THE UNIVERSITY OF NEW SOUTH WALES

Creative economy in regional areas: possibilities, pitfalls and on-going issues

Chris Gibson

Geography Program

University of New South Wales

cgibson@unsw.edu.au

www.fbe.unsw.edu.au/staff/Chris.Gibson/

Culture and regional economies

- Emergence of the ‘creative economy’
- Economic geography – the role of place (and geographical scale…)
- ‘Creative economy’ = 2% of GDP in Aus
- BUT…
- Substantial employment multipliers (coal/oil and gas mining 9 FTE jobs per $1million; versus film production, 37 FTE jobs per $1million)

Dominance of major metropolitan centres

(source: Gibson et al 2002)

Location	No. employed in cultural industries	% employment in cultural industries	Location quotient	Metropolitan primacy
Sydney	44,150	2.64%	1.40	1.86
Bal NSW	12,516	1.42%	0.75	
Melbourne	28,911	2.08%	1.10	1.63
Bal VIC	6,284	1.27%	0.68	
Brisbane	11,435	1.72%	0.91	1.14
Bal QLD	11,456	1.51%	0.80	
Perth	9,566	1.73%	0.92	1.88
Bal WA	1,920	0.92%	0.48	
Adelaide	7,559	1.73%	0.92	1.61
Bal SA	1,682	1.08%	0.57	
ACT	3,894	2.61%	1.38	n/a
Hobart	1,636	2.08%	1.10	1.18
Bal TAS	1,817	1.75%	0.93	
Darwin	779	1.91%	1.01	1.6
Bal NT	502	1.19%	0.63	
Other Territories	6	0.38%	0.20	n/a
Total Australia	144,113	1.89%	1.00	-

Business Location Counts
by Local Government Areas

Business concentration in Sydney

(source:
Gibson et al 2002)

Cultural Industry	Sydney	Australia	Sydney (%)
Newspaper Printing or Publishing	211	1016	20.8
Other Periodical Publishing	250	602	41.5
Book and Other Publishing	166	480	34.6
Recorded Media Manufacturing and Publishing	82	209	39.2
Book and Magazine Wholesaling	155	496	31.3
Recorded Music Retailing	255	912	28.0
Film and Video Production	1397	2762	50.6
Film and Video Distribution	59	163	36.2
Motion Picture Exhibition	92	476	19.3
Radio Services	70	370	18.9
Television Services	107	372	28.8
Libraries	173	1108	15.6
Museums	62	437	14.2
Zoological and Botanic Gardens	15	110	13.6
Music and Theatre	413	1102	37.5
Creative Arts	443	1137	39.0
Sound Recording Studios	99	240	41.3
Performing Arts Venues	47	158	29.7
Services to the Arts n.e.c.	347	810	42.8
Video Hire Outlets	406	2163	18.8
Photographic Studios	630	1921	32.8
Total Cultural Industries	5479	17044	32.2

A geography of creative economy

- Critical mass:
  - Demand factors: larger audiences/consumer base; inter-industry demand
  - Supply factors: communities of creative producers; ‘scenes’
- Global command centres:
  - Finance, property and professional services
  - Entertainment another indicator of ‘world city’ status

A geography of creative economy

- Infrastructures of production
  - Recording/TV/photographic studios, venues, printing and production facilities
- Social factors and impacts
  - Importance of face-to-face interactions
  - Desires of creative producers to live in bohemian suburbs
  - Subcultures
  - Renewal and gentrification

Creative economy in non-metropolitan regions

- Some embrace of ‘creative economy’ in rural/regional Australia: Parkes, Tamworth, Northern Rivers NSW

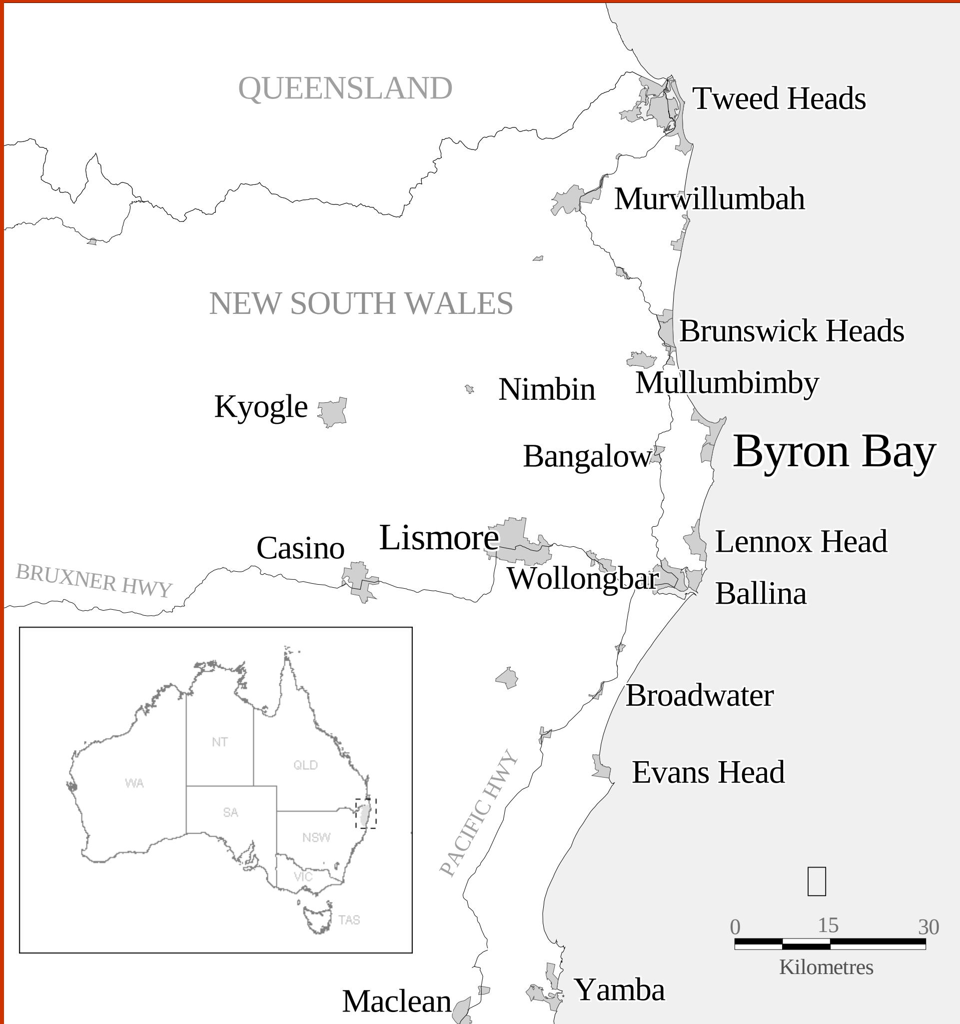
Creative economy in non-metropolitan regions

- Pessimistic prediction:
    - Metro centres surge ahead
    - Regional areas caught in ‘cumulative causation’ cycles of growth and decline
    - Lack of audiences for creative producers
    - Problems with rents/costs of living in some centres (e.g. Darwin, Alice Springs)

Creative economy in non-metropolitan regions

NSW Far North Coast:

- Counter-urban migration
- Cultural tourism



NSW Far North Coast:

- 3500 jobs
- 4% of local workforce (double national %)
- $30 million from music industry alone

Creative economy in non-metropolitan regions

- Complexities and contradictions:
  - New jobs, but persistent high rates of unemployment
  - Social displacement, rural gentrification
  - Importance of networks (technological, social), migration and tourism
  - Regions are not ‘bounded’ space economies: shaped by inter-regional linkages

Creative economy in non-metropolitan regions

- Aboriginal popular music
  - Mix of general and Aboriginal-specific issues
  - Cultural industries pitched as solution to unemployment/new private sector growth for remote communities
  - Importance of promoting indigenous cultural expressions
  - Aboriginal employment in cultural industries 4-6% of total employment: well above national av.

Aboriginal employment in cultural industries (2001)

	NSW	VIC	QLD	SA	WA	TAS	NT	ACT	Other Territories	Australia
Media Producers and Artistic Directors	15	3	0	3	7	0	7	0	0	35
Other Specialist Managers	60	19	32	12	20	12	18	8	0	181
Environmental and Agricultural Science Professionals	47	24	81	14	11	22	47	3	3	252
Architects and Landscape Architects	10	3	3	0	3	0	3	0	0	22
Librarians	21	6	29	0	0	0	7	3	0	66
Other Business and Information Professionals	79	37	129	23	71	8	51	36	0	434
Extra-Systemic Teachers	76	19	46	10	24	13	72	0	0	260
Artists and Related Professionals, nfd	30	5	30	5	20	3	15	0	0	108
Visual Arts and Crafts Professionals	126	17	179	126	122	9	95	0	0	674
Photographers	12	3	15	3	4	3	0	0	0	40
Designers and Illustrators	42	24	29	5	13	9	3	5	0	130
Journalists and Related Professionals	23	6	15	3	9	6	7	3	0	72
Authors and Related Professionals	12	7	7	0	3	0	0	0	0	29
Film, Television, Radio and Stage Directors	14	9	30	3	0	0	17	3	0	76
Musicians and Related Professionals	17	10	19	3	7	3	0	0	0	59
Actors, Dancers and Related Professionals	55	11	59	4	8	0	6	0	0	143
Media Presenters	11	0	30	6	15	3	24	0	0	89
Other Professionals	34	13	54	5	20	6	23	5	0	160
Building, Architectural and Surveying Associate Prof's	46	13	37	3	12	9	12	0	0	132
Sport and Rec managers; Other Managing Supervisors	134	25	97	26	51	19	27	11	0	390
Sportspersons, Coaches and Related Support Workers	88	34	60	12	30	8	8	6	0	246
Other para-professionals and library technician (#)	32	16	33	7	16	9	15	6	0	134
Performing Arts Support Workers	19	3	13	6	13	3	10	5	0	72
Other Miscellaneous Tradespersons and Related Workers	14	10	20	6	9	6	0	0	0	65
Other Misc. Advanced Clerical and Service Workers	13	3	6	0	0	3	6	0	0	31
Library Assistants	17	0	34	3	5	0	14	3	0	76
Other Intermediate Service Workers	67	23	55	9	17	9	46	5	0	231
Ushers, Porters and Related Workers	19	4	31	3	6	3	12	3	0	81
Total	1133	347	1173	300	516	166	545	105	3	4288

Source: ABS census, custom tabulation 2001

Creative economy in non-metropolitan regions

- Networks of production and broadcasting:
  - CAAMA, BRACS
- New audiences, social networks
- New technologies of production and distribution

Conclusions

- The odds are stacked against non-metropolitan areas, but these odds can be negotiated
- Inter-regional networks:
  - new markets, access to gatekeepers)
- Targeted government support:
  - Benefits greater than immediate employment/attendances/sales

Conclusions

- Intentions behind, and benefits from, creative economic development are diverse
- Possibilities of a genuinely ‘post-colonial’ creative economy in the NT
- But on-going socio-economic and geographical problems to confront…