This paper proposes that the relationship between creativity and regionalism be critically examined in order for Universities to develop research, teaching and learning activity that is calibrated to regional settings and transcends commonplace metropolitan-based conceptions of creative industries. Firstly commonly understood definitions of creative industries and links to economic development and productivity will be outlined. Then an approach based on understanding the geography of creativity is presented to better understand the multiple dimensions of regional creative activity. Finally an expanded definition of creative activity is proposed illustrated by research into creative regions currently being undertaken by Charles Sturt University in NSW.

Creative industries and economic development

In defining the creative industries the Australian Government includes music, performing arts, film, television, radio, advertising, games and interactive content, writing, publishing, architecture, design, and visual arts.[1] The significance of the creative industries came into focus in the late 1990s when the Blair government in the UK developed policies to address problems of post-industrial Britain through recognising the combined capacity of creative activities to generate wealth as well as their intrinsic cultural value. Two decades later the term has now been widely adopted by international bodies such as United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO, 2006) and United Nations Commission for Trade and Development (UNCTAD, 2008; UNCTAD, 2010) and globally with governments in both industrial and developing economies creating specific policies to promote creative industries. Discourse and research in creative industries has now matured and differentiated to include detailed analysis of 'production, consumption, markets, trade, creative labour, globalisation, creative cities, cultural policy and intellectual property' (Flew, 2012, p.2).

While policy definitions of creative industries vary between countries it is now widely accepted that there is a strong link between creativity, innovation and productivity growth. This has led to a growing body of analysis, statistics and mapping exercises examining the relationship between culture, creative industries and economic development. Creativity is at the centre of an upsurge in interest especially from business as an 'increasingly important source of sustainable competitive advantage in a globalised, knowledge-based economy where the barriers to reproduction of ideas, concepts and products have been dramatically

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[1] www.arts.gov.au/creative_industries
[2] Centre for International Economics (CIE), Creative Industries Economic Analysis Report, 2009, p,7.
[3] Regional Arts Australia (2009). *Creating a Better Life for Regional Australians*, Adelaide: Australia

reduced' (Flew, 2012, p.19). It is generally accepted that there are challenges in mapping the creative economy due to a number of factors that reduce the visibility of creative practice (CIE, 2009, p.20). The ARC Centre of Excellence for Creative Industries and Innovation (CCI) has developed a 'Creative Trident' methodology to recognize broader creative activities beyond those listed by traditional industry and Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) employment classifications and that better reflect the creative workforce (Higgs and Cunningham, 2007). While ABS data provides one perspective, two further categories of the creative trident identified are added to get a truer picture. These categories are then able to include an expanded set of creative workers including:

- support workers – those employed in creative industries, but in non-creative occupations; and
- embedded creatives – those employed in creative occupations, but in industries that do not produce creative products.

Using this approach in 2007-08, the creative industries in Australia were valued at more than $31 billion in industry gross product, representing a faster growth rate than the broader economy. With a contribution to GDP of around 2.8 per cent, this is more than a number of traditional industries such as agriculture, communications and electricity, gas and water supply.[2] In mapping the creative workforce and productivity, the Creative Industries Economic Analysis Report (CIE, 2009) reported that most businesses in the creative workforce are small to medium enterprises and are most highly concentrated in NSW (CIIC, 2009, p.7). Creative industries are not focused on urban centres alone. Professor Chris Gibson from the University of Wollongong argues that regional areas have registered the most noticeable impacts of the rise of the cultural economy due to ubiquitous digital environments of creative activity rendering the physical location of the creative workforce increasingly less relevant.

> Moreover, creativity and innovation are not unique to large cities. Though their critical mass clearly influences the number of firms and size of output from creative sectors in cities, creativity is everywhere possible (Gibson and Connell, 2004), and transformations triggered by the rise of the cultural economy have been as, if not more, profound, in rural and regional areas where the cultural industries previously had little presence at all. (Gibson and Kong, 2005, p.549)

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[2] Centre for International Economics (CIE), Creative Industries Economic Analysis Report, 2009, p,7.

Research underway at Charles Sturt University seeks to better understand the relationship between regionalism and creativity. One aspect of the research involves interviewing those with creative businesses and enterprises in regional areas. The notion that 'creativity is everywhere possible' is echoed in an interview with an internationally recognized sound designer working in the film industry on large-scale 'Hollywood' projects.

> 'If we took a snapshot today on a film and where we are all working, I'm here in Wagga, the foley guys are in Quorn near Port Augusta, South Australia somewhere, there's another guy on the central coast and the rest are in Sydney, but we are still quite spread out really, it's all reliant on technology [and] make sure we can get our files to Sydney quick enough and without errors.'

Regional issues

There is a growing body of research which shows that thriving creative industries and cultural activities are crucial for the health and vitality of a region and its communities (Pagan et al, 2008; McHenry, 2009; Andersen, 2010; Comunian et al, 2010; Gibson and Klocker, 2005; Lewis and Donald, 2010; Waitt and Gibson, 2009). Achieving high levels of community well being through thriving creative activity is not however without its challenges in regional Australia. In 2009 a Regional Arts Australia consultation found that issues of funding, infrastructure, education, remoteness and isolation all impact on the ability of regional communities to access and participate in the arts and to develop and promote their own artistic endeavours.[3] More than 68.4% of all people living in disadvantaged areas reside in regional Australia; as a consequence, young regional Australians (15-24 years) are about half as likely as those in metropolitan areas to be attending university and have almost half the level of university attainment. Only 6% of Indigenous people aged 18-24 years attend university compared to 25% of non-Indigenous people. The report *Creating a Better life for Regional Australians* identified five key priority goals for the next five years, in order to develop creative activity for the one-in-three Australians that live in regional, rural and remote Australia:

- Building a strong sense of purpose and identity
- Developing inclusive and resilient communities
- Engaging young people in creating regional futures

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[3] Regional Arts Australia (2009). *Creating a Better Life for Regional Australians*, Adelaide: Australia

- Health and wellbeing
- Environmental sustainability

While much of the research, theory and literature on creative industries has been generated in and about large metropolitan cities, there is a growing recognition that settings of regional, rural and remote areas pose different challenges and opportunities for creative industries to thrive. Many Australian local governments and regions have developed policies guided by Richard Florida's influential work on the pre-conditions needed to attract a talented 'creative class' to 'creative cities' (Florida, 2002). Florida's approach however, overlooks the endogenous creative activity already existing, but often less visible in rural and regional locations, due to its geographically distributed nature and less formalised presence. Gibson and Klocker (2005) warn against simply adopting Florida's metropolitan based methodology to rank smaller regional centres and cities according to their 'creativity index'. While characteristics identified by Florida as necessary to foster creative classes are recognisable in smaller non-metropolitan centres, others argue that these characteristics are not always a comfortable fit when relocated to regional centres (Pratt, 2011; Gibson, 2010; Bures, 2012). The results of a national report[4] for local governments that used Florida's methodology reinforced common perceptions of creative activity in non-metropolitan areas. In discussing the recent 'cultural turn' in regional development discourse, Gibson and Klocker highlight the urban bias in Florida's index:

> The actual results were hardly surprising. Inner areas of the capital cities performed well on the creativity index, and inland divisions fared badly. Of the 64 regions analysed across the country, the lowest dozen were all inland agricultural regions in NSW, Victoria, Queensland and South Australia. 'Winning' regions were all in the central areas of state capital cities — and predominantly in Sydney and Melbourne. The general pattern was that creativity mirrored other, already existing, indicators of socio-economic status: poor and remote regions, with lower educational attainment, higher unemployment rates and larger Aboriginal populations, fared worse than those where accumulation is greatest, and where competition for jobs and property have been most fierce. (2005, p.19)

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[4] State of the Regions report produced by the consultancy firm National Economics (2002) on behalf of the Australian Local Government Association.

Their observations point to the need for a different set of measures and methods to be used in regional and rural settings as well as robust interdisciplinary research in order to understand and utilize the enablers of creative activity.

The geography of creativity

The geography of creativity, examines the geographical dimensions of creative business, practice, education and research. As well as a focus on creative cities (Florida, 2002; Pratt 2008a, 2008b; Flew, 2010; Cunningham, 2008; Scott, 2002; Howkins, 2002) there is also an emerging emphasis on creative regions that increasingly links regions with common issues in international networks (Lewis and Donald, 2009; Gibson and Kong, 2005; Gibson and Klocker, 2005; Waitt and Gibson, 2009; Gibson 2002). Issues confronting Australian creative industries are common to many other regional counterparts in Europe, North America and some countries in Asia (Flew, 2010), and Australian academics are active in international research in regional creative industries.

Charles Sturt University is a geographically dispersed institution with most of its 10 campuses located in regional NSW within the area occupied by NSW's largest Aboriginal group, the Wiradjuri.

What does creative activity in regional NSW look like? Historically some of the strongest evocations of creativity and ingenuity in the national imagination in post-colonial Australia have originated from the inland and 'the bush'. Charles Sturt University's geographic reach corresponds with some of the most celebrated (and contested) sites and characters of Australia's creative and cultural heritage. The landscapes and towns of inland NSW including Lightning Ridge, Broken Hill, Orange, Yass, Walgett, the Murrumbidgee River, the Blue Mountains and Snowy Mountains have been the home of and inspiration for the country's most celebrated artists poets, writers and film makers including Banjo Paterson, Patrick White, Eric and Eleanor Dark, Miles Franklin, Pro Hart, Henry Lawson. Close to the Bathurst campus, Hill End artists' colony was home to many iconic modernist Australian artists and since the mid-1990s, and this legacy has continued through the Bathurst City Council initiative, the Hill End Artists in Residence Program.[5] When interviewed about Hill

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[5] Margaret Olley, Donald Friend, Russell Drysdale, Jean Bellette, Paul Haefliger, David Strachan and Jeffrey Smart, John Firth-Smith, Brett Whiteley Michael Johnson. Contemporary artists including Richard Goodwin, Anton James, Tom Spence, Wendy Sharpe, Peter Wright, Geoff Weary, Peter Kingston, Mandy Barrett, Emma Walker and James Rogers.

End as a site of contemporary creative activity and business, a printmaker with a letterpress business said:

> 'One thing for sure is the artists at Hill End are very tenacious, we really are a very robust group, and you also have to have that wonderful thing called patience. You've got to have at least a 10-year time span. You've got to expect the big hurdles that can leave you flat but you've got to get back up again. Being around like-minded people is important, because we all pick each other up all the time, it's very strong ... patience and tenacity. Historically everyone knows about Hill End as an arts precinct, if you could get more areas like that it would be great.'

These historic sites and landscapes continue to generate creative activity and interest, enabling communication technologies, coupled with the flow of urban dwellers to regional places seeking lifestyle and tree changes are among the complexity of factors that are transforming regional and rural cultural landscapes (Gibson and Kong, 2005). Through reappraising rural and inland Australia as sites of ingenuity, creativity and cultural activity, it is not only the grand landscapes, famous sites and artists that are celebrated and recognised. By broadening the definition of rural and regional creativity to include the creative interface between agriculture and national and international markets, the sites of everyday life in inland Australia continue to provide fertile ground for invention, innovation and ingenuity. By redefining inland Australia as a site of ingenuity, creativity and cultural activity, there is also a need to overcome deeply entrenched attitudes towards inland Australia that have formed since European settlement, which assume that the territory outside of major metropolitan centres is unsophisticated, marginal and falls into the construction of the national geographic imagination known as 'the bush'.

Expanding the compass of creative and cultural activity to be more closely calibrated to Charles Sturt University's spatial and demographic attributes creates opportunities for teaching, research and industry and community partnerships which capitalise on the distributed geography of the university, and proven strengths in agriculture, tourism, wine science, food production and health sciences. When considering contemporary creative activity in regional contexts, an expanded set of activities also warrants inclusion beyond the traditional and emergent creative forms previously mentioned. Activities associated with tourism and cultural heritage prevalent in many regional areas generate a range of creative

activities associated with cultural tourism such as tours, museums, galleries and visitor centres.

We are proposing that the intersection of agriculture and creativity be developed as a new hybrid area, agri-tivity. There are many examples of agri-tivity food tourism, agri-tourism (Micoo and Vinodrai, 2010), niche food production, gastronomy and wine-making, long accepted as part of creative activity in many European countries but slower to be recognised in Australia. An example of enterprises which combine research, education, tourism and cuisine is Fundació Alicia[6] in Spain, a research centre dedicated to technological innovation in cooking, using traditional local produce, and increasing social awareness about the cultural and educational importance of food. Directed by the famous chef Ferran Adrià, it is primarily a research centre that overlaps with agriculture, health, creativity, cultural tourism and heritage.

The integration of technologically advanced manufacturing with high value services, we are calling 'agri-services'. Agri-service is generally used to denote the provision of services (financial, managerial, scientific, mechanical, etc) to improve productivity in the agricultural, livestock, construction, mining, and energy sectors. Based on the growth in manu-services, agri-services recognise that experience is now more important than product, and signals a shift from transactional to relational marketing by investing resources in developing strong, lasting relationships with customers. Examples of agri-services could include:

- advancing the ingenuity situated in the rural history of 'making do' (agri-d.i.y.)
- packaging a growing variety of regional experiences based on products like farming and food production (agri-tourism)
- designing new provisions for digital health products/services to rural patients (agri-care)
- development of goods/services for the burgeoning urban farming industry (agri-gardening)

As well as agriculture, mining and manufacturing have also driven the need for innovation and ingenuity in regional and isolated places. The regional mechanic's institutes, the predecessors of TAFE technical and trade education also laid the foundations of research, invention and innovation in mining communities and the manufacturing sector. Recent changes in settlement patterns in Australia's regional and remote areas especially in mining

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[6] Fundació Alicia, Spain. http://www.alicia.cat/en/

towns creates an even greater need for new models for regional living in which creative activity in many forms contributes to sustainable and healthy communities. Similarly creative expertise is now increasingly sourced by the healthcare system.[7]


Role of the University

Public investment and locating universities in regions has been a long-standing policy in Australia, Europe and the USA, where the benefits to regional economic growth, cultural life and community well being are well documented (Powell 2007). Comunian and Faggian (2011, p.187) in examining the relationship between Higher Education and creative cities note that collaborations between creative cities, universities and local policy makers are becoming more common within the cultural and creative economy. Currently research in creative industries in universities in Australia is in metropolitan centres. The ARC Centre of Excellence for Creative Industries (CCI) has its administrative centre at Queensland University of Technology in Brisbane. Its institutional partners (Australian Film and Television School, Swinburne University of Technology, University of New South Wales, University of Wollongong and Edith Cowan University) are all city-based institutions, with a research agenda shaped around digital innovation. Charles Sturt University aligns its research focus with its geography and signals a shift from research focussing on coastal, metropolitan settings to inland creative regions and concerns.

Looking more closely at data available for the geographic, regional 'footprint' of Charles Sturt University helps build a picture of where existing creative activity is located, as well as gaps, inequities and future potential for activation and development. ABS data from the 2006 census reveals one part of the 'Creative Trident' approach by quantifying those engaged in creative occupations using the 2006 ANZCO occupation categories. When the 2006 ABS census data from each Local Government Area is mapped according to proximity to a Charles Sturt University regional campus, higher concentrations of creative professions and occupations are found in and bordering the regional centres of Charles Sturt University's campuses: Wagga Wagga, Bathurst, Albury, Orange and Port Macquarie. In Charles Sturt University's footprint the highest numbers are found in the Blue Mountains, also in close proximity to the Bathurst campus (Map 1). Charles Sturt University's current footprint covers 488,023 sq km or 60.9% of NSW, which does not include the LGAs bordering Charles Sturt University's newest campus at Port Macquarie. When 2011 census data becomes available

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[7] Pagan, Cunningham, Higgs (2008) Getting Creative in Healthcare: The contribution of creative activities to Australian healthcare, Queensland University of Technology, Queensland, http://eprints.qut.edu.au/14757/ last accessed 24/05/2010.

in August 2012 a comparison over time will be able to be undertaken within these same categories.
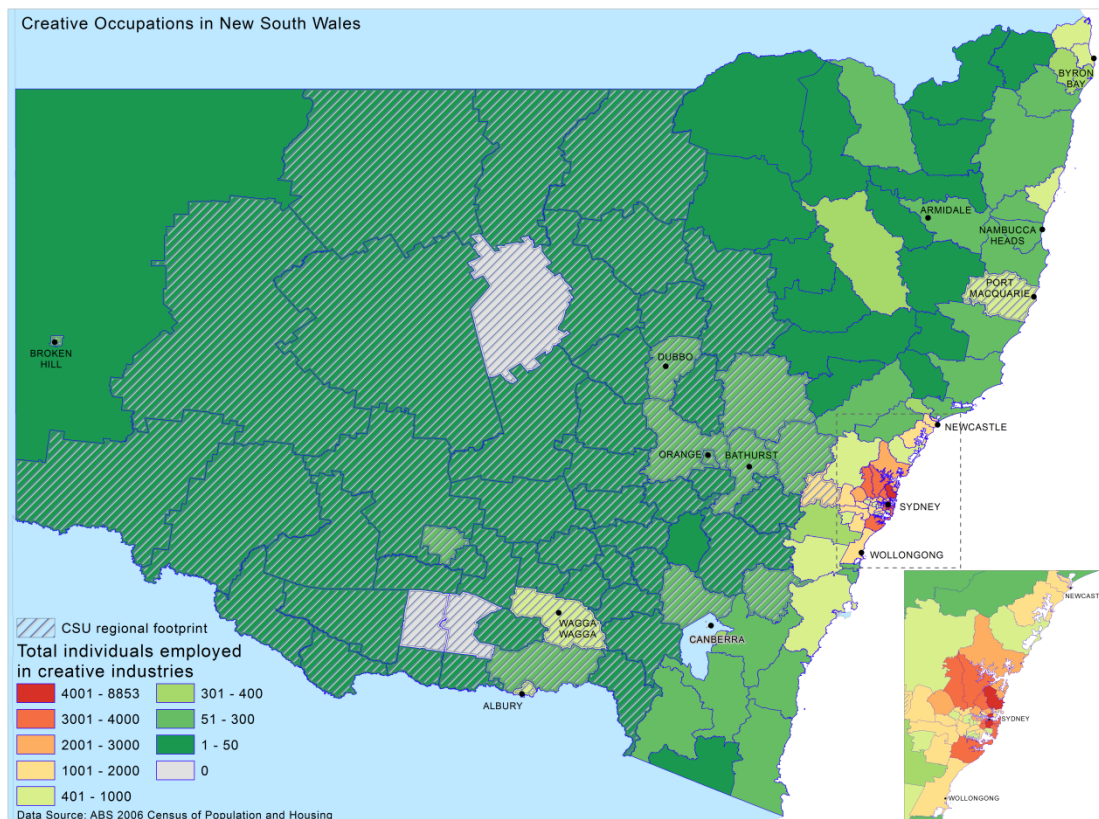
Map 1: Creative occupations in NSW and Charles Sturt University's regional footprint by Local Government Area using 2006 ABS Census Data. Note this data is only for NSW so does not include Canberra.

While this data reveals the professionalized aspect of the creative workforce it cannot capture the complete workforce in the all the categories of the creative trident identified by Higgs and Cunningham (2008). Rendered invisible in occupation data are also artists, musicians, writers and performers who don't earn their main living from creative practice yet participate and contribute to the cultural activity of local communities and regions. This is particularly so in Charles Sturt University's regional centres such as Wagga Wagga and Bathurst where there has been a long tradition of local performing and visual arts activities stimulated by the presence of arts education institutions, including the predecessor institutions of Charles Sturt University and the network of regional Schools of Arts that were a feature of many county NSW towns, the architectural remnants of which are still evident.

While contemporary visual and performing arts companies can trace their legacies to institutions in the early settlement of regional areas, regional creative activity is constantly evolving and emerging businesses, including web, sound and digital design, animation, communication, film and video and new media, are also located regionally. The digital environments and increasingly sophisticated communication technology on which they rely have liberated these creative enterprises from being tied to urban and metropolitan settings. A comment from a letterpress printmaker in Hill End emphasises the need for good communication technologies:

> 'We use a blog spot which we think is almost mandatory, I think that comes from two things... we love the computer and we love looking at the world. The blog spot has really opened up so many opportunities... galleries, all the regional galleries, they look at that and they instantly see your whole narrative. You have to start thinking as a business to get your message out there. We are always looking at what the rest of the world is doing.'

With ubiquitous communication allowing the physical location of the creative workforce to become increasingly less relevant, and in some cases nomadic, creative practitioners turn isolated, regional and rural locations to their advantage. A sound designer with an international profile comments on the benefits of working regionally:

> 'It's actually worked out to be more advantageous because I've started working on jobs in Melbourne as well, and if I was still in Sydney I probably wouldn't have picked up any Melbourne work. There are people in Adelaide who contact me as well. I almost feel more central in one way... A job at the end of the year, I'm the only Australian on that, the director and editor are in LA and I'm doing all of the sound from Australia.'

Conclusion

Geographically, Charles Sturt University's footprint covers a large proportion of regional NSW. This area can also be mapped for its past and contemporary creative activity, and its Wiradjuri and post-settlement cultural heritage. By reframing notions of creative activity and enterprises beyond the traditional definitions, a different landscape of creativity is made visible. Redefining creativity requires shifting the lens to focus research on creative regions rather than metropolitan clusters, on endogenous sites of ingenuity and innovation rather than importing creative talent, and on the intersections between previously unlikely creative

partnerships. If Australia hopes to secure a vibrant economic future in regional, rural and remote regions, as well as metropolitan centres, creative activities and innovative research are needed to enrich and sustain unique communities across the whole country.

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