

# *Editorial*

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## **Welcome to Sustaining Regions Online**

After a lengthy hiatus, I am pleased that Sustaining Regions is now back, and in an online format.

As editor, I aim to make this journal a lively vehicle for keeping practitioners, policy makers and academics informed about the important events and ideas in the field of regional development. I hope that it is soundly based from a theoretical perspective yet innovative, multi-disciplinary, controversial and cutting edge.

As is often the case, regional development is living through interesting times. For example, the new Commonwealth Government is putting together its vision for regional development for implementation in 2009. Major environmental challenges face our agricultural industries. Globally, the times are uncertain as governments face daunting challenges and markets are stuttering. How will the current crises and challenges, both economic and environmental, play out at regional scale in Australia? Are Australian regions equipped to deal with the challenges?

This edition features articles on a range of subjects.

Two interested parties with very different ideas on the recently discarded Regional Partnerships Program present their thoughts on this controversial program introduced by the Howard Government. I am very pleased that two senior politicians with portfolio responsibilities for regional development have chosen to publish their views in Sustaining Regions.

Tony Sorensen provides his normal lively account of the practice of regional governance in a dramatically shifting national and global context, based on recent research he has done in rural New South Wales.

Dennis Griffith of the Northern Territory Government and James Cook University questions how adequately our statistics measure disadvantage in remote Australia.

David Wilson, Carol Neill and Marie-Renee Lambert of Auckland Institute of Technology provide a fascinating account of the task of providing best practice governance for economic development in a major urban region, based on an analysis of practice in city governance internationally.

Finally, there is a review of an important forthcoming book on local economic development, edited by James Rowe.

Future editions will feature articles from overseas as well as Australasia, and from all the disciplines that nourish regional development. My own interests span regional policy, rural communities, regional governance and local economic development, as well as theories of regional growth and decline. I hope we can publish articles in all of these areas, and more, in future editions.

We will welcome articles and case studies from practitioners and academics alike. Hot topics like the regional impacts of climate change policies, the city country divide, environmental challenges in rural regions, the continued offshoring of manufacturing, and our growing global cities. New perspectives on perennial questions like the role of clusters in economic development will be welcome.

In putting together each edition of Sustaining Regions, I will be assisted by an editorial Board consisting of Professor Rolf Gerritsen of Charles Darwin University, Adjunct Professor Tony Sorensen of the University of New England, James Rowe of Manikau City Council and Estella Rodighiero of Moreton Bay Area Consultative Committee. These

people bring a wealth of theoretical and practical experience in regional development to the task, blend urban and rural (and even remote) perspectives and span both countries that make up the ANZ section of the Regional Science Association International.

Together we look forward to your company as we attempt to bring you the best thinking and practice in regional development over the coming years.

*Paul Collits*  
*Editor*