
Part A Developments in country Australia

The National Competition Policy (NCP) reforms agreed between the governments of Australia do not operate in isolation from other government policies, or from the long-term economic and social changes which are affecting the Australian community more generally. If the contribution of NCP is to be correctly identified, there must be some understanding of these various sources of economic and social change. Given the scope of this inquiry, the focus is on influences which affect country and metropolitan communities differently.

Part A begins with a review of long-term trends in the geographic dispersion of Australia's population and a snapshot of economic and social indicators in chapter 2.

The changes occurring in the structure of the Australian economy are outlined in chapter 3. This helps to establish a benchmark against which to assess the contribution of NCP reforms in country communities and metropolitan Australia. Also examined in the chapter are forces which essentially are beyond the control of governments (such as international commodity prices), as well as some government policies, which may have contributed to the changing circumstances of country Australia.
