# Ballarat Technology Park Submission

Dear Ben, I have been invited by the Hon Jaala Pulford MP and Minister for Regional Development to provide some input into the above process. I am Director of the Ballarat Tech Park as well as Pro Vice Chancellor in relation to business asset strategy. My role within the University largely centres on business/industry engagement, commercial revenue generation, optimising the return on physical assets and the like. The good things about my role in terms of regional impacts is that it is inextricably linked to business attraction and job creation. I would encourage you to look at our [website·www.btp.federation.edu.au](http://www.IJtP.fede/)

As a way of background the Ballarat Technology Park hosts about 30 enterprises and provides employment for about 140o people each day. The tenants comprise a mixture of private and public organisations with many working within the Information and Communications Technology Industry sector. The park was originally established in 1995, with IBM as its initial anchor tenant.

The Ballarat Technology Park has been successful because the State Government has been a strong partner and collaborator. The State has:

1. Provided funds to the University of Capital Works (new buildings and building refurbishments
2. Provided funds to companies to employ significant numbers of people e.g. IBM,
3. Concentrix. Known as employee subsidies
4. Directed business investment our way. Some companies looking for a regional location have often found the Park via the business attraction team in the State Government
5. Been a great ambassador for the Tech Park, promoting its mission, activities and benefits nationally and internationally

Obviously it is important in considering new and/or revised State policy initiatives that we should attempt to build on our successes, as distinct from discarding everything. In this regard, there are many existing policies connected with 1 to 4 above that should be maintained and possibly refined.

While I have not given significant thought to new strategic direction/policy formulation, the following represents some of my initial thinking:

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1. The population growth in Melbourne and the suburbs is simply unsustainable. It is understood that the population growth per annum approximates 100,000. This growth is obviously placing enormous stress on services, infrastructure and the like, evidenced in huge issues emerging in health, transport and housing…
2. The State should identify the major or primary regional growth centres. Based on population size and geographical location the obvious centres would be Geelong, Ballarat, Bendigo and Traralgon. Each of these centres should be aligned with a key business/industry capability . In the case of Ballarat it might be Information and Communication Technologies, Geelong might be linked to Advanced Manufacturing, Traralgon might be connected with Food Manufacturing/ Agribusiness, Bendigo .....unknown! There are an important number of benefits in relation to identifying a business/industry capability with a key regional centres. It enables regional cities to be strategic, to plan with confidence, to grow and expand capability. At the moment all major centres are trying to be all to everyone! It must be immensely confusing to companies wishing to invest in regional Victoria!
3. The State should positively discriminate in favour of growth in these centres. New policies need to be developed that encourage enterprises to establish in regional Victoria. Financial support and assistance should be directed at the 'new industry' sectors, particularly those that evidence themes of ICT, R&D, advanced manufacturing, value adding etc
4. In relation to c above, the financial benefits of establishing in regional Victoria and key centres should be obvious, explicit and possibly linked to areas such as Stamp Duty, Payroll, Tax, Grants towards Investment in Technology etc.

I realise that this response is a little belated however I would be pleased to chat with you or others at a mutually convenient time.

Mal

Mal Vallance

Pro Vice Chancellor (Business Asset Strategy)

Federation University Australia