

### **Note from the Editors**

This issue of the *Australasian Journal of Regional Studies* covers the full panoply of regional science, from theory to practice and from regional development to urban management. And we are proud to include the citation given to Professor Robert Stimson when he received the Association's Distinguished Service Award at its annual meeting in December 2012 in Wollongong. Bob, as he is known to all, is one of the world's most outstanding contributors, in both research and administration, to the field of regional science as amply documented by Kingsley Haynes and Paul Dalziel, our past President. We have three articles on urban economic themes. The first, by Yigitcanlar and Dur, deals with the planning of knowledge precincts. They report first on the models developed in such places as Copenhagen, Eindhoven and Singapore before considering how far some large Australian cities match up to their overseas peers. However, readers might want to assess the balance between active strategies to promote knowledge precincts and spontaneous emergence of such districts as in Silicon Valley or even Sydney and Melbourne which rank in the world's top 20 innovation cities. The second, by Boymal, de Silva and Pomeroy, deals with the critical issue of housing affordability and their analysis of time series data over 16 years confirms not only declining affordability in Melbourne, but a resultant decline in socio-economic diversity in inner urban locations as less financially stressed households avoid the diseconomies of travel. The third, by Huang and Rice, reports on an empirical study in Europe that demonstrates how geographical proximity elevates inter-firm linkages and enhances both explicit and tacit knowledge and diminishes reliance on in-house R &D. These benefits appear to flow from reduced transactions costs and increased trust or reciprocity, all of which tend support advocates of open innovation.

The contribution by Miller and Rowe deals with crucial issue of Aboriginal (or First Nations) economic development. It analyses Canada's experiment with the creation of the Territory of Nunavut carved of the Northwest Territory over a decade ago and asks whether this exercise in native self-determination has improved the economic welfare

of its inhabitants while retaining and enhancing their unique culture. If that proved to be the case it might point the way to improved development prospects for Australia's Aboriginal communities which, like Nunavut, score poorly on standard socio-economic indicators. Alas their findings are equivocal, but still worth debating. The final article is by one of Canada's leading regional scientists, Professor Mario Polèse. His keynote presentation to the December 2012 conference identified seven key spatial development trends in his country. He then compares Canadian and Australian development experiences and notes emphatically that distance matters greatly in determining regional development prospects for peripheral locations in both countries, a valuable warning to policy-makers.

We commend these articles to you as valuable contributions towards the better identification of regional problems on the one hand and the analysis of possible strategies and policies on the other.

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