Welcome

Regional Leadership – Are We Slack Enough?

Australians have a strong, and on occasions proud, tradition of anti-intellectualism. Our national ethos is often presented in terms of sport, physical achievements, and the capacity to earn our living from physical labour. There is, however, a lot to learn from academic work on virtually all issues, and while we may not agree with all opinions, there can be a great deal to consider.

Academic writing on regional leadership is a good case in point: academics have written on the topic off and on for at least 30 years, and in aggregate there is a wealth of international experience to draw upon. One of the foremost scholars in this area is Roger Stough from George Mason University in the US. Roger has written a number of books and articles on regional leadership and has come to the conclusion that one of the key determinants of the quality of a region’s leadership is the presence of ‘slack resources’. That is, places where there are individuals with spare time and capacity to both respond to challenges, as well as create new opportunities, tend to fare better in the long term.

Roger Stough’s observation is simple but powerful. Many of us would have experienced occasions when we noticed one city, region or town appears better organised and more dynamic than its neighbour. Stough’s work helps us think through why this eventuates. It is also consistent with a lot of the work undertaken on regional leadership in Australia which has found that regional leaders in Australia tend to be male, owners of significant land holdings and drawn from long established families in the region.

Many of us would think, well what is new in that? That outcome is entirely expected. But at a more fundamental level we now have new tools to think about both why that outcome has been established and what it might means for future regional leadership. Farmers, and especially broadacre farmers, have a world of work marked by periods of extreme activity and times of relatively little demand. The nature of that industry, therefore, naturally creates a pool of ‘slack resources’ as relatively well off farmers – who are independent of governments and other industries, business oriented and inevitably tied to that location – are able to use their down time to develop and enact their leadership.

Conventional regional leadership in Australia is under threat. First, farmers are under increasing pressure from drought, variable terms of trade, restructuring in their industries, as well as the impact of a strong Aussie dollar.

Family farms are also being replaced by corporate agri-businesses whose managers may, or may not, have a mandate to demonstrate regional leadership. Second, would conventional farmers ever have the skills needed to successfully negotiate a future that is now shaped by rapidly moving global processes? Third, population loss is stripping away leaders in many regional communities while new residents in fast growing coastal settlements do not always have that same sense of attachment to their region. Where they do have a commitment, they often struggle to find opportunities to express their leadership capacity.

In short then, tightening economic conditions and changing industry structures have stripped away existing slack resources and not established replacements. While it sounds attractive for regions to operate as efficient, tight economies, such a modus operandi leaves little room for the emergence of leaders and the reshaping of regional economies.

There are, therefore, some substantial challenges for regional Australia. How can we build the ‘slack resources’ needed for regional leadership to flourish? What can, and should, governments do to encourage regional leadership? Can governments change their business models in such a way that they further encourage regional leadership? And, finally, what can be done for places whose prospects for regional leadership are dim?

Professor Andrew Beer
Director
Congratulations

Pauline McLoughlin has been an important member of the CHURP team for 15 months now and we are pleased to report that her PhD thesis has been passed with an ‘outstanding’ grade. Pauline’s PhD will be conferred in December.

Official Launch of CHURP...

Building the Knowledge for Australia’s Cities and Regions in the 21st Century

This important event for the Centre and University of Adelaide is being hosted by Professor James McWha

Book

Housing Transitions Through the Life Course: Aspirations, Needs and Policy

Andrew Beer and Debbie Faulkner with Chris Paris and Terry Clower

Available to order at: direct.orders@marston.co.uk

Upcoming Conferences/Events

Regional Studies Association Conference
Localism: Sufficient and Fit for Purpose?
Date: 3 November, 2011
Venue: University of Manchester Conference Centre
https://eiemea.certain.com/rsa/getdemo.ei?id=1010023&s=5OKYSW2F

ERA World Town Planning Day
Higher Density Housing – Adelaide’s Future?
Professor Andrew Beer
Date: 8 November, 2011, 3.30-4.30 pm
Venue: Town of Walkerville Town Hall
Sponsor: Nolan Rumsby Planners

Human Dimensions of Climate Change on South Australian Transects–A Symposium

On 21-22 November CHURP will be hosting a symposium on the human dimensions of adaption to climate change in South Australia. This symposium, as part of a Premier’s Science and Research Fund project, will bring researchers, practitioners, and some of South Australia’s best minds together to discuss geographically-focussed data, approaches and findings for the monitoring of the human effects of climate change in South Australia. We encourage both researchers and policy makers to contact Dr Emma Baker (emma.baker@adelaide.edu.au) or phone 8313 3277 for more information, if you are interested in participating in this symposium.

Regional Studies Association One Day Winter Conference
Contested Regions: Territorial Politics and Policy
Date: 25 November, 2011
Venue: London, UK
https://eiemea.certain.com/rsa/getdemo.ei?id=1010024&s=_39KKNBWM

State of Australian Cities National Conference

The State of Australian Cities is a national forum, held biennially, to share scholarship directed at the complex and multidimensional issues facing us as an urban nation. This conference will seek ways of bridging the divides created by a focus on disciplinary based approaches to research, towards better cities in a better country.

Date: 29 November-2 December, 2011
Venue: Melbourne

2011 Asia Pacific Network for Housing Researchers Conference
Neoliberalism and Urbanisation in Asia Pacific: Challenges and Opportunities for Housing
Date: 8-10 December, 2011
Venue: The University of Hong Kong
http://web.hku.hk/~apnhr/

18th Pacific Rim Real Estate Society Conference
Date: 15-18 January 2012
Venue: Hawke Building, University of South Australia
http://www.pres.net

International Cooperative Research Conference
Building A Better World: The Role of Cooperatives and Mutuals in Society
Date: 21-23 June, 2012
Venue: Victoria University of Wellington.
http://nzascm.coop/?page_id=25
The Centre for Housing, Urban and Regional Planning is proudly hosting the

6th Australasian Housing Researchers’ Conference (AHRC12)

“Housing in an Era of Risk and Crisis”

8-10 February 2012
The University of Adelaide North Terrace Campus
Adelaide, South Australia

Email: ahrc12@adelaide.edu.au
Web: http://www.adelaide.edu.au/churp/ahrc12

Second and Final call for Abstracts close on
28 October 2011

New Research Projects


Older People’s Community Engagement South Australia, COTA Seniors Voice/Resthaven.

Affordable Housing, ECH Inc.

New directions in Health Inequalities Research: Understanding the intersection between housing, employment and health in Australia, ARC Linkage.

The Importance of Gender and Socioeconomic Disadvantage for the Mental Health of People Living with Disabilities, ARC Linkage.

Revealing the Hidden Health Effects of Housing in Australia: An initial evidence base on the health effects of poorly housed Australians, University of Adelaide Research Grant.

Welcome Onboard to:

Gary Wilson has joined CHURP as a Visiting Fellow, to be involved in projects on homelessness and housing. He obtained B.Sci., B.Soc.Admin. and is a graduate of Mt. Eliza Australian Management College. Gary brings a wealth of experience in the areas of mental health, community health, disability services and housing. He was the Executive Director of Shelter SA for nearly 10 years, advocating that housing is a basic human right. Over the years, Gary has been a tutor, lecturer and guest lecturer across the 3 SA Universities. He also has experience in Human Resources, governance in a number of not for profit agencies, and is a member of SACOSS.

Events Attended by CHURPies

Dr Debbie Faulkner attended the CEDA (Centre for Economic Development of Australia) event entitled 2011 Aged Care Review: opportunities and challenges for an ageing population on 27 September.

Professor Andrew Beer attended the European Commission’s Cities and Regions Open Days which were held from 10-13 October in Brussels. Professor Beer contributed to the session on Monosectoral Cities, sharing the platform with contributors from the UK, Spain and Russia. The Open Days attract more than 5500 participants and are the public face of DG Reggio, the arm of the Commission that deals with regional matters. Much of the discussion at the Open Days focused on the release of the 5th Territorial Cohesion Report and the concept of ‘Smart Specialisation’.

Professor Andrew Beer attended the SACOSS Cost of Living Summit which was held at The Lakes Resort, West Lakes on 19 October.

Professor Andrew Beer will give a paper on planning in South Australia at the RSA Winter Conference: Contested Regions: Territorial Politics and Policy in London on 25 November.
**Felicity Prance** has also recently joined the CHURP team and will be assisting with homelessness research. Felicity has been working as a Policy Research Consultant for the past two years. Project-based contracts with SA Health, Coffey International, the Institute for International Trade, the Property Council of Australia and Urbis have allowed her to develop a strong skills set in both private and public sectors. Felicity is also a postgraduate research student within Anthropology and Development Studies at the University of Adelaide. Her ethnographic research explores the politics of climate change adaptation policies in the South Pacific and is informed by field work on South Tarawa, the Republic of Kiribati.

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**Publications**


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Next edition February 2012.

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Best wishes for the remainder of the working year and the festive season, from all the CHURPies.

**Please send items of interest to:**
churp@adelaide.edu.au

**Contact us**

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**SENIOR THE HON MARK ARBIB**  
Minister for Indigenous Employment and Economic Development  
Minister for Sport  
Minister for Social Housing and Homelessness  
**MEDIA RELEASE**  
30 September 2011

**NOMINATIONS OPEN FOR THE NATIONAL HOMELESSNESS SERVICES ACHIEVEMENT AWARDS**

Australians are encouraged to nominate outstanding organisations committed to addressing homelessness in the first-ever National Homelessness Services Achievement Awards.

Nominations open today in seven categories, which celebrate excellence, quality, innovation and achievement by homelessness service providers.

Minister for Social Housing and Homelessness Mark Arbib said the Awards would recognise the outstanding contributions of organisations around the country that provide assistance to people who are homeless or at risk of homelessness.

Senator Arbib said the Australian Government is committed to an ambitious, long-term plan to halve the rate of homelessness and offer supported accommodation to all those who seek it by 2020.

Nominations for the Awards close on Friday 25 November, with winners to be announced at an awards ceremony in February 2012 at the Great Hall, Parliament House, in Canberra.

The Award categories are:

- Excellence or innovation in addressing homelessness by an organisation;
- Excellence in the prevention of, or early intervention in, homelessness;
- Outstanding business or philanthropic commitment to addressing homelessness;
- Excellence or innovation in partnerships in delivering services;
- Closing the gap: Excellence in addressing Indigenous homelessness;
- Excellence in supporting pathways to employment or education; and
- Excellence in addressing homelessness in a regional, rural or remote location.

To nominate an organisation in the National Homelessness Services Achievement Awards visit: [www.fahcsia.gov.au](http://www.fahcsia.gov.au)

**Media Contact:** Sean Sammon 0417 137 419
The Strategic Leadership Relay: How to Keep Regional Innovation Journeys in Motion?

Regional development is a never-ending interplay between individual and collective intentions. Strategic leadership is needed to provide evolving processes with a nexus between individual and collective, and to find desired directions by herding a flock of strong-willed actors to collaborate. Regional development is being about long-term processes also leadership is seen as a multi-actor force in time instead of a leader follower relationship here and now. Consequently, regional development is scrutinized as an innovation journey, where innovation refers to new creations of economic, ecological and social significance. Therefore, a concept of leadership relay is introduced for future leadership studies for regional development. A leadership relay is discussed as a sequence of events with identifiable main phases and key actors carrying the processes. The main thesis is that different actors with different strategies play leading roles in achieving desired outcomes. However, it is worth noting that leadership relay is more often than not an unconscious and incidental phenomenon that brakes more easily than flows smoothly from past to futures and thus, constructing conscious leadership relays may be one of the core issues in the fields of regional development.

Tuesday 15 November
Drinks 6.00 pm   Lecture 6.30 - 7.30 pm
Innova 21 Conference Room

Professor Markku Sotarauta is Dean of the School of Management at the University of Tampere, Finland. He holds the Chair of policy-making theories and practices. In 2008 he was appointed as a Visiting Professor in the Newcastle University Business School (UK) for a three year period. Sotarauta has consulted for the Finnish Parliament, many Finnish ministries, OECD, cities and regions, in regional economic development, strategic planning, leadership, knowledge-based regional development and competitiveness of regions.
6th Australasian Housing Researchers’ Conference

Housing in an era of risk and crisis

Wednesday 8 – Friday 10 February 2012
Hosted by the Centre for Housing, Urban and Regional Planning at the University of Adelaide

The premier conference for housing researchers across Australasia, allowing delegates to share their research findings with their colleagues and peers. The AHR12 includes a dynamic and thought provoking series of keynote addresses, researcher presentations and social events.

Themes:
- Ageing and Housing
- Comparative Housing Research
- Environmental sustainability, design and housing
- Health and Housing
- Homelessness
- Housing and the Planning System
- Housing Economics
- Housing Governance
- Housing Policy
- Indigenous Housing
- Innovative Approaches for Housing Supply
- Regional Housing Markets
- Vulnerable Groups and Housing

Further information and registrations visit
www.adelaide.edu.au/churp/ahrc12/

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