



HIGH-TECH

SOUTH AUSTRALIA

**AN EXAMINATION OF THE LOCATIONAL PREFERENCES OF
HIGH TECHNOLOGY FIRMS IN THE ELECTRONICS INDUSTRY**

by

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ABSTRACT

Using the electronics sector as a case study, this thesis is an attempt to measure the present, and assess the future, importance of high technology industry in South Australia, and to understand both the role it plays in the local economy and the extent to which the industrial environment in South Australia is conducive to the birth and in-migration of high technology firms.

Despite its peripheral location in the Australian space economy, Adelaide is the headquarters of a number of Australian-based high technology companies and is also the Australian headquarters for several multinational high technology firms. Adelaide boasts a quality of life which is the envy of other capitals and indeed it appears that many firm owners establish their businesses (or choose to remain) in Adelaide mainly for that reason, despite the fact that their main markets may be located elsewhere. Firms locating in Adelaide also have access to a skilled and relatively cheap labour force, and with some very specialised exceptions, Adelaide has a good service and technical support network for high technology establishments. There is also evidence that Adelaide is experiencing the beginning of high technology clustering, a process seen by many to be critical in the evolution of a high technology region.

There are however several problems. Adelaide is still relatively isolated from other Australian capitals because of poor air services, some specialised technical personnel need to be 'imported' from interstate or overseas, there is only a small local market, and the links between firms are still immature, with only small numbers

of firms sharing information and working with other firms in the cluster. Academic - high technology industry ties, although fairly common, are rather superficial, and once a project is completed, such ties are generally severed.

Over the years, successive State Governments have tried to address some of these issues. The establishment of Technology Park and later Science Park (both adjacent to universities), the ambitious Multi-Function Polis, the establishment of the Submarine Corporation and the approval for the building of the third runway at Adelaide Airport have all been steps in this direction. If these measures are embraced by industry with enthusiasm, then coupled with the attributes already present, Adelaide certainly seems to be the right place at the right time so far as the development of high technology industry is concerned.

DECLARATION

I hereby declare that none of the material contained in this thesis has been accepted for the award of any other degree or diploma in any institution and that, to the best of my knowledge and belief, the thesis contains no material previously published or written by another person, except where due reference has been made in the text of the thesis. I consent to this thesis being made available for photocopying and loan, if applicable, and if it is accepted for the award of the degree.

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