

Conference Report

The 21st Meeting of the Pacific Regional Science Conference (PRSCO) was held at Broadbeach, Queensland in Australia over the period 19-21 July 2009. This conference series, which is one of three supra-national events organized by the Regional Science Association International (RSAI), takes place every second year, and is primarily attended by RSAI members belonging to its national and continental sections in the Pacific Rim area (Australasia, Southeast Asia, North America, Latin America). Attendance at this meeting of PRESCO was around 150, which was significantly lower than usual. This was evidently due to the "swine flu" scare as well as depressed economic conditions in a number of countries, although in no way did this below-average attendance diminish the success of the Conference.

In this connection, particular mention is made of three remarkable Keynote Sessions, presented by John Quigley (*the Housing Crisis*), Blair Comely (*The Economics of Climate Change*) and Geoffrey Hewings (*Regional Science and Policy*). The bulk of the Conference involved around 40 sessions (organized in 6 or 7 concurrent blocks), each taking up half of a morning or afternoon. These focused on a wide range of topics, including regional data analysis, migration, regional labour markets, regional development and the environment, agriculture and rural development, the rise of mega-cities, the role of infrastructure development.

Being an international gathering, there were the inevitable discussions among speakers as to what constituted the fundamental building blocks of the discipline: the region, the city, the labour market, economic development, regional policy, etc. This is a very common state of affairs, alas, which is inimical to progress in urban and regional analysis. Facilities were available at the Conference for the display of RSA publicity, and it was possible to talk to a range of individuals about the scope of RSA activities and the various tangible and intangible benefits of membership. Following the Conference, RSA publicity materials were distributed during the course of a short visit to Melbourne, Victoria. The writer takes this opportunity of thanking the RSA for enabling him to attend the Conference and present a paper on the theme "Contrasts in Spatial Structure".

John B. Parr, 12 October 2009