

ANZRSAI Newsletter

AUSTRALIA AND NEW ZEALAND REGIONAL SCIENCE ASSOCIATION INTERNATIONAL

An interdisciplinary international organisation focusing on understanding the growth and development of urban, regional and international systems

June 2008



Mildura, Victoria

photo: Fiona McKenzie

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Feel free to make copies of the ANZRSAI Newsletter for your office colleagues or others who may be interested in learning more about regional issues or about the ANZRSAI.

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Conference reports

REGIONAL STUDIES ASSOCIATION (RSA) ECONOMICS UNIVERSITY, PRAGUE,

Report by Ann Hodgkinson, University of Wollongong

The RSA is the other international regional studies organisation with the RSAI, based in the U.K. There were over 450 attendees, their largest ever conference, the Prague factor. Most came from Europe, with only three from Australia and a handful from North America. So we learnt a lot about regional policy in the EU! European cross border and cross cultural relations do not seem to have improved, at least in the newer parts, so I suspect the EU works because of the economic benefits from expanded trade, investment and markets more than anything else.

The conference covered a broad range of topics in the areas of regional economics, planning, policy, 'branding', labour markets and business development. The focus of most papers was on concepts and policy, rather than methodology as such. From my perspective, the benefits of attending an international conference arise from gaining insights into new ideas in one's field of research. In my research paper on small firm regional exporters in Australia, I found what I thought was a surprising result. These firms were now looking for co-operations with others in their industry outside their region, both nationally and internationally. This seemed to contradict accepted wisdom regarding clusters and spatial agglomeration. However, a number of other presenters reported similar results, especially those from small, relatively peripheral regions and countries. Thus a new spatial phenomenon may be emerging as firms evolve in response to global markets. By attending this conference, I have validated that my firms were not behaving perversely but are part of a new international process.

I think this benefit is true for all conferences. One is exposed to new ideas which can be incorporated in their own work, whether as an academic or practitioner. A little plug for our two upcoming conferences in December 2008 and July 2009.



REGIONAL CITIES OF THE WORLD WROCLAW, POLAND

Report by Ann Hodgkinson, University of Wollongong

After the RSA conference, I made a short visit to the University of Wroclaw (*pronounced Vrotswahf*), the regional centre for lower Silesia in Poland. After vibrant, cosmopolitan Prague, regional Poland is a little more challenging, but an area rarely visited by Australians. Wroclaw suffered badly in WWII. Being close to the Sudeten area, it was the first part of Poland to be invaded by Nazi Germany. It was also one of the last they left, with the troops there being ordered to hold it at all costs. They tried, in the process flattening a large part of the historic Rynet or market square to make an airstrip. The rest of the city, including the university buildings, were extensively bombed in the final attacks. There is a major cemetery on the main road holding the bodies of thousands of Russian troops, testimony to the violent fighting it took to liberate the town. Unfortunately, liberation turned into decades of communist control from which Wroclaw is still in the process of recovery.

The town centre has now been restored to its former Gothic, Renaissance and Baroque glory, with one 1930s Nazi architecture building for contrast. The restoration process throughout the town is continuing with EU funding. Tourism is growing, although the majority are currently from Germany. Increasing numbers of the population speak English but it cannot be guaranteed, even in tourist attractions. It is amazing what one can achieve with gestures! Wroclaw is surrounded by large modern factories reflecting inward foreign investment to take advantage of Poland's low (but rising) wage costs. Most of the brand names were unfamiliar to me but Ikea, Toshiba and LG were there.

The University of Wroclaw was founded by Archduke Leopold of the Austro-Hungarian Hapsburgs. It has a beautiful baroque building with the most splendid Grand Hall imaginable. It too had to be restored after the bombing. It currently has about 45,000 students from a city population of around 700,000, with some international classes in English. The University is also involved in a Centre for Peace Studies dedicated to reconciliation between Poland and Germany. It is held in the previous home of the German leader of the peaceful resistance to the Nazi regime, who was executed in 1944. The area was also used for meetings between the Polish, Czech and other resistance movements in the Communist era. It has an extensive library on these movements, although predominantly in Polish and German, and welcomes scholars on these topics from throughout the world.

My colleague at Wroclaw would be interested in collaborating with anyone interested in European Integration studies or economic relations between Australia and Central Europe. Please contact me for further information at annh@uow.edu.au

Conference reports

BITRE REGIONAL PERSPECTIVES CONFERENCE CANBERRA

Report by Fiona McKenzie, Victorian Government

The third regional perspectives conference was held in Canberra on June 17 and was attended by more than 130 participants from across Australia.

Topics covered included:

Professor Philip McCann from the University of Waikato spoke on the subject of globalisation, highlighting key characteristics such as: trade; communications; global branding; multinational companies and a ‘shrinking’ world. The late 20th century saw key transformations associated with globalisation – institutional change (such as the EU and NAFTA), technological change (transport and information technology), and organisational changes (outsourcing, off shoring, expansion of multinational corporations).

While spatial transaction costs for routine standardised, low-knowledge activities have fallen, the transaction costs of customised knowledge activities have risen. Hence, some of the higher level knowledge activities cannot be easily diffused. This explains why the idea that we would all be telecommuting doesn’t hold with what we are now seeing – the concentration of activity into cities.

The *rate* of moving into cities is currently increasing. There is a premium for face to face contact despite the technological opportunities for dispersal brought by ICT. Ironically, Glaser’s 1998 into ICT usage found that the closer people are geographically the more they use ICT. Such technology provides a memory store. As more data is dealt with, more sophisticated tasks are undertaken. Knowledge interactions enabled by ICT are much more *complex* and as a result more face-to-face contact is needed. In fact ICT and face-to-face contact can be seen as complementary. They are not substitutes *except* in the case of routine low knowledge activities.

The regional perspectives conference also provided a useful showcase for a variety of Federal Government research findings. **Professor Ann Harding** from NATSEM presented information on: social inclusion; the spatial implications of population ageing, and poverty estimates. NATSEM is developing an internet atlas to enable access to this type of social data. This, and findings from other NATSEM research can be viewed at: www.canberra.edu.au/centres/natsem/home

The Bureau of Infrastructure Transport and Regional Economics (BITRE) presented findings from a number of forthcoming research studies:

Income Support – **Carolyn Brennan**

Household Wealth – **Leanne Johnson**

Costs of remoteness – **Geoff Frost**

Afternoon sessions included a presentation by **Rolf Gerritson** from Charles Darwin University. His presentation explored regional development issues in northern Australia, in particular the paradox of strong economic growth but socio-economic problems – growth rather than development.

Despite this growth, the NT economy has not changed very much in the past 20 years and is still characterised by:

- Industry sector stasis
- An encapsulated export sector
- Inefficient labour markets
- Welfare dependencies

Large projects such as mining can have a negative effect on local markets as skilled labour gets sucked up into project. While fly in-fly out arrangements make economic sense it can lead to low levels of social capital. Furthermore northern Australia has a high population turnover and increasingly people are not willing to live in remote areas.

From a mining community perspective, **Amy Ruddock** from the Chamber of Minerals and Energy in Western Australia, presented information about development in the Pilbara region and the research work of the **Pilbara Industry Community Council**. Issues such as housing shortages and land release issues are significant in the Pilbara region. Further information can be found online at www.cmewa.com.au.

Turning to agricultural issues in regional Australia, **Neil Barr** from the Victorian Department of Primary Industries presented his research on structural adjustment in the farm sector, with particular reference to climate change adaptation. His key research question was “why do small farms persist?” Farm amalgamation in Victoria has been slow and steady since the early 70s. Consistent rates of 5% exit and 4% entry of farmers per year have been seen over several decades. Meanwhile the *rate* of farm amalgamation has slowed. Neil Barr asks “why isn’t more happening in response to structural change?” and “what is the implication for climate change adaptability if responses are slow?”

The small farm sector appears to be quite resilient. This may not be a good thing – adaptation (eg amalgamation) may actually require *lack* of resilience. But selling the property has been found to be a *wealth* decision not an *income* decision so farmers don’t sell in a slump and exit grants do not work well. More rapid change has been seen in irrigation areas where water trading has allowed farmers to recoup *wealth* through selling their water rights. This has led to rapid adaptive change in irrigation areas – a radically different adaptation response compared to neighbouring dryland sheep areas.

Do you have a conference report that we could publish?

Many of you prepare such reports for colleagues or for the bodies that funded your attendance.

Why not expand your audience by sending a copy to us for the newsletter.

Contributions should be sent to:
The editor, ANZRS AI Newsletter

anzrsai@uow.edu.au

Notices

Agri-Food Research Network Conference

About the conference

The Agri-Food Research Network is a forum for Australian and New Zealand social scientists researching the economic, cultural, social and environmental implications of agricultural and food systems. Since its establishment in 1992 it has convened regular annual research conferences and facilitated the publication of research.

The 2008 Conference of the Agri-Food Research Network will be held from Wednesday 26th to Friday 28th November, at the Darlington Centre at the University of Sydney.

Preceding the Conference, on Tuesday 25th November, there will be an optional field trip to examine the Hawkesbury Harvest initiative, in north-western Sydney. The field trip will include a slow food lunch of local produce and wines

Keynote Speaker

The Keynote address for Agri-Food XV will be presented by Professor Brian Ilbery of the Countryside and Community Research Institute at the University of Gloucestershire, UK. Professor Ilbery is a rural/agricultural geographer whose research interests lie in agricultural change and policy, rural development, alternative farm enterprises, short food supply chains and local/regional speciality food and drink products.

Submitting an Abstract

To submit an Abstract for a paper to be presented at the Conference, email Bill Pritchard (b.pritchard@geosci.usyd.edu.au) or Jeff Neilson (jneilson@geosci.usyd.edu.au) before 11 August. Papers are welcome on any area related to social scientific research into food and agriculture. Additionally, there are a number of special sessions that will be held during the conference. If you think your paper is relevant to one of these sessions, contact the nominated session organiser listed below.

1. Climate Change and Agricultural Prospects in Australia contact Nadine Marshall: nadine.marshall@csiro.au
2. Centring social science in building diverse and resilient biological economies contact Richard Le Heron at r.leheron@auckland.ac.nz
3. Carving up the landscape: agriculture, land use change, and planning contact Peter Parbery at peter.parbery@dpi.vic.gov.au
4. Biofuels -- What Role for Energy from Agriculture? contact Sophia Murphy, smurphy@iatp.org
5. Global markets and local environments: understanding the positions of agricultural smallholders in the Asia-Pacific contact Bill Pritchard (b.pritchard@usyd.edu.au) or Jeff Neilson (jneilson@geosci.usyd.edu.au).
6. Doing agri-food fieldwork in developing countries contact Jasmine Glover at jglo9763@mail.usyd.edu.au

American seeks exchange opportunity

My name is Jane Leonard and I am interested in undertaking a 6-month sabbatical or professional exchange in Australia during the first half of 2009.

My current position is Executive Director of the Minnesota Sesquicentennial Commission, prior to which I was President of Minnesota Rural Partners, working in community, rural and economic development.

For 25 years, in various positions with the public, private, and non-profit sectors, I have worked to build a healthy balance between civic society and market-based economy, including creating policy and programs that integrate knowledge and innovation economy strategies into community and economic development goals. I was named the U.S. Small Business Administration's Regional Champion Award winner and Minnesota Advocate of the Year for 2004-2005. I am also a recipient of the University of Minnesota Alumni of Notable Achievement award for my work in entrepreneurship, community technology and rural development policy in 2006.

I will be completing nearly two years of heading up our state's 150th anniversary celebrations next January. Having spent some time in Australia helping to organize the 1996 Community Development Society meeting in Melbourne, and again a few years later working with electronic commerce, I am keen to learn more about Australia's community and rural development field, and hopefully share a thing or two or more from my 25 years of experience in general community development, and more specific work in telecommunications, community technology development and entrepreneurship/economic development. I'm not looking for full-time work, or a fully-paid position, but rather an exchange of some sorts.

If you are aware of any suitable opportunities or would like further information about my professional qualifications and interests, please contact me:

E: minntwin@comcast.net P: 651-646-3850

ANZRSAI membership

If you know of people who would like to join ANZRSAI, please download a membership form from the website:

www.anzrsai.org

Membership fees 2005-06 (GST Inclusive)

Standard	AUD \$ 160.00
Student	AUD \$ 87.50
Emeritus	AUD \$ 108.50
Institution	AUD \$ 337.50



Notices

Introducing a new university course ...

M. Comm with regional development specialisation University of Wollongong Australia

The University of Wollongong is offering a new Master of Commerce degree with a specialisation in regional development. This degree is open to anyone with a recognised undergraduate degree in any discipline. The degree consists of four core subjects in accounting, economics, marketing and strategic management. Students then elect a specialisation in finance, regional development, organisational innovation, e-commerce or public relations, consisting of four defined subjects.

The regional development specialisation involves the following subjects: Small Firms and the Economy, Regional Development, Tourism Marketing, plus one of the following: economic development, innovation and technology, innovation and entrepreneurship or small business management. At the moment, this degree is only offered through the Wollongong and Loftus (Sutherland) campuses. However, if there is enough interest, other options may be considered in the future.

More information can be obtained from Karen Wells at the University of Wollongong on (02) 4221 3634.

ANZRSAI Annual Conference 2008

This year's conference is being held jointly with ARCRNSISS at the National Wine Centre, Adelaide from November 30th to December 3rd 2008.

Full details can be found on the conference website at www.siss.edu.au. We are inviting all members to contribute to the conference through submission of a paper and presentation of this at the conference.

This year there are a number of strands and themes and all details can be found in the conference brochure. There will be opportunities for both refereed and non-refereed papers and submission deadline is October 17th. Referred papers will be subject to a peer review process.

Please note that conference registration includes an individual membership subscription. If you are not able to attend the conference we invite you to renew your membership now - application forms can be downloaded from the homepage on our website.

Awards

The Department of Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development and Local Government has generously agreed to sponsor a number of Practitioner and Student Awards at the 2008 ANZRSAI Conference.

Regional Development Practitioner Award \$2,500

Best Undergraduate (Honours) Thesis \$1,000

Best Postgraduate Thesis \$1,000

Full details of all these awards can be found on our website:

www.anzrsai.org

Conference Calendar

August 2008

SEGRA 2008

August 18-20, Albury, NSW

www.segra.com.au/segra

Coast to Coast 2008

August 18-22, Darwin, Northern Territory

www.coast2coast.org.au

Volunteering Australia

12th National Conference on Volunteering

September 3-5, Gold Coast, Queensland

www.volunteeringaustralia.org

Bangladesh Regional Science Association and PRSCO

PRSCO Summer Institute

May 15-17, Dhaka, Bangladesh

www.brsa.org.bd

September 2008

11th International River symposium

1 September Brisbane Queensland

12th National Conference on Volunteering

3 September Gold Coast Queensland

Australian Conference of Economists

30 September Gold Coast Queensland

October 2008

Housing and Social Inclusion

7 October Melbourne Victoria

Major Projects Conference

14 October Brisbane Queensland

Australian Learning Communities Network

National Conference; Connecting Faces, Places and Spaces

26 October Adelaide South Australia

Evidence-Based Policy Development

29 October Canberra ACT

December 2008

Labour Underutilisation, Skill Shortages & Social Inclusion:

Three sides of the same coin!

4 December Newcastle NSW

World Indigenous Peoples Conference

7 December Melbourne Victoria

International Conference on Knowledge in Small and Medium Sized Towns

4-5 December, Portugal

July 2009

PRSCO 2009

19-22 July Gold Coast Australia

Conferences

A joint conference sponsored and organised by:
Australia and New Zealand Regional Science Association International
and ARC Research Network in Spatially Integrated Social Science

People, Place and Space

Rethinking Regional Policy Agendas

30th November - 3rd December, 2008



32nd Annual
ANZRS AI
Conference



National
ARCRNSISS
Conference

**National Wine Centre
University of Adelaide**

Cnr of Botanic and Hackney Roads, Adelaide



Conferences



21st Conference for the Pacific Regional Science Conference Organisation

(19 - 22 July, 2009, Surfers Paradise, Queensland, Australia)

FIRST CALL FOR PAPERS

The 21st PRSCO Conference will be hosted by the Australia New Zealand Regional Science Association International at the Conrad Jupiter's Convention Centre, Surfers Paradise, Australia, 19-22 July 2009. The overall theme of the conference is:

GLOBAL CHALLENGES – REGIONAL RESPONSES

The programme committee invites contributed papers on topics in regional science for presentation at the conference. The committee will welcome papers on any aspect of regional science, but is particularly interested to receive papers reporting research or case studies on the following themes:

- The Impact of Climate Change on Regional Communities
- Regional Integration around the Pacific Rim
- The Political Economy of Regional Development
- Developing and Marketing Regional Identity
- Advances in Regional Data Analysis
- Regional Labour Market Dynamics
- Knowledge-Based Regional Development
- Regional Issues and Analysis in China
- Social, Economic, Environmental and Cultural Issues in Regions
- Indigenous Contributions to Regional Development
- Urbanisation and Mega-City Regions
- Emergency Relief for Regional Disasters
- Issues in Rural Economic Development
- Infrastructure Issues in Urban/Rural Development

The indicative timetable for submitted papers is as follows:

1 August 2008	Second Call for Papers issued Website opened for submission of abstracts Acceptance will be notified within 3 weeks
20 March 2009	Final date for submission of abstracts
20 April 2009	Draft conference programme on website
29 May 2009	Final date for submission of full paper
19 June 2009	Final conference programme on website
19 July 2009	Conference opens

David Fuller
Chairperson PRSCO2009 Conference Committee

www.prsco2009.com.au