and industries, with an existing or potential population-carrying capacity sufficient to allow each region to develop an almost complete range of tertiary* industries, and a fairly full range of secondary† industries. The starting-point for each region was that it should have soil, climatic and mineral resources eventually to support about 20,000 workers in primary‡ industries, which would lead to a total ultimate population of about 400,000 in each region. This size of region was modified somewhat to take account of special geographical features, communication facilities, existing centres of population and commerce, and existing local authority boundaries.

This Government has decided that State administration should be decentralised into regions as far as possible. The authorities will also gradually decentralise in the same way, and the Queensland Electricity Commission has already done so by constituting five regional electricity boards.

Regional committees of a general nature have not been formed, but committees for special purposes already exist, and with the gradual altera-

* Tertiary industry embraces all social and administrative occupations, e.g. health, legal, education and amusement.
† Secondary industry is defined as processing, manufacturing and construction.
‡ Primary industry is defined as production without processing, e.g. agricultural, timber and mineral products.
tion of boundaries will become regional boards for various functions. Other committees will be formed as required. The Co-ordinator-General of Public Works acts as the central planning authority.

Regional Planning in South Australia

In this State twenty regions have been defined and a regional planning committee has been set up. No special administration has however been established to develop such work, and no individual regional committees have been formed.

Regional Planning in Western Australia

This State has been divided into sixteen regions. They have been formed by grouping a number of the existing road boards with similar interests to form each region. The boundaries of the regions thus coincide with the existing boundaries of the grouped road boards or local authorities. The principal factors considered in determining the limits of the regions were: (a) natural port outlet for each region; (b) similar types of climate and soil; (c) type of production; (d) stage of development already reached; (e) rainfall characteristics, etc.

The choice of regional centres did not present any great difficulty because the paucity of population, other than in the metropolitan area, restricted the choice to narrow limits.

No special planning authorities have been set up in Western Australia, but the work of co-ordination of the various records of the different Government departments has been done by the Public Works department. The present policy is to utilise the existing local authorities in an advisory capacity as far as possible.

In view of the present population of the State and its area, extensive development of regional planning is not at present practicable.

Regional Planning in Tasmania

In the smallest State of the Commonwealth the defining of the six regions presented little difficulty as the sections of the State involved have been for some years referred to by geographical names and regarded as economic units.

A State economic planning authority supervises and co-ordinates the work of the committees set up in each region. These committees are constituted generally on the same lines as those referred to in connection with New South Wales.

An aerial survey of the southern portion of the west coast is to be carried out in the immediate future with a view to opening up this hitherto inaccessible part of Tasmania.

Conclusion

Regional planning has become firmly established in Australia and the machinery which has been set up will be invaluable in ensuring efficient development of the country as large-scale immigration gains impetus.
La Confédération de l'Australie, d'une superficie de 3.000.000 milles carrés et d'une population de 7.500.000, comprend 6 États indépendants, à savoir : Nouvelle-Galles du Sud, Victoria, Queensland, Australie Méridionale, Australie Occidentale, et Tasmanie, et une région connue sous le nom d'Australie Septentrionale qui est administrée directement par le Gouvernement de la Confédération.

Dans un but d'Aménagement régional, tout le pays a été divisé en 93 régions. Ce ne sont pas de grandes entités géographiques mais plutôt des unités fondées sur une administration locale existant déjà.

On peut dire que l'effort conscient de diriger les ressources de la nation vers un plan régional d'Aménagement a commencé en 1942, quand a paru imminente l'invasion de l'Australie, mais le point de départ réel de cet effort a été la Conférence qui a eu lieu entre la Confédération et les États en 1944.

L'Aménagement Régional en Australie a pour but de se concentrer sur la délimitation des régions, l'étude des ressources, le collationnement des renseignements, d'inciter les services administratifs à prévoir la protection et l'exploitation des ressources, de veiller à la décentralisation des services administratifs, aux rapports entre l'exploitation de chaque région et l'État, et de créer un organisme administratif adéquat pour la réalisation de ces désirata.

L'intérêt manifesté par les simples citoyens pour tous les problèmes d'après-guerre dépendants d'un gouvernement local a été encouragé. Les activités des Aménagements Régionaux dans chaque État ont été coordonnées par une Autorité nommée par le Gouvernement de chacun des ces États.

Les Comités Régionaux n'ont pas de pouvoirs d'exécution mais agissent en tant que conseillers techniques auprès des Autorités Locales et, par l'intermédiaire de ces dernières, auprès du Gouvernement Fédéral de la Confédération. Une liaison étroite est maintenue entre ces diverses Autorités.

Les particularités physiques, l'activité économique, les facteurs sociaux et les frontières régionales ou autres ont été les principaux facteurs pris en considération pour la formation des régions.

Le Gouvernement Fédéral et chacun des Gouvernements des six États ont abordé le problème de l'Aménagement Régional sous des angles similaires mais les activités du Gouvernement de la Confédération sont naturellement limitées aux projets d’aménagement qui affectent plus d’un État et ont une importance pour l’ensemble de la Confédération.

La Nouvelle-Galles du Sud, le premier des États australiens ayant réalisé un Aménagement régional, l’a exploité d’une façon plus intensive que n’importe quel autre État de la Confédération et le travail fait par ses 20 comités régionaux représente un très grand champ d’activité, allant de l’abolissement des taudis à la production et à la distribution de l’électricité.

Chaque Comité Régional, dans les différents États, se compose de membres représentatifs du Gouvernement Local et des Services Administratifs de l’État, aussi bien que de membres prééminents représentatifs du commerce et de l’industrie.
L'Aménagement Régional s'est aussi développé considérablement dans l'État de Victoria où l'Autorité Centrale d'Aménagement a édité une formule standard de rapport pour l'étude des diverses régions, concernant les ressources physiques, les ressources économiques et les services publics.

Dans l'État de Queensland, le mot Region a été défini comme étant une partie de l'État ayant des intérêts communs, des industries suffisantes pour occuper 20,000 travailleurs, prévoyant donc une population totale finale de 400,000 pour les 20 régions de l'État.

En Australie méridionale, peu a été fait en dehors de la délimitation des 20 régions.

En Australie occidentale, en dehors de la délimitation de certaines régions sur la base que chacune doit avoir un port naturel comme débouché, un type similaire de climat et de sol, un même type de production et la même pluviosité, aucune exploitation intensive d'Aménagement régional n'a été possible.

La Tasmanie, le plus petit des États de la Confédération, comprend six régions qui depuis longtemps sont considérées comme des entités géographiques et des unités économiques.

D'une façon générale, l'Aménagement régional est solidement établi en Australie et devrait être d'une grande valeur dans l'exploitation efficace du pays.