

# **COLLABORATION THROUGH REGIONAL GOVERNANCE**

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## **Speaker Biography**

Mr Andrew Wear, Department of Planning & Community Development Andrew Wear leads strategy and policy development for the Community Development Group within the Victorian Department of Planning and Community Development. With over ten years in senior public sector roles, he publishes regularly on a range of topics, including community development, innovation, collaborative governance and social exclusion.

## **Presentation overview**

Across Australia, increasing attention is being given to new forms of regional governance. In an attempt to tackle complex, cross-cutting challenges, these structures invariably emphasise collaboration. This presentation surveys emergent forms of regional governance across Australia and draws on Victoria's Regional Management Forums as a detailed case study.

## **Abstract**

Across Australia, increasing attention is being given to the development of regional governance structures. These structures are invariably defined by their emphasis on collaboration, as they attempt to integrate effort across government agencies, between levels of government, and draw in key regional actors.

The increasing emphasis on regional governance is informed by an emerging recognition that regions are the most appropriate level at which to tackle many key economic, environmental and social challenges. Furthermore, the issues that need to be tackled are often cross-cutting, with complex intersections between economic, social and environmental issues. The new Australian regionalism is an evolving, pragmatic response to these challenges.

This paper will survey emergent forms of regional governance across Australia and will draw on Victoria as a detailed case study.

Victoria established Regional Management Structures in 2005 to facilitate collaboration between state government departments and local governments. They are now an established fixture of the Victorian public sector landscape, and have evolved beyond their formal beginnings to incorporate loose intersecting networks of groups based in and around the Forums themselves. The open, fuzzy and somewhat elastic boundaries of these groupings allow the extent of the region to vary or the right coalition to be established to address each issue.

Regional Management Forums and their associated groups are now playing a key role in the development of integrated regional strategic plans, which are aimed at aligning policy and guiding investment.

The experience of regional governance in Victoria and elsewhere points to a public sector future based on collaboration, flexibility and responsiveness. This will demand new responses from government departments as well as the public servants that work for them.