

# ANZRSAI Newsletter

An interdisciplinary international association of researchers and practitioners on the growth and development of urban, regional and international systems

**February 2010**

**Councillor Profiles**

## ABOUT ANZRSAI

ANZRSAI Council Notes	1
Councillor profiles:	
Paul Collitts	1
Tony O'Malley	2

## REGIONAL RESEARCH

Rural and Regional Committee of the Parliament of Victoria	
Regional Centres of the Future	3
Disadvantage in Regional Victoria	3
Wimmera-Mallee Pipeline	4
Rural research by city students	4
Honours student original research	5

## REGIONS & PRACTICE

Regional development in Northern Territory, Rolf Gerritsen	6
Intergenerational report & Regions Work, Home and Community project	7
Creating more Hong Kongs	8
Wine faces tough times	9
Regional Development Policy in New Zealand	11
Regional Development Australia	12

## UPCOMING CONFERENCES

ANZRSAI Council 2009-10	14
-------------------------	----

.....

## ABOUT ANZRSAI

### ANZRSAI Council Notes

ANZRSAI Council has been very pleased with the conference proceedings and the financial results of PRSCO.

Paul Collitts is getting on with planning for our next conference, in Melbourne, possibly starting on 5 December 2010. Themes are not yet set but the Intergeneration Report and the impacts on regions and major cities, the Murray-Darling Basin and Regional Development Australia are likely contenders.

Back copies of Sustaining Regions are to be scanned and placed on the website.

**Paul Collitts: Vice President Australia and Editor Sustaining Regions. Former President.**

Paul Collitts has worked in regional development for nearly 20 years.

He is Senior Research Fellow in Regional Development at the Hamilton campus of RMIT University, and a Research Fellow at the Page Research Centre. He joined RMIT in 2007.

For the previous 12 years he was a regional policy adviser to the NSW Government, working mostly in the Department of State and Regional Development.

He completed BA (Hons) and MA degrees in political science at ANU in the late 1970s and early 1980s. After a brief academic career in the 1980s, he worked in politics, government and industry till the early 1990s.

In 2002 he completed a PhD at the University of New England in geography and planning. His thesis examined regional policy in Australia since the 1960s and the decline of decentralisation as a policy objective.

Paul has presented and written extensively on such topics as the role of government in regional development, small town decline and survival, community economic development, regional leadership, professional development for regional development practitioners, the creative class and rural youth out-migration.

Paul has also been involved extensively in university teaching, having taught courses for eight years

# *ANZRSAI Newsletter*

on economic development and spatial policy in the planning program at the University of New South Wales. He was an adjunct Senior Lecturer there from 1999 to 2003. He contributed a chapter on regional planning in the Planning Australia text book edited by Susan Thompson (Cambridge University Press), which recently won an excellence award from the Planning Institute of Australia for planning scholarship, research or teaching.

He is currently undertaking research into the effectiveness of local economic development efforts, the drivers of regional economic performance, rural in-migration, people attraction strategies and innovation and networks. He is also developing an international collaborative research and community learning project examining rural community decline and survival in “heartland” regions in Australia and the United States.

He has developed and is delivering graduate programs to members of Economic Development Australia and other economic development professionals, and has developed the curriculum for the Department of Agriculture funded Next Gen Young Rural Leaders’ program in the Southern Grampians region. He is currently developing a Young Entrepreneurs Program in Hamilton.

He also manages and contributes to the delivery of a broad range of research consultancy projects, with recent clients including Southern Grampians Shire, the Victorian Parliamentary Rural and Regional Committee, and Regional Development Victoria.

## [Tony O’Malley: South Australia and Newsletter Editor](#)



I grew up and spent my school days in the western suburbs of Adelaide. In 1965 I obtained a Bachelor of Technology in civil engineering from University

of Adelaide after studying at the predecessor of University of South Australia and working part-time in the Department of Highways.

By the end of 1967 I had married, my MBA was complete and I had been accepted into a PhD program by course work and thesis in the Economics Department at University of Alberta. In late 1973 I took up a position as a consultant with WD Scott and Company and returned to Adelaide. My PhD in economics was awarded in 1975 after a thesis on the labour market for higher degree holders.

For the next 30 or so years I worked as an economics and strategy consultant to clients in industry, regions and governments across Australia, and in New Zealand, Philippines, Papua New Guinea, Kenya and Sudan. From 1997 until 2005 I worked voluntarily as Project Champion with 40 other volunteers producing an annual publication “Indicators of the state of SA” on behalf of SA Business Vision 2010 (later Viva SA). This contribution led to an award as Civic Entrepreneur of the year in 2000 and a Medal in the Order of Australia in 2007.

# *ANZRSAI Newsletter*

My interest in regions began with an MBA thesis on regional pulp and paper industry and assisting with a research study on regional economies in Alberta, and continued during PhD studies. My consulting practice included several regional economic development plans and cluster development initiatives.

Research activity has now substituted for consulting activity, a transition assisted by an appointment as an Adjunct Research Fellow in the School of Management at University of South Australia. Regions, applications of transaction cost economics, innovation, and virtue ethics are my main research interests.

Family, three grandchildren, swimming and reading remain my principal recreations.

My hopes for ANZRSAI are that it will grow and strengthen communication and collaboration between regional practice and regional science. I am interested in creating networks of practitioners and researchers in South Australia, in seeing that regional science and practice provides regions with the tools, and that regional leaders stop begging and start taking up the challenge of reversing their continuous decline and capturing a much larger share of a growing national population.

## **REGIONAL RESEARCH**

### *Report of an Inquiry into Regional Centres of the Future*

On 9 December the Rural and Regional Committee of the Parliament of Victoria tabled its Report into Regional Centres of the Future. Over a period of 18 months, the Committee heard from 175 witnesses at 13 Public Hearings, received 64 written submissions and recorded over 750

pages of transcripts of evidence – all from a wide range of experts and stakeholders passionate about the potential of country Victoria to absorb its share of Victoria’s growing population, and indeed thrive while doing so.

The Report presents a thorough summary and discussion of the large amount of evidence generated during the Inquiry. At the core of the Report sits the belief that when governments address what have become known as the ‘non-negotiables’ – infrastructure; connectivity (including transport and communications); health; and education – regional towns and centres become empowered to exploit their latent talents. Along with a targeted decentralisation approach by government this will allow them to succeed in their own distinct ways.

“Conducting this Inquiry and putting together this Report with my colleagues I have been inspired by the vision and ideas presented by experts, leaders and regional champions from all walks of life – people who are working to develop our regions for the benefit of all Victorians,” said Committee Chairman, Damian Drum MLC.

The Report into Regional Centres of the Future is available by contacting the Committee on 1300 787 202 (Victoria only) or 03 8682 2884, or by going to [www.parliament.vic.gov.au/rrc](http://www.parliament.vic.gov.au/rrc) .

Two further inquiries are commencing or in progress.

# *ANZRSAI Newsletter*

## *Inquiry into Disadvantage in Rural and Regional Victoria*

The Rural and Regional Committee of the Parliament of Victoria has begun an Inquiry into the Extent and Nature of Disadvantage and Inequity in Rural and Regional Victoria. The Committee would like to hear from people concerned about rural and regional disadvantage, including community groups, government agencies, business and consumer groups, and private citizens. Submissions addressing the terms of reference – available online at [www.parliament.vic.gov.au/rrc](http://www.parliament.vic.gov.au/rrc) – should be sent to the Committee by 20 March 2010. The Committee can be contacted on 1300 787 202 (Victoria only) or 03 8682 2884.

## *Inquiry into the Wimmera–Mallee Region Pipeline*

The Rural and Regional Committee of the Parliament of Victoria has begun an Inquiry into Positioning the Wimmera–Mallee Region to Capitalise on New Economic Development Opportunities. The Committee would like to hear from people involved in economic development in the Wimmera–Mallee Pipeline region, including community groups, government agencies, business and consumer groups, and private citizens. Submissions addressing the terms of reference – available online at [www.parliament.vic.gov.au/rrc](http://www.parliament.vic.gov.au/rrc) – should be sent to the Committee by 15 February 2010. The Committee can be contacted on 1300 787 202 (Victoria only) or 03 8682 2884.

## *Rural research by city students*

Courtesy of UniSA News – February edition

At the end of each university year, a handful of Adelaide students pack up their bags to spend four weeks in a regional area to work on a research project. By the end of that month, the students have learnt valuable professional skills, made new friends and experienced life away from the city; while the local community has benefited from the outcomes of their projects.

Run by the Spencer Gulf Rural Health School in Whyalla, the Rural Vacation Research Bursary Program has seen about 25 students take up this opportunity since the program (the brainchild of School research head, Associate Professor Gary Misan) began in 2005.

The latest group was made up of five students from the Division of Health Sciences who all worked on an individual community project.

Twenty-three year old Mary Masters was one of the students. Her project involved cataloging all the health services that are available in Whyalla. The Bachelor of Nutrition and Food Science graduate thought it was a great opportunity to gain some research experience. “I have been thinking about going into research and I wanted to see what it was all about,” she said.

Coordinator of the Rural Vacation Research Bursary Program, Chris Thompson, said there have been many successful outcomes from the program. “It is a great way to encourage city-based students to even consider doing research and it also encourages them to look at doing that in a rural setting,” Thompson said.

“The Spencer Gulf Rural Health School and the Centre for Rural Health and Community Development, have

# ANZRSAI Newsletter

substantial post-graduate research capacity, so students are always needed to carry out work.

“Over the years, the students have delved into a variety of topics, some closely related to their degree programs, while others have challenged students to move out of their comfort zones to do something quite different.

“We hope that by getting a taste of rural-based research, students might be encouraged to come back after graduation to do Honours or PhD work here.”

Thompson explained that in some years students work as a team on a large single project. For example a team of five allied health students and one computing science student researched, scripted, filmed, edited and produced a ‘how to’ CD on procedures that health science students might encounter while on placement in a rural area.

The vacation research opportunity is open to students from any program. Under the bursary, all accommodation and travel costs are paid for and students are provided a living allowance. The program runs at the end of Semester Two each year.

Full details about UniSA’s Rural Vacation Research Bursary Program are online.  
([http://www.unisa.edu.au/scholarship/undergraduate/ug\\_why\\_mtgamb.asp#RVPS](http://www.unisa.edu.au/scholarship/undergraduate/ug_why_mtgamb.asp#RVPS))

## ***Economics honours student rewarded for his original research***

Reproduced with the permission of the Media Unit, University of Wollongong, NSW.

A School of Economics honours student, who has a deep interest and concern for the well-being of rural communities, has been awarded a prize for his original research.

Nathan Kettlewell late yesterday (11 February) was awarded the Australian Agricultural and Resource Economics Society (AARES) Undergraduate Prize for NSW.



Award-winning student Nathan Kettlewell with his thesis flanked by his supervisors Dr Oleg Yerokhin (left) and Dr Martin O'Brien

Nathan has just completed his Bachelor of Commerce (Economics) honours year. The prize was awarded on the basis of his thesis entitled: “The Financial and Non-Financial Outcomes of Rural to Urban Migration in Australia”.

The award was announced and presented to Nathan at the AARES annual conference being held in Adelaide from 10-12 February.

Nathan’s research (supervised by Dr Oleg Yerokhin and Dr Martin O’Brien of the School of Economics) was motivated by his deep interest in, and concern for, the well-being of rural communities.

These are communities which have been confronted with prolonged,



# ANZRSAI Newsletter

stressful drought conditions over recent years that have affected farming communities in many regions across the Australian Continent.

One of the 'last resort' strategies of rural families and individuals, when faced with economic hardship is to migrate to another region or to an urban centre.

Nathan developed a theoretical economic model to evaluate the financial and non-financial consequences of rural-to-urban migration. He used data from the HILDA (Household Income and Labour Dynamics in Australia) panel data survey conducted and maintained by the Melbourne Institute to quantify the effects of migration by rural workers and families.

Among his research findings, Nathan found that male (but not female) rural-to-urban movers experience a financial gain based on weekly (but not hourly) earnings compared with their earning had they not moved.

Nathan also found that female rural-to-urban movers experience an increase in non-financial well-being (based on self-reported well-being levels three years after their move).

Male movers did not experience such gains of well-being. While many rural-to-urban and inter-rural movers did experience some financial improvement, Nathan found no consistent overall improvement in life-satisfaction levels.

He explored the economic policy implications of his research findings.

## REGIONS & PRACTICE

### *A new approach to regional development in the Northern Territory*

By Rolf Gerritsen, Research Leader, Charles Darwin University, Alice Springs campus

In its first term (2001-05) the NT Labor Government approached regional development in the orthodox manner. Regional development boards were appointed. These considered regional economic development in what I would label the traditional 'local government' manner: draw up a wish list of desired/desirable regional/local projects and then call upon other tiers of government to fund these.

With the reelection of Labor in 2005, and particularly after the departure of the first Labor Chief Minister, Martin, the approach changed. The focus shifted to Economic Development Committees. Nine of these were established from 2006. They are smaller in geographic range than the previous development boards and are explicitly designed to take a "community-of-interest" approach to regional economic development. Their localism is very different from the "one-size-fits-all" underpinning of the development boards.

Generally, within the usual financial constraints, the EDC methodology has been quite successful. That is because they operate within a defined sphere of interest and usually feature an alliance between local communities and the key economic activities/enterprises within their region. Thus the Anmatjere EDC has focused upon assisting Aboriginal people to make the transition to the workforce, via the horticulture and (impending) mining industries. The

# *ANZRSAI Newsletter*

West Macdonnell Ranges EDC has targeted cultural and Red Centre Way tourism opportunities. The Tiwi Islands EDC has concentrated upon the establishment of small businesses in its communities. The Gulf EDC is becoming a key participant in the implementation of the MacArthur River Mining Community Benefits Package and its associated public infrastructure provision.

Some of the EDCs encompass single towns, such as Katherine and Alice Springs. In these the EDCs have generally been less effective because of the existence of alternative, pre-existing structures such as business associations.

The EDCs have also begun to carve out a local/regional brokerage role in facilitating and coordinating their activities with those of the Commonwealth and Territory governments. This role has been encouraged by incorporating into their membership representatives of these governments.

So far the EDCs have secured “low-hanging-fruit” successes. It remains to be seen if they can extend into more long term economic development design. Recognising this the NT Government plans to implement communications strategies that will enable the Committees to better interact with each other and to be held to their development plans.

One more recent noteworthy development in the Territory’s approach to regional development has been the creation of the so-called “super” Shires in 2008. There are seven of these, formed through the amalgamation of well over fifty small Community Governments. Each of these Shires covers a large area (most

are about the size of France) but have small populations of around 5,000 people. Some of these Shires seem to be entering the field of regional economic development. That development will be considered in my next contribution to the ANZRSAI newsletter.

## *Intergenerational Report 2010 and Regions*

Australia’s population is forecast to continue growing and ageing. Ageing will reduce the rate of economic growth and increase health expenditures. At the same time efforts to mitigate and adapt to climate change will change the structure of the national and regional economies. Population growth will moderate the effect of ageing on national productivity and innovation.

The proposed policy agenda is to grow productivity through investment in infrastructure, education and skills; to improve health system value for money; to restrict the rate of growth of public expenditures, and to introduce an emissions trading scheme.

“The development of Australia’s cities will also be central to improving productivity performance. Much of a city’s capacity to accommodate population increases while supporting productivity growth is reliant on the efficacy and adequacy of its infrastructure, including its housing stock. The sustainability of Australia’s cities will also be dependent on better governance in the planning and organisation of city infrastructure and more efficient use of existing infrastructure.” P xv

Head of Treasury, Dr Ken Henry has suggested that together Brisbane,

# *ANZRSAI Newsletter*

Melbourne and Sydney will accommodate an added 6 million.

Non-metropolitan regions get little mention despite being particularly vulnerable to the effects of these forecasts and policies.

“The ageing of the population is the major factor driving the slowing in economic growth. As the proportion of the population of traditional working age falls, the rate of labour force participation across the whole population is also projected to fall.” p. ix

Compared with urban regions, non-metropolitan regions without growing populations will age faster, experience higher dependency rates, retain fewer skills, achieve less innovation, face greater difficulty attracting public expenditure on infrastructure, education and health. Their capacity to provide health and other social services or to respond to climate change will decline. In extreme cases, some will become ungovernable.

Our non-metropolitan regions will need to get their thinking caps on if they are to attract some of the 13 million additional people predicted to be living in Australia by 2050.

Two recent publications suggest some steps regions could be taking. (Ed.)

## ***THE WORK, HOME, AND COMMUNITY PROJECT***

[Sustainable Lives in Sustainable Communities? Living and Working in Ten Australian Suburbs](#)  
Full Report by Philippa Williams, Kennedy Bridge, Jane Edwards, Natalija Vujinovic and Barbara Pocock,  
CENTRE FOR WORK + LIFE  
University of South Australia  
[unisa.edu.au/hawkeinstitute/cwl](http://unisa.edu.au/hawkeinstitute/cwl)

This study, conducted by surveying people in their many roles as community residents, employers, workers and parents, has much to offer planners of communities in the remote and rural regions of Australia as well as those in our major urban centres. After all, successful regional communities must compete for population with the major urban centres. The authors conclude that:

“The increasing reach of work into household life, across the life-cycle, makes understanding and responding to the tighter linkages between where and how we live, and where and how we work, of growing personal, social and economic significance.”

The report is available for download at [www.unisa.edu.au/hawkeinstitute/cwl](http://www.unisa.edu.au/hawkeinstitute/cwl)

## ***Creating More Hong Kongs***

[Paul Romer writing in the Harvard Business Review \(Jan-Feb, 2010: 55-56\)](#)

Australia is not alone in facing population growth. Around the world, ‘more than 3 billion additional people will be living in urban areas by 2050.’

Romer advances the idea of using charter cities to ‘change the rules for struggling economies’.

Perhaps struggling regions also have local rules which slow down the inflow of technology, restrict urban growth, stifle ambition, limit outside trade and deter investors? If so they might: create new rules to help new businesses form; and create new facilities and services to help their citizens obtain the logistics, quality and transaction services they need to trade freely with the world.



# ANZRSAI Newsletter

## *Wine Faces Tough Times*

The wine industry is an important Australian regional industry. The current difficulties are a significant regional concern because they require capacity reduction in vineyards and winemaking. The problems are national not restricted to specific varieties or price points. Some regions are more adversely affected.

In 2008, there were 2,299 wineries operating in Australia. Winegrape growing contributes to the economy in 89 defined wine areas throughout Australia.

In November 2009 the Winemakers' Federation of Australia, Wine Grape Growers' Australia, Australian Wine and Brandy Corporation, and the Grape and Wine Research and Development Corporation together issued a statement to the wine industry.

The statement urges all in the industry to recognise and own the problem of oversupply and the need for the industry to fix it.

## **Wine industry must confront the reality of oversupply**

### *Recognising the problem*

Structural surpluses of grapes and wine are now so large that they are causing long-term damage to the industry by devaluing the Australian brand, entrenching discounting, undermining profitability, and hampering the ability to pursue industry strategy.

Oversupply, inefficient and/or inappropriate vineyard and wine operations, and decreasing cost competitiveness are together compromising the ability of the industry to adopt new pricing

structures or to adapt to changing market conditions.

Comprehensive analysis and consultation suggests at least 20% of bearing vines in Australia are surplus to requirements, with few long-term prospects. On cost of production alone, at least 17% of vineyard capacity is uneconomic.

The industry must restructure both to reduce capacity and to change its product mix to focus on sales that earn viable margins. Bailouts are not an option and neither governments nor industry bodies should be expected to provide the answers; tough, informed decisions must be made by individual growers and wineries, from as early as the 2010 vintage.

### *The supply dimension*

Australia is producing 20-40 million cases a year more than it is selling profitably—roughly equivalent to total sales to the UK. The surplus inventory exceeds 95 million cases.

Drought, water shortages and climate change combined can provide no more than 10% of the necessary reduction in supply.

A strong dollar and poor cost competitiveness have been significant factors. Better economic conditions will not remove the fundamental oversupply. Even export growth of 4 million cases a year – equivalent to 6% annual value growth for the entire Australian category – would only eliminate 20% of oversupply.

### *The demand dimension*

Australia's wine exports have fallen by 8 million cases and 21% in value since their peak in October 2007. The decline has been greatest for higher value exports. Exports at lower price

# ANZRSAI Newsletter

points have frequently been unprofitable. Over the same period domestic sales of Australian wine have fallen, while sales of imported wine have increased.

New market opportunities do exist, but they will take time and significant, sustained investment to unlock.

## *Issues with competitiveness*

The industry has been selling excess wine in low-value / low-margin markets. Australian wine industry costs are too high to be viable or competitive in these markets. By creating the image of Australia as a low-cost producer, discounting makes it difficult for premium wines to gain recognition and market traction.

Australian supermarkets have launched their own low-price products, further reducing margins.

Other factors likely to worsen the long-term terms of trade for Australian wine production include:

- real increases in the price of water
- unfavourable exchange rates
- higher national emissions trading costs relative to some competitors
- increased unit costs as the industry rationalises throughput, and
- increased costs of accessing and servicing capital.

Research and innovation are essential but cannot provide a timely answer given the scale of the problem. The industry needs to restructure in order to compete as a premium wine producer.

## *Issues with viability*

Australia has significant problems in terms of vineyard and winery viability. In particular, too many regions produce uneconomic fruit because of high-grade cost structures. High-grade

cost structures have only one option and that is to produce high-grade fruit.

One 2009 study graded fruit from A to E then assessed viability in terms of whether vineyards exceed cost benchmarks for the relevant quality level. Its findings suggest that:

- in more than 20 regions 50% or more of the production for C and D grade fruit (premium and popular premium) is uneconomic
- in total, 36% of C grade fruit is uneconomic
- three of the highest profile and most productive regions for A and B grade fruit (specialty and super premium) struggle to produce C and D fruit at a competitive cost, with 50-60% of that fruit considered uneconomic
- 10 regions have 70% or more of production considered uneconomic – most are small, but three have total production of around 20,000 tonnes or more.

A regional study shows that significant quantities of grapes realise prices that are below the cost of production.

Viability needs to be addressed decisively and immediately. Where costs of production are high, vineyards must be achieving A and B quality grapes. Some regions do this reasonably well, some poorly.

## *Addressing the problem*

The primary focus must be on helping businesses and regions to strategically and honestly assess their current and likely future position then make appropriate decisions. Some vineyards and wineries that are underperforming may need to leave the industry; others may need to change what they produce and how they do it.

# ANZRSAI Newsletter

*The Wine Restructuring Action Agenda* proposes several initiatives as an immediate response including:

- providing briefings, data and viability assessment;
- lobbying governments on exit packages for growers and small wineries, alternative land use options, features of the Wine Equalisation Tax rebate that contribute to overproduction, and the features of the regulation of Managed Investment Schemes that encourage vineyard expansion, and
- discussing demand and environmental sustainability with regional associations.

R&D priorities have been refocused to support the restructuring agenda, with an additional \$750,000 committed so far by the GWRDC to support a range of initiatives, including:

- the Wine Australia market development strategy
- China market competitor analysis
- Further analysis of supply and demand
- Upgrading the Deloitte Ready Reckoner and Vinebiz programs.

Market development investment will refocus on the emerging markets of Asia, and on increased support for educational, promotional and relationship activities.

## *Conclusion*

Oversupply is having a debilitating impact on Australian wine businesses and restructuring the supply base is both essential and inevitable.

The industry's objectives in releasing this statement and formulating an action agenda are to advance the adjustment process, to bring about more sustainable operating conditions as soon as possible, and to dispel any notion that the industry can trade its

way out of its current problem or rely on the government to step in.

"It would appear that the Australian wine industry is at a crossroads. Under the current industry structure, some growers and wine producers must and will exit the industry as margins fall below sustainable levels in the face of oversupply and weakening demand for Australian wine in the global marketplace."

*Rabobank Global Focus: Australian Wine, Winter 2009*

## ***Regional Development Policy: New Zealand***

The Industry and Regional Development Branch of the New Zealand Ministry of Economic Development administers regional development policy in NZ.

The Ministry advises government on regional development issues and coordinates and manages, across the public sector, policy issues related to regional economic development.

The work of the Branch guides the Ministry and New Zealand Trade and Enterprise (NZTE) in their regional level interactions with government, the business sector, Māori entities and local communities. It is responsible for the design, implementation and monitoring of NZTE's regional development programmes.

The Branch also works closely with regional groups and other agencies to develop and manage specific regional development policies and strategies.

New Zealand's Regional Economic Performance report covers economic growth data for 12 New Zealand regions for the 2000-2004 time period

# *ANZRSAI Newsletter*

and includes various other economic and demographic data since 1998. Economic development is defined as the process of raising the level of prosperity and material living in a society through sustainable wealth creation that fully utilises community resources.

From a central government perspective, while there is a multitude of agencies involved in regional economic development, their overarching strategic intent is to actively contribute to better regional and local outcomes. Equally regional and local input is essential to national strategy development and implementation.

All agencies recognise that strong regional economies are an integral aspect of growing the economy as a whole; that regional decision makers influence economic outcomes and that a collaborative and joined up approach is essential in making the whole (region) greater than the sum of its parts.

In April 2007, the Minister for Economic Development announced that the government was refreshing its approach to regional economic development in order to support its economic transformation agenda. A key focus of the refreshed approach was supporting the development, monitoring, communication and implementation of regional economic development strategies.

A detailed action plan is an essential part of an economic development strategy and provides an excellent framework for all those involved in regional economic development to identify how their organisation or agency can contribute to a strategy's implementation.

The Regional Development Unit within the Ministry of Economic Development is available to provide guidance to regions about strategy development, particularly in the early stages of strategy planning. A framework and guidelines for strategy development is available on the MED website Strategies for Regional Growth.

The Ministry of Social Development publishes annual regional plans. These plans set out the priorities and direction for each of its eleven regions.

## *Regional Development Australia*

Regional Development Australia (RDA) is a partnership between the Australian, state and territory and local governments to support the growth and development of Australia's regions. RDA committees will build partnerships between governments, regional development organisations, local businesses, community groups and key regional stakeholders to provide strategic and targeted responses to economic, environmental and social issues affecting the regions of Australia. The national RDA Charter sets out the areas of focus for the RDA network.

RDA is delivered through a national network of 55 committees. All RDA committees have now been announced and many are open for business. The details of committees including their contact details can be found under the relevant state or territory heading.

The RDA committees will:

- consult and engage with the community on economic, social and environmental issues, solutions and priorities;

# *ANZRSAI Newsletter*

- liaise with governments and local communities about government programs, services, grants and initiatives for regional development;
- support informed regional planning; and
- contribute to business growth plans and investment strategies, environmental solutions and social inclusion strategies in their region.

A key task for the committees is to develop regional plans which will be available to the community for review and discussion. RDA committees will then work with their communities to implement these plans.

Each committee comprises local leaders with broad and diverse skills and experience, as well as demonstrated networks within their region. Committee members are individuals who understand the challenges, opportunities and priorities within their local community.

Appointments to RDA committees have been made by the Federal Parliamentary Secretary for Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development and Local Government; in most jurisdictions, the state or territory government minister responsible for regional development; and in some jurisdictions the local government association.

These appointments have involved an open and public Expression of Interest process.

The Australian Government provides funding to support the establishment and operation of the committees. In some jurisdictions, state/territory and local governments are also providing funding and/or other forms of support to the committees.

Extracted from [www.rda.gov.au](http://www.rda.gov.au) on 18 February 2010.

## ***Regional Development Australia National Forum***

The Australian Government is hosting a Regional Development Australia (RDA) National Forum in Canberra on 18 March 2010. The forum will be preceded by a RDA National Dinner on 17 March 2010.

The RDA National Forum will bring together the Chairs and Deputy Chairs of all fifty five RDA committees to discuss the major challenges facing regional Australia, exchange ideas on the ways in which they can assist their regions to address these challenges and learn more about relevant Australian Government programs, services and initiatives. Attendance at the forum is by invitation only.

## **UPCOMING CONFERENCES**

### **NORSA 2010**

#### **The Search: Future dynamics of regional development**

[www.ucs.fi/NORSA/](http://www.ucs.fi/NORSA/)  
or email [norsa2010@uta.fi](mailto:norsa2010@uta.fi)

NORSA is the Nordic section of the Regional Studies Association.

Substantial abstracts of approximately 1000 words/2 pages should be submitted by March 22nd 2010.

Themes include, but are not limited to,

- Leadership and regional development
- Regional innovation
- Constructing regional advantage
- Institutions, change and governance
- Culture, creativity and regions
- Peripherality in border regions
- Regionally engaged higher education
- Urban - Rural Interaction



# ANZRS AI Newsletter

- Small businesses and regions
- Potential of built environment
- CGE simulation models

## EIGHTH EUROPEAN URBAN & REGIONAL STUDIES CONFERENCE

### Repositioning Europe in an era of global transformation

15th -17th September 2010,  
Europahaus Vienna, Austria

Themes include:

- Competition & Regional Alignment
- Changing Global Division of Labour
- Financial Crisis & Structure of Cities
- Surviving/ Living through the Crisis
- European Borders, Inclusion, Identity
- Geographical Peripherality
- Creativity and Sustainability
- Sustainability in Cities and Regions
- Creative Cities, Regional Advantage
- Gender, Diversity, Difference
- Urban Change, Vernacular Cosmopolitanisms, Creative Cultures
- Mobility and Migration
- Theories, Methods of Development in an era of transformation

Questions and one page abstracts (by 31st March 2010) should be sent to:  
kathy.wood@durham.ac.uk

### 2010 Desert Knowledge Symposium

The 2010 Desert Knowledge Symposium and Business Showcase, 10 and 11 November at the Alice Springs Convention Centre. Contact Tami Boehm. Email [Tami.Boehm@desertknowledge.com.au](mailto:Tami.Boehm@desertknowledge.com.au)

### 2010 ANZRS AI Conference

The 2010 ANZRS AI conference will be held in Melbourne from December 5th-8th. Further details including theme, venue and Call for Papers will be posted as they become available.

## ANZRS AI Council 2009-10

### President

Paul Dalziel  
Lincoln University, Canterbury NZ

### Vice President (Australia)

Paul Collits  
RMIT University, Hamilton

### Vice President (New Zealand)

David Wilson  
AUT University, Auckland NZ

### Secretary/Public Officer

David Fuller  
University of Wollongong

### Treasurer

Tony Sorensen  
University of New England, Armidale

### Council Member (NT)

Rolf Gerritsen  
Charles Darwin University, Darwin

### Council Member (SA)

Tony O'Malley  
Outlook Management, Adelaide

### Council Member (VIC)

John Martin  
Latrobe University, Bendigo

### Council Member (TAS)

Robyn Eversole  
University of Tasmania, Burnie

### Council Member (QLD)

Christine Smith  
Griffith University, Brisbane

### Council Member (ACT)

Shelby Canterford  
Geoscience Australia, Canberra

### Council Member (NZ)

Bill Cochrane  
Waikato University, Waikato NZ

### Council Member (NSW)

Ann Hodgkinson  
University of Wollongong

### Council Member (WA)

Marilynn Horgan  
City of Joondalup, Joondalup

### Contact details

Executive Officer  
ANZRS AI  
PO Box U236  
University of Wollongong NSW 2500  
Email: [anzrsai@anzrsai.org](mailto:anzrsai@anzrsai.org)  
Website [www.anzrsai.org](http://www.anzrsai.org)  
Ph 0409973329