

Regional Economic Development & the Changing Role of Local Government in Queensland

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Defining 'Economic Development'

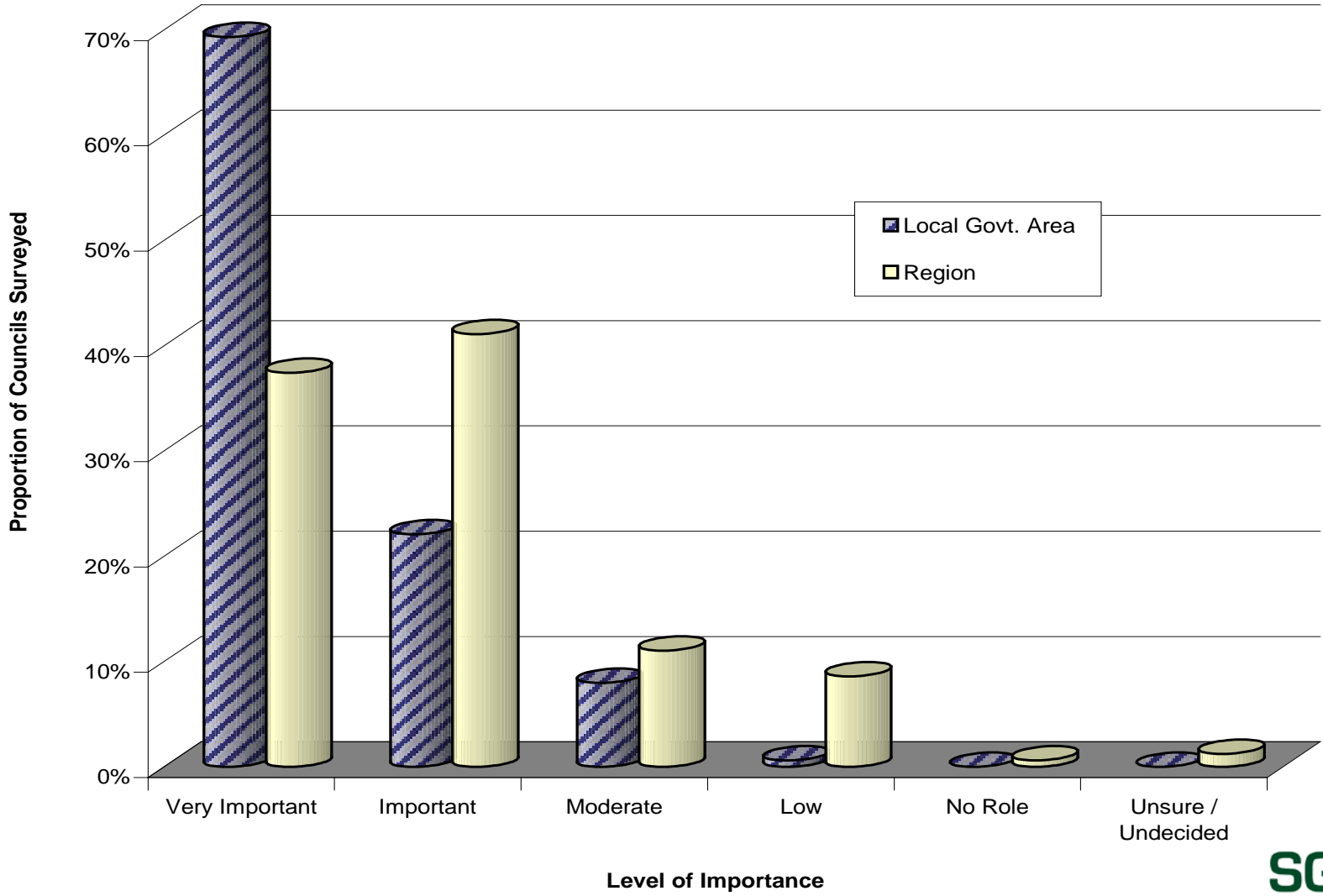
- **'Economic Development'** is the process of expanding the size of the economy (increasing an area's level of income and capital / wealth) and distributing that wealth (through local expenditure and employment) to the community.
- Is typically measured in terms of jobs and income.
-but also includes improvements in education, health, lifestyle & 'liveability', environmental sustainability and community well-being.
- LG can influence all of these things

Defining Economic Development

Local Government has a role to play, a role influenced by:

- National and global economic trends and impacts
- Policy response – a greater role for larger ‘regional’ Councils
- Local / regional circumstances
- Importance of local knowledge and local responses - ubiquitous engagement with and implicit charter to serve local communities

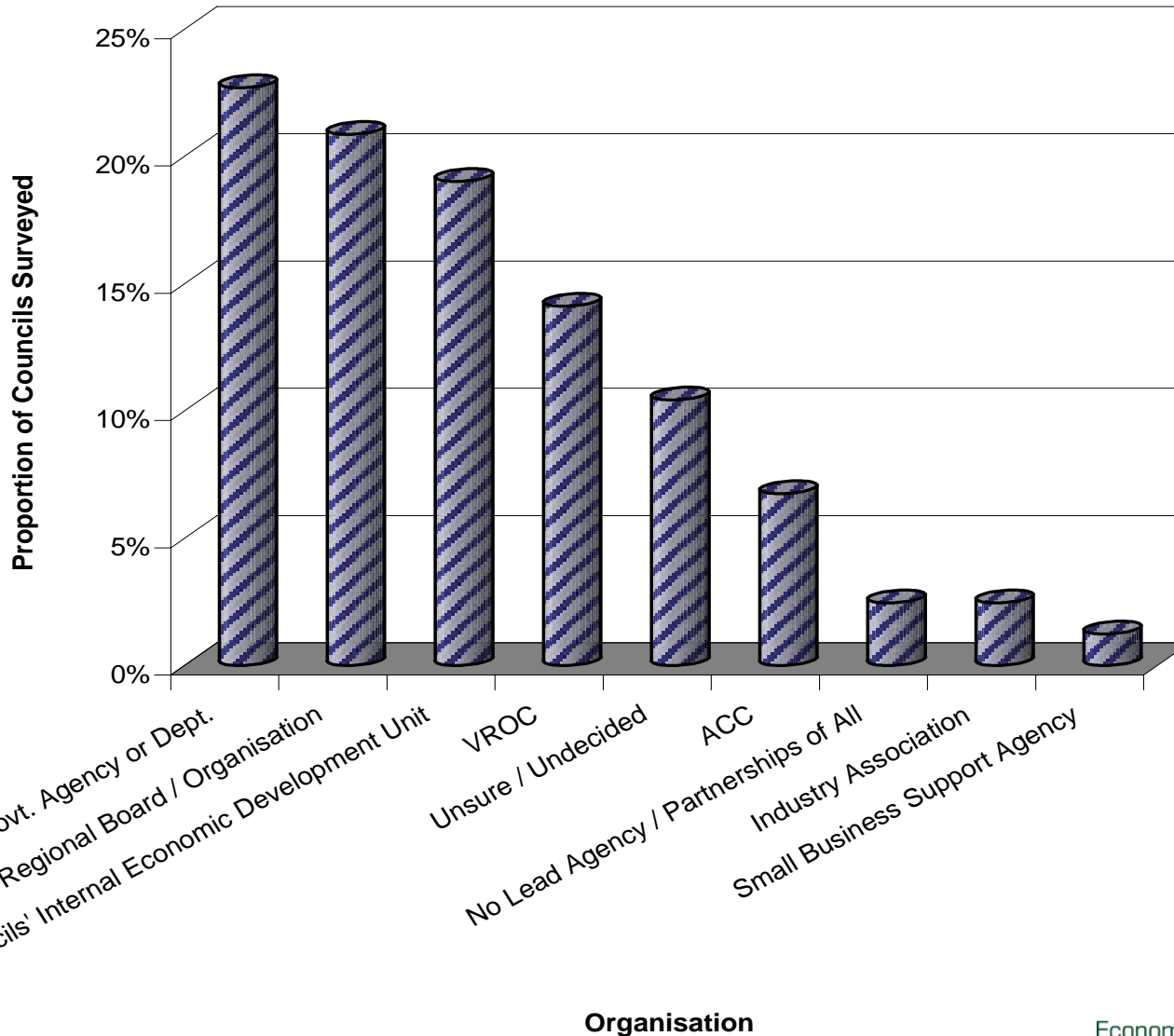
Councils' Perceptions of Role in Eco. Dev.



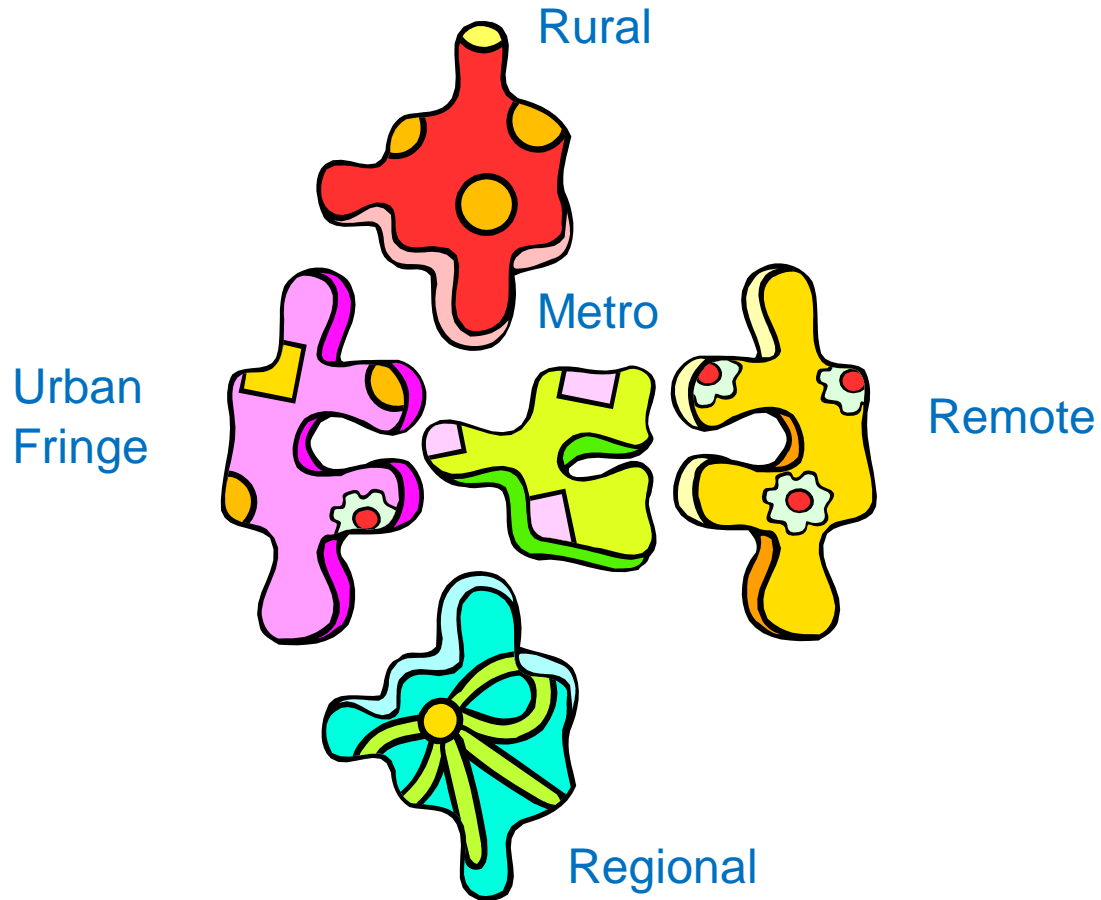
Local Government's Contribution

- **Promoter, facilitator and coordinator:**
 - Spends money on development infrastructure (roads, parks & gardens, community facilities, etc.)
 - Provides important community services (e.g. recreation, aged care)
 - Partner in early stages of project development via DAs
 - First point of contact for business / investment enquiries
- **Active engagement** – over 50% of Australia's regional development agencies are a branch of Local Govt. (Beer & Maude, 2002)
- ...but there are others..

Regional Development Agencies

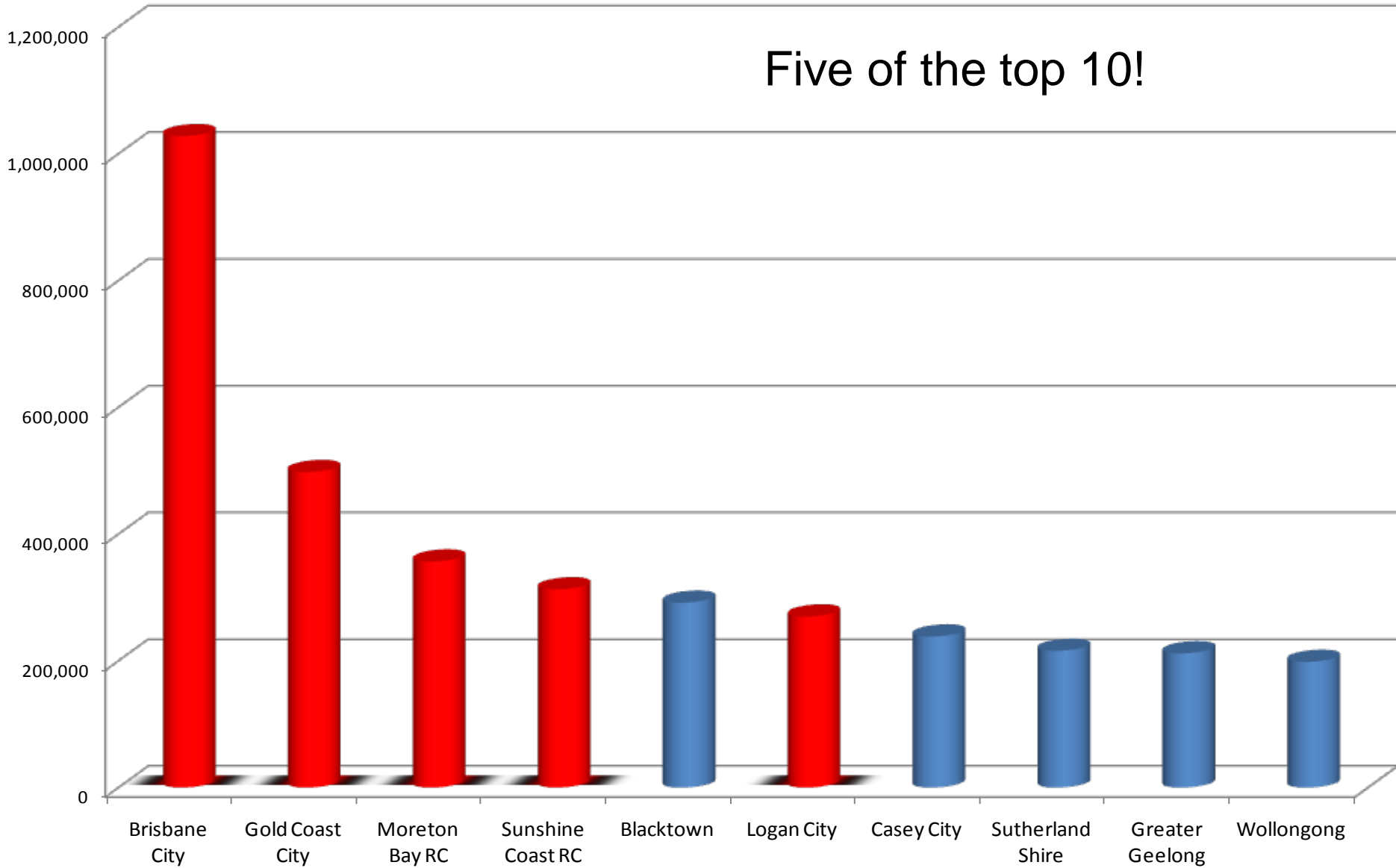


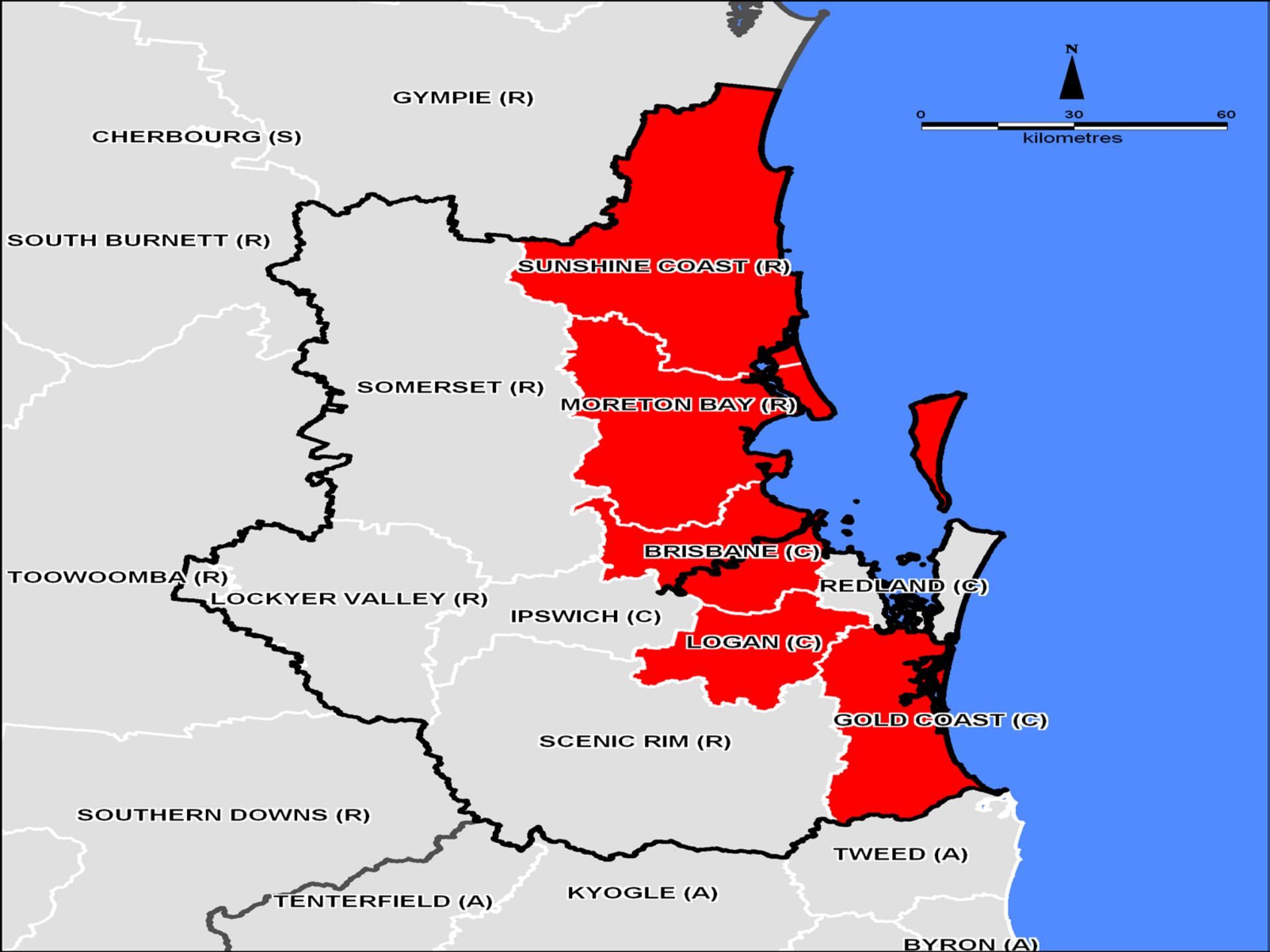
The Cities are Regions Too



'Regional Government' in Queensland

Five of the top 10!





SEQ Regional Plan 2009-2031

*“Plan for employment to support a **strong, resilient and diversified economy** that grows prosperity in the region by using its competitive advantages to deliver **exports, investment and sustainable and accessible jobs.**”*

(DRO 9 ‘Employment Location’)

Commonwealth Reinvention

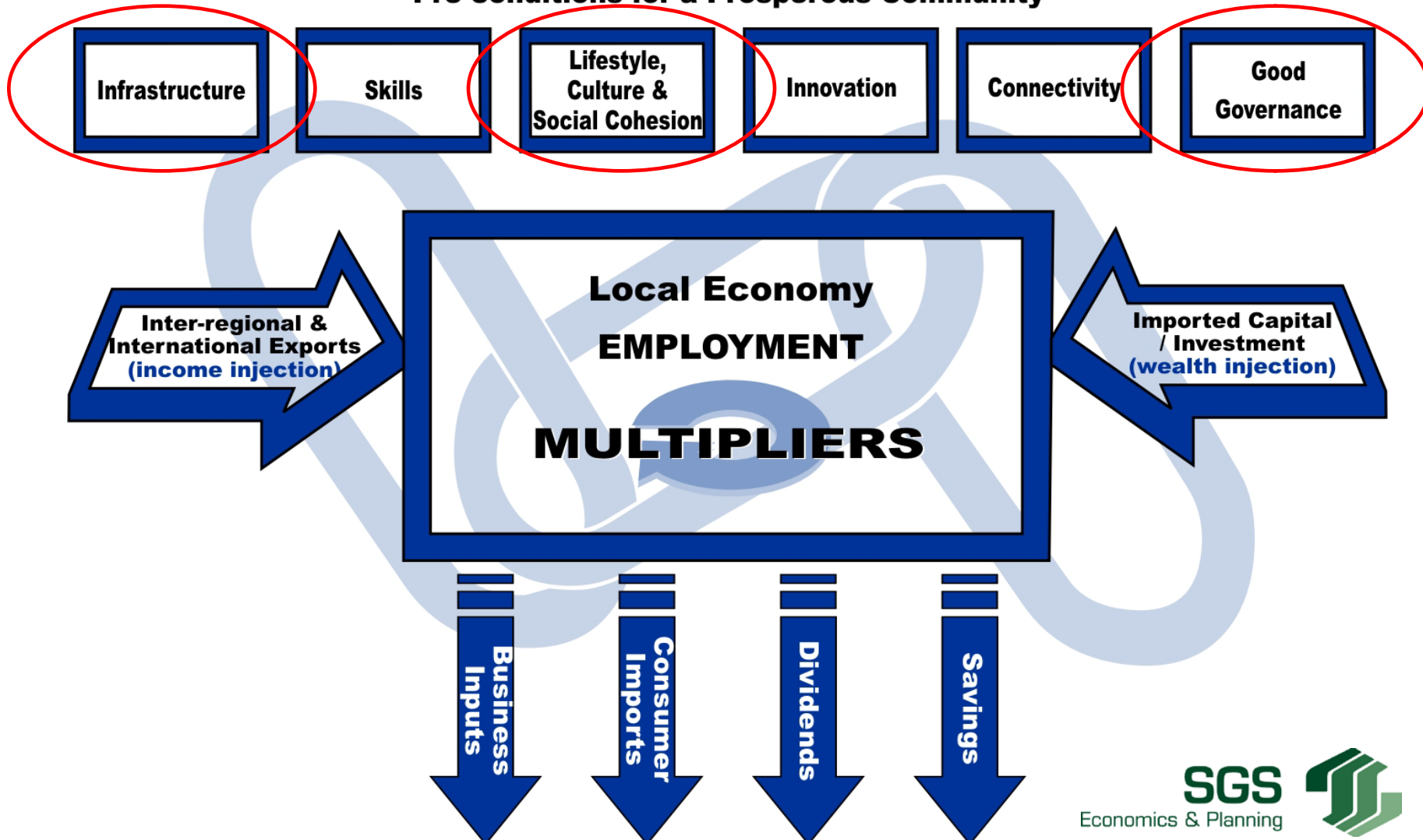
- ACCs replaced by Regional Development Australia Committees (RDA):
 - to provide a strategic framework for economic growth
 - provide advice on consultation and community engagement
 - influence regional planning
 - promote whole-of-government programs, policies and initiatives
 - promote community and economic development
- MOU between C'wealth and Queensland Government
- RDA regions align with new LG boundaries

A 'Regional' Development Focus

- Councils can (and should) continue to focus on what they can influence. These are clearly 'local' economic development activities:
 - (e.g. land use planning, infrastructure provision or business information and assistance programs)
- But can now adopt a **broader (regional) view** due to:
 - A renewed Commonwealth commitment to regional development
 - Better articulation of 'natural economic regions'
 - LGAs now being large enough to encompass many of the pre-conditions for a competitive economic environment

Drivers of a Regional Economy

Pre-conditions for a Prosperous Community



Economic Development Functions

1. Managing a coordinated approach

- Lobbying and coordinating funding submissions ★

2. Supporting a conducive business/people environment

- Strategic planning ★
- Information provision & referral ★
- Development approvals ★

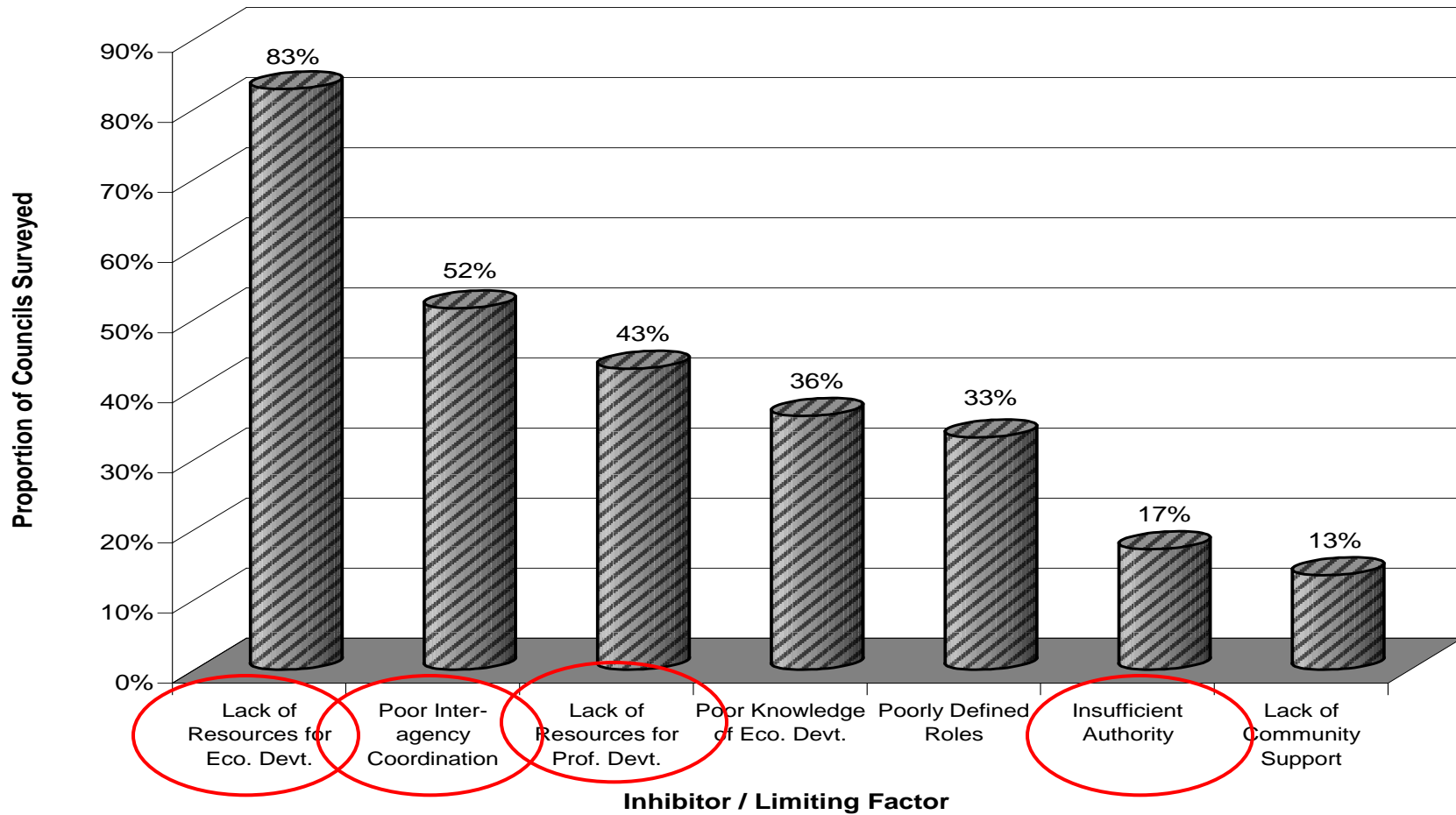
3. Facilitating local investment, business & emp. growth

- Facilitating business networks & clusters ★
- SME and micro business support ★

4. Attracting / facilitating new investment

- Catalyst project / infrastructure investment ★
- Business attraction ★

Inhibitors to Local Government Activities



Moving Forward – 5 suggestions

1. Be pro-active - work with other Metro and Regional Councils, the State and C'wealth to pursue regional planning frameworks
2. Engage the private sector (and others like Universities) in those regional planning frameworks
3. A fine grain approach - understand and support the industries / clusters (established and emerging) that drive the regional economy
4. Invest in local skills, knowledge and understanding (Councillors and Officers)
5. Engage with RDA and secure the \$\$

And what about the Feds?

1. Focus program funding on the real needs of individual regions (avoid competitive and potentially non-strategic grants-based approach)
2. Utilise local knowledge – ‘authorise’ and validate the ED function of Regional Councils
3. Understand and articulate city-region links (the jigsaw)
4. Engage with Regional Councils (and the State) now!
5. Monitor performance for genuine accountability
6. Communicate and inform!



Thank you

