



Industry Clustering

Can the principles of industry clustering foster economic development in inland rural Australia? This is the question that Dr Judith McNeill from the Institute and Dr Roger Epps from the School of Human and Environmental Studies are investigating jointly with industry leaders in Tamworth, as part of a project recently approved for funding by the Australian Research Council, with additional support from the Tamworth City Council and local businesses.

A New Approach to Regional Development

The globalisation of markets, competition policy, and changing technologies have posed serious challenges to towns in inland rural Australia. There will be no quick or easy fix for many of these challenges. However, one idea which is currently popular overseas is to design regional development strategies which promote the benefits of industry clustering.

Because of its small but strong manufacturing sector and the enthusiastic support for clustering ideas among local industry leaders, the city of Tamworth will be an ideal case study. This study will be one of the first to apply clustering principles to an inland rural town in Australia.

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It has been found that industry clusters that are performing well depend very much upon motivated local business leaders, collaborations of firms based on trust, and a business culture which encourages friendly rivalry in some spheres, yet a sense of 'all pulling together' as a region in the global sphere. The results of applying industry clustering principles to economic development strategies in townships overseas are encouraging, although varied.



Australia's country towns require special approaches to local economic development.

Project Details

Project Title: "Economic Development Strategies for Inland Rural Towns"

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