

**Notes from the Editors**

As is our normal practice, this issue of the journal presents six papers reflecting both the wide range of interests represented by the discipline of ‘regional studies’ and, additionally, the diversity of research that lies within its component parts.

The paper by **Baum *et al.*** investigates income inequality across various Australian regions based on ATO and ABS statistics. There seem to be general perceptions of inequality across Australia—often focusing on city versus regional criteria. This paper identifies that, in fact, the nature and quantification of inequality varies considerably across regions resulting from the impact of a wide number of disparate factors.

Cost benefit analysis represents a fundamental assessment tool for major, normally public, projects. The paper by **Branigan and Ramezani** considers this approach in the context of a major railway project in New South Wales but, additionally, considers it having regard to economic impact assessment methodology—a tool more commonly applied to private sector investment. In this way the paper considers a more holistic assessment of such projects.

The paper by **Burns *et al.*** considers a theme familiar to most, that being, the increasing presence of farmers markets across Australia. It particularly investigates the well-known and popular markets at Byron Bay, New South Wales, and highlights the consumer preference to support local production and ethical consumption exhibited at such venues.

Ad valorem property taxation forms a critical review source across Australia and New Zealand regions. The paper by **Mangioni** notes that, across these jurisdictions, the application of long-standing assessment principles is becoming increasingly diverse. The entire system is now also challenged by much more intensive urban land uses, where the establishment of highest and best use becomes increasing problematic. A move towards a more unified approach would appear in order to allow this important taxation base to remain consistent and to widen it into the future.

A matter of current controversy is the consideration of off-shore oil exploration and production in the Great Australian Bight. The paper by **Pascoe *et al.*** does not pre-judge this complex matter but puts forward the important premise that any balanced and analytical investigation and decision requires comprehensive and consistent social and economic baseline data. As well as being relevant to that particular region, the principles are of obvious value in the assessment of major mining and other development elsewhere in Australia.

As is our normal approach, we welcome international papers that have relevance to the Australasian region. In this edition we include a paper by **Singh *et al.*** that explores the effect of regional trade agreements on exporting firms, in this case in Fiji. The paper concludes that the involvement of firms in exports under RTAs may be quite limited and the guidance and support of public institutions are important in securing desirable outcomes.

Emeritus Professor Mike Hefferan and Professor Bruce Wilson

Joint Editors  
Australasian Journal of Regional Studies