

- **Should the ZTO special area boundaries be redrawn to reflect contemporary settlement patterns?**

ZTO special area boundaries need to be redefined considering, various other factors that contributed towards achieving the census population. If the region demands more services due to challenges such as health, education, infrastructure etc., there can be added population in the region. They may either represent as advantages or disadvantages of the region.

So, those elements need to be factored in, for a good policy design and implementation:

1. Employees who are residing primarily to support the needs of the permanent population;
2. Contractors, consultants and staff who resides in the region mainly for the purpose of their job;
3. Visitors in the region;
4. Population ratio;
5. Health Survey of the region; and
6. Education, culture, crime rate, living cost, environmental factors, geographic location, long term sustainability of the region etc.

Not all the boundaries need to be updated with each new Census. But, if parameters vary from set target, need to re-design the boundaries.

- **Are there criteria that would help better target assistance in line with whatever objectives are deemed appropriate for remote area support?**
- Remote area supports need to aim at gradual withdrawal of supports, by empowering to achieve self-dependency over a period.
- This can be achieved through long term planning focussed on capacity building of people and the region. (Education, health, environment, infrastructure etc.)
- Australian government is spending money to encourage people to live and work in remote area. So, there should be fair representation from Federal Government to monitor the plan and objectives.
- Many remote areas were left alone only by means of financial help from Federal Government. That increased incompetency of the regions. Production and distribution of public products, merit goods etc. were very vital for the development of remote areas. Varying policies and long term absence of Federal Government's direct involvement in those activities caused uncertainty in many regions.

- **Should larger regional centres continue to be included in the arrangements?**

Please refer answer 1

- **Should the payment levels be changed, indexed, and/or means tested?**

1. Payment level need to be reviewed immediately to meet the inflation level and needs.

2. Adjust the payment levels by considering the following:

- Remote area support needs to be aimed at gradual withdrawal of support by encouraging to achieving self-dependency:
 - This can be achieved through long term planning focussed on capacity building of people and the region. (Education, health, environment, infrastructure etc.): and
 - Federal government is spending money to encourage people to live and work in remote area. So, there should be fair representation from Federal Government to monitor the plan and objectives.
- **Given that the RAA was introduced as a companion payment to the ZTO, should eligibility and payment rates be amended to address eligibility anomalies between ZTO and RAA? (figure 4)**

Those are two different areas.

- **Is there scope to rationalise the three arrangements into one payment for people in remote areas?**

The Henry Tax Review (2009, p. 32) explaining in a different context.

Currently, the three separate arrangements are well placed in the current economic situation.

Should businesses in remote areas be provided with ZTO-like support?

- Policies targeting businesses in remote areas?

- More close involvement by Federal Government to enable them to function efficiently to national standards and meet the regional objectives.
- **Are there alternative mechanisms to more directly support Australians residing in specified geographic areas?**
- A stable centralised management system that can transfer knowledge and information effectively and constantly.
- **Would the forgone revenue and expenditure from the tax concessions and payments be better allocated to State and Territory governments to provide additional funding for their regional development programs?**

Need to evaluate the outcome of the previous and current programs and their vision in line with Federal Government's objectives.

- **Should the Government seek to attract graduates possessing in-demand skills to regional areas by forgiving their HELP debts?**

It is important to have intrinsic motivation when working in remote areas.

Providing training and development opportunity will be more effective.