

EDITORIAL

The papers in this volume were delivered at the Annual Conference of the Australia and New Zealand Regional Science Association International at the Gold Coast during September 2002. The theme of the conference “Public Private Partnerships: Investing in Regions: has become an important policy issue in Australia in recent times. The volume begins with a paper from one of the plenary sessions of the conference. This is followed by a selection of papers that were presented at the contributed paper sessions.

The first contribution, by Robert Guild, focuses on appropriate levels of public and private participation in the provision of infrastructure needed for social and economic development in a regional context. It develops a set of economic arguments which may be able to be used to determine what role the public sector should play at different phases of the infrastructure provision process.

The second paper, by Kevin O’Connor, focuses on the impact of globalisation on regional development. Previous research on this topic has concentrated on how globalisation forces impact on top ranked global cities, while O’Connor turns his attention to middle ranked global cities of which Melbourne is a prime example. He analyses aggregate measures of trade, finance and migration flows and explores changes occurring in the Melbourne regional economy as a result of globalisation.

The next paper, by Gordon Forth and Ken Howell, identifies demographic, cultural and economic factors which need to be taken into account by local government and regional development organisations when developing strategies designed to attract and retain skilled employees and entrepreneurs to their region. It uses Australia’s Greater Green Triangle region in Victoria as a case study.

The following contribution from Christopher Miller, Gary Packham and David Pickernell, describes how development of an on-line web-based degree in enterprise designed by the University of Glamorgan in Wales has been employed as a tool to assist individuals and communities generate their own economic development solutions in areas suffering from relatively high unemployment and low workforce participation rates.

The fifth paper, by Siobhan Dent, John Switala, Philip Adams and Mark O’Sullivan, uses the Monash Multiregional Forecasting model to estimate the economic impacts that a foot and mouth disease (FMD) outbreak could have on Queensland and Australia. Significant impacts would occur even in non-agricultural industries, regions like Queensland which are heavily dependent on agricultural and food processing industries absorb larger negative impacts than the rest of Australia in percentage terms, and the national economy is projected to take up to thirteen years to recover from a FMD outbreak.

The next paper, by Trendle, provides an analysis of variation in regional unemployment rates in Queensland. It uses advanced spatial econometric analysis to assist in identifying variables significant in explaining differences in unemployment rates after taking into account the impact of spatial dependency and spatial spillover effects between regions.

The following contribution by Paul McPhee and Ann Hodgkinson, returns to the impact of global processes on regional development. In particular it analyses the results from a survey of regional exporters within New South Wales. The results point to comparatively limited collaboration and local networking between these exporters which is a finding which contrasts with the literature on learning regions, and suggests a role for regional development agencies in facilitating the further enhancement of these networks.

The eighth paper, by Tony Melhuish, Marcus Blake and Susan Day, explores the use of optimisation techniques for crating synthetic household populations at the small area level in the Australian context. Successful creation of such synthetic household populations would facilitate greater use of micro-simulation models in socio-economic and demographic policy analysis at various regional levels.

The next paper by Terry Clower and Bernard Weinstein, examines the impact of a particular infrastructure development (introduction of rapid transit light rail stations) on the valuation of properties in close geographic proximity. While residential properties generally experienced a rise in value as a result of improved accessibility, the impact was the reverse for some local businesses.

The final paper, by Gudrun Meyer-Boehm, analyses the dynamics of multifactor productivity (MFP) within the electronics and electrical equipment industry across the states of the United States. A belt of states in the south-west displayed above average growth in MFP and some of these states not only caught up with previous high productivity states but actually surged ahead resulting in an increased dispersion of MFP within the nation as a whole.

The ten papers in this volume range from highly technical and abstract contributions to new modelling approaches to providing insights more immediately relevant to regional policy makers and regional development practioners. This diversity reflects well the broad range of interests encompassed by regional science scholars in Australia and New Zealand

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