

EDITOR'S INTRODUCTION

The 31st Annual Conference of the Australian and New Zealand Regional Science Association International in September 2007 returned to the TelstraClear Pacific Events Centre in Manukau City, New Zealand. The conference was held in partnership with the Small Enterprise Association of Australia and New Zealand (SEEANZ) and the Economic Development Association of New Zealand (EDANZ) under the general theme of "Building Sustainable Growth in SMEs". The ANZRSIAI Council is particularly grateful to Professor Stuart Locke (Waikato University), who chaired the conference committee and organised the conference programme on behalf of the three partner organisations.

Perhaps because of its return to the location of its 2005 conference, the number of contributed ANZRSIAI papers in 2007 was fewer than usual, with only 16 papers published in the refereed proceedings. This issue of the Association's scientific journal presents five of those papers. As always, these papers were selected for the quality of their science and the importance of their research question. Papers that provided reflections on the current literature, or reported the application of well-established research techniques to local issues, or constructed artificial data to illustrate the potential of a proposed idea, or described research programmes being planned for the future, were all well-received at the conference but not selected for this issue.

The first of the five papers, by Scott Baum, Anthea Bill and William Mitchell, is a statistical study of labour market disadvantage in non-metropolitan Australia, drawing primarily on the Household, Income and Labour Dynamics in Australia dataset. It departs from previous work by considering wider notions of labour underutilisation, rather than simply unemployment. The paper explores the influence of individual characteristics, parental background, social networks and regional labour market processes (including labour in-migration) on labour underutilisation, defined as involuntary part-time employment, unemployment and sub-employed or discouraged workers.

The second paper, by Ann Hodgkinson, extends her previous analyses of a survey carried out by the author of 146 New South Wales regional exporters covering the period 1996/97 to 2000/01. This paper explores whether exporting performance is better explained by competitive assets that arise from interaction with entities in a firm's external environment (the market-based view) or by internal entrepreneurial behaviour that builds sustained competitive advantage (the resource-based view). The study identifies three factors particularly associated with export growth: high levels of export intensity; use of partnerships and collaborations; and use of e commerce sales through the internet.

The third paper, by Fiona McKenzie, John Martin and Chris Paris, addresses the very topical issue of multiple residences and their impact on local governments in the regions. This research project brings together an Australian policy advisor, an Australian academic and an Irish academic, and thus is able to combine local relevance and international context. The paper presents four case studies of population mobility around residence in the state of Victoria, and identifies six particularly important issues for regional fiscal policy:

infrastructure; traffic and congestion; law and order; emergency services; boating and recreational fishing; and environmental concerns.

The fourth paper, by R. L. Miles, L. Greer, D. Kraatz and S. Kinnear, received the Award for Best ANZRSAI Paper at the Conference. It reports on a collaborative research project between the Institute for Sustainable Regional Development (CQU) and the then Queensland Department of Local Government, Planning, Sport and Recreation to develop measures for community well-being. The research team constructed a framework based on six domains and then conducted a case study in Emerald Shire in central Queensland to test the robustness, efficiency and suitability of their model. The results were mixed, but the paper reports some important lessons in this key area for ongoing policy development.

The final paper is by Alistair Robson. It analyses the reasons behind strong economic and population growth in the South East Queensland region in the decade to 2001. The analysis is disaggregated into four sub-regions, broadly defined as Brisbane City, the South, the West and the North. The paper reports the results of a shift-share analysis of 1991 and 2001 Census data which reveals which industries were the main drivers of endogenous employment growth in each of the four sub-regions. For the whole region, just over half of the endogenous growth occurred in four industries: manufacturing; retail trade; education; and health and community services.

The Association's 32nd Annual Conference will be held in Adelaide in November 2008.

Paul Dalziel
Guest Editor