

## Looking forward: the importance of the new *Asia-Pacific Journal of Regional Science*

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Ever since the first Pacific Regional Science conference was held at the East-West Center in Hawaii in 1969, there has been both anticipation and—more recently—experience of rapid growth in regional science activities in the Asia-Pacific region. This is of course a vast region, which encompasses Australasia, Oceania, the Pacific Americas and Asia. Together they account for two-thirds of the world's population. Even more impressive has been its economic growth, coinciding with huge investment in human and physical capital widening and deepening, globalisation, and massive technological and institutional change. A journal, specifically devoted to regional science in this part of the world, but soliciting contributions from scholars throughout the world is clearly very timely. Those who took this initiative, including the Editor-in-Chief, Professor Higano and his team of editors, advisors and editorial board members are therefore to be congratulated on this splendid initiative.

The need for policy-relevant multidisciplinary research that encompasses the spatially differentiated and complex interrelationships between the cities, regions and nations in this part of the world is greater than ever. Economic development has led to unprecedented improvements in the standard of living, but also to large environmental challenges and greater spatial and personal inequality. Growing diversity, heterogeneity in behaviour and turbulence in market outcomes are challenging our understanding of global socio-economic processes. New challenges are now arising as, for example, populations are ageing, rapid progress in artificial intelligence may transform the world of work, while populist politics is increasingly replacing the global integration paradigm with one of localised protection and tinkering. Science itself appears under some threat as, in the cacophony of

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information streams through social media and news channels, public perceptions are increasingly influenced by “post-truths” and “alternative facts” rather than by the solid and rational scientific inquiry that has seen so many breakthroughs in many fields; and that has also been sounding such important warnings regarding our stewardship of planet earth.

A new journal faces the challenge of developing a reputation, but the absence of a regional science journal for the Asia-Pacific region until now suggests that the new journal fills an important niche. This bodes well for the rapid development of a reputation for scholarly quality that would attract the confidence of, and the submissions by, not only senior but also young and emerging scholars in our field.

May the journal prosper and disseminate new knowledge that can contribute to greater wellbeing in the Asia-Pacific region and beyond.