

# **Population Driven Development in The City of Casey: Is it Sustainable?<sup>1</sup>**

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**Abstract**

The City of Casey is the fourth fastest growing region in Australia. Thus far its success is population driven. This paper reviews the recent trend in regional development policies in Australia with particular reference to Casey. A new model based on the Regional Innovation System framework for the analysis of development in the region is constructed. Questions are raised about whether this region can have economically sustainable and innovation driven development in the future

## **Introduction**

Australia has enjoyed a long spell of unparalleled economic growth in the last decade: a stark contrast to the recession of the early nineties. This economic boom has been fuelled in part by the housing industry. In Melbourne this has led to very high house prices in the inner city suburbs and consequent increased urban sprawl, predominantly in the South East corridor, along the Monash Freeway. The City of Casey, formed by the merger of the Cities of Berwick, major parts of the City of Cranbourne and parts of the City of Knox in 1994 (City of Casey, 2004, p. 3) has been the major beneficiary of this development. Population has increased from 145,000 in 1994 to more than 225,828 in June 2006 (City of Casey, 2006). The development in this part of Melbourne has been population driven: more housing estates, retail and some industry. Thus this rapid development (fourth fastest in Australia) is driven by exogenous forces. Rural South East Melbourne is turning into urban Melbourne, without the economic drivers of the central business district and inner city suburbs.

Multiple surveys initiated by the City of Casey and the State Government of Victoria have found little if any evidence of industrial cluster formation (Ratio Consultants, 2003). Cluster activity is a prerequisite to the formation of a Regional Innovation System (RIS). A vibrant RIS is almost mandatory for the sustainable economic development of any region. Cooke *et al.* (2000) defined RIS as a system that consists of interacting knowledge generation and exploitation of sub-systems linked to global, national and other regional systems for commercialising new knowledge. Asheim and Isaksen (2002) suggest that RISs

are the preferred method to analyse and grasp the working of regional clusters, which in turn are places where social and cultural interaction and institutional make up stimulate collective learning and innovation, vital for sustainable development. Since the 1990s, RIS has become a leading approach in explaining innovation patterns and process experienced by firms and industries at the regional level (Doloreux, 2004).

Any region that desires long term sustenance has to look at the newer modes of generating employment and wealth. This development is driven by innovation (entrepreneurial and technical) that attracts professionals to live and work in the region. As there is no large research centre in Casey, groundbreaking research that will change the world is considered unlikely. However the incremental innovation that drives day to day business is eminently possible and does not require large cash outlay, needs to be encouraged. This category of innovation is consistently ignored by planners and governments (Lahey, 2006).

The City of Casey, the largest local government area in Victoria is treated as a part of the South East Development (SED<sup>2</sup>) by the Federal Government's Area Consultative Committee Program. It lacks the qualities that attract and retain entrepreneurs, thinkers and creative classes (Florida, 2002): good infrastructure, existing capital assets and well educated workforce (Berry, 2005). Whilst the current educational profile of residents of the area demonstrates an equivalent percentage of bachelors' degree holders in the region to SED (Appendix 1), this is most likely a result of the land cost alone. It is of relevance that Florida (2002)) stated that the availability of these conventional drivers of development is

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<sup>2</sup> SED: South East Development of Melbourne comprises of the Cities of Casey, Frankston and Greater Dandenong and the Shires of Bass Coast, Cardinia and Mornington Peninsula.

no longer sufficient to guarantee ongoing sustainable growth. A local government region such as Casey, does not have any possibility of attracting the modern well heeled knowledge worker in the absence of these facilities. Is it the proverbial ‘Catch 22’ situation?

This paper briefly reviews the philosophy and policies of regional development in Australia with particular reference to Casey. The current economic *milieu* of Casey raises concerns about the sustainability of the current population driven development. In response to this Casey is introducing innovation drive policies. But can such policies be effective? These are the issues that this paper aims to raise.

### **Regional Development Policy in Australia**

The regional development policy of Australia is influenced by the high proportion of population in urban areas (Maude, 2004). There has been centralization of the Australian economic geography (O'Connor et al., 1998) driven largely by the size of the two major metropolises: Sydney and Melbourne.

In recent times, Melbourne has developed as a major urban centre with specific areas of expertise, which are thus far not spilling over into Casey. The only way forward would be to make the development that has taken place so far more sustainable through innovation-driven growth. This requires government intervention to encourage industry and firm development, creating jobs in fringe suburbs and cities such as Casey while allowing the City of Melbourne to retain its character. The Victorian State Government has established a

series of programs in order to develop such independent innovation-based growth in fast growing regions like Casey. The Federal Government on the other hand prefers to allow market forces to resolve these issues on their own. Thus, there appears to be a conflict of policy approach between the Federal and the Victorian State Governments.

The opening up of the Australian economy in the 1980s to global markets and competition was a significant shift from the previous more insular nature of regional economic development. This resulted in the formation of a more unequal economy in the place of egalitarian motivated state policies. Some parts of the country had population growth without investment in productive activities needed to establish a prosperous future (Beer et al., 2003, p. 3). These regions are vulnerable to social and economic regression with high rates of unemployment, increased reliance on social security and other government financial support systems. They are generally located on the peripheral areas of the major metropolitan cities; especially Sydney and Melbourne. The City of Casey is one such local government region. The widening social gap between prosperous and economically challenged areas extends to education, health, leisure, employment and quality of life issues (Beer et al., 2003; Florida, 2005). These areas within the metropolitan cities that are disadvantaged for multiple reasons (Maude, 2004), including locational disadvantage, lack of infrastructure, transport, housing and lack of potential to participate in the changing economy. The nature of the economy is being reshaped by the trend of corporations to rapidly increase returns for their shareholders rather than increase the net worth of the company resulting in loss of jobs, services and revenue for fringe suburbs. It is recognised that non-core or dispersed metropolitan regions have their own peculiar problems (National

Economics, 2005). These fringe metropolitan areas are at risk of losing their youth to centres with higher job potential. This is of great importance as regional development policy in Australia targets large areas or regions such as the Melbourne Statistical Division (MSD). Regional policy no longer targets local government areas such as the City of Casey.

Beer *et al.*, (2005) believe that regional development policy in Australia is heavily influenced by neo-liberalism: governments increasingly shift the responsibility of regional development to the regions themselves; effectively emasculating federal agencies by reducing funding. Federal government agencies are limited to overall facilitating and providing information. Competition between various agencies and a lack of a co-operative agenda results in the dilution of the scarce government aid available. The City of Casey is cognizant of this, and understands that its responsibility for sustained development in Casey. All its development policies and programs reflect recognition of this neo-liberal philosophy.

### **Why Casey?**

The City of Casey is the largest local government area in Victoria. In the next decade the population of Casey will exceed that of Canberra (Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2006). Even though regional policy assumes that the region is homogenous: this is obviously not the case. Casey is lagging behind the MSD in virtually all indices of economic development. Whilst Casey cannot exist as a separate or self sustaining region, its fortune will remain inextricably intertwined with that of the MSD/ SED. Micro level policy as

formulated by the City of Casey is necessary to ensure that the economic development of Casey will converge with that of MSD.

The City of Casey realizes that its young will require a large number of jobs to keep crime and unemployment low in the next decade. Collits (2004) argues that regions need to take their destiny in their own hands, with governments encouraging these regions towards such innovation driven development. The City of Casey is following this philosophy with some vigour: it is proactive in attracting new businesses, has a business development office, and has been successful in getting some state and federal funding for some of its surveys and projects. It is trying desperately to create jobs for the youth of the next two decades. Given that there is high degree of job leakage to the SED/MSD; residents face the prospect of long travel distances to work (South East Development (Melbourne) ACC, 2006). Such work related travel faced by the youth in Casey tends to encourage those with strong skill base to move closer to job opportunities.

Increased presence and employment of highly skilled workers who earn high wages, who do not have to travel elsewhere for work and who spend their earnings in the region, results in increased retention of income in the region or higher *rent retention*. Absence of this class of workers and jobs results in high job leakages, low rent retention and decreased attraction of creative classes (Florida, 2005). Knowledge workers, scientists, professionals and virtually all workers that hold a bachelors degree or higher have been termed as creative classes by Florida, in addition to artisans, media and entertainment workers. A highly skilled and educated workforce is the engine of innovation in any given region (Simmie, 2001). A highly skilled workforce results in improved economic performance and



innovation in a region, which leads to an influx of more skilled and educated workers. How to commence this process of rent retention in a nascent urban centre like Casey is a real problem for regional innovation -based development.

### **Casey 2006: Population Driven Development**

The City of Casey has devised a set of major industry groupings, using the business database, the ANZSIC classification and local surveys. The data available from these sources is very limited. This paper explores the issues based on the available data, both published and unpublished and other academic research. Of these major groupings, the City of Casey has identified four industry groups that are critical for the sustained development of Casey on the basis of employment data alone<sup>3</sup>. These industry groups are manufacturing, education, health and finance and insurance services. Some data is available on the manufacturing sector, with scanty data for the other three sectors. It is important to identify the basic (exporting) and non basic (firms selling to the local region only) industries in any region for strengthening the local economy (Economic Base Theory: (Blumenfeld, 1955; Klosterman, 1990)). Such strengthening can provide the basis for more endogenous driven innovation policies as will be examined in the next section of this paper.

The retail sector is driven by the demographics/population growth itself. Whilst the retail/wholesale sector and the construction sectors are large employers (see Appendix 2),

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<sup>3</sup> Mr Rick Grounds from the City of Casey in March 2006 provided secondary data which identified these industry groups.

they are not considered to be as important in the sustainable development of the area, in their present form. Ongoing development of the four identified sectors is likely to be the key to reducing the job leakages from the region, increasing the profile of Casey in line with what the City of Casey calls its C21 strategy (see Appendix 3) in the short run. The C21 strategy aims to improve *rent retention* in the region and attracting more skilled workers to Casey. In Casey, the four identified critical industry groups are likely to provide higher paid jobs than the retail sector. Of these, health, and education are core infrastructure sectors, manufacturing usually generates the most jobs, whilst finance and insurance services are imperative for the development of firms and industries. Once export data is available then it would be possible to ascertain the basic industry in the region. By first principles it should follow that health, education, retail, finance/ insurance and building are likely to be non-basic industries while manufacturing is likely to be the basic industries. However, education, finance and insurance, and health services could potentially service residents from outside the region, thereby becoming basic industries improving sustainability of development. This is possible by the development of large ‘service centres’ for these industries. Retail centres also have a potential to become basic industries particularly if ‘warehouse’ type shopping precincts are developed.

A review of the 2001 census data reveals that 6.7% of the population residing in this city has a bachelor’s degree or higher, similar to the average of SED (see Appendix 1). This suggests that the educational knowledge capital of the region is similar to the SED. It should be noted that both these regions have a significantly lower number of graduates in comparison to the MSD. There is a potential to increase the population of graduate

residents in the area if Casey were to sell its comparative advantage of low cost housing, lifestyle and amenities.

Selling the concept of low cost housing is all very well when the population is able to service that debt. The rate rises in 2006 have resulted in an increasing number of unsustainable mortgages and repossessions (Cooke et al., 2006). This results in displaced families, increases the burden on welfare groups and payments and ultimately leads to increased crime, reduces the land value in the region and makes the region less attractive to the creative classes. This increases the imperative for the City of Casey to concentrate upon innovation driven policy to increase jobs and industry in the region.

### **Casey 2006: Innovation Driven Development**

The City of Casey and to some extent the state government have seen the need for growth in regions like Casey, to be more endogenously driven by innovation. The Stanford model of Frederick Terman, an industrial technology park on the doorstep of Stanford University, working on high technology projects, largely for the government and big industry, is being emulated by the City of Casey. Casey Technology Park is being developed in close proximity to the Berwick Campus of Monash University. The business development unit of the City of Casey is collaborating with Monash University to support this initiative. Whilst there are no large companies in the region, nor government research grants of the scale seen

at Stanford, it is hoped that the Casey Technology Park will boost the local knowledge economy and information technology services.

The available data on household weekly income demonstrates that in Casey and SED, there is a significantly smaller proportion of population in the higher income band of more than \$2000 per week, most likely a result of the smaller number of managers, administrators and professionals living in the Casey and SED as compared to the MSD (See Appendices 4 and 5).

The Index of Relative Socio Economic Disadvantage is a composite measure of the economic well being of the region. A region with a high score has fewer low income families, few people with little training and unskilled occupations. This index is better for Casey than the overall average for SED (Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2001), but lower than the national average as well of the MSD.

It would appear that, at least on the surface, the lower housing cost in the area has attracted a spread of population with similar educational characteristics as SED. Given this factor endowment, Casey should potentially be able to become at least as sustainable as the entire SED region.

Using the RIS framework in Appendix 6, the available data on Casey can be summarized and compared with successful RISs elsewhere in the world. This comparison is only preliminary, based on information gathered from secondary sources both published and unpublished. The comparison indicates that a RIS based around Casey and its neighbouring areas is deficient. It is clear, whilst there are business support networks, educational

institutions, entrepreneurship in the home based sector, presence of financial and insurance services, government initiative, and university driven research; there is a distinct lack of cluster formation, only a nascent education sector, non existence of venture capital, foreign investment or substantial research and development facilities.<sup>4</sup> It is therefore unlikely that Casey will be able to develop a RIS in the near future.

To support The City of Casey's proactive economic development policy, it has expanded and developed its website. This provides links to all its services, the major state and federal business support services, a business directory, business news, chambers of commerce and their contacts. Business and industry recognize the prime role of local government in the provision and facilitation of information to local businesses. In effect, the City of Casey is functioning like a knowledge distribution node. Such a role has been suggested by Richards and Carson (2006), albeit for the distribution of knowledge in regional tourism systems. Information and knowledge are the keys to successful innovative practices and the City of Casey sees this as the basis for development in time of a sustainable economy. The proactive role of the City of Casey is in the provision of innovation driven policies: the provision of knowledge, financial aid, networking opportunities and infrastructure development; these are steps in the right direction though in their infancy.

Review of data from the 2001 census reveals a paradoxical demographic profile in Casey.

On the one hand the knowledge endowment is adequate for development similar to the

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<sup>4</sup> The analysis in this paper is based on Cooke (2001) and Holbrook & Salazar (2003) that identifies cluster formation as a distinct subset of a RIS. Some researchers reject the role of a separate RIS model and emphasise cluster formation as the *sine-qua-non* of regional development, for example: Braun, P., McRaeWilliams, P. & Lowe, J., (2005), 'Small Business Clustering: Accessing Knowledge Through Local Networks', *Journal Of New Business Ideas and Trends*, vol. 3, no. 2, pp. 57-63. The current analysis is relevant in both forms of RIS and cluster dominant approaches.

neighbouring areas, on the other there is a skill shortage. The local government is proactive in attracting and helping businesses to set up in the area and to try to overcome this skill shortage. It is recognized that the youth in the region may well be trapped by their lack of skills into low skill jobs in the immediate neighbourhood, thereby precluding their potential employability elsewhere.

The essential prerequisite for the development of any RIS is the presence of local industry/firms. The local and state governments have a number of programs available for attracting and developing businesses and networks in Casey (Jain, 2005). The presence of firms and industry is the most important ingredient in the establishment of a cluster which eventually leads on to the development of a successful RIS. Once there is a critical mass of firms, then and only then, can networks and innovation systems be developed.

The Regional Economic Strategy for the Melbourne 2003-2030, and a subsequent study by McDougall and O'Connor (2005) found little if any evidence of cluster formation in the region. *Clusters* or agglomeration of industry and services evolve close to their supply chains. Industry clusters are a result of geographic concentration or association. Guinet (1999) called clusters a localised manifestation of the system of global innovation and production. Cluster formation results in synergies and economic leverage from shared knowledge networks, competencies, supply and distribution chains, markets, resources and support institutions available in a specific locality (Roberts & Enright, 2004). All the industrial groups identified thus far are only a mere collection of listings with poor network formation. These industry groups remain important even in the absence of cluster formation

if only for their job creation and economic importance. If, inter-firm linkages or clusters can be encouraged the synergies of a cluster would flow on to not just the participating firms but to the entire region as a whole, even in the absence of a RIS.

To separate basic from non-basic firms the essential prerequisite is export data, currently not available. The government and its agencies need to identify the base industries as a prelude to further support for their expansion and cluster development. Once the industries are identified then the government needs an effective policy to attract new businesses in the selected category to allow for the development of a cluster. This is easier said than done: new companies and firms will only migrate to Casey if they see an economic advantage in doing so. In a nascent urban centre this process can be perhaps helped by government support in an Institutional Regional Innovation System (IRIS) approach leading to the potential development of a cluster.

Australia as a whole and regional Australia in particular has been identified as lacking in venture capitalists (Hindle & O'Connor, 2004; O'Connor et al., 2001). This has been identified as an essential prerequisite in the formation of an entrepreneurial type of RIS. There is a dearth of venture capitalists and entrepreneurs in Casey (See Appendix 6). This further strengthens the argument that if Casey has to have a RIS at all, government intervention would be required to strengthen the institutions to form an Institutional RIS (IRIS) such as Wales (Heidenreich, 2004). The prime mover of initiation of the IRIS is the government (Cooke, 2004). IRIS is reliant upon public knowledge generation and the

exploitation by public research laboratories, universities, technology transfer institutions, incubators, investors, trainers and other intermediaries.

## **Conclusion**

This paper raises questions about how a region which has thus far developed only on the basis of population driven factors, would develop in future. If Florida (2005) is to be believed then Casey would do well in promoting itself as *the* place to live, using its many attributes to convince the creative classes to migrate to this region and enrich the environs with their diversity. This would then allow innovation to flourish, create a new centre for business and industry and lead to overall improvement in the profile of the City of Casey.

Whilst Casey is the fastest growing region in Victoria, if it continues merely to reinforce its current set of population driven factors, the region will remain heavily dependant on cheap land to continue its growth. The rising price of oil, relatively poor public transport, environmental concerns and low income status (in comparison to the MSD) raise many questions about the long term viability of having merely a population driven development strategy. Thus, this points to the need to push for an effective pro-active strategy for innovation – driven economic development in the region. Casey needs effective government intervention and innovation driven policies to encourage business networking and encourage the formation of new businesses in an attempt to have some form of sustainable development.



## **Glossary**

ANZSIC classification	Australia and New Zealand Standard Industrial Classification
Basic Industry/ firm	Firm/ industry predominantly exporting goods/ services outside the region
Casey	The region of Casey
City of Casey	City Council, City of Casey (Local Government)
Economic Base Theory	Developed by Blumenfeld (1955) to explain the importance of exports in the economy of a Metropolis
IRIS	Institutional Regional Innovation System
MSD	Melbourne Statistical Division
Non basic firm	Firm selling goods/ services to the region
Rent retention	Retention of monies spent in the region by local residents/ community
RIS	Regional Innovation System
SED	South East Division of Melbourne

## Appendix 1

### Educational profile of Casey residents in 2001 compared with SED and MSD

Highest Qualification Achieved	number	%	SED%	MSD %
<b>persons aged &gt;15 years</b>				
Bachelor degree or higher	8,586	6.7	7.0	14.2
Advanced diploma or diploma	7,675	6.0	6.4	8.4
Vocational	23,101	17.9	16.9	13.8
No Qualifications	75,451	58.5	57.3	52.1
Not Stated	14,054	10.9	12.3	11.5
Total	128,867	100	100	100

**Source:** South East Development Melbourne ACC (2006)

## Appendix 2

### Industries people work in 2001: Casey compared with SED and MSD

Industry	Casey %	SED%	MSD %
Agriculture, mining, forestry fishing	1.4	2.2	1.0
Manufacturing	23.5	21.0	16.0
Electricity, Gas & Water	.5	.4	.4
Construction	8.4	8.6	6.5
Wholesale and retail	24.7	23	20.6
Transport and Storage	4.4	3.7	3.9
Communication Services	2.3	1.9	2.3
Finance, Insurance and business Services	11.5	11.3	17.7
Public Administration & defence	2.0	2.6	2.9
Education, health and community Services	11.2	13.5	16.3
Not classifiable/ not stated	2.6	2.9	2.4

Source: South East Development Melbourne ACC (2006)

## **Appendix 3**

### **C21 strategy**

The 3 volume Casey C21 Strategy: A Vision for Casey's Future was adopted by Council on 3 September 2002. It provides an integrated city development model. This model encompasses land use, community development, environment, economic development, provision of infrastructure, opportunities for recreation and leisure and a full range of people services. The Strategy considers these city developments over three timeframes: the next five years (the needs of the current community); 25 years (the next generation); and 50-100 years (future generations).

#### C21 Volume 1

Vision, Themes, Outcomes, Plan, Regional Outcomes, Action Plan

#### C21 Volume 2

Context, Restoring Nature, C21 Jobs, C21 Learning Accessible City, Planning Communities, Choice In Casey, A Casey Identity, Building On Casey's Advantage, Safer Casey, Building Community Capacity, A Positive Business Environment Improving Casey's Environment, C21 Indicators, Community Planning Outcomes, C21 Actions

#### C21 Volume 3

Community Based Values, Community Leader Interviews, General Research, Other Research, C21 Community Exhibition

**Source:** City of Casey (2002)

## Appendix 4

### Occupations in 2001: Casey compared with SED and MSD

Occupation	Casey%	SED %	MSD%
Managers and administrators	6.4	7.0	8.3
Professionals	10.5	12.1	20.6
Associate Professionals	9.5	10.0	11.4
Tradespersons	16.1	16	11.8
Clerical, sales and service	31.5	30.1	30.4
Production and Transport	13	11.6	7.9
Labourers	10.7	10.8	7.4
Inadequately described/ not stated	2.3	2.4	2.1

Source: South East Development Melbourne ACC (2006)

## Appendix 5

### Weekly household income in 2001: Casey compared with SED and MSD

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<b>Income Group</b>	<b>Casey %</b>	<b>SED %</b>	<b>MSD %</b>
< \$ 499	19.5	27.7	24.5
\$500- \$999	29	27.9	25.0
\$1000- \$1499	21.7	17.4	17.2
\$1500- \$2000	11.4	9.2	11.8
>\$2000	6.6	5.6	10.0
Not stated	11.6	12.1	11.6

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Source: South East Development Melbourne ACC (2006)

## Appendix 6

### A RIS Framework Model: Established RIS vs Casey (Preliminary Analysis)

Component		Established RIS	Casey
Business Support networks	Local govt. networks	√	evolving
	State/ federal govt. networks	√	evolving
Clusters	Industrial	√	X
	Services	√	X
Education	University	√	√
	Technical Education Institutions	√	√
	High Schools	√	evolving
Entrepreneurship		√	evolving
Financial	Financial Services	√	√
	Banks	√	√
	Insurance Services	√	√
	Venture capitalists	√	X
	Foreign Investment	√/ X	X
Government	Attraction and retention policies	√	√
	Support network	√	√
	Tax rebates and initiatives	√	X
	Cluster development policy	√	X
Industry	Large Multinational Corporation	√/ X	X
	Small industries	√/ X	√
Innovation	across all sectors	√	X
R & D	University Driven	√	limited
	Commercial translation	√	X
	Externally driven	√/ X	X
Skilled Labour		√	?
			(Supply demand mismatch)

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