

# RESEARCH DIRECTIONS

## Western Sydney IT Cluster Program Success?

**Professors Ross Chapman and Ron Beckett from the Centre for Industry and Innovation Studies have been investigating the success and benefits of the Western Sydney Information Technology Cluster program. This research was funded by the NSW Department of State and Regional Development.**

'There are many challenges facing small technology companies, including access to cutting edge technologies and to local and international business networks', says Professor Chapman. 'The Western Sydney Information Technology Cluster is a NSW government initiative intended to enable growth of the Information and Communications Technology industry in the Western Sydney area by encouraging innovation, entrepreneurship, internationalisation and business growth. More than 200 members of the Western Sydney Information Technology Cluster have been receiving assistance to meet their business challenges through the provision of web support, business growth and education workshops, local and international networking events and a variety of other services. In order to continue to provide these services to Western Sydney Information and Communications Technology businesses, the efficiency and effectiveness of the Western Sydney Information Technology Cluster program in relation to the NSW Department of State and Regional Development's strategic goals must be evaluated.'

This study has included an analysis of Western Sydney Information Technology Cluster performance reports and has benchmarked against similar local and international programs, as well as made comparisons with literature on the nature of cluster programs in general. To further understand the benefits and challenges of the program, surveys and interviews with cluster members and stakeholders have been carried out, as well as an



examination of the impact of the program on participating firms and assessment of current program staff resources and roles.

The Western Sydney Information Technology Cluster is the largest cluster of IT small/medium businesses in Australia and has already fostered good relationships with industry associations. The confirmed success of the Western Sydney Information Technology Cluster program can enhance not only regional Information and Communications Technology knowledge but could be used as a model for other cluster programs in a variety of business fields across Australia.

**Project Title:** A Research Study of the NSW Government's Western Sydney IT Cluster Program for the NSW Department of State and Regional Development

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