

careerone

Australia's biggest job network

King of clusters

Industry strategist
draws in big dollars
and creates jobs

Inside:

- Executive appointments
- Education and training
- Specialist appointments
- SA Government appointments

Apply for these jobs online at...

careerone.com.au

Jobs galore from cluster strategy

Academic, author and industrial development consultant Rodin Genoff is regarded by many as one of Australia's foremost experts on industry clusters. **ANDREA STYLIANOU** spoke to him about his work as industry strategist at the City of Playford.



City of Playford industrial consultant Rodin Genoff with Playford Mayor Marilyn Baker and vice-president of Hirotec Australia Tex Igarashi. Hirotec Australia has invested in the Playford project.

Pictures: MICHAEL RUDOLPH

INDUSTRY strategist Rodin Genoff's position at Playford has seen him contribute to the establishment of the Innovation Network in a disused 19,000sq m factory in the northern suburbs.

"We've attracted \$90 million investment so far for the Innovation Network, leading to the creation of 200 direct jobs," Mr Genoff says.

"It comprises 14 companies and several service providers, together with three global companies now using the disused factory in the Elizabeth West Industrial Precinct to launch their operations into the Asia-Pacific region."

Projects such as this earned Playford a Federal Government award in 2002 for developing the most innovative economic and regional development model in Australia.

"Our cluster strategy has created a new global enterprise in the City of Playford with a combined turnover of more than of \$200 million," he says.

In 2001, the strategy achieved international recognition with Mr Genoff representing Australia and New Zealand at the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development and the French Government's World Congress on Local Clusters.

Mr Genoff also assisted in last year's establishment of the Centre of Robotics Excellence SA at the Innovation Network.

"It is the first business-based robotics training centre in Australia, the result of a commercial joint venture between the Elizabeth West-based company Priority Engineering Services and the UK-based company CIMAC Asia Pacific," he says.

The centre, which is funded by business, will enable local companies to work with state-of-the-art technology leading to new applications in factory automation.

Mr Genoff is developing an advanced manufacturing centre to

encourage networked companies to develop products and services. "Funded by the Commonwealth Government's Sustainable Regions program and with significant financial input from participating companies, it will provide smaller engineering and components companies with access to computer-aided design and manufacturing technology," he says.

"This is something they would not be able to afford individually."

As inaugural co-chair of Clusters Asia-Pacific Inc, he has raised awareness of the benefits of industry cluster programs. CAP is now developing a national project on how industry clusters can act as a magnet for direct foreign investment.

Mr Genoff works as a private consultant, advising on cluster strategies in Victoria, Western Australia, and

economy and community." Innovation and new ideas just don't happen, Mr Genoff says. "They require leadership and Playford chief executive Tim Jackson has developed a strong team approach. Combining (this) with the vision of Mayor Marilyn Baker and we have a team that can make a lasting difference."

It has resulted in Playford gaining an international reputation for the way it tackles big issues, winning a UN award for planning in competition with cities such as Chicago.

Mr Genoff is convenor of the annual national Manufacturing Prosperity Conference, which he initiated in 1998, and is now run by the City of Playford. Last year, Prime Minister John Howard and State Treasurer Kevin Foley used it to announce a \$100 million automotive investment at Elizabeth West.

Somehow, Mr Genoff finds time for a private life, which includes chairing Parallelo, Australia's leading multicultural and new media theatre group.

"My parents are of Bulgarian background and I'm very proud of the contribution that migrants have made to our prosperity," he says.

"But the challenges we faced were formidable. For instance, my brother and I started school not being able to speak English.

"This is why I chair Parallelo, which explores issues of dislocation and separation, while also celebrating the triumph of the human spirit.

"Different cultures can learn from each other and enrich and enliven the communities they live in."

At weekends, Mr Genoff nurtures a market gardening tradition. "With my wife, Susan, and close friends we have bought a country property where we have planted an olive grove, so we can make olive oil to share with family and friends," he says.

“Despite working frequently in Sydney, Melbourne and Canberra, I believe that being Adelaide-based has enabled me to be more innovative”

New Zealand and developed the Environment Cluster Strategy for the Commonwealth Government's Emerging Industries Branch.

His books include *Making the Future Work*, *Crisis and Change in the SA Economy* and *Manufacturing Prosperity, Ideas for Industry, Technology and Employment* and he co-authored *Innovation and the Knowledge Economy, Industrial Regeneration in Northern Adelaide*.

"Despite working frequently in Sydney, Melbourne and Canberra, I believe that being Adelaide-based has enabled me to be more innovative," he says. "I am proud that my work builds on Adelaide and South Australia's creative heritage.

"I also choose to work at the City of Playford because it is a region where I believe my work can make a substantial difference to the local