

Note from the Editors

The six articles in this final issue of the *Australasian Journal of Regional Studies* for 2014 once again cover key themes in modern regional science. The first of these concerns regional economic development processes in non-metropolitan Australia. A difficult task at the best of times, the demand for local development stimulus across rural Australia remains undiminished despite poor track records over the last half century. But the two articles by Kotey and Sorensen and Mangoyana and Collits neatly come together to explain some key dimensions of the struggle for regional development in the encroaching second machine age. The first of these details many of the difficulties faced by rural small businesses as they grapple with the need to innovate to stay alive, while confronting numerous barriers often not of their own making in an uncertain world. Alas for them, it is now becoming clear that intensive networking is becoming a key element both in starting new businesses or modernising existing enterprises. This is, of course, difficult in small and widely scattered communities, a situation underscored by the second of the two articles, this one dealing with collaboration among businesses and agencies charged with promoting local development in Wide-Bay Burnett. Mangoyana and Collits witness silo cultures among both governments and businesses rather than widespread networking among all the local players, and advocate new networking models able to facilitate high level interaction among all relevant parties.

Housing is another important theme for both our journal and the nation, especially given the periodic booms in house prices witnessed in recent decades. A concomitant of booming prices is housing stress as families struggle with high mortgage repayments and incapacity to pay off debt should household income decline through unemployment or declining real wages. Rahman and Harding ably document the rising incidence of stress, especially in the larger capital cities such as Sydney and Melbourne and in what they discover to be stress hot-spots within them. Both households and lenders alike could benefit from this micro-analysis to help avoid the kinds of default situations triggering the 2007-08 financial crisis. Le Ma and Chunlun, on the other hand see evidence of regional house-price convergence within capital city regions, though possibly at only some times in the boom-bust housing cycle. Both these articles embody large data sets and high order statistical modelling so characteristic of early regional science.

This leads us nicely into Gong, Kendig, Harding, Miranti and McNamara's analysis – again using micro-simulation based on large data sets –exploring spatial economic (dis-)advantage among older Australians. Their interesting analysis demonstrates considerable disparities in income, home ownership and other dimensions of well-being nationally and strong spatial clustering of overall advantage or disadvantage in particular locations –in both urban and regional locations. These kinds of conclusion are echoed in Mascitelli and O'Mahony's article critiquing the Federal Government's White Paper on Australia in The Asian Century. They rightly conclude that the integration of Australia's economy with burgeoning growth and economic change in our Asian partners could create many adjustment and equity problems underplayed by the White Paper. And downstream from this the government might find it strategically and financially difficult to deliver the potential benefits of such integration, while handling the downsides.

This is our final edition as co-editors and we have overall enjoyed our time-consuming and challenging role. We thank, in particular, our often patient and respectful contributors, our legion of referees – who sometimes have a hard job, and our readers. Interestingly, we have received nothing but thanks for keeping AJRS going as a viable journal. And we, as a learned society, and as people often working at the policy interface, need the in-depth analysis of process and policy performance that AJRS provides. Hard evidence – both positive and negative – is important for effective policy, and especially the latter!

Tony Sorensen
Sonya Glavac