

### **Notes from the Editors**

Hello and welcome to the first issue of the 25<sup>th</sup> Volume of the *Australasian Journal of Regional Studies*. This issue marks the first to be produced under the auspices of the new editorial team, comprising Bligh Grant, University of Technology Sydney, Rolf Gerritsen, Charles Darwin University, Khorshed Alam, University of Southern Queensland and Vince Mangioni, also at University of Technology Sydney. This team takes over from Bruce Wilson, RMIT and Mike Heffernan, Sunshine Coast University, who offered their stewardship over several years. While all of the new editorial team has published in *AJRS* over several years, it has taken some time to become used to the rhythms of production of the journal, which in part explains the tardiness of this first issue of 2019. Nevertheless, there is a stream of excellent submissions flowing to the journal from both Australasia and elsewhere and we look forward to providing the next two issues of Volume 25 *post haste*.

The first contribution to this issue of *AJRS* is by Lisa Denny, Institute for Social Change, University of Tasmania. Dr Denny examines workforce polarisation—a subject that is pervasive in discussions of contemporary economics and politics (particularly regionally) both in Australia and globally, in scholarly form and in the broader literature. Denny investigates several explanations for this phenomenon (technological disruption; interregional economic divergence) before focusing on job polarisation (i.e., under-qualification *and* over-qualification) in Tasmania, using pre- and post-GFC data (2006 and 2016 respectively). The article observes that job polarisation has increased, and that job characteristics and skills have changed within industries—a reflection of heightened industry diversity (not professionalisation) which in turn presents significant policy changes.

Shifting focus from workforce to enterprise, Robert T. Hamilton and Sara Satterthwaite of the University of Canterbury Christchurch, observe that high-growth enterprises are designated a key role in the narrative of development generally and in regional development in particular. Using spatial analysis, they examine the establishment of 28 000 enterprises across New Zealand in 2005; 2011 and 2014, differentiating them by industry structure and examining their impact at regional and local levels. The authors find that urban centres dominate in the spatial distribution of high-growth enterprises, although two peripheral regions do attract a greater than predicted number of enterprises. Nevertheless, the overall distribution of enterprises heightens what they refer to as ‘chronic regional disparities’ in New Zealand.

In his 'Foreword' to the report of the Australian Parliament's (2018) recent inquiry into regional development, *Regions at the Ready: Investing in Australia's Future*, the Hon Damian Drum MP noted the advantages that regional communities can offer for families, particularly children and youth. In their contribution to this issue, Geoff Woolcott and colleagues commence with the observation that education policy developed at state and federal levels, principally for metropolitan populations, can lose its effectiveness in non-metropolitan settings. The authors posit a co-creation approach to teacher education to enhance understanding and relevance in regions, suggesting that these processes are usefully thought of as akin to those used by research scientists and community leaders. Moreover, they suggest that far from developing in isolation, such learnings can develop into networks, thereby emphasising educational opportunities for local communities.

In a welcome contribution from India, Biswa Swarup Misra of the Xavier Institute of Management at Bhubaneswar examines how infrastructure impacts upon inter-district inequality by utilising data from 12 Indian states—a total of 388 districts. The author's approach focuses on 'availability' and 'usage' of infrastructure (rather than the more familiar measures of 'quality' and 'quantity') finding that only 'economic' infrastructure alleviates inter-district income disparities between 'leading' and 'lagging' states. Alternatively, 'social' infrastructure, while being deemed necessary, accentuates income inequality in 'lagging' states. Still, the author argues that the importance of both types is crucial to address inter-regional inequalities.

Contestations around regional identity loom large in any discussion of public policy, particularly in contentious arenas such as climate change. In their contribution to this issue, Dan Tisch and Natasha Hamilton-Hart of the University of Auckland, harness psychological and social theory centred on belief formation to examine how farmers in New Zealand's dairy industry conceive of climate change. Undertaking qualitative interviews, the authors probe farmer beliefs about weather patterns and climate change, concluding that these farmers elicit a strong preference for learning from 'trusted' sources rather than pronouncements from government. The authors explore the implications of this for policy responses to climate change.

In sum this issue of *AJRS* is representative of the content of the journal over many years. With a strong focus on regions, the articles examine a range of policy issues through this lens—economic inequality, business investment, the promise of adapting education policy and training to (non-metropolitan) place, the importance of infrastructure and the crucial role of

belief systems—in this case pertaining to agriculture. It is also representative in the use of a variety of social science methods—economics and econometrics, spatial analysis, business management, sociology and policy studies. It is also pleasing to see contributions from diverse places—Australia, New Zealand and the Subcontinent.

The editorial team would also like to take this opportunity to thank the previous editors for their sterling work in handing over the journal to the new editors, Lynn Darnell for her valuable administrative support and Bruce Murray for the much-underrated work of copyediting.

On behalf of the Editorial Team,

Bligh Grant.