

Notes from the Editors

In this edition, we present five Australian papers all of regional development significance but certainly diverse in their subject matter—ranging from infrastructure and governance through to business structure, government support measures and employment.

Several of these papers have been developed following the successful ANZRSIAI conference held in Toowoomba in December 2017. The link between the Journal and the annual flagship conference is an important one and it is planned to include more of these articles in upcoming editions.

The paper by Stimson and ors. is one of these papers. Recognised as ‘best paper’ at the 2017 Conference, it presents an important longitudinal model for employment performance across functional economic regions. They consider a range of spatial econometric components in attempting to explain variations in performance outcomes. This has important implications for the more accurate development of future regional development policy.

The paper by Akbar and ors. highlights the impact of new industry (in this case, mining) on existing infrastructure and the policy implications of all of that in accommodating transport demands beyond that of the local community.

On matters of governance, the Wallace and Dollery paper reflects on a familiar topic—compulsory municipal merges. The paper uses a case study example drawn from regional New South Wales and considers the effects on a smaller municipality in its amalgamation with a much larger council. The paper’s particular importance lies in its ability to retrospectively consider the longer term impacts of those changes, more than a decade on.

Many government business and regional support schemes now focus on start-up enterprises in business activities generically described as ‘knowledge intensive’. The paper by Hefferan and Fern highlights the recent emergence of significant international research papers that now question some of the earlier assumptions that underpin firm-specific programs through that ‘start-up’ phase. These might suggest some reconsideration and realignment of certain regional economic support measures into the future.

The fifth paper, by Hettihewa and Wright, reflects on the differences between regional and urban small businesses and, based on significant sampling, suggests that, perhaps surprisingly to some, regional businesses are more durable and therefore more credit worthy than the average,

Australia wide. The paper notes, however that these positive characteristics may be at risk based on the perceived slower uptake of new technologies and often limited scale of enterprises in non-urban areas.

The Editors.