

Final Report

Ageing in place: intergenerational and intrafamilial housing transfers and shifts in later life

authored by

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Australia's population is ageing because of the combined effects of increased longevity and decreased fertility. These demographic changes are producing economic, social, and personal challenges for Australian society, for families and individuals, and the issues for Government are numerous.

The previous Positioning Paper reviewed the fiscal burden for Government and the challenges for Australian older individuals and their families. The particular perspective was the context and previous research on the housing tenure and future housing intentions of Australians aged 50 years and over. Previous research on intergenerational assistance and housing transfers was also addressed. The Positioning Paper presented the view that there may be pressure on housing tenure and attachment to the family home and upon intergenerational relationships as assets of older people, particularly housing assets, may be required by older people to finance their needs for accommodation, residential care, health and other services and for their enhanced expectations for retirement lifestyles.

The research questions which were the focus of the research reported herein were:

1. What are the experiences of mid-life and later-age Australian men and women regarding present housing tenure and future housing intentions, their financial expectations for future lifestyles, and the intergenerational and/or intrafamilial transfer of their financial and/or housing assets?
2. How do older Australians expect that those transfers, *inter vivos* or by inheritance, will affect the economic and social circumstances of younger family members?

This is a major national study of the future housing intentions of older Australians, involving an availability sample of 7000 men and women aged 50 years and over. There is an extraordinary spread of respondents across all regions of Australia. Respondents can be examined according to postcode. The empirical research combined a broad range of quantitative and qualitative research methodologies - a national survey, in-depth qualitative research using focus groups and Internet chat rooms, and sociological narrative analysis. The large sample resulted in very substantial statistical power in the quantitative analysis. Data collection focused primarily upon home owners 50 years and over as many of them have already or are facing decisions concerning their future residential plans, and because housing equity and housing transfers are a focus of the study. And the decisions made by these older Australians are indicative of changing priorities and expectations and relations among kinship systems which inform our understanding of social change within the context of Australia's ageing population. Non-home owners were not excluded and the sample contains almost 600 non-home owners, so differences in housing intentions between home owners and private and public renters were able to be examined. One third of respondents were aged between 50-59, comprising the first cohort of the Baby Boomer generation. This provided the first opportunity to have some insights into future expectations of these senior Baby Boomers.

This is an examination of family and place in Australian society in the new millennium at a time when the meaning of family and place is now subject to contestation and debate within the public discourses of government policy, the law, education and the media. Within this conceptual framework, the analysis focuses on the residential

intentions and reciprocal obligations within nuclear family relationships, our primary form of kinship in this country.

The innovative methodological approaches taken in this empirical research have presented opportunities for sociological analysis of the transformations which are taking place in housing intentions and family relationships, and most importantly to explore the sources of such changes in personal identities, intentions and aspirations. Broad cultural shifts in family values, personal self-identities and material aspirations are most manifest in the attitudes and intentions of older Australians with regard to their future housing intentions, their financial expectations, and particularly the possibilities of the transfer of the family home to their Baby Boomer children, and in turn their Generation X children.

In the body of this exploration of changing notions of place/home, personal and family identity and intergenerational relations in Australia, four major dramatic themes now dominate the discussions of reciprocity and obligation within family relationships. Those themes are fate, sacrifice, betrayal, and resentment. These themes are revealed in the sociological analyses of the comments from respondents. These themes reflect and embody the shifting meanings around current ideas and values with regard to home ownership within the context of what it now means to believe in and belong to a family in contemporary Australia.

Key Findings of the Research

There is a significant shift in the values and priorities of older Australians which is transforming the patterns of future housing tenure, lifestyle and family relationships. Desires for independence, flexibility, consumer and lifestyle choices increasingly take precedence, challenging traditional notions of old age and family obligations.

These desires are now key values and priorities for older Australians. Longevity, changing family relationships, new forms of identity formation and social expectations, greater social mobility and diversity are contributing factors.

More older people are living alone and loving it, especially women. Housing tenure is important. Home ownership is the conduit to lifestyle choices. Private renters, particularly women are most fearful for the future.

Ageing in place depends more upon attachment to location rather than the family home. Older people are now accepting of changes in housing tenure. Baby boomers are particularly comfortable with moving house. Problems of household and garden maintenance, divorce, death of a spouse, downsizing, lifestyle preferences precipitate decisions to move.

Intentional communities, or friendship enclaves offer new forms of community, friends and groups of people with commonality in lifestyle and consumption patterns and preferred lifestyle choices. Extended family living is resolutely rejected.

Home-ownership, the greatest financial asset, provides the conduit to all those choices. Downsizing, equity conversion or extraction, capitalising assets are acceptable options. Commonly used expression OWLS (Oldies Withdrawing Loot Sensibly). Here foundations of traditional family obligations will be seriously tested.

There is a grudging recognition of increasing user-pays services, coupled with expectations of the rights of aged citizens to receive age pension and other Government support services. Lack of personal planning for future financial needs.

One quarter of respondents expect to use up all their assets before they die. One third of Baby boomers expect that to be the case. More than one third already have assisted children financially, mostly loans not gifts. The desire to bequeath assets is diminishing. Remarriage and new relationships create complexity. There is a dominance of "Put yourself first after years of hard work" attitudes. Commonly-used expression SKI (Spending Kids Inheritance).

Ageing in Place

The patterns of housing tenure, lifestyle and family relationships of older Australians are changing as reflected in these findings. More than one third of respondents (37%) live alone. Women in particular are living alone (46%), and are twice as likely to be living alone as are men (22%). Indeed among those respondents aged over 50 years, almost half the women were living alone, while three quarters of the men were living with a spouse or partner. Also older people are more likely to live alone. Fifty seven per cent of respondent aged 75 years and over are living alone. The majority of respondents are home-owners, most owning their home outright, although a quarter of the Baby Boomers aged between 50 and 59 still have a home mortgage, and five per cent of Baby Boomers are still renting.

The most notable finding is that there is a remarkably clear relationship between housing tenure and age and people's desire to age in place or move in the future. Almost three quarters (71%) of respondents 75 and over had no intentions of moving in the future, compared to just over half (53%) of Baby Boomer respondents aged 50 to 59 years. Many of the older respondents aged 75 and over (44-5%) had already moved in the previous five years. Housing tenure is particularly important. Women, pensioners and those in private rental accommodation were most anxious about moving in the future, concerned that they would be unable to afford to do so but realising that their financial circumstances may make it impossible to stay where they are. Private renters (69%) expected to move in the foreseeable future and many were fearful that they would be forced to move because of financial difficulties as they grew older.

Home-ownership is clearly the conduit to greater possibilities of self-determination of an older person's future lifestyle choices. More than four out of five respondents (82.8%) saw their home as an investment for the future, 86 per cent said that owning a home means that one is free to make decisions about how one lives, and three quarters (74.8%) said a person could sell the home or borrow against it to provide for needs in old age. The predicted probability of home-owners moving in the future was very low compared to people who were living in privately rented accommodation.

Home-owners were most likely to want to age in place (64%), although for many their attachment was not necessarily to the home but to the area in which they lived. Location was particularly important. Pleasure in and familiarity with the area and its facilities were regarded as important factors contributing to people's day to day lifestyles. Proximity to people they know in the area was also important.

Older people were less likely to expect to move in the future than younger people, although many older people had already moved from their family home in the past. Yet widespread commonsense perceptions that all older people are resistant to change and residential mobility were not borne out. One in three respondents had moved in the previous five years, with the largest proportion moving location. And one in three said they expected to move in the foreseeable future.

Baby Boomers (respondents between 50 and 59 years of age) are lowest in every category of wishing to age in place, indicating that they are comfortable with moving for lifestyle reasons as opposed to wanting to stay for whatever reason. Indeed, for them the notion of ageing in place was likely to conjure up images of immobility and old age, something which is not yet part of their cultural vocabulary.

The problems of house and garden maintenance, particularly on the death of a spouse or problems of declining health, loomed as the reasons which would most precipitate a move for respondents in the future as they aged. Many respondents cautioned that people should make their move either to a new location or into a retirement village while they were still active enough to establish new activities and new relationships. The importance of friends nearby was a frequent narrative. Women, people living in rural areas, and pensioners were more likely to state that they were unable to afford to move from their present home.

The most outstanding feature of responses from this mainly home-owning population was the almost uniform definition of the home as a conduit to a person's future lifestyle choices. The symbolic dimension of the home as the foundation for personal identity is now somewhat blurred as the values of consumption and lifestyle begin to take precedence. Home-owners spoke of their home offering them a diversity of choices for the future. Many commented the past or future shift represented a lifestyle decision, moving as some said to "a better place" or to "warmer weather" or to "access better recreational facilities". Many respondents now living in country or coastal towns had moved to those areas (particularly to coastal areas) in the past five years – the well-known 'sea change' phenomenon.

Financial Planning for Future Needs

The most successful moves were by respondents who had formed 'intentional communities' or friendship enclaves, either moving to a location or a retirement village where they already had friends. Ironically, this phenomenon can also be seen as a return to community but of a different sort. This is not the traditional family-based neighbourhood community; rather it is a set of emerging consumer classes, groups of people who find commonality in lifestyle and consumption patterns. Those new consumers pride themselves on their cultural literacy, as it were, as to the choices they make about where to live and what to buy. It is here that the foundations of traditional family obligations are being seriously tested, because the evidence suggests that in many cases people are prepared to use their greatest asset, the family home, to achieve those desires.

Overall, the most significant feature of the responses of older Australians interviewed was their desire to have a sense of flexibility with regard to their lifestyle intentions during the last years of their life. Whereas previously one could argue that stability was the defining factor in old age identity, the majority of respondents said that a sense of flexibility and fluidity was important, and that home ownership was the central factor

underpinning the possibility of their now having a choice as to how to spend their remaining years. Whether the choice was to sell and spend, or sell and move to a location which provided access to better lifestyle opportunities, the prevailing attitude was the same; that after years of hard work they have earned the right to enjoy the fruits of their labours in any way they choose, regardless of the well-worn tradition of ageing in place with the sole aim of providing security for the next generation.

There was a broad consensus from respondents in the research that people do not tend to plan ahead, even from those self-funded retirees who said they had worked and saved judiciously. Some respondents spoke about too much planning being a waste of time when one didn't know whether one's health might intervene or how long one might live. The frequent changes of government policies were also a matter of concern which some respondents argued led to a disinclination to plan for the future. Many respondents felt the uncertainty of the future meant that it was impossible to plan.

There was outrage at the diminution of government-provided services and the Government's demands that older people keep working longer, construed by many as a betrayal of the 'social contract'. There was also a false sense of present day security, as Governments were perceived by many older people as obliged to provide for older citizens' needs. There was a level of ambiguity, and in some cases outright delusion, around expectations of the Government's role as a service provider.

Emerging from the survey there was a parallel wish about ultimately being 'saved' by the Government, a hope that future support will be available despite all indications to the contrary. Almost half the respondents expected to pay for their future needs out of savings, superannuation or medical insurance, women were far less likely to expect to do so than men. But many also said they would have to sell or rent the family home to do so. Very few respondents (6.3%) stated they would take out a loan on their home to pay for future needs, and only one in a hundred said they would ask their children for financial assistance to pay for future needs. Many respondents grudgingly recognised that it is inevitable these days that people have to look after themselves because no one else will.

Retirement villages were a deeply ambiguous category and hence communications about them tended to be couched in suspicion. While those who were already living in retirement villages were by and large satisfied with their choice, more generally there was a degree of suspicion about the costs and conditions of retirement villages, and also importantly, what retirement villages symbolised in terms of family relationships. Retirement villages may offer a new substitute form of family and community, but it is one which ultimately signifies a final break from the real family. Retirement villages according to respondents offer life with a new mono-generational surrogate family of siblings, with the omnipresent administrators representing the new 'parent figures'. And it is that seeming loss of independence, abrogating control to village managers or staff, which presented a problem.

For many respondents, the home is their major asset. Indeed for many the family home is their only capital asset, and their only income comes from superannuation, insurances or government-provided age, service or disability support pensions. Generally expressed greater expectations about retirement lifestyles and awareness of more user-pays health and other services led us to an expectation that people may seek to access the capital in their home through a reverse mortgage or other equity conversion product to supplement their living standards at some stage during retirement. This was not the case.

The equity in the family home will doubtless provide the capital for older people to make lifestyle decisions. But the form of that equity conversion or equity extraction is however at present not adequately provided in the financial marketplace. Some respondents saw a reverse mortgage as a way of endlessly condemning them to a lifetime of sacrifice as prisoners of the mortgage cycle. Others who were more candid about capitalising upon their assets saw reverse mortgages as the answer to their financial problems, as the commonly used expression 'OWLS' (Oldies Withdrawing Loot Sensibly) implies.

Shifting Values and Family Relationships

The research clearly reveals a shift in the norms and values of the Australian family as what we might call 'new' family structures increasingly replace previous nuclear families – divorce and serial marriages create blended families, and there are single parent families, childless couples, same sex couples and transformations within traditional ethnic families. There is a shift from 'roots-based' family and personal values which emphasise production and reproduction to the increasingly prevalent values of consumption and lifestyle. This may be viewed as a rejection of the 'sacreds' of previous generations where home and family were the primary source of personal identity. This is not to say that the family is not still the basis for many people's sense of identity, as the family continues to provide the foundation for most people's lives. It is more a case of how family relationships are now construed within personal narratives and popular political rhetoric and mass media representations.

The whole notion of a strong and supportive traditional family structure has disappeared. Within all of the research arenas, a defining feature emerged around the issue of shared accommodation with family. Intergenerationally, the narrative remained the same; extended families or multi-generational families are often negative and destructive. The narratives of family were characterised by repeated references to underlying tensions and hostilities which could erupt at any time given the right set of circumstances. In many instances, people spoke about painful memories of past experiences of living in extended family situations.

Within this new social and political context our research suggests that older Australians as a group are beginning to shift their attitudes towards their children from one of self-sacrifice to one of self-interest. Their greater expectations for retirement lifestyles and their growing recognition that older people will increasingly have to fund their own old age have contributed to this.

Although more than one third of respondents suggested that they had previously given financial assistance to their children or younger family members to purchase a home and many recognised that with rising prices it was now more difficult for children to purchase a home, in almost all cases assistance was in the form of a loan not a gift. Mostly the loan was informal with no interest, but not always. For some respondents the loan had not been repaid and there was resentment about this. The data demonstrated the explicit outcomes – that is that people whose parents had paid off their home or people whose parents or parent had already moved into a retirement village were far more likely to be provided with financial assistance to buy a home. Also, that people whose parents are renting have very little prospect of gaining parental assistance for home purchase.

Yet the discussions from respondents were more about their desires and expectations for retirement lifestyles in the context of reciprocal obligations surrounding intergenerational and intrafamilial assistance. The themes were endlessly repeated like mantras. These themes were able to be analysed in the narratives of peoples' discussion and comments. Narrative analysis, as discussed in the Report Methodology, offers the opportunities for analysis of the meanings and values about a society or a social group which are articulated through symbols and stories which are widely held to be true and which are mobilised by policy makers, politicians, the media, cultural groups and by individuals themselves to define a sense of identity. A special list of references relating to narrative analysis and its use in policy development is attached to the list of references at the end of the Report. The narrative stream linked the big themes seamlessly – Fate: we were never given anything, those times were hard. Sacrifice: of our youth and capacity for pleasure, the biggest sacrifice of all. Resentment: they want it all without having to sacrifice- implicit in this is that fate has been kinder to them. Betrayal: they've been privileged with education and opportunities we never had so they should know better. If they are selfish, they are betraying us and the values we stand for, and their expectations will not be fulfilled.

Bequests and Inheritance and Intergenerational Relations

The attitudes of many men and women towards inheritance has shifted as to what previously would have been considered 'the right thing to do' in terms of traditional obligations and responsibilities to their children. Our data strongly suggest that many older people's attitudes have taken on more of those of their Baby Boomer children; that is "put yourself first". The desire to bequeath assets to the next generation seems to be significantly diminishing.

More than one quarter of respondents overall suggested that they expected to use up all their assets while they were alive, more than one third of Baby Boomers expected that to be the case. Almost 70 per cent of people renting said they will leave no assets behind when they die. Some respondents said that they hoped that there would be enough left for their funeral, but that would be about all. Only self-funded retirees were confident that they would leave a legacy, only 17 per cent expecting to use up all their assets before they die. A surprisingly small number of respondents (7%) had made provision in their wills for charitable bequests.

People who had remarried or were in new relationships said that they had made special provisions in their wills for their respective children. Some people reported bad experiences themselves with parents who had disregarded them in favour of new wives and children, and some anticipated that there may be problems ahead in conflict over their assets. Some respondents commented that this was the best reason for them to spend all their money while they were alive, that they had always tried to provide the best education for their children in their first or second or even third families, but that there was a lot of hostility between the children of different families.

Indeed, in popular culture we now have the acronym 'SKI', which stands for 'Spend Kids' Inheritance' to define this new behaviour. How this attitudinal change is expressed and legitimated within the narratives of contemporary Australians is very much a function of the shift from the sorts of identity values which used to be derived from lived experience within fixed communities to identity values derived from mass exposure to virtual sources through media representations, which of course encourage and idealise consumption and lifestyle.

The Demise of Universal Home Ownership – the Great Australian Dream Unrealisable

Many respondents said their children had told them to go ahead and spend their money, but many stated that they still felt their children had some expectations that they would inherit at least the family home. There are strong indications that the expectations of Baby Boomers, and of their children the Generation X-ers, that they will inherit the family home of older Australians will not be realised. Increasing longevity and user-pays policies for health and residential care will place what might be unexpected and onerous burdens upon the retirement savings and home equity of the war generation and so too on their Baby Boomer children. As aged health and residential aged care has a mix of user pays and government provision, especially for those on low fixed- incomes.

This coupled with the aforementioned “put yourself first because you deserve it” attitude offers bleak prospects for the expected legacies of the Baby Boomers and even less for their Generation X children.

Consequently, the ‘Great Australian Dream’ of universal home-ownership - that cornerstone of our egalitarian society – may be no more. As young people now make lifestyle choices opting for inner-city apartment living or rental accommodation, no longer will their longer term expectations of parental support or inheritance be available to meet that ever diminishing chance of meeting the deposit, let alone the loan repayments, for the suburban home on the quarter-acre block.

Although these shifts towards questioning the tradition of passing on everything to the children are still in the minority, there are grounds to believe that this phenomenon will only increase as the current cultural and political climate continues to espouse the virtues of self interest over collective responsibility. This is likely to have extremely important ramifications for politicians, policy-makers, banks and the housing sectors in coming years.

Perhaps the most surprising issue which surfaced entirely without provocation in responses to the survey and in discussions in the focus groups and the Internet chat rooms was people’s desire to be able to end their lives painlessly and at the time of their own choosing, in other words, euthanasia.

These far reaching transformations in personal identities and family values in Australian society are ongoing. The findings of this project are in some cases revelatory and certainly warrant the close attention of the community as a whole. The findings will doubtless provoke discussion within Australian families. And in so doing, some of the previously unexpressed resentments and hostilities may well be resolved, or at the very least result in more open communication between generations. These are particularly important issues for, as was reported in the previous Positioning Paper, legal challenges to wills are escalating and court proceedings only waste money which could more productively be used by family members of whichever generation.

As indications of the trajectories of future intentions and aspirations of older Australians, these findings provide important information to politicians and policy-makers in governments, both federal and state, and to decision-makers in community organisations and in the private sector. As the limitations of the research precluded a random population sample, the findings are not representative of the views of every

older Australian. But they do however represent the views of a very broad-ranging sample of more than 7,000 Australians aged over 50 years of age, and must therefore be seen as salutary guidance to future choices of older Australians.

The results of this research provide an impetus for more extensive research, most particularly to examine how people's attitudes can and will change over time. Future research priorities and policy directions which may advisedly be appropriate and acceptable for Australian citizens are detailed in the last section of the Report.

CHAPTER 1

1.1 Overview of Issues From the AHURI Positioning Paper

A detailed Positioning Paper was prepared in the first stage of this Project. The Positioning Paper summarized previous research and provided an information context for the empirical stages of the Project. The Positioning Paper was posted on the AHURI website on July 13, 2004¹ and has created widespread interest among policy decision-makers in the public and private sectors and in community organisations across Australia as well as internationally. The Positioning Paper also produced a large amount of interest from the mass media in articles in leading metropolitan newspapers and on radio all over Australia. Some radio stations conducted talk back programs and in every case the radio switchboards were bombarded with people of all ages wishing to share their experiences and concerns regarding these issues. This is a clear demonstration of the salience of this issue to policy decision-makers and to the general public. It is evident that the issues of older people's housing and most particularly the destiny of the family home are of pressing concern in Australia.

1.1.1 Australia's Ageing Population – Fiscal Challenges

Australia's population is ageing because of the combined effects of increased longevity and decreased fertility. In 1976 Australia had 1.3 million people over 65 years comprising nine per cent of the total population. By 2004 that figure had doubled to just over 2.6 million people over 65, comprising 13.0 per cent of the total population (ABS 3201.0, 2004). The number of people aged over 65 is expected to grow to between 6.2 million and 7.9 million by 2051, more than 25 per cent (one quarter) of the population. The over 85 age group is expected to almost quadruple as a proportion of the population, the highest growth rate of all age groups. From 290,000 in 2005, the number of those over 85 will grow to almost 1.6 million, an increase from 1.5 per cent in 2003 to 8.6 per cent by 2051. Hand in hand with an ageing population, the proportion of working-age Australians is expected to drop substantially. As a proportion of the total population, the number of people in this working age bracket is projected to fall from 67 per cent in 2002 to between 57 per cent and 59 per cent by 2051 (ABS, 3222.0, 2003).

These demographic changes are producing economic, social, and personal challenges for Australian society, for families and individuals, and the issues for Government are numerous. Ageing populations create pressure for higher expenditure on pensions, health care and other government-provided welfare and social benefits, leading to higher taxes falling on fewer workers. The Commonwealth's 2002 Intergenerational Report (Costello, 2002) and the National Strategy for an Ageing Australia (Andrews, 2001) drew attention to the future implications of an ageing population for younger taxpayers if current levels of public spending per head on older people are to be maintained. And as well, in a world of global markets and capital flows, governments cannot increase taxes significantly without damaging national competitiveness.

Government decision-makers are faced with a limited range of options to control the public costs of ageing. The most important strategy currently in place to reduce aged pension expenditure is the government mandated Superannuation Guarantee Charge (SGC), which aims to build the levels of private savings and self-provision of retirement

¹ <http://www.ahuri.edu.au/general/project/display/dspProject.cfm?projectId=87>

income (Olsberg, 1997). However universal compulsory private savings through occupational superannuation contributions were introduced just over a decade ago and older people currently benefit little. It is also generally accepted that the SGC will be insufficient to have a significant impact upon the retirement incomes of Baby Boomers born between 1946 and 1966 (Kelly, 2002). Confronting the growing fiscal burdens of coping with the health, pension and other government provided services and benefits for an ageing population, there have already been two decades of economic reforms. These have produced Australian Government policies and community expectations that older people must be increasingly responsible to self-fund their retirement needs and pay user charges for health, community care and aged care facilities. Some parts of Government have an interest in unlocking the assets of the aged to pay for these expenditures. To some degree Australian Governments since the early 1980s have taken a renewed interest in assets: re-introducing an assets test on age pensions and a capital gains tax and a range of taxes upon superannuation savings. The family home has to date remained sacrosanct.

1.1.2 Australia's Ageing Population – Housing, Housing Transfers and Intergenerational Relations

Home ownership in Australia is very high and particularly highly valued amongst older people. In 2001, 80 per cent of people over 65 years of age were home-owners, 75.5 per cent owning their homes outright unencumbered by mortgage. In 2002-03 there were approximately 1.5 million older person households (ABS 4102.0, 2005). Of these, approximately 80 per cent lived in a dwelling that they owned outright. Only three per cent of older person households were purchaser households paying off a mortgage (ABS 4102.0, 2005). Home-owners have been major beneficiaries of increases in the value of housing in the past 20 years. Australia's current generation of retirees, as well as those now aged 55 to 64, have a substantial and increasing share of the nation's private wealth (Harding, King and Kelly, 2002) due to their high levels of home ownership and the increased value of housing assets, particularly the recent momentous inflation in the value of the family home in the eastern states of Australia. The estimated average asset wealth of Australian families with a household head aged 65 or over increased from \$106,000 in 1986 through \$267,000 in 1994 to \$390,000 in 2000. In 2002-03, the average value of dwellings owned by older couple households was \$285,000 and for lone person older households \$280,000. There are differences in the average value of dwellings owned by older person households across states and territories. In 2002-03, New South Wales had the highest average value (\$395,000), followed by the Australian Capital Territory (\$312,000) and Victoria (\$280,000), while Tasmania had the lowest average of \$141,000 (ABS 4102.0, 2005).

Yet many older people are asset rich but income poor. There is diversity in income levels among the elderly as a result of previous labour market experiences and lifetime income differences, regional differences, gender and ethnic differences, and an increasing economic polarisation within Australian society. Although capital from other asset types may be more accessible than housing, for many older Australians without adequate superannuation or other income producing assets, their only options for future needs may be to extract equity from their home or to trade down their residences. There may be pressure on attachment to the family home and upon intergenerational relationships as assets of older people, particularly housing assets, may be required by older people to finance their needs for accommodation, residential care, health and other services and for their enhanced expectations for retirement lifestyles. Previous research has shown that meeting user pays policies generally

depends on funds from selling or mortgaging the family home or from assistance from within the family (Healy, 2002: 11).

Ownership of the family home has had a particular place in Australia's history, often referred to as 'the Australian dream' (Baum and Wulff, 2001). Not only has the family home always been the most significant financial asset for the majority of Australians, but home ownership has served as an important icon for personal identity and family values. Never before has the destiny of the family home and the social relationships within families been of such crucial moment for the economic, social and political future of Australia.

Previous research documents the desire by older Australians to remain in their home, a desire which is supported by Australian governments not only in the form of favourable tax (capital gains) and pensions treatments (Winter, 1999), but also in terms of aged care policy by providing assistance with activities such as property maintenance, personal care, health care, and household tasks. A few older people have been able to remain in their homes by borrowing against housing assets (Fratantoni, 1999). There are also technological advances which make it possible for older people to make alterations to their home to enable them to live longer independently (Celler and Lovell, 2000).

Yet previous research finds that some older people move, and do so for diverse reasons (Stimson and McGovern, 2002). The most common factors include the death of a spouse, concerns about security, difficulties being experienced with home maintenance and changes in the nature of the neighbourhood, or because of their own current or anticipated care needs (Stimson and McGovern, 2002). Older people choose from a number of options. Many move to units, town houses, smaller houses or cheaper locations, or move to other accommodation - such as with families, retirement villages and aged care. There is a long standing pattern in Australia of some older people moving to smaller houses in their retirement, often moving to coastal areas (Salt, 1999). In some cases the move is for lifestyle reasons or to free up housing assets to meet living costs by trading down their asset. A more recent and unprecedented move by retirees is to retirement village developments. Other older Australians are forced to move to retirement accommodation with care services or to aged care institutions due to unforeseen or overwhelming circumstances. Unlike many other countries, intergenerational support of the elderly in terms of living under one roof is not common in Australia.

The issue of private transfer of wealth within families, particularly housing wealth and its potential for ensuing intergenerational conflict, has recently become a public issue in Australia (Macfarlane, 2003). Such concerns challenge established ideas about the place of older people in society, about succession and inheritance, and about relations between kin which have been traditionally considered as an 'intergenerational contract' or as a set of social and cultural norms defining people's expectations and obligations (Walker, 1996).

Of note too, there is a new emphasis upon *inter vivos* financial transfers between living people. Eighty seven per cent of Australians who had received assistance to buy homes were helped by parents, and 64 per cent of those who inherited houses inherited from parents. The remainder received help or inheritances from grandparents or other relatives (King and McDonald, 1999). They found also that 5.5 per cent of the population aged 15 and over had, in the previous 10 years, received private intergenerational financial assistance to purchase a home or land and 5.7 per

cent had received an inheritance, worth at least \$10,000, as money or inherited housing.

The expectations for inheritance of the Baby Boom generation are of particular interest. The wealth available for inheritance by the Baby Boomers should be greater than that available to previous generations, although they can expect to receive it somewhat later. Total household wealth potentially available for transfer by bequest is projected to rise from \$8.8 billion per annum in 2000 to more than \$70 billion in 2030 (AMP/NATSEM, 2003). But expectations of intergenerational transfers may fall short of current estimations. There are recent significant social and structural changes in Australian society. Apart from increasing longevity and changing expectations for retirement lifestyles, there is a greater prevalence of multi-generational families, an increasing incidence of divorce, remarriage and blended families, single parent families, later child bearing and smaller families. These changes are all important to intergenerational obligations and support because they form a central part of the context within which these are worked out.

There are few studies either overseas or in Australia that focus upon the transmission of real property and capital assets either through testamentary bequests or *inter vivos* transfers. Contemporary literature on intergenerational transfers has focused upon a narrow range of issues, most particularly the economic, social and moral obligations between generations and within families and the exchange of goods and services from younger to older generations and vice versa (Edgar, 1989; Kendig 1986 and 1990). Much of the sociological research concerning inheritance has focused upon the transfer of wealth within the family as a source of social inequality and a constraint upon opportunity and attainment (Johnson, 1999; Quadano, 1989; Walker, 1996; Saunders, 1994).

The legal situation in Australia regarding inheritance is quite different to most other countries which continue to impose varying amounts of death duties, wealth taxes or other imposts upon the testamentary disposition and transmission of property. Since 1975 inheritance or estate taxes and death duties have been progressively removed in all Australian States. Succession to property on death through inheritance in Australia is legally constrained under differing laws relating to wills under various State legislation and legal statutes which relate to the distribution of assets. The acceptance and degrees of legislative and fiscal restrictions upon the statute of wills and the rights of descents and distributions continues to be a source of debate in moral philosophy and political and legal thought.

Confronting longevity and extended periods of retirement, Australian men and women face unprecedented lifestyle and financial choices and opportunities. And faced with fiscal burdens of providing health, welfare and other government provided services for an ageing population, questions of the persistence of untrammelled rights of bequest and inheritance may once again be on the public agenda for discussion in Australia. This Report documents the findings of the national research study which explores these issues.

1.2 The National Empirical Research Project

1.2.1 Introduction – Home, Kinship and Exchange in Australia

Among the most dramatic changes that accompany the present demographic shifts in Australia are the far-reaching transformations in intergenerational relationships via exchange relations in modern nuclear families, our system of kinship. Broad cultural shifts in family values, personal self-identities and material aspirations are most manifest in the attitudes and intentions of older Australians with regard to their future housing intentions, their financial expectations, and particularly the possibilities of the transfer of the family home to their Baby Boomer children.

These behavioural and attitudinal shifts are very much a function of a transformation in personal identities and the values which underpin them. Up until the mid to late twentieth century most people derived their identities from their lived experiences within well defined types of communities into which they were born and continued to live. These identities could be described as 'roots' based, with their foundations in social class, voting allegiance, religion and church, neighbourhood, community organisations, local pubs and clubs. Increasingly however, identity values are now derived from virtual sources - representations from an ever expanding media industry - print media, film, television (where the defining feature has been the continuing blurring of boundaries between fiction and non-fiction), radio, the Internet and other electronic communications. All of these expanding sources of representation are driven by the advertising and marketing industries which, of course, propagate and promote the consumption lifestyle. In particular, home ownership and housing tenure are at the centre of this nexus of consumption.

The family home has long been important because it was the material manifestation of the long held Australian sense of egalitarianism – the home on the quarter acre block was the symbolic object which could be analysed, measured, spoken about by politicians, economists, community and cultural leaders and most of all by ordinary men and women. It was the egalitarian myth made manifest for all to see. The post-war rise of a home-owning middle class and the concomitant growth of the suburbs was not only important because it showed, from lived experience, our national myth to be true. The function of that home, with its backyard rendering it a safe, self-contained space, balancing nature and culture, was the reproduction of the family unit, the most important of all social institutions. The home during this period provided the necessary stability and security for reproduction, was backed by the promise of government support through the welfare state and most importantly, was the living symbol which brought our national myth to fruition.

From the late twentieth century, the influence of globalisation has brought about profound shifts in the way people born after the war formed their social identities. From the late sixties and early seventies in Australia, their attitudes and values were formed more through the social changes in Western societies (feminism, civil rights, environmentalism, the sexual revolution, consumer based individualism), which were given mass exposure through a rapidly expanding media, than by the types of lived community experiences of their parents. The new values, priorities and experiences of the Baby Boomer children transformed the self-identities and the types of cultural narratives through which people find meaning and legitimacy in their lives. Within those frameworks, lifestyle emerges as the dominant cultural narrative, replacing production and reproduction. Witness the change in attitudes to beachfront real estate around the country. Previous generations did not value the beachfront because of

property erosion. Now it is the site of the country's biggest real estate boom, despite the foreknowledge of risk of future rising sea levels due to global warming. The shift here is from the material importance of assets to cultural assets like a view and access to lifestyle. The home itself has been replaced as the dominant symbol of personal identification and the foundation for family and kinship. Location is now the primary symbol of identification because it provides access to those cultural sites where lifestyles can be enjoyed and displayed and cultural capital can be accumulated. And in the overwhelming acceptance of those cultural mores, property assets with lifestyle benefits have indeed become the essence of material success and aspiration.

At the same time, broader economic and industrial changes also had social ramifications. The emergence of the efficiency of the market as an allocative mechanism in social and economic life, demands for individual responsibility and an emphasis on the mutual obligation between the citizen and the state in combination produce uncertainty and a dissolution of social trust. This is of critical importance because it transforms the nature of gift exchange between families, inheritance being the most defining. Fate, sacrifice, betrayal, resentment and even revenge – all have become defining themes within contemporary cultural narratives around family, kinship and reciprocal relations in this country.

1.2.2 Research Aims and Research Questions

This second stage of the research project, the national empirical stage of the project, gives voice to the changing priorities of older men and women through sociological analysis of the responses of more than 7,000 Australians aged over 50 across the country. Here, through extensive survey data, in-depth qualitative research and narrative analysis, are revealed the celebrations and the tensions of kinship relations surrounding the mythologies and realities of the family home, still such a dominant foundation for lifestyle and financial stability in this country. The privilege of listening to these voices will be important for individuals and their families, but also for those in policy areas whose decisions will continue to impact so markedly upon the future daily lives and possibilities for older Australians.

The research questions which were the focus of the empirical research were:

- What are the experiences of mid-life and later-age Australian men and women regarding present housing tenure and future housing intentions and the intergenerational and/or intrafamilial transfer of their financial and/or housing assets?
- How do older Australians expect that those transfers, *inter vivos* or by inheritance, will affect the economic and social circumstances of younger family members?

Data collection focused primarily upon home-owners aged over 50 years for the following reasons:

1. They are already concerned with these issues, many of them facing decisions concerning their future residential plans, many of them having already retired from the full-time paid workforce and some having already made decisions to downsize from their long-term family residence either shifting location or into smaller accommodation.

2. The decisions made by these older Australians are indicative of changing priorities and expectations and relations among kinship systems which inform our understanding of social change within the context of Australia's ageing population.

The sample is intentionally an availability sample focusing upon the intentions and attitudes of home-owners as housing equity and housing transfers are a focus of the research. A national random sample of home-owners aged over 50 years was not possible within the constraints of available funding for the project. It was also considered important not to exclude non home-owners from the research. Indeed our sample contains almost 600 non home-owners (almost ten per cent of respondents). One third of respondents are aged between 50 and 59 years of age and comprise the first cohort of the Baby Boomer generation. This is the first opportunity to have some insights into the future expectations of these senior Baby Boomers. Their responses are further enhanced by our analyses of their parents' narratives as indications of the likely housing tenure trajectories for Baby Boomers.

These findings provide evidence for the development and evaluation of programs that will assist people to age in their own homes, and also programs that will facilitate the desired mobility of older people, in particular the potential to 'unlock' housing wealth and thereby augment older people's life choices. The project also explores older people's intentions with regards to legacies and bequests, and thereby informs future policies for asset transfers in this country. This Final Report and a Research and Policy Bulletin are here provided at the completion of the first two stages of the project.

1.2.3 Stage Three of the Project

The third stage of the project will be a follow-up survey of respondents in 2007 two years subsequent to the original study in order to determine changing expectations and actual shifts in housing occupancy. This subsequent study will be conducted through telephone interviews with previous focus group and computer website chat room participants. It is our intention to use the sample from the previous qualitative field research to make contact with at least 50 respondents for this survey. Stage Three of the project will provide longitudinal data for analysis of actual behaviour, which can then be compared against expectations and attitudes of respondents expressed in the baseline surveys, and qualitative research. The intentions of the research will be to identify what (if any) changes in housing tenure and/ or housing transfers have taken place within this two year period, and whether decisions concerning housing transfers have been made or changed during the two year period. A further Report and a Research and Policy Bulletin will be prepared at the completion of the third stage of the project. These reports will continue to contribute to policy development on home ownership, ageing in place and accommodation options for the aged, and the balance between public and user financing of services and consumption among the aged.

1.3 Methodologies of the Empirical Field Research

The empirical research for this project was conducted over a one year period from April 2004 to April 2005. The field research combined a broad range of integrated quantitative and qualitative research methodologies. Housing tenure was the master narrative. The research purposely targeted home-owners, but by also including non home-owners, differences in housing tenure between home-owners and private or public renters were able to be examined. These are separately identified and

discussed in the report. Five social groupings were selected for general analysis and examination in this report. These are gender, age cohorts, primary place of residence, household status and source of income of respondents. A cohort is a demographic jargon word for any group of people born within the same prescribed period whose common experiences, particularly in youth, make them different from all other cohorts, before and after. Three age cohorts were selected for analysis within the population of respondents aged over 50. The first cohort, comprised men and women between 50 and 59 years of age. They are part of the first group of the Baby Boom generation born after World War II and imminently facing or just having entered retirement. The Baby Boomers, recipients of both a fortunate global and local fate, have enjoyed high standards of living and this group of early Baby Boomers in particular managed to benefit from opportunities on the real estate and employment fronts. The second cohort comprised those aged 60 to 74; the young old, active and independent most already in retirement. This is the cohort that in their youth had to deal with the aftermath of Depression and War, yet post-war they enjoyed opportunities for higher standards of living, full employment and affordable housing with tremendous upward mobility and access to consumption. The third cohort comprised those aged over 75 years; the older old, facing dependence and many planning their move into residential care.

1.3.1 Quantitative Research

The national field research survey which comprised the primary quantitative data collection has created an enormous amount of public and government and community interest, and has produced a unique original database of the attitudes and intentions of older home-owning Australians throughout this country. The absence of data concerning the attitudes and intentions of older Australians suggested the need for a major national quantitative survey to establish much needed indications of a benchmark for these issues in Australia. Informal interviews and discussions with older men and women in both Sydney and Melbourne alerted the researchers to the sensitivity of older people regarding issues of housing, family relationships and plans for inheritance. This led to extensive piloting of the self-report questionnaire to be used in the national survey.

The national survey produced an entirely unanticipated level of response from older Australians. Altogether just under 7,000 older Australians ($n = 6,789$) completed the questionnaire. Although a formal closing date of June 30, 2004 was indicated, responses continued to be received even up to May, 2005. Many respondents enclosed letters giving additional comments or enclosing newspaper cuttings concerning the issue. The size of the response makes these findings unusually reliable in statistical terms and correspondingly very important as indications of the attitudes and intentions of older Australians. It also makes the data set a very important and useful resource for further research and researchers.

The focus of the national survey was to gain information on the attitudes and future intentions with regard to housing and inheritance of older Australians.

The particular themes which were addressed were:

1. The present housing tenure of older Australians.
2. The attitudes and future intentions with regard to housing of older Australians.

3. The financial planning for future needs of older Australians, and attitudes concerning particular government policies on residential age care.
4. The intergenerational assistance given by older Australians to family members with regard to housing.
5. The intentions of older Australians with regard to bequests and inheritance.

The results of the national survey responses on these five themes are detailed in the Results section of this Report.

1.3.2 The National Survey and Research Sample

Given the limited research funds and the practical difficulties of securing a national random sample, the research instrument for the survey (see Appendix A) was inserted as a four page questionnaire in the bi-monthly journal of the National Seniors' Association, called '50 Something' in April/May, 2004 with a four week response period. The National Seniors' Association (recently combined with the some State branches of the Council on the Ageing COTA) represents the majority of Australia's community and service organizations for people over 50. The journal '50 Something' was selected as it offered the most cost-effective and appropriate means of targeting a wide national readership from which it was possible to identify a range of respondent categories for subset data analyses. The journal has a readership which includes members of over 50's organizations such as self-funded independent retirees and more asset wealthy sectors of the community who live in their own homes. These readers include those sectors of the population who have equity in their housing asset and who are in a position to make housing equity choices and transfers, and are thus the primary target population for this project.

As the national survey was not conducted using a random sample, it is not possible to claim these responses are necessarily representative of all older Australians. Yet comparison against data from the ABS 1999 Australian Housing Survey and the 2001 Census of Population and Housing reveal that there are general similarities with the categories of the national data. There is a bias towards home-owners in this project, but that was the intention of the selection of this sampling frame - that is older Australian men and women who were likely to be home-owners. As well, the ABS figures are all for those aged 65 and over, whereas 54.8 per cent of our sample are aged under 65. This of course was our intention for we are seeking to have clear indications of the intentions and attitudes of those approaching retirement, particularly those between 50 and 60 years of age - the third of our sample who include the first cohort of Baby Boomers. The percentage of respondents on some questions in the categories was sometimes quite small. However the large sample means that even the small percentages do represent quite a reasonable number of respondents. So, for example, a response rate of one per cent represents 68 respondents and five per cent represents 340 respondents (but only on questions where the full sample responded).

1.3.3 The National Survey – Data Analysis

The survey responses were coded and a data file was created. Data were analysed using the statistical package for the social sciences (SPSS), using appropriate descriptive and inferential statistical tests for significance and measures of association for some variables. All results reported are statistically significant at $p \leq 0.05$ (Pearson Chi-Square, t-tests and logistic regression). Logistic Regression was used to assess

the weight of relationship between some variables. The methodology for the Logistic Regression is detailed below. Results and statistical output are detailed within the Results Section.

1.3.4 Logistic Regressions

Four binary questions were analysed using logistic multiple regression techniques. The questions analysed were Q5 ('Do you think in the foreseeable future you might move from your present home?'), Q10 ('Have you made a will'), Q14 ('Have you ever given your children or other younger family members financial assistance') and Q16 ('Do you expect to use up all your assets while you are alive?').

The explanatory variables used in the regressions, and their modal categories², are shown below:

- Sex (Male, Female; modal category: Female).
- Age (50-59 years, 60 – 74 years, 75 years and over; modal category: 60 – 74 years).
- Children (No children, One or more children; modal category: One or more children).
- Housing tenure (Own home – no mortgage, Own home – with a mortgage, Renting privately, Renting public housing, In a retirement village or hostel or nursing home; modal category: Own home – no mortgage).
- Source of income (Pensioner/part pensioner not working, Self funded retiree, Semi retired – includes those who suggested they were retired whilst working part time and those who were neither working nor retired, Working not retired; modal category: Pensioner/part pensioner not working).
- Region (Major city, Regional city, Country/coastal town, Rural area; modal category: Major city).
- Household Status (Living with spouse/partner, Living alone, Living with Family or others; modal category: Living with spouse/partner).

Multiple regression techniques generate estimates of the independent relationship between variables (holding other observed factors constant). Logistic regressions model the probability of a given response as a function of other variables. Results of logistic regressions, however, can be difficult to interpret. The approach taken here is to examine the effects of one explanatory variable at a time. Thus the predicted probabilities associated with each value of a given variable are shown, whilst every other variable is held constant at its modal value. For example, to examine the effect of gender, the predicted values for persons aged 60 – 74 years, with one or more children, living in their own home without a mortgage, receiving a pension or part pension, living in a major city with a spouse/partner are shown, and only sex is varied. Only those explanatory variables that are statistically significant are examined here.

² The category selected by the most number of respondents is referred to as the modal category.

The full set of results is included in Appendix G. For each regression, some cases are excluded where responses to one or more of the relevant variables are missing (Q5: 7.9% of cases; Q10: 6.8%; Q14: 8.2%; Q16: 14.5%). The results are calculated on the remaining cases.

1.3.5 Qualitative Research

The qualitative research which comprised the next stage of the research provided opportunities to further explore and analyse patterns of differences within the population. In addition to eight focus groups in Queensland, New South Wales and Victoria, an innovative use of computerised communications with older men and women provided an opportunity to gain more intimate examination of people's experiences and attitudes. This methodological approach was developed by the researchers on finding that there were constraints on the quality of data produced by public discussion of these issues in focus group situations as a result of people's concern for privacy regarding personal matters of this nature. The researchers found there were taboos concerning speaking about family relationships, about which there are frequently issues of conflict and contradiction. People in the focus groups tended to codify their negative feelings through expressing their ideas within acceptable social narratives. By negotiating to raise the issues for investigation over two national internet services used by older Australians, one the Greypath Chat Room ³ and the second the NEAT Chat Room ⁴, the researchers were able to obtain narrative responses in which people revealed very private details of their kinship relations. The main structural difference here is the back stage setting as opposed to the front stage setting of the focus groups. The communication is therefore anonymous between the respondents and the researcher. Although mediated by the computer, it is more like a private conversation between two friends over coffee in a neutral venue. Hence, there is an ability to state private things – anonymity at this level truly provides security and confidentiality. The Internet is interesting for that – in some sense it acts as a form of electronic confessional – for true or secret feelings, sometimes revelatory. Recursive analysis of data outcomes throughout the research process resulted in this extension of our original research design with significant benefits in the analysis of the data and research outcomes.

1.3.6 Narrative Analysis – Analysing the Qualitative Data

Narrative analysis has been the primary conceptual framework used to interpret the data. The term 'narrative' is not just used as a descriptive device to document the verbal and written responses of participants in relation to specific sets of questions. Rather, as an interpretive framework, narrative analysis allows us to chart the meaning of these personal 'stories', as it were, in relation to larger meta-narratives within society. In our case these are the meta-narratives of family relations in Western capitalist societies. And the meanings embedded in these will change over time as different societies respond to broader historical, economic and cultural forces.

Personal stories or narratives of self in relation to these wider social meta-narratives always reference the individual in ways which locate the individual in meaningful ways, regardless of whether the individual is supportive of, or reactive to social change. In

³ <http://www.greypath.com>

⁴ <http://www.pobox.une.edu.au/mailman/listinfo/neat>

short, these personal narratives are legitimating devices in which the self is positioned as a subject with a moral basis for action. Within their narratives, people will mobilise both sacred and profane categories of meaning in order to position themselves in relation to the world. And like the structure of myth, these will be in dramatic form and will have the capacity to resolve the contradictions inherent in their own position, i.e. balancing their own needs and desires with what is perceived to be the 'social good'. Different narratives acquire truth status within social groups by virtue of the fact that the meanings they convey are shared by that group. In this sense they act as projective grids through which people 'create the world' as best suits the needs of both the individual and the group.

Not only is narrative analysis invaluable in charting the shifting meanings of individuals and groups in relation to social change, but it is also of great predictive value. Through narrative analysis one can chart potential ways of acting as a consequence of the strength of people's attitudes, values and beliefs, as expressed in their stories about themselves in relation to society. In summary, we can predict how people will act as a function of their narrative summation of who they are. This is particularly valuable in providing predictive indications of people's potential for action when confronted by various economic and social policy situations.

1.3.7 Ethical Considerations

Ethical considerations have continued to be an important aspect of the project. The project, the research instruments and strategies for analysis were approved by the University of NSW Ethics Committee. Respondents in the self-report national survey were informed of processes to protect the anonymity of their responses, and the measures for the security of the data. Consent forms were obtained from all participants in the focus groups. Likewise, participants in the Internet chat rooms were informed of processes to protect the anonymity of their responses, and all email addresses have been removed from the data so that anonymity is ensured. All data is retained and held securely in the School of Sociology at the University of New South Wales.

The results of the analyses of the data are detailed in the next section under thematic headings.

CHAPTER 2: RESEARCH FINDINGS

2.1 Introduction

This section presents the results of the data analyses of both the quantitative and qualitative data, as the findings from the qualitative research substantially inform and explain the quantitative survey results. The results reported in the tables however are drawn entirely from respondents to the national survey. For this reason, it is important to first present a clear overview of the profile of the 6789 men and women who responded to the national survey.

The results are presented under five themes which directly address the research questions of the project. Those themes are:

1. Present Housing Tenure
2. Future Housing Intentions
3. Financial Planning for Future Needs
4. Intergenerational and Intrafamilial Assistance
5. Bequests, Inheritance and Intergenerational Relations

Results are presented in the following tables according to the demographic and other categories selected for analysis. Housing tenure, gender and age cohorts⁵ revealed significant differences across most themes. Income status, primary place of residence and household status revealed significant differences on many themes and are also separately presented. Results of logistic regressions are included on themes where the relationships between variables are both statistically significant and meaningful in the context of this study. Qualitative responses from open-ended questions in the survey and from analysis of focus group and Internet chat room discussions are included to further explore the quantitative responses in the tables. Frequently there are criticisms concerning the representativeness of qualitative responses in major research projects. The respondents to the national survey, as well as those who took part in the focus groups and Internet chat rooms, showed an overwhelming eagerness to have their say, both on the formally defined topics and on other related issues that arose during the survey and discussion. To address the issue of representativeness, as well as in deference to our respondents, we have included a large number of respondents' comments in an attempt to more fully convey the scope of the attitudes and concerns of the very many older men and women who contributed to our research.

⁵ A group of persons having similar ages

2.2 Respondents in the Empirical Research

The national survey produced almost 7000 responses (N = 6789). There is an extraordinary spread of respondents across all regions of Australia (as detailed in the cluster map below see Figure1 and Appendix H). All states were well represented, with respondents residing in major metropolitan areas and in regional cities, country and coastal towns and rural areas (2223 from NSW/ACT; 948 from Victoria; 2053 from Queensland; 652 from South Australia, 666 from Western Australia; 144 from Tasmania; and 68 from the Northern Territory). As targeted in this availability sample, respondents comprised mainly home-owners over 50 years of age. One third of the respondents were between 50 and 59 years of age born between 1946 and 1955 - the first cohort of the Baby Boom generation⁶. Almost 50 per cent were aged between 60 and 74, many of them already retired, others still working but planning for retirement. Over one third were self-funded retirees, just over one third were pensioners or part-pensioners and just under one third were still working. Both men and women were well represented (males 39%, females 61%). It is usually considered very difficult to get men to fill in self-report questionnaires and the participation by 2599 males indicates the interest of men in these issues. More than one third of respondents live alone (36.4%) - a category of growing and immense importance (see ABS Australian Social Trends, 2005). In the older cohorts the numbers living alone are even greater; 56.6 per cent of those 75 and over and 37 per cent of those 60 to 74 years. Many more women (45.7%) than men (21.5%) were living alone. Most men were living with a spouse or partner (74%) and very few respondents overall (6.9%) were living with family and/or others (7%). Eleven per cent of respondents had no children (males 8.6%, females 12.7%) and it was younger respondents and people who live alone who, predominantly, were childless. The vast majority of respondents (86%) had between one and five children, and some older respondents had more. Tables showing profiles of respondents according to gender and age cohort are included in Appendices D and E. As a large availability sample, responses are presented in terms of actual category responses, and have not been weighted against national census categories. However respondent categories are similar to categories in national census and random population studies, and comparisons are included in Appendices B and C.

The large sample resulted in very substantial statistical power in the analysis, which meant that even minor differences between variables were statistically significant. As a consequence, only those differences which presented meaningfully in the context of the study are presented.

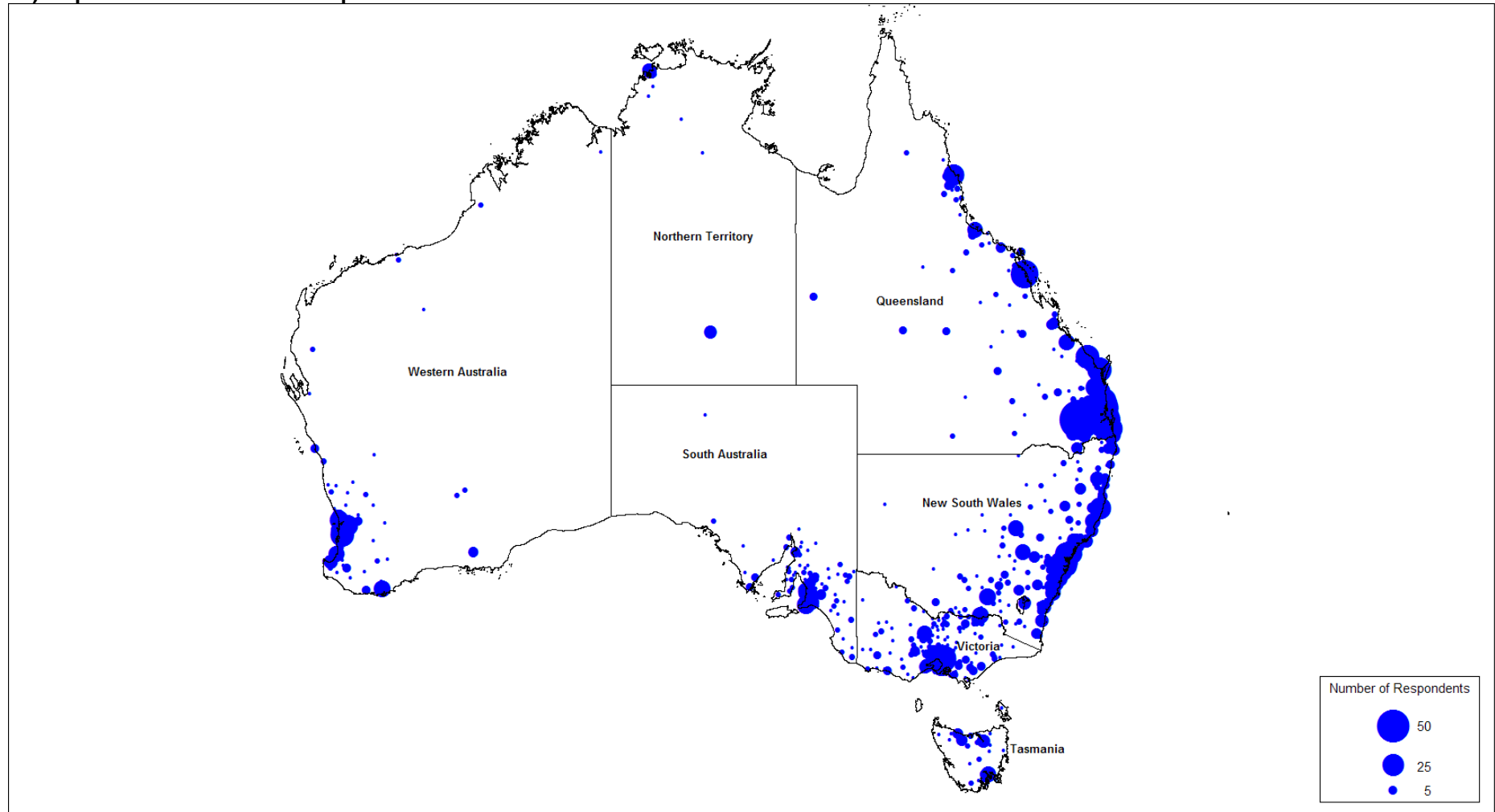
One hundred and forty respondents participated in the qualitative research, 82 in the seven focus groups and 58 in the Internet chat rooms. The focus groups were held in Brisbane city (12 participants, 7 Men and 5 women); Southport on the Queensland Gold Coast (12 participants, 6 Men and 6 women); Coffs Harbour a seaside town in New South Wales (11 participants, 6 Men and 5 women); Sydney City (13 participants, 7 Men and 6 women); Melbourne City (15 participants, 8 Men and 7 women); Rosebud a seaside village in Victoria (10 participants, 7 Men and 3 women); and Knox, near the Dandenongs outside Melbourne (9 participants, 5 Men and 4 women). The internet produced 58 responses, 19 from men and 39 from women, 19 from metropolitan centres and 34 from regional centres, two respondents were overseas and three did not provide a postcode. Distributions by State were NSW 10; Victoria 19; Queensland 13; South Australia 3; West Australia 3, Tasmania 3 and the ACT 2. Queensland.

⁶ People born between 1946 and 1966

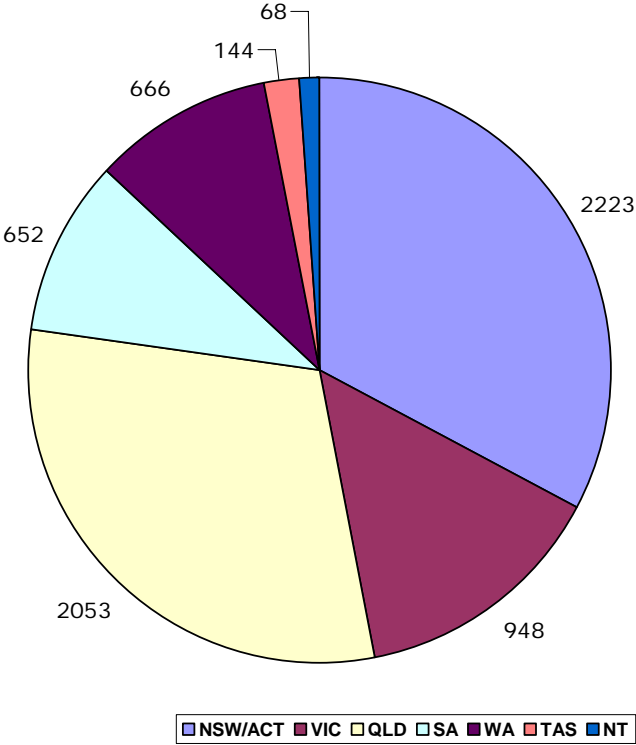
Constraints of research funding precluded holding focus groups in Western Australia or South Australia or in rural areas, although there were respondents from these States and from rural areas who participated in the qualitative research through the Internet chat rooms. As demonstrated earlier all areas of Australia were well represented in the national survey research.

Figure 1: Distribution of respondents across Australia by state and gender

1a) Map of the distribution of respondents



1b) Distribution of respondents by state



1c) Distribution of respondents by gender

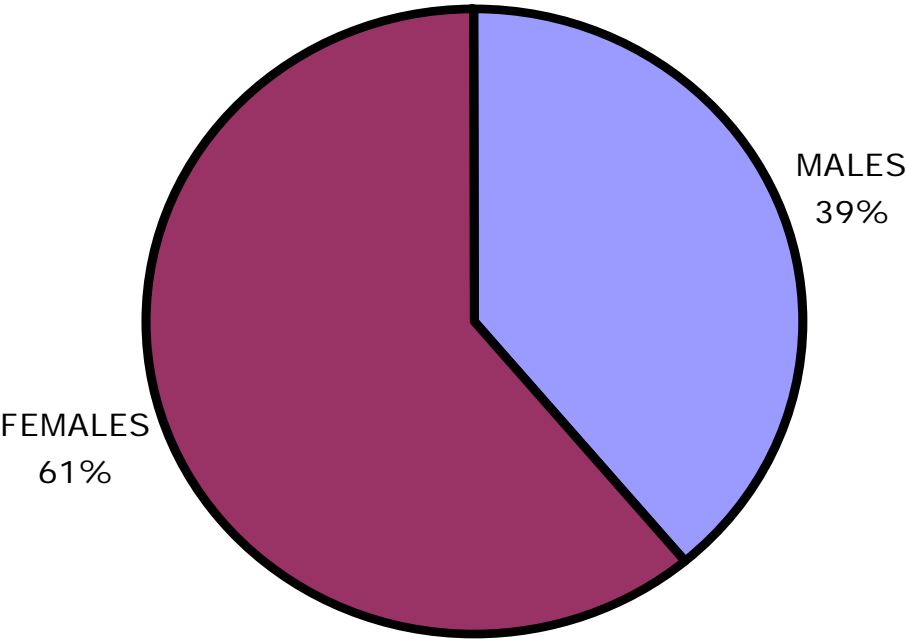


Table 1: Profile of national survey respondents (N & %)

Demographic Characteristic	N	% of Total
Gender		
Male	2599	38.3
Female	4156	61.2
Age		
50-59	2240	33.0
60-74	3367	49.7
75 & over	1167	17.2
Primary place of living		
Major city	3543	52.7
Regional city	1245	18.5
Country/coastal town	1410	20.9
Rural area	534	7.9
Household status		
Living with spouse/partner	3844	56.6
Living alone	2453	36.4
Living with family/partner/other	472	7.0
Income status		
Working full-time	1098	16.2
Working part-time & other income	1907	28.6
Pensioner/part pensioner	2488	36.6
Self-funded retiree	2592	38.2
Housing Tenure		
Total home owners	6200	91.3
Own home – no mortgage	5258	78.7
Own home – with mortgage	942	12.6
Renting privately	246	3.7
Renting – public housing	78	1.1
Retirement village	259	3.9
Hostel	6	0.1

N = approx 6789 (Missing values on some variables and some duplication of responses on Income Status)

2.3 Present Housing Tenure

Home ownership is represented as the master narrative, the stories and comments about their experiences from the respondents in both the quantitative and qualitative research. The vast majority of respondents were living in their own home (91.3%), most owning their home outright with no mortgage (78.7%). Almost 1,000 respondents (12.6%) were living in their own home still paying off a mortgage, 246 (3.7%) were renting privately, 78 (1.1%) were living in public housing and 259 (3.9%) were living in a retirement village. More men than women were living in their own home with no mortgage (males 82% with no mortgage, compared to women 77% with no mortgage). The profile of a home owner with no mortgage is an older male, generally living with a spouse or partner, and either a self-funded retiree or a pensioner. The Baby Boomer cohort were far less likely to have paid off their home mortgage, and more of them were renting privately than were older cohorts. Respondents who were still living with

other family, children or others, and those in rural areas, were also more likely to still have a mortgage.

The major differences are between respondents who were living with their spouse or partner (83% in their own home with no mortgage) compared to those who were living alone (74% in their own home with no mortgage) and those who were living with family or other people (only 66% were living in their own home with no mortgage). Almost all self-funded retirees were living in their own home (91% with no mortgage). Respondents still working full-time in the paid workforce were most likely to still have a mortgage (36.2%) or were privately renting (5.9%). Pensioners or part-pensioners (4.6%) also were renting privately or living in public housing. Among those who said that they are living in their own home with a mortgage, over a quarter were aged under 59 and were still in the paid workforce.

Table 2 : Housing tenure by demographic characteristics

Question 1: Where do you live?

Demographic Characteristic	No Mortgage (%)	With Mortgage (%)	Renting Private (%)	Renting Public Housing (%)	Retirement Village (%)
Housing Tenure Overall % (N)	78.7 (5258)	12.6 (942)	3.7 (246)	1.1 (78)	3.9 (259)
Gender					
Male	81.5	11.4	2.9	0.8	3.3
Female	76.8	13.3	4.2	1.4	4.2
Age					
50-59	68.2	25.3	4.9	1.2	0.5
60-74	85.1	7.8	3.3	1.1	2.7
75 & over	80.1	2.2	2.4	1.3	13.4
Primary place of living					
Major city	80.6	11.0	3.3	1.2	3.8
Regional city	74.3	15.7	4.5	1.3	4.1
Country/coastal town	79.4	12.1	3.3	0.9	4.1
Rural area	74.6	17.1	4.4	1.2	2.4
Household status					
Living with spouse/partner	83.0	12.8	1.8	0.4	2.1
Living alone	74.1	10.0	6.4	2.1	7.2
Living with family/partner/other	65.9	25.0	5.1	2.8	0.5
Income Status					
Working full-time	56.8	36.2	5.9	0.8	0.3
Working part-time	75.7	19.1	3.9	0.7	0.6
Self-funded retiree	91.0	4.0	1.0	0.2	3.7
Pensioner/part pensioner	80.7	5.3	4.6	2.4	6.8

N= 6789 Pearson Chi-Square generally significant $p \leq 0.05$

2.3.1 The Values of Home Ownership

There was general agreement on the positive benefits of home ownership among those who responded to this question (N = 6146). Most of those respondents saw the value of their home in terms of almost uniform self-interest. Most saw home ownership as an investment for the future, three out of five considered it was cheaper to buy than rent, four out of five considered that owning a home meant one was free to make decisions about how one lives, and three quarters considered that one can sell it or borrow against the home, and that it is something of value which one can pass on to one's family. Males are more likely to consider the home in economic terms. While many women also saw the home in economic terms, its predominance in economic terms is significantly greater for males (t-tests - $p \leq .013$). Only on regarding the home as something of value which one could pass onto children were there any significant differences, and then older respondents were more positive about the value of the house as a legacy. Generally less than ten per cent of respondents disagreed with the statements in this question. Only on whether it was cheaper to buy than rent were substantial numbers unsure of their response (approximately 30%). And on whether a home was something of value which one could pass on and that a person could sell the home or borrow against it to provide for one's needs in old age, approximately 20 per cent of respondents indicated that they were unsure of their response.

2.3.2 Ageing in Place

Two thirds (64.6%) of respondents indicated that they wanted to stay in their present home and wanted to 'age in place'. Asked about the reasons for remaining in their present home, surprisingly few (20.9%) spoke of emotional attachment to the home itself. Most respondents simply wanted to remain in the same location - pleasure in and familiarity with the area and its facilities were regarded as important factors contributing to people's day-to-day lifestyle. Home-owners, both with and without a mortgage, were more inclined to wish to stay in their present home than other respondents. Three quarters of respondents regarded the comfort of their home as important. Women were more likely to nominate their emotional attachment to their home or the proximity of family and friends as reasons for their desire to age in place and not to move from their home. Female respondents as well as respondents living in rural areas and pensioners, were more likely to state they were unable to afford to move from their present home. Older respondents were more likely to want to stay near their friends than younger respondents. It was notable that those renting privately and those living in a retirement village were least likely to have an emotional attachment to where they live. Typical responses were:

"I would prefer to stay in my own home as long as possible. I am on my own and I would have problems finding a supporting social group. I stopped driving some years ago due to medication." - female (82 years)

"We don't want to move. Our house is in a good location near the ocean, we have good neighbours, close to a bus stop, and a shopping centre and we have developed our garden and like the place." - male (74 years)

"The most traumatic thing facing seniors is having to move house – in some cases away from their normal and familiar neighbourhood." - female (78 years)

"We have no plans to move. This is a quiet crime free area with an hourly bus service." - female (63 years)

“I want to stay in my house as long as I can. It is the security of knowing that I can continue my lifestyle as it is. I may have to spend some money on a regular basis for somebody to do jobs that need doing but I want to stay here to the end.” - female (70 years)

“Arthritis is making it difficult to keep a large house clean and the garden tidy. But I want to stay in the same area to be near family, friends and my church.” - male (81 years)

Table 3: Values of home ownership

Question 2: Apart from providing a place to live, people may have different opinions about owning their home (Multiple Response - Respondents who agreed or strongly agreed):

- 2(i) It is an investment for the future
- 2(ii) It is cheaper to buy than rent
- 2(iii) Owning a home means one is free to make decisions about how one lives
- 2(iv) It is something of value which one can pass on to one's family
- 2(v) A person can sell it or borrow against it to provide for needs in old age

Demographic Characteristics	2i (%)	2ii (%)	2iii (%)	2iv (%)	2v (%)
Overall responses	82.8 (5063)	62.0 (3682)	85.6 (5502)	73.8 (4580)	74.8 (4599)
Gender					
Male	81.4	62.0	83.1	74.3	73.2
Female	83.9	62.2	87.2	73.5	76.0
Age					
50-59	85.3	58.6	83.6	70.6	76.9
60-74	82.0	62.1	85.7	72.9	74.1
75 & over	80.6	70.0	89.7	83.3	73.2
Primary place of living					
Major city	83.6	61.9	85.1	73.9	74.8
Regional city	81.9	62.9	86.5	73.8	76.6
Country/coastal town	81.8	63.0	86.4	72.7	74.0
Rural Area	83.9	59.7	86.1	76.8	75.6
Household status					
Living with spouse/partner	83.5	61.8	85.0	73.1	73.9
Living alone	82.1	62.9	86.6	74.6	76.9
Living with family/partner/other	82.3	61.7	86.0	76.2	73.8
Income Status					

Working full-time	85.2	58.3	83.7	70.0	77.5
Working part-time	81.8	64.0	86.6	75.7	73.7
Self-funded retiree	83.1	62.7	85.1	74.9	71.8
Pensioner/part pensioner	81.3	64.4	87.8	75.4	74.9

N= 6146

Pearson Chi-Square generally significant $p \leq 0.05$

Many respondents stated that they were anxious about moving and see remaining in their home as one way not to have to make difficult decisions. People in rural areas, in particular, are concerned that their rural residence does not have a high resale value and that the capital would not be sufficient for them to purchase a retirement village unit. The difficulties of making a move to a retirement village was a subject which many respondents were concerned about and which is discussed later under the heading 'Retirement Villages' (see Section 2.4.4). The problem of accommodating the household effects accumulated over many years was one reason many people offered as a reason for their disinclination to move.

"I want to stay in my home as long as I can. The new units are too small and I have so much stuff that I have accumulated over the years and would not want to part with." - male (68 years)

"If you are not moving, rising prices can only enhance the value that can be dispersed eventually to the kids and grandkids." - female (62 years)"

"People say we should downsize to make it easier for our children, but we are not about sitting in a tidy house waiting for death. We have hobbies, particularly our garden, that keep us happy." - male (67 years)

Table 4: Ageing in place and reasons for desire to do so (number and percentage)

Question.5: Do you think in the foreseeable future you might move from your present home?

Question.6: As you intend to stay living in your present home, what are your reasons for doing so? (multiple response)

- 6(i) Suits me financially
- 6(ii) Suits me in comfort
- 6(iii) Suits me in location
- 6(iv) Emotional attachment
- 6(v) Want to stay near friends
- 6(vi) Can't afford to move

Demographic Characteristics	N	6i	6ii	6iii	6iv	6v	6vi
	Response 'No' for Q.5	(%)	(%)	(%)	(%)	(%)	(%)
Overall Responses	64.6	63.2	75.2	83.1	20.9	34.7	17.2
64.6% Desire to Age in Place	(4318)						
Gender							
Male	1604	63.5	75.8	84.2	17.7	30.3	12.2
Female	2599	63.0	74.8	82.5	22.8	37.5	20.4
Age							
50-59	1256	63.1	74.1	83.2	22.1	32.6	19.8
60-74	2140	64.6	76.1	84.1	20.1	36.6	17.0
75 & over	820	59.7	74.3	80.4	21.1	33.3	13.8
Primary place of living							
Major city	2220	64.4	76.8	84.5	22.0	38.6	15.9
Regional city	764	65.0	75.2	82.2	19.9	35.4	19.9
Country/coastal town	900	61.2	73.6	83.0	16.4	25.5	17.8
Rural area	305	56.1	68.5	75.8	28.3	30.9	18.5
Household status							
Living with spouse/partner	2371	62.2	76.4	84.7	20.2	33.5	13.0
Living alone	1574	64.7	74.7	82.0	21.4	36.5	22.7
Living with family/partner/other	149	64.7	67.3	75.8	28.1	37.3	24.8
Demographic Characteristics	N	6i	6ii	6iii	6iv	6v	6vi
	Response 'No' for Q.5	(%)	(%)	(%)	(%)	(%)	(%)
Overall Responses	64.6	63.2	75.2	83.1	20.9	34.7	17.2
64.6% Desire to Age in Place	(4318)						
Income Status							
Working full-time	567	68.1	75.3	85.9	20.5	29.1	18.0
Working part-time	625	64.5	76.2	83.7	26.1	37.8	16.8
Self-funded retiree	1701	65.0	81.4	89.4	22.5	37.6	8.7
Pensioner/part pensioner	1626	64.1	75.0	81.6	19.6	36.0	25.1
Housing Tenure							
Own home – no mortgage	3317	64.1	77.5	85.4	22.7	36.3	14.0
Own home – mortgage	444	62.7	74.9	83.8	21.3	29.9	23.9
Renting privately	71	61.6	52.1	71.2	4.1	28.8	46.6
Renting public	48	66.7	51.0	64.7	19.6	25.5	64.7
Retirement village	215	55.4	64.0	67.6	2.3	27.9	24.8

N=4318

Pearson Chi-Square generally significant $p \leq 0.05$

2.3.3 Residential Mobility

Just over one third of respondents (33.2%) had moved house in the past five years. Housing tenure revealed very significant differences. Respondents who were renting privately (73.1%) were almost three times as likely to have moved in the previous five years compared to respondents living in their own home with no mortgage (27.4%). Respondents in their own home but with a mortgage were also more likely to have moved (41.4%). Almost two thirds of respondents currently living in a retirement village had moved in the previous five years. Most of those respondents who had moved had either moved location (13.1%) or had moved to a smaller home (10.6%). Mostly moving was for better lifestyles - many having moved either to coastal regions or to be closer to support facilities, or to overcome the difficulties of coping with household maintenance. Some respondents commented that they had moved to a “better place” or “a warmer place” or “an easier place to care for”. Another factor had been divorce or family breakdown which had resulted in their moving house. Younger respondents were significantly more likely to have moved, particularly the Baby Boomer cohort. Hardly any respondents had moved to live with family or had downsized to release money to assist children or other family members. Many respondents over 75 who had moved indicated they had moved due to health or disability, and those respondents may have moved into care. The most significant difference was that respondents who live in a country or coastal town (43.5%) were more likely to have moved location in the previous five years compared to other respondents – many commented they had made what they referred to as a ‘sea change’. Rural residents were least likely to have moved house in the previous five years.

Table 5: Past mobility and reasons for moving (N & %)

Question.3: Have you moved in the past 5 years?

Question 4: If yes, what were your reason/s for moving? (multiple response)

- 4(i) Moved to smaller house
- 4(ii) Moved location
- 4(iii) Moved to live with family
- 4(iv) Downsize release money to live on
- 4(v) Downsize to release money to help children, or other family members
- 4(vi) Moved due to health/disability

Demographic Characteristics	N						
	Yes Response for Q.3	4i (%)	4ii (%)	4iii (%)	4iv (%)	4v (%)	4vi (%)
Overall responses	33.2	10.6	13.1	1.5	3.5	0.4	3.7
33.2% Had Moved	(2258)	(708)	(878)	(103)	(232)	(28)	(247)
Gender							
Male	32.9 (803)	32.9	43.7	4.1	9.8	1.3	9.4
Female	33.7 (1334)	29.9	35.9	4.7	10.7	1.3	11.4
Age							
50-59	38.0 (792)	23.5	34.8	3.4	9.0	1.2	8.6
60-74	33.4 (1075)	33.7	42.4	4.7	12.3	1.3	9.6
75 & over	24.6 (277)	44.6	37.9	6.7	7.0	1.8	20.7
Primary place of living							
Major city	29.1 (878)	39.1	28.3	4.5	9.9	1.5	9.1
Regional city	32.4 (439)	30.3	34.4	6.1	11.7	1.5	12.1
Country/coastal town	43.5 (633)	25.7	57.4	3.8	12.3	0.6	11.3
Rural area	21.4 (174)	16.4	39.9	2.7	4.4	1.6	12.0
Household status							
Living with spouse/partner	33.4 (1216)	31.9	45.7	3.4	9.2	0.9	9.8
Living alone	34.4 (803)	32.3	30.9	3.6	12.3	1.7	11.1
Living with family/partner/other	29.1 (72)	23.4	24.7	26.0	7.8	2.6	11.7
Income Status							
Working full-time	32.6 (329)	24.3	25.5	2.1	4.9	0.9	4.0
Working part-time	29.7 (324)	28.7	31.5	3.1	9.0	1.9	7.7
Self-funded retiree	35.2 (791)	37.3	56.8	4.3	11.6	1.0	9.0
Pensioner/part pensioner	35.3 (822)	35.5	40.9	6.8	14.1	1.6	18.9
Housing Tenure							
Own home – no mortgage	27.4	37.3	45.7	4.3	11.9	1.3	10.0
Own home – mortgage	41.4	19.1	28.7	1.8	4.7	0.9	4.7
Renting privately	73.1	9.2	15.5	6.3	5.2	1.1	10.3
Renting public	41.3	29.0	25.8	3.2	6.5	-	25.8
Retirement village	63.1	40.8	45.9	2.5	17.2	2.5	22.9

N = 2258 (Multiple Response – Respondents could tick more than one response)

Pearson Chi-Square generally significant $p \leq 0.05$

Qualitative research offered opportunities for respondents to elaborate on their reasons for moving. As mentioned above the problems of home and garden maintenance were deciding issues for some people. Typical comments were:

“The level of hard physical work required by large gardens was looming as a future problem.” – male (66 years)

“I owned a very large old rundown house with no money to upkeep or renovate so the choice to sell was forced upon me.” – female (72 years)

"I moved 3 weeks ago. I wanted a flat house and minimal garden. It was a hard decision because it seemed to everyone but me it was a big cost and effort for what I wanted. However, I am happy with my new unit and feel it is very 'growing older' friendly." – female (64 years)

"Maintenance became a problem and tradespeople are so expensive." – male (68 years)

"Home upkeep became a problem. I'm sick of the garden and I need assistance with maintenance." – male (71 years)

"We moved 7 years ago because we wanted a smaller house and garden that was easier for us to manage as we got older. It was fortunate we did as my husband developed cancer two and a half years later and passed away within 5 months. I could never have managed in our other home." – female (60 years)

Declining health and the desire to be closer to health facilities were also much mentioned.

"We moved interstate to the warmer weather because my husband had a breakdown after we were both retrenched. Our next move will be to a smaller home, less housework and maintenance, close to transport, shops, doctors and public hospital." – female (63 years)

"We didn't want to leave the first and only home we ever owned but poor local health services forced it on us." – male (69 years)

"My wife had a severe stroke so we need to move to a smaller home closer to Doctors and Hospitals." – male (70 years).

"I have moved 3 times in the past 5 years because of ill health and lack of funds to keep my home in good standard of repair and upkeep. I moved into public housing and have done a lot to make this into a home." – female (59 years)

Financial difficulties, most particularly after the death of a spouse or after divorce, were other most quoted reasons for making a move. Typical comments were:

"I moved when my husband died and it was no longer necessary to be close to his nursing home. I needed to clear the mortgage and other debts and wanted to be closer to the family." It was not a hard decision to make as I got bored living in the same place for too long. – female (72 years)

"Death of a spouse often leaves one with lower standard of living, single pension not enough to live on, so I have had to move." – female (72 years)

"I have moved 3 times in the last 5 years due to a series of incidents the main one being a medical retirement and the break up of my marriage." – female (62 years)

"We have a flat attached to the house and we rent it so the tenants help with the garden, but we could move into the flat and let the house to pay for house and garden help." – (female, pensioner, 66 years)

"We sold our family home. It had a self-contained flat which housed my mother. We had thought our children would do the same but they were not interested. My children said your dreams are not our dreams... Our plans are up in the air." – female (68 years)

"I moved to be closer to transport so that I could rent out some rooms as I needed extra income." – male (72 years)

"I had to downsize because of a rent increase." – female (61 years).

"I had to move to be in an area where I could get work." – male (63 years)

"I had to move to an area where there were better employment prospects for my much younger wife." – male (64 years)

The things which made it easier for people to move were either that they had friends or family living in the area to which they had moved, or that they had often been to the area for holidays in the past. Those for whom the move had been most successful were those who had become active in clubs or community organizations in the new area. One man commented that joining a ballroom dancing club had saved his life. He now came into town every day to go dancing and had met many new friends. A few had moved to be closer to look after aged parents. One interesting comment was:

"We moved in order to force our children out of the nest and find their own way in the world." – male (61 years)

2.3.4 People Without Home Ownership

While the majority of respondents were home owners, there were 474 respondents who were not home owners, who were either renting privately, or living in public housing or were living in a retirement village without strata title. It is important to have insights into the intentions of Australians who are not home owners. The majority of non home-owner respondents who had moved in the previous five years had moved to a smaller home or had moved to live with family or had moved into a retirement village. Those who had moved to a retirement village were mostly self-funded retirees. And those who said they intended to move in the next five years were mostly those renting privately and almost all of them said they intended to move to live with family. Those living in public housing said they could not afford to move. Typical comments were:

"Sadly I do not own a home and I have very limited resources. I envisage my last days in a tent on the river bank somewhere." – female (72 years)

"I don't own a home and I live almost entirely on the pension. I didn't think about the future early enough and expected I would be working longer than I was able to because of my health. I should have bought a unit when I could afford it and had the money but I wasn't sure where I wanted to settle." – female (66 years)

"We are renting and are on the housing list and will always have to rely on the government for housing health and everything. My husband was made redundant from a government career at age 53 after 21 years and has not worked since." – female (57 years)

“Your survey is only for folk who own a home. Sadly, I am not one of them. I would love to see someone do something for folk like me who don’t own a home and have very limited resources. Nothing I have looked at is within my reach. We have no hope of State housing, as the upper income limit is \$38,000, not a lot in this day and age.” – female (64 years)

2.4 Attitudes and Future Intentions of Older Australians with Regard to Housing

2.4.1 Future Mobility

Many respondents had expectations about moving in the future. More than one third of respondents (34.8%) indicated that they expected to move in the foreseeable future. Housing tenure was particularly important, with more than two thirds (68.8%) of those renting privately expecting to move in the foreseeable future and almost half the home-owners with a mortgage also expecting to move (44.3%). Similarly almost half the Baby Boomers in the 50-59 age cohort (42.1%) expect to move, as will those still living with family (42.3%) and those still working full-time in the paid workforce (47.2%). Across all categories, those who expected to move considered that they would move either to a smaller house or to move location. Respondents who live alone (28.3%) and older respondents (51.4%) stated that they expected to move for reasons of health or disability.

While overall just over ten per cent of respondents indicated that they would downsize to release money to live on, one in five of the Baby Boomer cohort expected to downsize to release money to live on. Few respondents indicated they would move to live with family (2.3%) or would downsize in order to release money to assist children or other family members (1.5%). The difficulties of coping with household maintenance and the prospect of ill health were subjects of concern which participants in the qualitative research said would probably precipitate the move from their family home. Typical comments included:

“We are selling our home because my husband has osteoarthritis and finds climbing 13 stairs many times during the day is aggravating his condition. Also the yard and gardens are starting to become a problem.” – female (55 years)

“I have no plans to move but ill health would of course change this outlook and if that happened I would have no qualms about going into a nursing home as I wouldn’t want to burden my children.” – male (75 years)

“We intend to move to a two bedroom unit within the next 4 years. We want to be in walking distance of some shops, with a hospital not more than 10 minutes away and on a flat site. I don’t want to leave this area but my husband would like to move away from this busy suburb and this is causing a bit of conflict at present.” – female (69 years)

“I plan to move, to downsize to release my capital. But I want to be in a similar area where friends, doctor dentist, hospital are in easy reach.” – female (68 years)

Table 6: Reasons for future mobility

Question 5: *Do you think in the foreseeable future you might move from your present home?*

Question 7: *If you intend to make a move in the foreseeable future, what are your reason/s for doing so?(multiple response)*

- 7(i) Move to smaller house
- 7(ii) Move location
- 7(iii) Move to live with family
- 7(iv) Downsize to release money to live on
- 7(v) Downsize to release money to help children, or other family
- 7(vi) Move due to health or disability

Demographic Characteristics	% (N) 'Yes' to Q.5	7i (%)	7ii (%)	7iii (%)	7iv (%)	7v (%)	7vi (%)
Overall Responses	34.8	22.0	16.9	2.3	10.9	1.5	15.1
34.8% Will Move	(2360)	1472	1133	153	731	101	1009
Gender							
Male	34.7	48.2	41.1	4.0	22.1	3.3	22.3
Female	34.5	42.7	33.8	4.6	21.2	2.4	22.1
Age							
50-59	42.1	44.5	44.0	4.3	23.4	3.8	12.1
60-74	34.1	48.2	34.3	4.6	22.4	2.3	22.8
75 & over	26.0	34.1	22.0	3.4	12.5	1.4	51.4
Primary place of living							
Major city	34.9	48.1	37.9	3.6	22.7	3.1	22.0
Regional city	36.2	42.5	38.4	4.9	19.3	2.0	19.8
Country/coastal town	34.1	41.6	30.9	5.9	22.0	2.5	23.5
Rural area	39.7	40.1	40.1	2.4	18.4	2.9	26.1
Household status							
Living with spouse/partner	36.0	49.5	40.2	3.3	21.7	2.8	19.5
Living alone	33.2	36.2	30.9	5.7	20.5	2.1	28.3
Living with family/partner/other	42.3	50.4	41.5	6.5	26.0	7.3	13.8
Demographic Characteristics	% (N) 'Yes' to Q.5	7i (%)	7ii (%)	7iii (%)	7iv (%)	7v (%)	7vi (%)
Overall Responses	34.8	22.0	16.9	2.3	10.9	1.5	15.1

34.8% Will Move	(2360)	1472	1133	153	731	101	1009
Income Status							
Working full-time	47.2	43.3	54.7	4.3	22.9	3.5	8.6
Working part-time	38.7	49.6	38.0	4.2	28.0	4.2	11.4
Self-funded retiree	32.0	55.0	33.3	3.9	18.1	2.8	29.4
Pensioner/part pensioner	31.1	39.3	29.0	5.2	23.1	1.7	35.5
Housing Tenure							
Own home – no mortgage	33.3	51.0	36.4	3.8	23.4	2.7	24.6
Own home – mortgage	44.3	42.1	46.0	5.3	24.8	5.6	10.9
Renting privately	68.8	12.4	29.8	7.5	8.7	-	16.1
Renting public	31.1	21.7	30.4	13.0	4.3	-	47.8
Retirement village	10.5	3.8	11.5	7.7	7.7	-	46.2

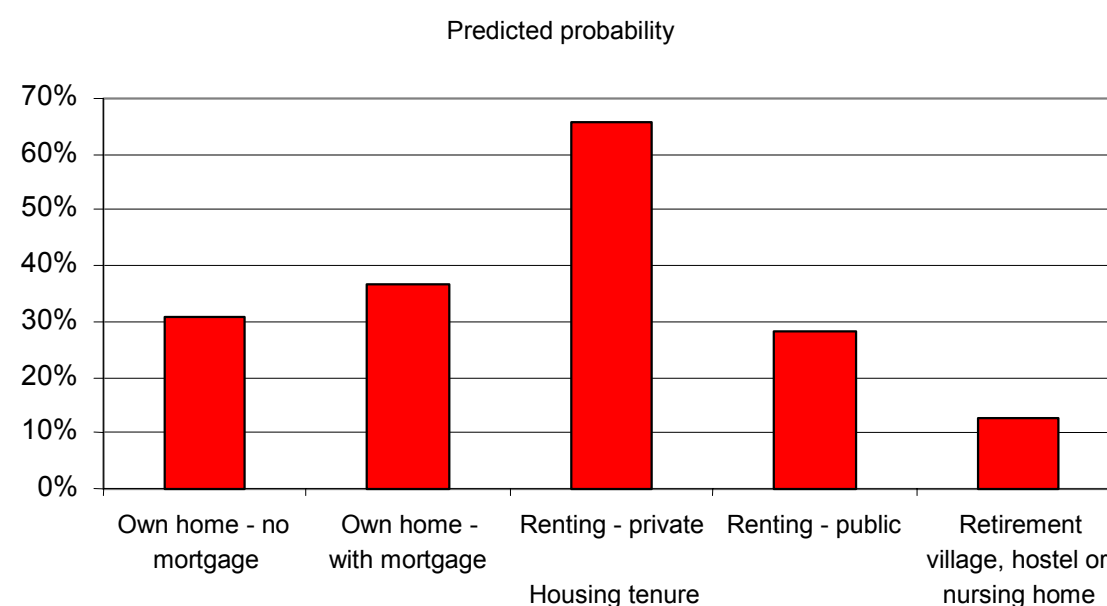
N = 2360

Pearson Chi-Square generally significant $p \leq 0.05$

2.4.2 Move from present home in future (Logistic Regression)

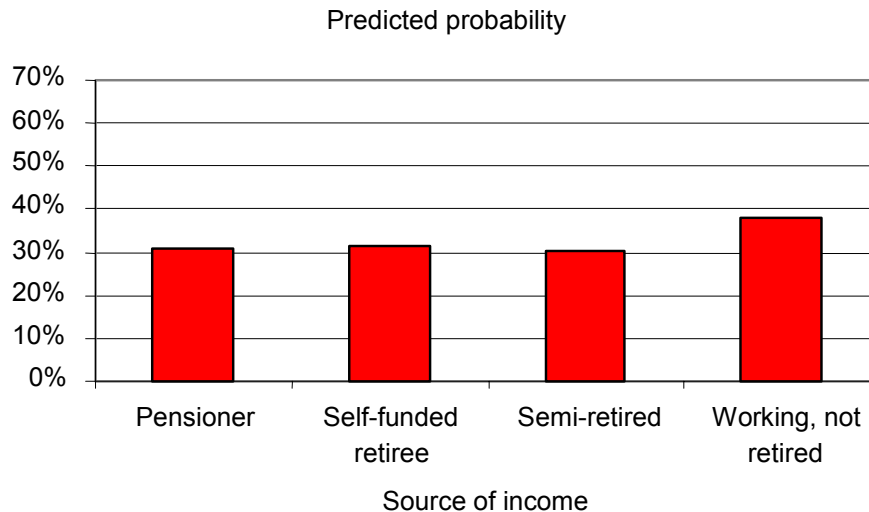
Just over one third (35%) of persons included in the regression suggested that they may move from their present home in the future. With each variable at its modal category, the model predicts a corresponding percentage of 31 per cent. As may be expected older people were less likely to expect to move in the future than younger people. The strongest relationship on likelihood to move derived from housing tenure. Private rental was associated with a high predicted probability of an anticipated future move (66%). Living in a retirement village, hostel or nursing home was associated with a very low predicted probability (13%).

Figure 2: Predicted probabilities for 'moving home in future' by housing tenure (other variables held constant at modal categories)



There was also a relationship between this variable and source of income (Figure 3). Specifically, the predicted probability was 38% for those working (whilst not retired), while it was 31% for each of the other categories.

Figure 3: Predicted probabilities for 'moving home in future' by source of income (other variables held constant at modal categories)



2.4.3 Moving in with Children

The prospect of moving in with children provoked strong and remarkably consistent negative responses both in the national survey and in the focus groups and Internet chat rooms. Very few respondents (4.2%) stated they had or would move to live with family or to downsize to release money to help children or other family (2.8%). Many referred to very unpleasant experiences they had as children living in an intergenerational household with grandparents. Some of their comments attest to the strength of their opposition to this option.

“Never in a million years would I consider this option! One of us would be jailed for murder!” - female (58 years)

“I don’t get on that well with my children. They are very selfish and only ever take and not give back. I am tired of giving and would not consider moving in with either of my children.” - female (63 years)

“As I say to my son, I love you but I couldn’t live with you!” - male (67 years)

“I could live with my youngest daughter. We are good friends, but I would have to dispose of her husband as he and I don’t get on.” - female (63 years)

“I would never consider moving in with my children. I stayed with my son for 6 weeks. I don’t get on with my daughter-in-law and I was just used and abused. My daughter stayed with me when she got back from overseas and I had to ask her to leave.” - female (65 years)

"I would never move in with my children with today's thinking. The children think you owe them something and will use you for sure babysitting etc. I do know what I'm talking about I have 4 girls and 2 boys." – female (67 years)

"I would never move in with my children. It would spell the end of a beautiful friendship." – male (72 years)

"I would never move in with family. I have been very sick. I asked one of my children if I could stay just for a while. She said no. So much for family." – female (61 years)

There were many who remembered difficult times living in an intergenerational household. Typical comments were:

"I would never think of moving in with my children. I have vivid memories of my boyhood when my grandfather lived with us and how demanding he was of my mother." - male (61 years)

"I would never move in with my children. I saw what happened in my family when my grandmother moved in with us." - female (72 years)

"I am selling now. I hope to go into buying with my son, but I'm not sure that it will ever feel like HOME (sic) to me. I look for safety issues, the infrastructure, price and if I can manage to live in a place without a body corporate. I hate "cluster" living." - female (59 years)

Many respondents saw a move to live with children as limiting both their and their children's independence. These were values of independence which they regarded highly. Typical comments were:

"I would never move in with family. I am fiercely independent." - male (74 years)

"Wouldn't move in with any of my 4 children . We are an energetic family of wide interests and coping with an oldie would be a chore." - male (63 years)

"My other offspring have a very different lifestyle to me and I would have to be dragged kicking and screaming to their doors I might add that they would probably have them locked firmly anyway. I don't approve of drug use and they do!" - female (65 years)

"No question of me moving in with family. They live all over the place and in other countries." - female (61 years)

"I have been offered a granny flat situation by one of my children but that would mean this particular child takes all my money and the other 3 will miss out." - female (77 years)

An exceptional case was that of a male respondent, aged 62, who was still working:

"If we were invited and could live separately we would consider it, but would not suggest the idea. We have had our married children live with us at various times and this has worked out fine, as we treat them more like younger siblings than children".

Only within the focus groups was there any serious discussion of moving in with children, and then the discussion was initiated on both occasions by older people from a CALD background, one a Greek male who said he shared a house with his son and his son's family but that they had entirely separate units and lived quite independently of each other. He was quite critical of what he saw as an abandonment of their children by Australians. The other discussion, started by an older Chinese person, also spoke of the expectations of Asian and some European families that they would live with their children when they got older and perhaps needed support. Within that discussion a couple of women agreed that they too would move to live with their children, that it would be enjoyable to be able to see their grandchildren grow up. One other male respondent commented that it would give he and his wife the freedom to travel more easily if they moved to live with their children.

2.4.4 Retirement Villages

There was a wide variety of responses regarding the move or possible move into a retirement village complex. Those who had already moved to a retirement village were almost entirely positive about the experience. Respondents who commented most favourably upon their move said that they had chosen a retirement village where friends had already taken units. Many respondents cautioned that people should move to a retirement village while they were still quite young and active. Some commented they had left their move too late. The most successful moves to a retirement village, many said, were when people moved while they were still able to make new friends and to participate in all the social activities in the village. But there were many respondents who were anxious about a possible move into a retirement village. Their concerns focussed upon the high prices of retirement village units, and in particular the high maintenance costs and the lack of control over the stability of those maintenance charges. Typical comments were:

"I am wary of moving into a retirement village. They are ticky-tacky boxes, cheek by jowl. We are at the mercy of the owners when it comes to weekly fees over which one has no control." - female (56 years)

"I felt once living there one was at their complete mercy or lack of mercy." - female (67 years)

"The information on retirement villages is very uncertain and the whole things seems very iffy on costs and charges and the discrepancies seem so great." - female (62 years)

"We moved to a retirement village but the costs of this strata unit used up all the proceeds from the sale of our house. The benefits are very much an

improved lifestyle with a wider range of friends and acquaintances, but it requires effort.” - male (82 years)

“Moved to make a fresh start with a new partner. We’ve discussed retirement villages, but doubt they support lesbian couples. Anyway we value our freedom and independence .” - female (59 years)

“Retired folk need to sort out the accommodation they will need in plenty of time, not wait until their eighties or until they are sick or lonely. Retirement accommodation is a veritable minefield – it takes an active mind to sort out the hazardous/bad/unhelpful villages from the ones (like ours) which provides a haven as we get older.” - male (82 years)

But not everybody was apprehensive. One 63 year old female respondent said:

“I would move to a retirement village with medical supervision. Being single I feel I need backup of some sort.”

2.5 Financial Planning for Future Needs

2.5.1 Uncertainty and Lack of Preparedness

There was broad agreement from the survey respondents that people do not plan ahead. Some respondents ascribed the lack of planning to uncertainty about the future. Some spoke about it being a waste of time planning when one didn’t know whether one’s health might intervene or how long one might live. The perceived changes in government policies by respondents were also a matter of concern which some respondents argued led to a disinclination to plan for the future. Others were critical of those who had not made plans for the future. Typical comments included:

“Denial is part of human nature. Also by the time people are in their late 60s it is usually too late to do much about planning - the die is cast.” - male (77 years)

“Some people we have met recently seem to be afraid to face up to planning for either incapacity or even insolvency in old age. Some just would not talk about it as if it only happens to someone else.” - female (78 years)

“The old Australian phrase “She’ll be right mate.” - male (71 years)

“People don’t plan. They think they will stay fit and well for ever.” - male (81 years)

“Old age seems so far away until you turn 60.” - female (67 years)

“People don’t plan because they are afraid.” - female (74 years)

“It’s too much and it’s too indefinable. Get a change of government and all your planning goes out the window. When you’re 20 and need to make

plans, you cannot imagine 60. The old know what it is to be young, but the young do not know what it is to be old." - female (76 years)

"Government policy changes daily-no use to plan ahead." - male (73 years)

"I was forced to take a redundancy at 60 and had been planning to work until I was 65. I was considered too old by employers to get another job. I was divorced and lost 25% of my gross super and 70% of our gross assets. So starting over is very difficult... We're told we should work longer. Employers won't even let us work a normal worksan." - male (67 years)

"As a nurse I had very little opportunity to save as most of my career I was paid a living wage not a saving wage." - female (82 years)

"Because they are afraid." - female (56 years)

"I didn't plan for this because (a) I never dreamed I would be in this situation, (b) my husband was self-employed and didn't have superannuation and would not take out life insurance because he said he wasn't paying out money for me to enjoy myself when he was dead." - female (73 years)

"Bubble mentality. Whilst they are comfortable at the present they do not think of it. Others are possibly too busy looking after family so that it literally is overlooked. Thirdly, there are those who cannot physically do anything about it, hence it doesn't get looked at." - male (58 years)

"Frankly, that's bloody stupid of them ! Shortsightedness." – male (73 years)

"People don't plan. They refuse to accept age because age is a source of problems and nobody accepts to be a problem and few people accept to deal with problems." – female (81 years)

"It's in the (far) future and I suppose a lot of us still have the attitude it will be alright on the night." – male (56 years)

"I don't think people want to think about the future and feel it happens to others but not themselves. I used to think about what I would do if I survived my husband but I didn't want to think about it. I would immediately think about something more pleasant." – female (69 years)

Men had greater expectations (56.3%) that they would pay for future needs out of savings, superannuation or insurance than did women (43.5%). Similarly it was self-funded retirees (68.7%) and respondents living with their spouse or partner (54.1%) who were far more likely to provide for their future financial needs out of personal savings, superannuation or insurance. More than one third of women (37.4%) and one third of pensioners or part pensioners (36.7%) said that they would have to sell or rent their family home to pay for future financial needs. Very few respondents (approximately 6% overall) considered that they would take out a loan or reverse mortgage on their home. In fact many were quite outraged at the prospect of even considering a reverse mortgage. The issues they raised are discussed later. Less than two per cent of respondents said they would ask their children for assistance.

Most surprisingly very many respondents (almost a quarter of all Baby Boomer respondents) indicated that they had not considered the issue of their future financial needs. Housing tenure was important here. Respondents who still had a mortgage (36.1%), respondents renting privately (65%) and those in public housing (73.3%) said that they would depend upon government services for their future needs. Typical comments were:

"I believe the whole area is so complex that the easiest way to deal with it is not to think about it, and to hope that you'll never have to face it. Or someone else will make the decision for you/or someone will help you. As a never-married single woman I know that none of the above is likely to work for me, but I still try to convince myself that things will work out." – female (63 years)

"I'm one that doesn't think of these things. If nothing else I'll just go on a full government pension and let the system take care of me." – female (57 years).

"I don't think people want to think about things like this. I used to think about what I would do if I survived my husband (note- husband died of cancer several years ago), but I would immediately think about something more pleasant." – female (74 years)

"If I spent my life worrying about funding and sickness, then I'd worry myself into an early grave. I assume everything is going to be alright." – male (76 years)

"The government wants all Baby Boomers to die before retirement so they don't have to pay out any pensions to us even though some of us have been working and paying taxes since we were 15." – female (54 years)

"As a never married single woman I try to convince myself that things will work out that you'll never have to face money problems, that you'll get sick or die first. Or someone will rescue you." – female (68 years)

"I try to be very positive and assume I'm going to remain well until I die old, crabby and suddenly from something very minor (like old age). If I spent my life worrying about funding and sickness, then I'd worry myself into an early grave." I assume everything is going to be alright." – female (61 years)

"As an older woman to find myself in the so-called retirement years of my life without funds to continue on living on my modest home which I love is a sad time indeed." – female (81 years)

"We tend to have a she'll be right, attitude which has been passed down from our parents and things have changed so much in our lifetime, including the cost of living." – female (72 years)

2.5.2 Unexpected Life Changes

Many respondents regretted that they had not saved earlier and for some old age had come surprisingly quickly. For many respondents unexpected life changes, retrenchment, unemployment or sudden sickness short-circuited their retirement planning. Typical comments were:

"You may think you have the bases covered but fate (or whatever) can deal unexpected blows." - female (58 years)

"What happens if within two weeks I'm brought down with some sort of illness, my whole plan collapses, or I might still be living exactly as I am in 10 years time, so it's difficult to plan." – male (69 years)

"Many of us have been single parents for many many years and the struggle has been hard. Money was needed to feed, clothe and care for our families. We are now at a stage that we are worried about our future and medical care. We do not have an answer on how to pay for our care. I have a real worry right now on how to pay for my funeral and millions of us are in the same boat." – female (79 years)

"I always believed my husband planned for us. But his illness proved that to be wrong." – female (68 years)

"We plan as well as we can but the ball game keeps changing. Our parents are the only real practical example to help us plan." – female (58 years)

"Didn't consider the future when I was bringing up the children. Also I didn't envisage my husband getting Alzheimers disease in his early fifties necessitating early retirement." – female (61 years)

"No-one ever sees themselves crippled and depending on others when they have loved a healthy life. No one is accustomed to OLD AGE (sic)." – female (87 years)

"When we reached the age of 50 we planned to save really hard for the next 15 years for retirement. But my husband lost his job at 52 and couldn't find work because of a back injury. I lost my job 2 months later have worked casually since. Hence we couldn't save and had to rely on a pension. People don't realise how quickly retirement will come around." – female (58 years)

"People don't often take a strategic approach. Sometimes that's difficult particularly when you have to retire prematurely like I did. My career retirement plans (focused on superannuation) were truncated by health problems." – male (61 years)

"Trying to give your children a head start sometimes drains your finances more than you had calculated." – male (68 years)

2.5.3 Marriage Breakdown

Marriage breakdowns and divorce had frequently brought unexpected strains. Typical comments were:

“Marriage breakdowns put both my husband and myself on the position of paying out large amounts. This certainly makes it harder for retirement plans. Add to that a breakdown in health with both of us. And the time we expected to be forging ahead with children grown up, our plans for a comfortable retirement were shot down in flames.” – female (59 years)

“I have NO available cash to pay for anything. I would have to sell my home. Many of us (divorced) have had adequate plans in place for retirement as a couple. The situation changes a great deal after divorce, and either one or the other person may end up doing it very hard.” – female (63 years)

“Many people don’t plan for the marriage break-ups that happen and this can make a large difference to plans. Also, my husband had to cease work at 47 years of age. His super was only small and is already gone, but it cleared our mortgage.” - female (67 years)

“How can one predict what life will deal one? Few people have all their bases covered so as not to experience some form of hardship or difficulty when disaster such as divorce or health problems strike.” – male (68 years)

“Money was perhaps not a serious problem. Many women were used to being controlled by their man (tut tut). It will never happen to me.” – female (65 years)

2.5.4 Reliance on Government Provision of Services

One third of respondents (31.3%) stated that they expected to use government services for their future needs. Yet many said they were outraged at recent government cuts in services and expected that more cuts were coming. One man said:

“I paid my taxes...yes the government, I’ve paid enormous taxes. I don’t get anything out of the buggers.” – male (71 years)

“I certainly don’t have enough savings. But I like to think there’ll be something there to assist me down the track.” – male (62 years)

“Well fifty years ago it was the golden years in Australia...the new generation has to change its attitude, don’t rely on government...the future generation will need to cope on their own and should look to the future. We have to give up this lackadaisical attitude - she’ll be right mate.” – male (77 years)

There was a strong level of resentment expressed by self-funded retirees at what they saw had been their sacrifices to save to provide for themselves in retirement and what they saw as profligate living by others who are now in receipt of government benefits. - One female respondent aged 75 said - *“Why are we penalised for our own sacrifices.”*

Others commented:

"They have always lived for today, and left planning to others." – female (59 years)

"Why does good behaviour get you nothing (except additional taxes on your savings) and bad behaviour get you all the handouts and considerations." – male (59 years)

"Self-funded retirees are treated abominably by governments. We worked hard and saved damn hard to get where we are yet we are discriminated against at every turn." – male (60 years)

"Since entering the workforce in 1955 my parents instilled in me the importance of superannuation and to contribute each pay period. I did this for 40 years." – male (67 years)

"The bonus scheme for people who don't draw the age pension should become part of the estate in the event of a self-funded retiree's death. Currently any accrued bonus lapses and are not payable even to the spouse." – male (67 years)

Men in particular expressed strong concerns about the future and were worried about the uncertainty of life itself and of government policy changes. Typical examples are below.

"Again I think that when you're talking to people my age and you're talking about the future, the future unfortunately can be anywhere from 10 minutes away to 10 years away. Now this is where it is very difficult to know and to give you an answer on right, what is your situation going to be if you're still around in 10 years time etc, etc, but what happens if within two weeks I'm brought down with some sort of illness etc, etc and the whole – my whole thing collapses and I've got to go into a nursing home and so I can't really plan for that, I can't plan to be going into a nursing home in a couple of weeks time. In 10 years time I might still be living exactly the way I am. The only thing you can look at is the fact that as I said to you, the house that I live in, I know that as I get older I will not be able to maintain, physically maintain that house. I would most probably have to move into a house with less grounds or whatever you want etc, etc, but I believe that I can – I'm adequately covered at the present. I'm not adequately covered for future needs, but I have no idea what my future needs are going to be, you know I have absolutely no idea and I can have any disaster before me. It may be me, it may be my wife etc, etc, and this would just throw entirely any of our plans completely out the window." – male (60 years).

"I certainly don't have enough savings, I can't access the superannuation and I guess what I would say that for the next ten years what I'm doing is saying well I've got 10 years really, I don't believe John Howard, I don't want to be working full time at 70, I think that's an impost and that I'm trying to make the next 10 years a period where I can save and make myself at least reasonably comfortable and I'll take what I can get from the government at the end of the day too. I don't believe, like you, I don't believe ... every pensioner... I know but I'm sort of covered. But I'd like to think that there'd be something there to assist down the track." – male (55 years)

Table 7: Financing future needs

Question 8 *Imagine at sometime in the future you were to need nursing, security, company or other forms of assistance (maybe even residential care), how would you pay for it?(Multiple response)*

- 8(i) Out of savings, superannuation or insurance
- 8(ii) Sell or rent the family home
- 8(iii) Haven't considered this issue
- 8(iv) Take out a loan on my home
- 8(v) Ask my children
- 8(vi) Use government services

Demographic characteristics	8i (%)	8ii (%)	8iii (%)	8iv (%)	8v (%)	8vi (%)
Overall Responses	48.3 (3232)	33.5 (2238)	19.4 (1299)	6.3 (422)	1.1 (71)	31.3 (2096)
Gender						
Male	56.3	27.3	19.9	6.7	0.9	29.7
Female	43.5	37.4	19.1	6.0	1.2	32.2
Age						
50-59	48.3	32.9	23.9	5.5	1.0	31.9
60-74	48.7	35.6	17.4	7.2	1.1	31.7
75 & over	48.0	28.5	16.5	5.3	0.9	29.2
Primary place of living						
Major city	52.7	33.3	18.4	7.0	1.2	28.2
Regional city	42.3	34.8	20.2	5.6	1.0	32.9
Country/coastal town	45.7	33.5	18.9	5.9	0.8	35.1
Rural area	42.5	30.6	24.7	3.8	0.9	38.7
Household status						
Living with spouse/partner	54.1	31.7	18.9	6.2	0.8	29.2
Living alone	41.5	36.1	19.0	6.6	1.5	34.6
Living with family/partner/other	39.0	33.1	24.2	5.3	1.3	32.2
Income Status						
Working full-time	49.5	32.7	25.3	6.3	1.9	33.3
Working part-time	48.9	37.4	20.6	8.0	1.2	32.4
Self-funded retiree	68.7	31.0	14.3	6.1	0.5	21.1
Pensioner/part pensioner	32.4	36.7	19.4	7.1	1.3	41.9
Housing tenure						
Own home – no mortgage	52.3	36.5	18.9	6.5	0.7	27.5
Own home – mortgage	36.5	36.7	25.9	10.0	2.1	36.1
Renting privately	34.6	5.9	19.8	0.4	3.4	65.0

Renting public	14.7	2.7	29.3	1.3	4.0	73.3
Retirement	48.3	18.2	9.5	1.2	1.7	43.0

N= 6686

Pearson Chi-Square generally significant $p \leq 0.05$

2.5.5 *Financing Residential Care*

In the face of continuing discussions in government and the mass media about the possibilities of requirements for up front payment for nursing home accommodation, respondents were asked their opinion on payment bonds for residential age care. One in ten of respondents thought up front payment bonds were fair and appropriate; a slightly larger number (12.6%) stated the bonds were unfair and inappropriate. Respondents who were younger were more likely to indicate that such bonds are unfair and inappropriate compared to respondents in older age groups. The most significant finding was that just over one in three respondents reported that they did not fully understand how such bonds work. Such lack of knowledge about payments for residential care indicates that major campaigns are necessary for people to understand government policies on these issues. This is an issue which should be addressed, and government communications and education are policy priorities. Although almost one third of respondents agreed that such bonds should be means-tested and should be shared equally between government and individuals, few indicated that such fees should be paid out of estates. Once again there was an obvious disinclination to leave debts as a legacy after death.

Table 8: Financing residential care

Question 9: The Media are full of debates about the possibility of up front payment for nursing home accommodation. What is your opinion of up front payment bonds?

- 9(i) Fair and appropriate
- 9(ii) Totally unfair and inappropriate
- 9(iii) Should be means tested
- 9(iv) Should be paid out of estates
- 9(v) Should be shared equally between government and individuals
- 9(vi) Don't fully understand how they work

Demographic Characteristics	9i	9ii	9iii	9iv	9v	9vi
	(%)	(%)	(%)	(%)	(%)	(%)
Overall Responses	11.4	12.6	29.2	13.7	24.2	32.9
% (N)	(765)	(841)	(1954)	(913)	(1617)	(2203)
Gender						
Male	14.5	12.7	28.2	13.3	25.2	30.9
Female	9.6	12.4	30.0	13.9	23.6	34.3
Age						
50-59	9.0	14.2	26.2	12.9	24.5	35.7
60-74	12.3	12.0	30.8	14.0	24.4	32.0
75 & over	13.6	11.2	30.8	14.3	23.4	30.9
Primary place of living						
Major city	12.6	13.0	28.6	13.9	23.5	32.6
Regional city	10.0	12.4	29.6	12.9	24.5	34.0
Country/coastal town	10.4	11.3	30.3	14.2	24.8	32.9
Rural area	11.1	13.2	30.8	13.2	25.8	32.1
Demographic Characteristics	9i	9ii	9iii	9iv	9v	9vi
	(%)	(%)	(%)	(%)	(%)	(%)
Overall Responses	11.4	12.6	29.2	13.7	24.2	32.9
% (N)	(765)	(841)	(1954)	(913)	(1617)	(2203)
Household status						
Living with spouse/partner	12.6	12.4	27.6	12.9	25.4	31.6
Living alone	10.4	11.9	32.5	15.3	22.3	34.1
Living with family/partner/other	7.6	16.7	27.1	12.1	24.2	38.3
Income Status						
Working full-time	9.2	14.9	25.4	11.8	25.7	36.9
Working part-time	11.2	12.6	30.4	13.6	26.0	32.9
Self-funded retiree	16.9	10.4	27.8	14.4	26.6	31.2
Pensioner/part pensioner	8.1	13.5	35.1	15.5	23.6	34.0

N= 6686

Pearson Chi-Square generally significant $p \leq 0.05$

2.5.6 Reverse Mortgages of Equity and Conversion

For many respondents the home is their major asset. Indeed, for many the family home is their only capital asset, and their only income comes from superannuation, insurances or government-provided age, service or disability support pensions. Generally respondents expressed greater expectations about retirement lifestyles and awareness of the likelihood of more demands for user-pays support services, particularly in health services, led the researchers to an expectation that people may seek to access the capital in their home to supplement their living standards at some stage during retirement. This is not the case. As seen earlier in Table 7 'Financing

Future Needs', only six per cent of respondents indicated they would take out a loan on their home to finance future needs. The growth in the availability of home equity conversion loans, also called 'reverse mortgages', the strong growth in real estate property values in recent years and the ageing of Australia's population has led to the emergence of a growing range of home equity conversion loan products in the Australian marketplace. Many respondents expressed an interest in reverse mortgages or some type of product which may allow older people to boost retirement circumstances or assist them to cope with an unplanned event such as health breakdown or household maintenance problems. However, the overwhelming response was distrust with the products currently available, criticism of the banks and other providers, and reticence to saddle themselves or their family with debt. Typical of the profusion of negative responses were:

"I wouldn't take out a reverse mortgage, I've already paid two mortgages, why should I want to pay another one when I'm dead?" – female (59 years)

"I would not take out a reverse mortgage. I believe that is just the greedy banks trying for a last bite." – male (61 years)

"Forget reverse mortgages. Buy lottery tickets." – female (56 years)

"I had been considering taking out a home equity conversion loan for travel and other purposes but decided against it. The fees and charges and the way that compound interest would mount up made my hair stand on end. The banks are outrageous. If they were candid about the business, they would fly the skull and cross-bones at the masthead. Banks used to be supportive of people, now they're ripping off everybody." – female (58 years)

"Never sell an asset unless you have a reason. Taking a reverse mortgage is gambling with it." – female (67 years)

"We'd sell the family home. My husband would never borrow on the family home." – female (71 years)

"I wouldn't take out a RM. Never could stand the worry of owing money and perhaps my family having to pay off the debt." – female (64 years)

"I have spent 30 years paying off one mortgage. I don't want to take out another one." – male (63 years)

"A reverse mortgage is an option that might suit some people but it would not suit me. What happens when the home equity is all used up and one is still alive and relatively well?" – male (68 years)

"For those with really valuable properties, the 10 percent or so they offer might be worth the hassles. But with a very ordinary house, the 10 percent is not going to do much. Plus there's the worry of having a debt accumulating-not that I've anyone special to leave the house to." – female (62 years)

"You can only take out a reverse mortgage if you own the house. Everyone assumes that because you are retired and have a house you own the house. If you have a mortgage, there is little one can take out for such a thing as funding your illness or nursing home." – female (71 years)

But some respondents were prepared to consider a reverse mortgage option. Typical comments were:

“As long as it is all above board I would take out a reverse mortgage.” – female (61 years)

“Reverse mortgages are an excellent option for some people without heirs.” – male (67 years)

“I would want to make sure the income or lump sum is not taxable as assets or income to reduce our pension.” – male (59 years).

“I have taken a reverse mortgage to pay for a near new car and to pre-pay for my funeral” – male (74 years).

“They’re good for more enjoyment in later years.” – male (63 years)

“If, on balance, the house became too hard to live in and/or we found that pension and superannuation payments were insufficient, then we would have to consider the option.” - male (67 years)

2.6 Intergenerational and Intrafamilial Assistance

2.6.1 Intergenerational Assistance for Home Purchases

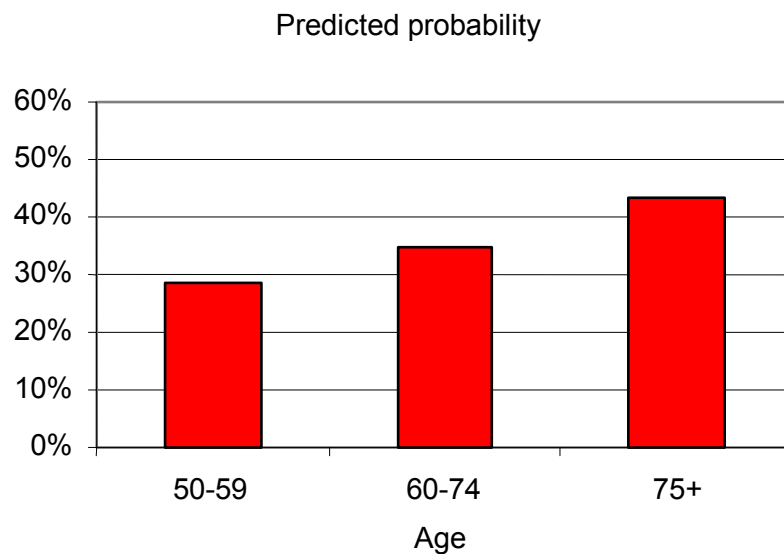
As outlined in table 9, more than one third of respondents had given their children or other younger family members assistance to purchase a home. More males (41%) than females (32%) had provided such assistance. Interestingly, although the proportions of respondents who had given such assistance increased with age, there were little differences over the one in three who had given such assistance across income status, place of residence or household status. Even 31 per cent of pensioners or part pensioners had given their children financial assistance. For most respondents the assistance had been in the form of a loan to assist them at the time of the home purchase or to help the children pay their mortgage. For many the loan was interest free, often in the form of an informal agreement. For most respondents the loan had been fully repaid, but some respondents complained that their children had not honoured their obligations. Not many had given the assistance as a gift. Few respondents renting privately or those respondents still living with family had provided financial assistance for their children for home purchase, but many commented that they had offered other forms of assistance. Most particularly many of those still living with their family had children in their thirties still living at home and some had returned home after divorce. A few had their married children living with them.

2.6.2 Intergenerational Assistance (Logistic Regression)

More than one third (36%) of the respondents included in the regression suggested that they had previously given financial assistance to their children or younger family members to purchase a home. With each variable at its modal category, the model predicts a corresponding percentage of 35%. Every explanatory variable except for

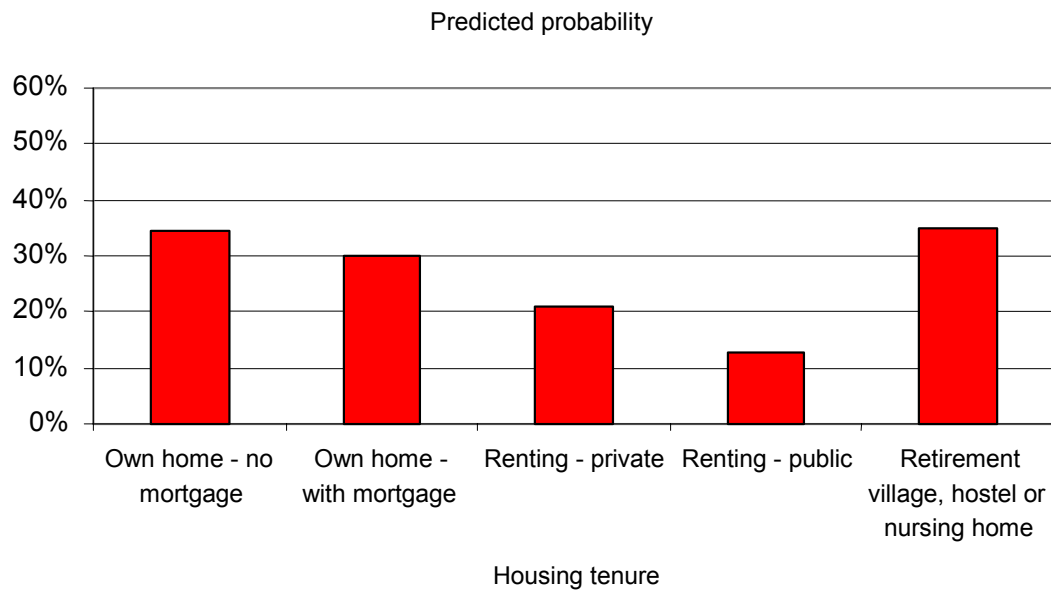
region was statistically significant in explaining the variation in this variable. Males were slightly more likely to report having provided such assistance, and not surprisingly, having children was a very strong predictor of providing intergenerational assistance. There was a positive relationship between this variable and age (Figure 4). The predicted probabilities ranged from 29% for 50-59 year olds to 43% for those aged 75 years or over.

Figure 4: Predicted probabilities for 'intergenerational assistance' by age (other variables held constant at modal categories)



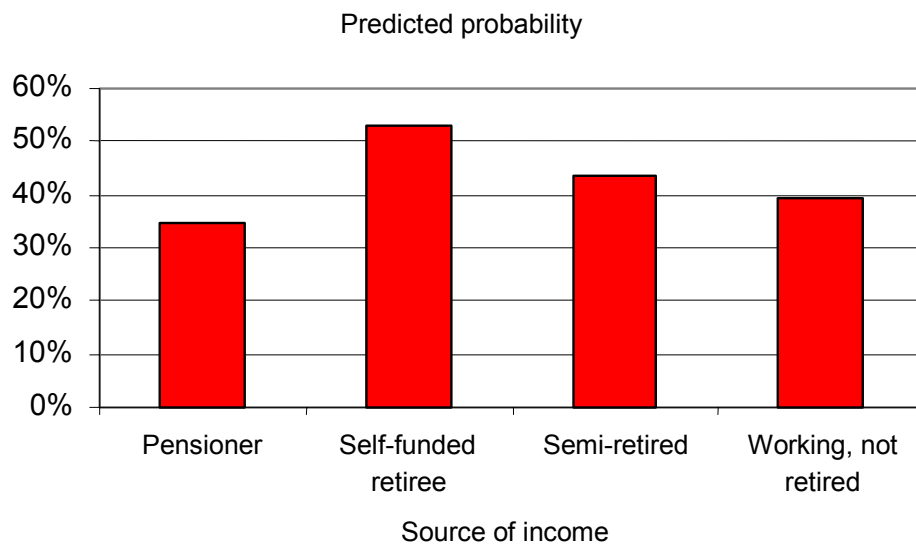
Housing tenure was also a strong predictor of intergenerational assistance (Figure 5). The predicted probabilities were just 13% for renters of public housing and 21% for private renters, compared to 35% each for outright home owners and those living in retirement villages, hostels or nursing homes, respectively.

Figure 5: Predicted probabilities for 'intergenerational assistance' by housing tenure (other variables held constant at modal categories)



Source of income was also a significant predictor (Figure 6). The highest predicted probability was for self-funded retirees (53%), while the lowest was for pensioners (35%).

Figure 6: Predicted probabilities for 'intergenerational assistance' by source of income (other variables held constant at modal categories)



2.6.3 Reasons for Assisting with Home Purchases

Many of the respondents who had provided family with assistance to purchase their home commented that they did so because they recognised that it was now difficult for younger people to purchase a home. Only older respondents aged 75 and over had given such assistance in order to provide their children with additional investment assets or income or to ensure their future security. Almost no respondents (0.4%) intended to dispose of their assets in order to deny themselves the age pension. Typical comments were:

“We built a granny flat at the rear of our property so that our daughter and husband with our grandchildren could live in the main house. They were unable to raise the necessary deposit to obtain a loan to have a house of their own. We had the granny flat built with a loan on the main house and the younger family are paying back the loan to the bank. The granny flat did not cost as much as a new building and they will inherit the whole lot and be a lot better off than we were when we started off.” – male (68 years)

“We have helped our children into their own homes on open term interest free loans that have bitten into our own property acquisition standards. Help is needed these days because the capitalist system we espouse rewards the talented and lucky at the cost of the living standards of the many. Many face an ever-increasing deposit gap that mostly cannot be bridged by basic savings.” – male (66 years)

“No-one was in a position to help my wife and I buy a home. My children did not require help in buying their homes but I have had to give a hand to my grandson. The younger generation require help because the cost of housing has leapt ahead of their income.” – male (71 years)

“Our house was built with the assistance of a War Service Loan. I believe children need assistance now as their standards are so high.” – male (82 years)

“I believe that we as a community sell lifestyle so effectively that many people are discontent with any concept of start at the bottom and work up in houses, jobs, personal relationship[s] etc.” – female (63 years)

“We have helped our children, initially by giving them a good education so that as they got older they would become financially secure.” - male (71 years)

“If we get to the end of our life without becoming a physical or financial burden to our children, then we feel that we will have done a good job as parents and citizens of our community.” - male (74 years)

“I helped my daughter and her husband buy their house, mainly because their housing situation was causing problems in their marriage and I did it for my granddaughter.” - female (65 years)

“No-one helped us; it was not the ethic in our young day. The ethos has changed and ‘good parents’ are seen to be the ones who give their children a great deal.” - female (78 years)

"I have helped 4 children and some older grandchildren financially with purchase of vehicles, furniture, holidays as well as home purchases." - female (72 years)

"Prices of homes are too expensive for the young, who have never had to go without. It's our generation's fault as we all wanted them to have what we never had." – female (74 years)

"I wouldn't give any assistance. The price of property has skyrocketed, but the circle keeps coming around. Anyone who thinks property just keeps on going up has rocks in their head. It would only take one huge disaster (influenza epidemic for example) and property will fall, apart from the normal economic fluctuations." - male (76 years)

2.6.4 Sacrifice, and Betrayal and Resentment and Resentment

Yet very many respondents were critical of what they saw as the profligate spending habits of their children. A number of respondents (35.6%) had given their children or other younger family members financial assistance to purchase a home, but some rejected the idea, venting their feeling that the younger generation were improvident and given to excessive expectations.

"No-one helped us buy a house. Children are not taught how to treat money. They all want to live for today and let tomorrow or Grandma or the Government look after them. If only it was mandatory in schools to teach them values and work ethics, maybe we wouldn't have so many youngsters on the dole." - female (75 years)

"I had to help my children. We always made our own way. The young want it all now, not wait for items like light fittings and curtains and Plasma TVs." - female (63 years)

"Today's young people are not prepared to go without anything. They expect to move into a house with everything their parents have at home. They forget it's taken the parents 25 years or more to acquire it all. Children nowadays HAVE (sic) to have a good car, mobile phones, expensive weddings and honeymoons and dine out on a regular basis." - male (71 years)

"Young people have not had to battle for the necessities as we depression reared generation had to." - female (86 years)

"My father gave me 200 pounds a couple of years after we married (he didn't have it at the time) because I had paid for my own wedding, and this went into the block of land." - male (82 years)

"Younger people have difficulties in getting autonomy and being proud of it as we were. They accept help because it is often offered and when this doesn't happen they blame the parents for not doing it. I don't agree with this. When I was called to help my son to buy a house I offered to pay half but have property rights to it. It was a big scandal and I'm not sure my son understood it or will forgive it." - female (71 years)

"We worked hard and did without all the luxuries. Because kids today want more and they want it now, they will go for the home they want rather than the home they can afford." - female (77 years)

"Maybe the old saying 'crawl before you walk' could be a good adage for today's home buyers!" - female (70 years)

"We never had any help at all. Living beyond one's means and overcommitting seems to be the main reason the younger generation ask for assistance." - female (83 years)

"No one helped us buy our house. My parents never owned their own house. The young people of today expect everything they have at home when they get their own house. They get into so much debt for cars, big weddings expensive holidays, all the latest in sound and computer technology etc." - female (81 years)

"Because they earn good money and are both working and have never had to go without they have had expectations of our assistance. I think it's our generation's fault as we all wanted them to have what we never had." - male (79 years)

"No one helped us buy our house. We scrimped and saved for our furniture etc. and were quite happy to have bare floorboards! I don't know why so many people today may need help in buying a home. Our children didn't. Maybe the old saying crawl before you walk, could still be a good adage for today's home buyers." - female (83 years)

"I think that today's young people want too much, and won't sacrifice to buy a smaller house. Both parents want to work, and they expect the grandparents to take over their family responsibilities. They take out big mortgages and want four wheel drives to keep up with the neighbours. I have always paid as I went and never had hire purchase. Young people have had an easier upbringing than we had. I think they lack self-reliance". - male (78 years)

"The only help we have given our two children is to give them gifts of \$5,000 each, to be used for what they want, when they want. Both our children were able to pay off their mortgages thanks to good management by themselves and spouses. One of our children now owns three houses." - male (76 years)

"Our in-laws had rented all their lives, and when they retired their protected rent was no longer protected. We had to help them to buy a house. We applied for a cheap government loan here in Canberra. They just covered the interest for a number of years, and then blackmailed us into taking over the loan. We took out a loan and were able to pay it off by taking in students and myself working." – female (68 years)

Table 9: Intergenerational assistance for home purchase and reasons for doing so

Question 14: Have you ever given your children or other younger family members financial assistance to purchase a home?

Question 15: If yes, what were your reasons?

15(i) Unable to get their own home

15(ii) Provided them with additional investment asset/income

15(iii) Disposed of assets which would deny me my aged pension

15(iv) Ensure their future security

Demographic Characteristics	% & (N) ‘Yes’ response to Q. 14	15i (%)	15ii (%)	15iii (%)	15iv (%)
Overall responses	35.6	19.9	7.8	0.4	9.1
(Yes) & reasons	(2268)	(1333)	(518)	(29)	(611)
Gender					
Male	40.6	56.2	24.8	1.9	26.5
Female	31.6	58.4	20.9	0.6	26.0
Age					
50-59	27.7	57.6	22.3	0.2	29.1
60-74	36.9	58.7	23.6	1.8	24.0
75 & over	44.2	53.9	20.4	1.0	28.1
Primary place of living					
Major city	36.5	55.8	24.3	1.1	26.6
Regional city	31.6	62.8	18.6	1.3	24.8
Country/coastal town	36.0	56.4	22.7	1.2	26.5
Rural area	31.8	62.4	17.6	1.2	23.6
Household status					
Living with spouse/partner	39.3	57.4	23.9	1.2	25.7
Living alone	31.4	56.9	20.2	1.2	27.2
Living with family/partner/other	20.2	57.4	23.4	-	23.4
Income Status					
Working full-time	25.4	63.9	22.6	0.8	27.8
Working part-time	34.2	60.5	23.9	0.9	28.0
Self-funded Retiree	45.4	54.4	28.3	0.9	29.6
Pensioner/part pensioner	30.8	62.3	18.1	3.0	24.0
Housing Tenure					
Own home – no mortgage	37.7	55.7	23.8	1.4	26.1
Own home – mortgage	27.4	71.2	14.4	0.5	27.0
Renting privately	18.7	52.3	22.7	-	25.0
Renting public	10.8	62.5	37.5	-	-

Retirement village	38.3	55.4	21.7	-	30.4
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N = 2268

Pearson Chi-Square generally significant $p \leq 0.05$

2.7 Bequests and Inheritance and Intergenerational Relations

2.7.1 Financial Expectations

As outlined in table 10, almost 30 per cent of respondents (28%) indicated that they expected to use up all their assets while they are alive. This was a question which created much interest. Of the 6089 respondents who answered the question, almost 40 per cent (39%) wrote additional comments upon the questionnaire. Many of their comments reflected their anxiety about having sufficient money to provide for their needs if they lived a long time. The prospect of long debilitating illness, prolonged periods of dependency and the financial capacity to pay for all their medical care and support needs were issues of concern for very many respondents. As discussed later many respondents saw euthanasia as a preferred alternative to future decrepitude. In terms of their use of assets, there were significant differences in terms of housing tenure, gender, age and income status. Private renters (69.8%) and people in public housing (66.7%) were twice as likely as any other category to expect to use up their assets while they are alive. The Baby Boomer cohort (35.2%) were far more likely to expect to use up all their assets while they are alive. More women (33.3%) expected to use up all their assets compared to men (22.1%). Respondents who were still in the paid workforce or who were pensioners were more likely to expect to use up all their assets than were self-funded retirees (those with income from paid work, either full or part-time, 36%; pensioners and part-pensioners 32.4%; self-funded retirees, 17%). Respondents without children were more inclined to state they would use up all their assets before they die, and people with children were more inclined to have made a will and to give priority to leaving the house for their children or younger family members.

Many respondents considered the uncertainty about how long they might live, or what their health requirements might be, were extenuating factors which influenced whether they would use up all their assets before they died. Typical comments were:

"I feel very uncertain about using up all my assets. It depends very much upon my health. I'm 73 in good health and single. So far so good." – male (73 years)

"I worked with pensioners and saw some dreadful scams where old people let the children handle their affairs. I vowed to always control my own assets." – female (63 years)

"We need to hang on to our assets as we don't have a crystal ball to see how long we shall live and how much we'll need to pay for our health and other needs." – female (63 years)

"As I have no children it will all go to cancer research. I believe people should go to the grave with zero assets." - male (62 years)

"After some sorry times with our children, my wife and I now say we will spend the lot and enjoy ourselves." - male (71 years)

“The way things are going with the government we’re going to need all our assets to pay for our needs as we age. I don’t think there’ll be anything left for our children.” - female (78 years)

“I don’t expect to use up all my assets but I do know they are going to reduce significantly especially if I get really sick.” - male (74 years)

Not everyone was so negative about leaving assets for their children. Typical comments were:

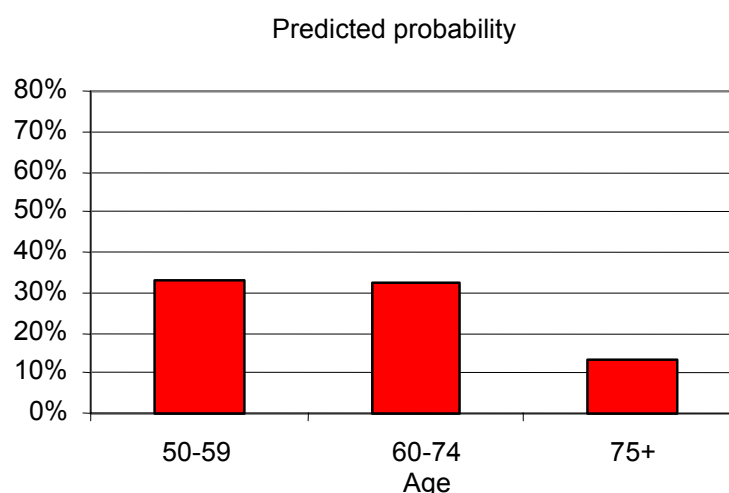
“Both our children are adamant that we spend our money and enjoy ourselves instead of stashing it away for them or their children.” - female (63 years)

“I don’t want to use up all our money as there would not be anything to pass onto the children.” - female (71 years)

2.8.2 Using Assets (Logistic Regression)

More than one quarter (28%) of the respondents included in the regression suggested that they expect to use up all their assets whilst they were alive. With each variable at its modal category, the model predicts a corresponding percentage of 33%. Gender, age, children, housing tenure and source of income were statistically significant in explaining the variation in this variable. There was no association between this variable and region, or household status. Males are considerably less likely to expect using up all of their assets while alive. While this was a statistically significant finding, it is not surprising as many more female respondents are living alone and in general older women have less financial resources than men (Olsberg, 2001). Also not surprisingly respondents who have children are much less likely to expect to use all of their assets than those who did not. There was also a relationship between this variable and age (Figure 7). The predicted probability for those aged 75 years or over (14%) was much lower than for the other two age categories (33% each).

Figure 7: Predicted probabilities for ‘using assets’ by age (other variables held constant at modal categories)



As in all the other regressions, housing tenure was a strong predictor of expecting to use up all assets whilst alive (Figure 8). The predicted probabilities were much higher for renters (72% for private renters; 69% for renters of public housing) than for the other tenures. The lowest predicted probability was for homeowners with no mortgage (33%). Source of income was also significant (Figure 9). The lowest predicted probability was for self-funded retirees (16%), while the highest was for pensioners (33%).

Figure 8: Predicted probabilities for ‘using assets’ by housing tenure (other variables held constant at modal categories)

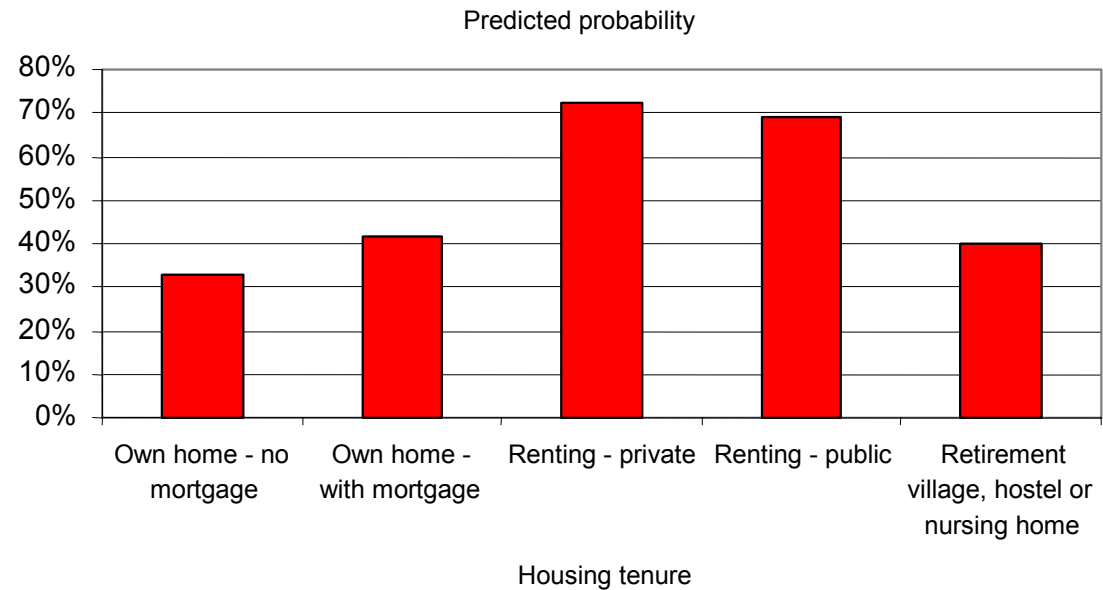
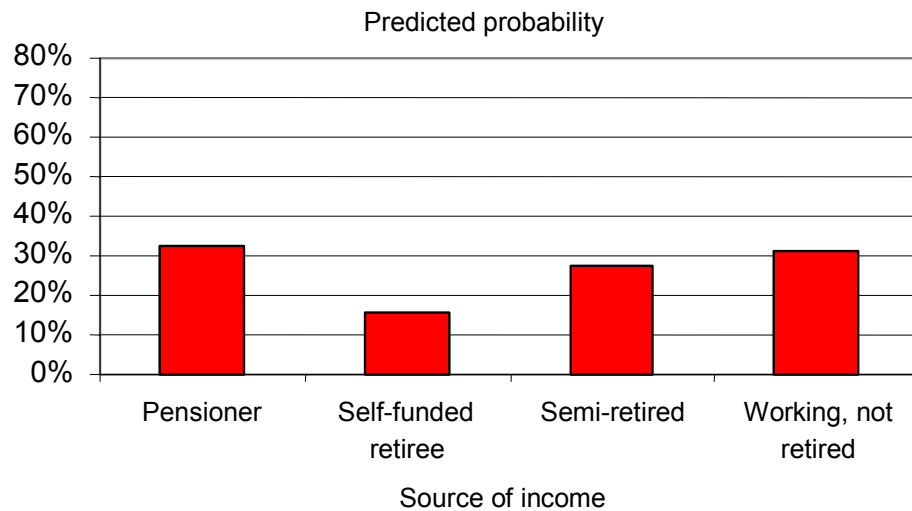


Figure 9: Predicted probabilities for 'using assets' by source of income (other variables held constant at modal categories)



2.7.2 Euthanasia

Questioned about using up their assets before they die led to an entirely unprovoked outpouring of people's concern about having control over their own death, or their demand that euthanasia be available to them. Typical comments were:

"I won't go into a nursing home or become dependent. I want to live my life out and if I had to and could, I'd end my life somehow, rather than go into an institution like that. I have nursed in those places and I know how people are treated." – female (57 years)

"My greatest fear is long life and being terminally poor which is my long term prospect." – female (68 years)

"I'd rather die than give up my independence. Euthanasia will be my choice so I can say goodbye at my time of choice." – male (81 years)

"Going to a nursing home would spell the end of life." – female (72 years)

"I don't ever intend to go to a nursing home. I saw enough when my mother was in one for two months." – female (69 years)

"Quality of life is more important than mere existence." – male (64 years)

Table 10: Financial Expectations to End of Life

Question 16: Do you expect to use up all your assets while you are alive?

Demographic Characteristics	No (%)	Yes (%)
Overall response	72	28
Gender		
Male	77.9	22.1
Female	66.7	33.3
Age		
50-59	64.8	35.2
60-74	70.1	29.9
75 & over	87.1	12.9
Primary place of living		
Major city	73.5	26.5
Regional city	67.8	32.2
Country/coastal town	70.0	30.0
Rural area	66.7	33.3
Household status		
Living with spouse/partner	74.0	26.0
Living alone	67.7	32.3
Living with family/partner/other	65.5	34.5
Income Status		
Working full-time	61.8	38.2
Working part-time	65.7	34.3
Self-funded retiree	83.0	17.0
Pensioner/part pensioner	67.6	32.4
Housing Tenure		
Own home – no mortgage	75.4	24.6
Own home – mortgage	60.9	39.1
Renting privately	30.2	69.8
Renting public	33.3	66.7
Retirement village	76.4	23.6

N=6089

Pearson Chi-Square generally significant $p \leq 0.05$

2.7.3 Making A Will

Almost all respondents across all categories had made a will (96.2%). Housing tenure is demonstrably an important factor, and the large number of home-owners in the sample was obviously an influencing factor as the only categories with less than this figure were those who were not home-owners. Older people were more likely to have made a will than younger people. The predicted probabilities ranged from 97.9% for 50-59 year olds to 99.2% for those aged 75 years or over. Not surprisingly, having children was positively associated with having made out a will. The predicted probabilities were 98.4% for those with children, and 97.2% for those without children. Slightly higher numbers of women had made a will than men, but the differences although statistically significant were not meaningfully different - predicted probability higher for women (98.4%) than for men (97.7%). Few respondents had discussed

their will with their children. Many saw their will as a potential source of conflict, and sought to avoid family confrontation by not discussing it. Typical comments were:

“There’s no way I’m going to discuss the will with my children. It’s entirely my business what I do with my money.” – male (82 years)

“My children were horrified when I told them I was getting a mortgage on the house so that I’d have a few bob for a new car and a bit of money for myself. So I don’t tell them my business anymore and maybe there’ll be something left and maybe there won’t.” – male (69 years)

“I haven’t discussed it with them and don’t intend to do so. I have enough trouble keeping the peace as it is.” – female (72 years)

“I’ve discussed my will with my children. The only thing they argue about is who gets what in the house so we’ve put different coloured stickers on everything.” – female (78 years)

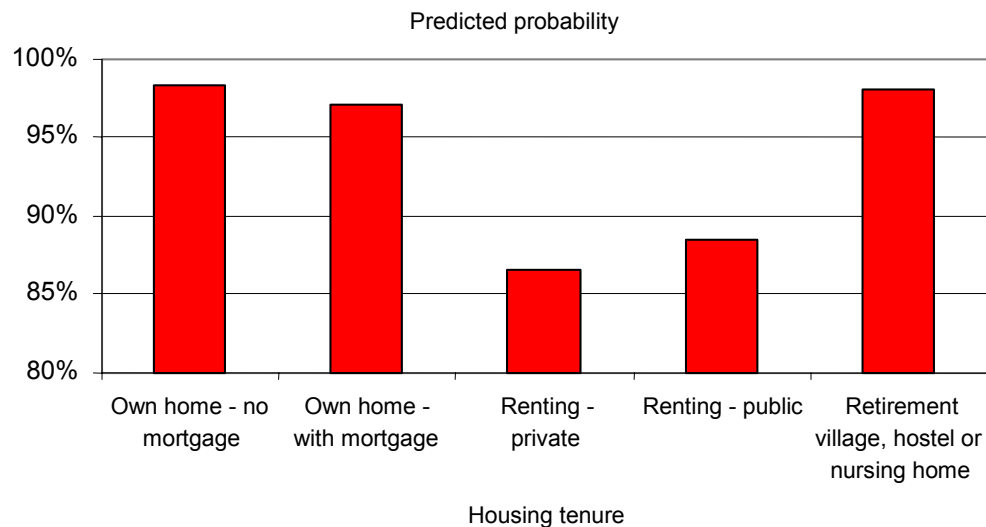
“They can fight when I’m not here.” – male (76 years)

“The difference between me and my children is that they expect assistance. Well they’ve got a few surprises coming their way when I die.” Female (69 years)

“I’ve left everything equally. I haven’t talked to them about it. I’m just hoping maybe the others will help the poor one. But I don’t want the arguments.” – female (67 years)

Logistic regression confirmed housing tenure was a strong predictor of having made a will (Figure 10). Living in rental accommodation (both private and public) was associated with a much lower likelihood of having made a will. The predicted percentages ranged from 86.6% for those renting privately, and 88.5% for those renting public housing, to 98.4% for homeowners without a mortgage.

Figure 10: Predicted probabilities for 'have made a will' by housing tenure (other variables held constant at modal categories)



2.7.4 Bequests and Legacies

The status of people's current relationships, whether they were married or with a partner, whether they were living with a spouse or living alone, all were important influences in the patterns of people's bequests. Many of these factors were influenced by the age gradient of respondents. Intended bequests to charitable institutions showed a significant age gradient, with older respondents far more likely to have intentions to make or had made such bequests. Across all categories except respondents over 75 years of age and respondents living alone, the proportions who had left legacies to charitable institutions were very small. Having no children also played a significant influence upon people's attitudes and intentions in regard to patterns of inheritance, where people without children were more inclined to state they would use up all their assets before they die. Housing tenure was obviously important. Respondents who were renting privately or living in public housing were more likely to be living alone and had left what assets they had equally divided along their children. Gender was also important in the patterns of people's bequests. Almost twice as many males (62%) as females (34.8%) indicated that they had left everything to their spouse. This may be the result of more female respondents being alone (45.7% of females live alone compared to 21.5% of male respondents; only 45.7 per cent of female respondents were living with a spouse or partner compared to 74 per cent of male respondents). Not surprisingly, the greatest disparities were with regard to household status. Three quarters of those living with a spouse stated that they would leave everything to their spouse (75.9%), and only 20 per cent of those living with a spouse and family said they would leave everything to their spouse. It is more than likely that the majority of these respondents had no spouse. Only 1.5 per cent of respondents living alone had left a legacy for a spouse. Many of these respondents were probably already widowed, divorced or perhaps never married.

Across all categories, about one third of respondents indicated they intended to leave everything equally divided between their children. More females than males stated they would leave their estate equally divided (males 28%, females 44%). Few respondents indicated in the survey that they intended to leave bequests to people according to their needs or to leave bequests to their grandchildren. Yet there was substantial discussion in the qualitative research of people's desires to bypass their

Baby Boomer children (whom many respondents regarded as undeserving) and leave assets to their grandchildren. In the Baby Boomer cohort almost half of respondents had no grandchildren - a reflection of marriage and fertility occurring later for their Generation X children⁷. Typical comments were:

"Not too worried about the kids getting their inheritance. They will end up with enough themselves after retiring. We are of the kind that intend to leave very little." – female (61 years)

"My wife and I after some sorry times with our children now say we will spend the lot and enjoy ourselves." - male (71 years)

"We deprived ourselves, worked hard so we had no debt. Our Baby Boomer children have been profligate. We're not prepared to go without now so that they can inherit the lot." – male (76 years)

"We had nothing. Kids should start the same way." – male (72 years)

"Their lackadaisical attitude just can't last. It's about time my children realised our money is for us to enjoy." – male (64 years)

"I'm not worrying about the children. I'm just thinking about me and my wife and our life. If there's any money left at the end of our time well so be it, if not stiff cheddar." – male (69 years)

"You only live once so enjoy it while you are here." - female (56 years)

"The lifestyle is actually the thing that has been important in my retirement, doing the kinds of thing myself and my wife always wanted to do." – male (68 years)

"I'm not leaving them anything. They've had enough of my sweat and tears already." – male (58 years)

"If we die early, the kids can have the home but if not then they miss out." – male (74 years)

"Children don't want to live in the family home but they sure want to inherit the asset value. Well as far as we're concerned we'll need that money." – male (76 years)

"Our children lived with us right through their University education and then some. We paid for their education and gave them money and they never had to pay board even when they started working in very good jobs. So we think we've done enough. They can't expect to get anything when we die." – female (65 years)

"I needed to get professional care when I was sick for many months and my children were annoyed with how much money I was spending. I don't know whether I'll have anything left at the end but I'm certainly not going to go without so they get the house." – female (68 years)

⁷ People born between 1967 and 1987

"Our kids are better off than we ever were. So whatever we've got is ours to use." – male (71 years)

"Our home will be the family inheritance. Our other assets are ours to enjoy." – female (69 years)

"Our children have and earn more than us. They are well organised. We may as well enjoy our own money." – female (65 years)

"You only live once so enjoy it while you're here. That's what our money's for. My kids might think otherwise but that's not my problem." – female (64 years)

"Because it costs so much to survive these days, there'll be nothing left." - female (54 years)

"I'm going to leave enough for the funeral." – female (72 years)

"I have loaned my son money and he doesn't pay it back, so he will not get any money from my estate if I have anything left. My son does not own a house here and probably never will." – female (69 years)

"I will never been in the position to help my children and they waste money anyway. My daughter is still single and doesn't save any money and pays a minimal rent to my ex-husband." – female (73 years)

"We need to keep hold of all our assets as we don't have a crystal ball to see how long we both shall live." – female (52 years)

"It will be the one who helps us will be the one to benefit the most." – female (63 years)

"I hope to leave them something but their attitude towards me has made me hesitate just recently." – female (59 years)

"I will never be in a position to help my children and they waste money anyway." – female (58 years)

"People wish to start where their parents are after working hard all their life." – female (72 years)

"We don't own a home but have made wills. Our children will be fortunate if we have raised enough to pay for our funerals before we die." - female (76 years)

"Rewards come from love and affection. Not the selfish way we've been treated." – male (76 years)

"I've pre-paid my funeral and now I'm going to spend what I have." – male (84 years)

But some respondents were hoping to leave bequests for their children. Typical comments were:

"Our house will be sold and assets probably divided 50% evenly and 50% on need as two of our children are becoming wealthy and the other two not so successful." - male (80 years)

"I'm leaving my money to the children equally. There'll be no distinctions between favourites." – female (58 years)

"The house will be left to our children equally. That's if we haven't had to sell it to survive." – male (79 years)

"We both grew up in the Depression and started work before World War II. So we knew the struggle that our family had and we hoped and did do better for our own family. And we'll leave them well provided for." – male (86 years)

Many respondents commented that their children were already well established, that they had good jobs and were financially secure. Typical comments were:

"I would have left my children the house but they have well paid jobs and don't require help." – female (73 years)

"I want to leave my home and other assets to the children but they say they don't need and it and to spend it all myself." – female (70 years)

"I expect to leave something for my children as my parents did for me. But they keep telling me they don't need it." – female (54 years)

2.7.5 Independence and Control

The desire for independence and not to be a burden on their family was also a matter of concern for some respondents. Typical comments were:

"With sensible but at times enjoyable frivolous spending, prudent investment and avoidance of credit, I'm optimistic enough to believe I won't be a burden on family or friends, that I'll be able to provide for myself until the end." – female (73 years)

"Losing my independence and having to rely on others would spell the end of life for me." - female (70 years)

"If I get sick I've got an extra bedroom so I can have someone live in and look after me. There's no way I'm going into a home. If it takes all my money and the kids get nothing well so be it." – male (77 years)

"Whether my children inherit anything depends on the cost of entering a retirement village or care exceeds or matches the total value of my assets." – female (76 years)

There were many stories of friends or relatives who had sold the family home when one partner died and put the money into one child's house. Sometimes these had dire consequences. Typical comments were:

"My sister sold her house and put the money into her son's house extensions. Three months later her daughter-in-law said I can't live with your mother. She'll have to go and she was out on the street with no money and having an awful time." – female (81 years)

"My friend sold her house and gave the money to her daughter and they built her a granny flat. It was fine for 12 months and then the children got divorced and the house was sold and the proceeds slip and she got nothing." – female (77 years)

"My sister had her disabled son living with her when she died. They all inherited equally and the other siblings insisted on selling the house and he ended up in a home which he wasn't happy about." – female (72 years)

Some respondents had already provided for their grandchildren in their will. Typical comments were:

"I left my granddaughter a legacy in my will for a good deposit on a house, but have changed it as she has become involved with a divorced man who has his eyes on the main chance." – female (71 years)

"I now don't think my children should have any of my money, so I will be changing my will to leave any income from my assets to be used for my grandchildren's education." – female (66 years)

"I have left everything to my cousin with funds set aside for her granddaughter's education." – male (78 years)

"I have 4 adult grandchildren, only one of them gets my home. I would love to be able to use up my assets beforehand, but my husband can't help saving for the future." – female (62 years)

"I want to leave the money to ensure my grandchildren get a good education, not for their parents to take yet another overseas holiday." – female (68 years)

2.7.6 Blended Families

Divorce and remarriage often presented difficult and complex decisions regarding family bequests. Typical comments were:

"We very carefully drew up new wills when we got married. If I die first he can stay in the house and also receives 2/3 of my fortnightly govt super. After he dies it all goes to my children." – female (61 years)

"My second husband has a life interest in my house as long as he wishes. When he vacates the house it goes to my daughter. Previously my daughter and granddaughter, but I have changed it as I want my daughter

to have the power that money brings, as her daughter has treated her badly, and I cannot see her looking after her mother in later life.” – female (78 years)

“We each have two children from previous marriages. We’ve kept the capital separate so that our respective children can benefit. The home is tenants in common not joint tenancy with provision for the remaining party to have life tenancy or until the sale of the property. Then the money is split between the children.” – male (69 years)

Table 11: Intergenerational and intrafamilial bequests

Question 10: Have you made a will?

Question 11: How have you left your estate?

- 11(i) Everything to my spouse
- 11(ii) Everything equally divided among my children
- 11(iii) Some to charity, church or institution
- 11(iv) Everything to my grandchildren
- 11(v) Certain things to particular people
- 11(vi) To people according to their needs

Demographic Characteristics	N “Yes” response to Q. 10	11i (%)	11ii (%)	11iii (%)	11iv (%)	11v (%)	11vi (%)
Overall responses (96.2% made a will)	6066	43.8 2930	37.8 2528	7.1 476	0.9 63	12.4 828	2.4 162
Gender							
Male	2327	62.0	28.9	5.5	0.6	9.6	1.8
Female	3739	34.8	45.8	8.6	1.2	14.6	3.0
Age							
50-59	1964	52.2	33.2	5.5	0.5	12.9	2.0
60-74	3043	46.1	39.7	7.3	1.0	11.9	2.8
75 & over	1078	30.9	49.3	10.8	1.8	14.7	2.8
Primary place of living							
Major city	3192	43.9	39.2	8.2	0.6	12.9	2.5
Regional city	1109	43.8	40.9	6.9	1.4	12.1	2.8
Country/coastal town	1283	49.5	38.7	6.4	1.4	12.6	2.2
Rural area	458	48.2	36.1	5.4	1.0	13.5	3.4
Household status							

Living with spouse/partner	3480	75.9	24.0	3.5	0.5	8.1	1.3
Living alone	2196	1.5	60.5	13.4	1.8	19.7	4.3
Living with family/partner/other	237	11.5	62.5	8.3	-	15.8	4.0
Income Status							
Working full-time	951	50.3	42.2	5.7	0.9	13.6	2.6
Working part-time	934	54.6	40.3	7.0	0.3	12.8	2.4
Self-funded retiree	2395	53.7	38.0	9.1	0.6	12.9	2.6
Pensioner/part pensioner	2233	40.8	48.0	8.9	1.6	15.1	3.1
Housing Tenure							
Own home – no mortgage	4705	48.2	38.2	7.2	0.8	11.9	2.4
Own home – mortgage	713	45.4	38.3	4.8	1.0	15.2	2.8
Renting privately	179	23.4	49.0	8.9	2.1	17.7	3.1
Renting public	61	14.1	60.9	6.3	3.1	9.4	1.6
Retirement village	232	23.4	48.0	14.8	1.2	15.6	4.1

N = 6066

Pearson Chi-Square generally significant $p \leq 0.05$

This section has presented the results from the 6789 respondents to the national survey, integrated and correlated with the qualitative data from the focus groups and Internet chat rooms and analysed using descriptive and inferential statistical procedures. The following section examines these results, and seeks to explain the research findings from a sociological perspective, situating the research findings within the context of contemporary demographic changes and social and economic and political transformations in Australia.

CHAPTER 3: DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

3.1 Introduction

The detailed results in the previous section provide extensive evidence of the attitudes, values and intentions of older Australians with regard to the issues of home and family in the changing social and economic landscape of 21st century Australia. The following discussion, using the interpretive frameworks of sociological exchange theory and narrative analysis, addresses the meanings of men's and women's responses in the national survey and the discussions in the focus groups and computer website chat rooms. The data are interpreted within the context of broader social changes which are impacting on the ways in which people construct their own sense of personal identity. At issue are the ways in which people mobilise narratives of self and society to position themselves within sub-groups or social demographics. It is important to remember that the power of narratives is not in the supposed objective truth of their content but in the degree to which a social group invests them with truth status and thereby provides grounds for future action. Within this study we focus upon the narratives which underpin and legitimate future lifestyle and housing intentions.

This discussion explores and examines the significant shift in the values and priorities of family and place and kinship relations in this new millennium in Australia.. Common perceptions that older people are resistant to change and are bound by traditional notions of old age and family obligations are disputed. A key finding is that patterns of housing tenure, lifestyle and family relationships are changing. And most importantly that older people are extremely diverse in their experiences and their attitudes and behaviour, as well as in their aspirations and expectations for the future as evidenced in these research findings. The context of these analyses of family and place is Australian society in the new millennium at a time of unprecedented demographic transformation when the meaning of family and place is now subject to contestation and debate within the public discourses of government policy, the law, education and the media.

Within this conceptual framework, the analysis focuses on the residential intentions and reciprocal obligations within nuclear family relationships, our primary form of kinship in this country. Specifically, our concerns target the changing notions of exchange, reciprocity and obligation. Exchange does not always have to take a material form; reciprocal obligations of course, can be of the emotional kind. One need not look further than guilt as a prime example.

In the body of this discussion based on the analysis of the survey results and upon comments by respondents about changing notions of place/home, personal and family identity and intergenerational relations in Australia, four major dramatic themes dominate the narratives of reciprocity and obligation within family relationships. Those themes are fate, sacrifice, betrayal, and resentment. All reference the shifting meanings around current ideas and values with regard to home ownership within the context of what it now means to believe in and belong to a family in contemporary Australia.

The innovative methodological approaches taken in the empirical research in this project have presented opportunities for sociological analysis of the transformations which are taking place in housing intentions and family relationships, and most importantly to explore the sources of such changes in personal identities, intentions and aspirations. For example, analysis of the qualitative data from the focus groups

and the computer website chat rooms revealed an important structural difference between the 'front stage' setting of the focus groups compared to the 'back stage' setting of the computer Internet chat rooms. The 'face to face' communication in the focus groups, a form of public forum with direct visual feedback from peers, was more highly formalised in the way that people made pronouncements which drew on established 'taken as given truths' about the state of the world. This was not the case in the Internet chat rooms, where 'faceless' communication was a discreet dialogue between respondents and researchers, more akin to a private conversation over coffee in a neutral venue. The Internet is a new and fascinating social phenomenon in this sense because it can be used as a form of 'electronic confessional', either for true or secret feelings or to explore new forms of identity. The discussions which the researchers experienced in the Internet chat rooms could therefore be described as revelatory, in that they were free from the sorts of self-censorship one finds in focus groups where people tend to perform and use language in ways deemed socially appropriate to that group.

Through this integration of qualitative research techniques with the quantitative national survey data, it has been possible to chart the narrative formations through which people identify and self-define in relation to the issues they were required to address. Furthermore, the insights gained through cross-correlating both forms of data provide important and valuable predictive indications around the kinds of policy directions which might be considered in the future and which advisedly might find acceptance with Australia's citizens.

3.2 Ageing in Place – Staying Put or Moving On

The changing patterns of housing tenure and lifestyle of older Australians are clearly demonstrated in the results in the previous section. More than one third of respondents lived alone, and increasingly as people aged they lived alone. Women in particular (45.5%) were living alone, and were twice as likely to be living alone than were men (21.5%). Indeed among those aged over 50 years, almost half the women were living alone, while three quarters of the men were living with a spouse or partner. The vast majority of respondents were home-owners (91.3% of all respondents), well over 80 per cent of those aged 60 and over owned their home outright, and self-funded retirees in particular owned their home outright (91%). The Baby Boomer cohort, those aged between 50 and 59, still had a home mortgage (25.3%) and five per cent of Baby Boomers were still renting. One third of those still working full-time also had a mortgage. The long accepted bush/city divide no longer seems to be apparent on a range of issues, although on this question of housing tenure slightly more respondents living in rural areas still had a mortgage.

Home-ownership was the strongest predictor of whether a person would age in place, would stay living in their home or at least their local area. The predicted probability of home-owners moving in the future was very low compared to people who were living in privately rented accommodation. Home-owners were most likely to want to age in place, although for many their attachment was not necessarily to the home but to the area in which they lived. Overall two thirds of respondents (64.6%) expressed their preference not to move, to stay living in their present home, regarding the location of their home or the financial aspects of their home as the abiding reasons why they were disinclined to move. Location was particularly important. Pleasure in and familiarity with the area and its facilities were regarded as important factors contributing to

people's day to day lifestyles. Private rental was associated with a high predicted probability of an anticipated future move. And many private renters were fearful about what would happen in the future. One private renter decried the difficulties of finding affordable rental accommodation as she aged, saying:

"I have very limited resources. I envisage my last days in a tent on the river bank somewhere".

Female respondents, people living in rural areas, and pensioners were more likely to state that they were unable to afford to move from their present home. People who were still working and not retired were more likely to anticipate moving than were pensioners, self-funded retirees or semi-retired respondents. Older people were less likely to expect to move in the future than younger people. Many had already moved from their family home in the past, and some were concerned about leaving friends in the area.

Baby Boomers (respondents under 59 years of age) are lowest in every category of wishing to age in place, indicating that they are comfortable with moving for lifestyle reasons as opposed to wanting to stay for whatever reason. Indeed, for them the notion of ageing in place was likely to conjure up images of immobility and old age, something which is not yet part of their cultural vocabulary.

The problems of house and garden maintenance, particularly on the death of a spouse or problems of declining health, loomed as the reasons which would most precipitate a move for respondents in the future as they aged. Many respondents cautioned that people should make their move either to a new location or into a retirement village while they were still active enough to establish new activities and new relationships. The importance of friends nearby was a frequent narrative. Typical comments were:

"I cannot afford a retirement village in this area and I don't want to leave my friends around here".

There were some respondents who had moved from owning to renting, commenting:

"I have less problems, I don't have to look after things, that's now the landlord's responsibility, or I can move when and where I want".

One man said the move to renting privately presented significant financial advantages, commenting:

"Just the interest on the proceeds of the sale of my house pays the rent".

There were surprisingly small variations in attitudes and intentions between men and women, except on issues where women's lower economic status affected their intentions (for example, their options for paying for future needs and that they could not afford to move).

3.3 A new 'Great Australian Dream' – Home as Base for Lifestyle

Yet widespread commonsense perceptions that all older people are resistant to change and residential mobility were not borne out. One in three respondents had moved in the previous five years, with the largest proportion moving location. And one in three said they expected to move in the foreseeable future. The most outstanding feature of responses from this mainly home-owning population was the almost uniform definition of the home as a conduit to a person's future lifestyle choices. Home-owners spoke of their home offering them a diversity of choices for the future, four out of five indicated that owning a home means that one is free to make decisions about how one lives and that it represents an investment for the future. Three quarters also saw the home as an asset that they could sell or borrow against to provide for their needs in old age, whether this be in the form of basics such as healthcare or for lifestyle pursuits.

It is clear, as our data shows and as evidenced in the plethora of media representations of home improvement, travel, consumption and lifestyle, which the place of 'the home' in Australian society is rapidly changing. The shift we are observing is from the home itself, as the material and symbolic foundation of personal and family identity, to the notion of 'home as location', a place which provides access to cultural sites where lifestyle and consumption can be enacted, witnessed and shared by others. In short, the shift is from home ownership as an end in itself to home ownership as a means to an end, in this case access to lifestyle.

And as many commented, their house move in the past or their anticipated future move represented a lifestyle decision, moving as some said to "a better place" or to "warmer weather" or to "access better recreational facilities". Many of the 1410 respondents (20.9%) now living in country or coastal towns had moved to those areas (particularly to coastal areas) in the past five years – the well-known 'sea change' phenomenon. Those who had moved most successfully were those who had moved to a place which was familiar to them; because of acquaintances in the area, or it was a place in which they had regularly holidayed, or because some of their friends had already moved there and encouraged them to do the same.

Ironically, as our findings demonstrate, this phenomenon can also be seen as a return to community but of a different sort. This is not the traditional family-based neighbourhood community; rather it is a set of emerging consumer classes, groups of people who find commonality in lifestyle and consumption patterns. The most successful moves were by respondents who had formed 'intentional communities', either moving to a location or a retirement village where they already had friends. Those new consumers pride themselves on their cultural literacy, as it were, as to the choices they make about where to live and what to buy. At the more affluent end we have the well-documented example of beachside café culture, but we can also cite the so called 'aspirational' classes who regularly partake of the wide range of shopping and recreational facilities in the mega-malls of the outer suburbs of our major cities. Furthermore, our research shows that this phenomenon is no longer age specific, the domain of young singles with high disposable incomes. It points strongly to an emerging retirement class which expresses strong desires to enjoy the fruits of its labours in active consumption and lifestyle activities. And it is here that the foundations of traditional family obligations are being seriously tested, because the evidence suggests that in many cases people are prepared to use their greatest asset, the family home, to achieve those desires.

Overall, the most significant feature of the responses of older Australians was their desire to have a sense of flexibility with regard to their lifestyle intentions during the last years of their life. Whereas previously one could argue that stability was the defining factor in old age identity, the respondents of today felt that a sense of flexibility and fluidity was important, and that home ownership was the central factor in their having a choice as to how to spend their remaining years. Whether the choice was age in place, to downsize, sell and spend, or sell and move to a location which provided access to better lifestyle opportunities, the prevailing attitude was the same; that after years of hard work they have earned the right to enjoy the fruits of their labours in any way they choose, regardless of the well-worn tradition of ageing in place with the sole aim of providing security for the next generation.

3.4 Sharing Houses with Children

Both in the survey and in the Internet chat rooms and focus groups the question of agreeing to mutual living arrangements with the children, be it in the form of co-habitation or the 'granny flat' option, was met with quite animated articulations of disdain and dismissal. Although some recognised these arrangements would be to the mutual financial benefit of both parties, these options were dismissed out of hand by the vast majority of respondents. Moreover, the issue of entering into these arrangements out of the desire to enjoy the fruits of the extended family, as is the case in many ethnic communities, and especially from the standpoint of the grandchildren, was not even considered. Indeed, when questions pertaining to the satisfactions of an extended family set up were raised, they were greeted with a sense of disbelief, as if the interviewer had no idea about the 'real world' of family relations in the 21st century. This is understandable, as we have witnessed the decline of the extended family and even the nuclear family - particularly amongst Australians of Anglo-Celtic heritage. People now regard the single parent and blended family structures as one of the many 'norms' to define the family unit.

Within all of the research arenas, a defining feature emerged around the issue of shared accommodation with family. This was the fact that people tended to reveal a lot more about themselves and their relationships with their children than 'official' questions required. And they seemed to feel that a conversational space had been open to them in which they could be openly critical of family relationships, especially if they codified their criticism using the modality of humour. One woman said:

"Never in a million years would I consider moving in with my children. One of us would be gaoled for murder".

This, one suspects, is because people across generations can now draw on available media codes and narratives which signify the family as the primary site of dysfunctionality. Indeed, a feature of these joking responses was that people often quoted television shows and their characters 'complaining about the kids'. This has been one of the biggest shifts in mainstream television - at the peak of the incoming idealised consumer world of the fifties and sixties and into the early seventies, the family was always depicted in idealised terms in relation to consumer capitalism. The television family sitcoms were gentle, and conflicts arose out of misunderstandings not out of malice. The important thing to remember was that the sacred institution of the family was still rock solid, and plots always furnished the resolutions to this meta-narrative, which was that the family will always prevail.

In the mid to late seventies when character replaced plot as the defining feature of prime time drama and sitcoms, the world became more complex. As the concept of the sacred institutions of society (the church, the law, the monarchy, the government etc.) came under threat from an intrusive media, public celebrities became metaphors. They were complex, many sided, and more importantly 'fallen'. The prime time shows reflected this, and what were previously symbolic figures upholding the values of sacred institutions became complex characters with foibles and vices. And the institution of family could be portrayed as totally dysfunctional. As the central sacred institution, because everyone has one, the family was the most sensitive subject for criticism, and therefore it became the primary terrain of comedy ('The Simpsons' being the most lasting example). The net effect was that family pathology became normalised in the sense that people could joke about their dysfunctional family as a sign of being well balanced. A typical response was:

"...I could live with my youngest daughter. But I would have to dispose of her husband as he and I don't get on."

In terms of the emotions it generated, sharing with children was easily the most stand out issue, both with the focus groups and the survey data. It was quite extraordinary just how open people were about how difficult were their relationships with their children. Mostly they tended to blame it on society and modern values. But they were also open about the fact that it was no better in their days. Stories of grandparents living with them were also generally negative. Intergenerationally, the narrative remained the same; extended families or multi-generational families are often negative and destructive. The narratives of family were characterised by repeated references to underlying tensions and hostilities which could erupt at any time given the right set of circumstances. In many instances people spoke about painful memories of past experiences of living in extended family situations. Typical of these responses were:

'...I wouldn't consider it. I have vivid memories of my boyhood when my grandfather lived with us and how demanding he was of my mother'; and

'...I would never do that, I saw what happened in my family when my grandmother moved in with us'.

When the older respondents talked about shared living of the past (as with the other examples) the curious thing was that they always seemed to demonise the grandparents and speak of the suffering of their parents:

"...so we had my grandfather living with us, an old pig he was too. My father hated it most of all".

Extended family was rarely expressed as a joy, more an endurance test imposed on people by the depression and housing shortages. It was a man of Greek descent and a woman of Chinese descent who spoke particularly warmly about their extended family obligations. The Greek respondent said that he had come to a good arrangement with his son to live in a granny flat attached to the house and that both were happy with this. He could not understand why there was so much angst among Australians in the discussion group when it came to this issue. There were stories of good experiences, but these were few. Many respondents spoke not only of their own painful experiences, but of the experiences of others they knew, many of whom had equally terrible stories to tell.

The essential point here is the ferocity of general responses; it was as though we had opened up a can of worms and people hadn't realised just how negative they were being about their families. Furthermore, those candid responses are interesting in this politically conservative climate where 'family values' rhetoric has become a staple. Yet, people rarely spoke of caring not to be of inconvenience to their children, instead they highlighted the potential for trouble. In most cases it was assumed that conflict would inevitably ensue.

3.5 Financial Futures – Anxieties, Uncertainties and National Delusions

"I certainly don't have enough savings. But I like to think there'll be something there to assist me down the track".

As seen above, people talk about denial as being a fact of life, and perhaps this is understandable considering that the social contract, as manifest in extended welfare benefits, was really created during their lifetimes. In its foundational form, the social contract signified a 'right' to welfare benefits following a lifetime of work, rather than the targeted mutual responsibility, or government 'charity', as welfare is now portrayed in political rhetoric and in the popular media. As one man reflected:

"Well fifty years ago it was the golden years in Australia...the new generation has to change its attitude, don't rely on government...the future generation will need to cope on their own and should look to the future. We have to give up this lackadaisical attitude - she'll be right mate".

Golden ages, imagined or otherwise, are important referents for ageing people because they give meaning to their history as they reflect on a future of uncertain expectations and perhaps diminishing possibilities for expanding personal experiences.

When questioned about this paradoxical position of holding deeply cynical views about government betrayal, yet retaining their faith in the benevolence of the welfare state, respondents were up front about being in denial. But instead of taking responsibility for their own denial, it was narrativised as either a universal human flaw or as an unfortunate, though still charming national trait. Typical comments were:

"Denial is part of human nature...people have a bubble mentality...many have a won't happen to me attitude...the old Australian phrase, she'll be right mate...people don't realise how quickly retirement will come around...I assume everything is going to be alright".

This apparent lack of awareness speaks of a false sense of present day security, as Governments continue to be perceived by many older people as obliged to provide for older citizens' needs. What has been perceived as a simple exchange relationship between taxpayers and the state, the social contract, has now been broken. Governments can be substitutes for family security, but only ever poor ones. And at the same time the whole notion of a strong traditional family structure has also disappeared. This also reinforces the notion expressed by many respondents in their narratives of self and society, that it is inevitable these days that people have to look after themselves because no one else will.

Almost half the respondents expected to pay for future needs out of savings, superannuation or medical insurance, women (43.5%) far less likely to expect to do so than men (56.3%). But many of them and others (about one third, 33.5%) also said they would have to sell or rent the family home to do so. Women (37.4%) were ten per cent more likely to have to do so than men (27.3%). Very few (6.3%) said they would take out a loan on their home to pay for future needs, and even less (1.1%) said they would ask their children for financial assistance to pay for future needs.

Many respondents were critical of those who had not saved or made plans for the future. There was a strong resentment expressed by self-funded retirees at what they saw had been their sacrifices to save to provide for themselves in retirement, and what they saw as profligate living by others who are now in receipt of government benefits. Typical of these responses were:

“Why does good behaviour get you nothing (except additional taxes on your savings) and bad behaviour get you all the handouts and considerations” and “ We worked hard and saved damn hard to get where we are, and yet we are discriminated against at every turn”.

Throughout the focus groups, chat rooms and surveys it was surprising to witness the level of ambiguity, and in some cases outright delusion, around perceptions of the government's role as a service provider. Perhaps this is due to the fact that in terms of public awareness we are still in a somewhat transitional phase between the perception of government as traditional service provider and government as facilitator of private sector initiatives in areas such as health, education and pensions/superannuation. This research reinforces the reality that it is imperative for future governments to take on the role of both educating the populace and providing incentives, in partnership with the financial sector through initiatives such as tax incentives, so as to avoid a widespread disenchantment which is already fermenting with regard to these vital issues.

3.6 Retirement Villages - The Last Option

In terms of place, family and meaning, retirement villages were a deeply ambiguous category and hence communications about them tended to be couched in suspicion. While those who were already living in retirement villages were by and large satisfied with their choice, more generally there was a degree of suspicion about the costs and conditions of retirement villages, and also importantly, what retirement homes symbolised in terms of family relationships. Retirement villages may offer a new substitute form of family and community, but it is one which ultimately signifies a final break from the real family. Retirement villages embody the compromise position between living with the children and therefore becoming dependent on them, and going to the nursing home, a place often referred to as ‘*God's waiting room*’ in modern television sitcoms. Retirement villages offer life with a new mono-generational surrogate family of siblings, with the omnipresent administrators representing the new ‘parent figures’. And it is that seeming loss of independence, abrogating control to village managers or staff, which presented a problem. Since it is a relatively new and ambiguous category which evokes suspicion, people tended to be more considered in their responses. There were no joking responses to this issue, as the exchange relationship was once more brought to centre stage. Just what are people buying into, and what are the new forms of reciprocal obligation which are acceptable in this new

world where people are free to be selfish and pursue their pleasures and interests? Uncertainty and suspicion underlie most of the responses. Typical comments were:

“...the information on retirement villages is very uncertain... I am wary of moving into a retirement village...retirement accommodation is a veritable minefield...”

Is the retirement village therefore the ultimate compromise for older people who want to be free to enjoy the pleasures of life but cannot afford the independence of real estate in the places where they would really love to live? As with the banks, there was a reaction to the thought of being exploited:

“I felt once living there one was at their complete mercy or lack of mercy.”

The dominant political and cultural message, that we are no longer living in a society, we are living in an economy, does make people raised in ‘roots-based’ communities of the past very uncertain. Because one thought can never be far away - what once was a home for you is now a business for somebody else.

3.7 Housing, Equity and Reverse Mortgages

For many respondents, the home is their major asset. Indeed for many the family home is their only capital asset, and their only income comes from superannuation, insurances or government-provided age, service or disability support pensions. Generally expressed greater expectations about retirement lifestyles and awareness of more user-pays health and other services led us to an expectation that people may seek to access the capital in their home to supplement their living standards at some stage during retirement. This was not the case.

While a reverse mortgage enables home-owners to borrow a lump sum or in some cases receive regular payments against the value of their home, few respondents to the survey indicated that they would take out a reverse mortgage on their home to finance future needs. This is despite widespread expectations by the banks that the market is set to expand significantly and will peak in 2015 when the bulk of Baby-Boomers will be retired with inadequate resources to source their expectations.

However, as discussed earlier, large proportions of home-owners saw their home as an investment for the future, or that a person could borrow against it, or that they might downsize in the future to release money to live on, as the commonly used expression ‘OWLS’ (Oldies Withdrawing Loot Sensibly) implies. Of note too, one third of respondents in this research, particularly younger people, said that they intended to use up all their assets before they die, indicating that the bequeath motive is eroding in Australia and will continue to do so. So it appears that there is a widespread acceptance of the home as a conduit for individual control of one’s destiny, and that home-ownership offers possibilities of self-determination of a person’s future lifestyle options. The equity in the family home will doubtless provide the capital for older people to make lifestyle decisions. But the form of that equity conversion or equity extraction is however at present not adequately provided in the financial marketplace. One woman said:

“We’d sell the family home. We would never borrow on the family home...forget reverse mortgages, buy lottery tickets.”

There was extensive discussion in the focus groups and chat rooms about reverse mortgages, there was concern about what most saw as punitive fees and charges and accumulation of compound interest which might force the sale of the house and create untenable debt for the next generation. These narratives surrounding the question of reverse mortgages objectify the notion of betrayal, with the government and the banks, instead of the family, being the object of people's hostilities. One woman said:

"I had been considering taking out a home equity conversion loan for travel and other purposes but decided against it. The fees and charges and the way that compound interest would mount up made my hair stand on end. The banks are outrageous. If they were candid about the business, they would fly the skull and cross-bones at the masthead. Banks used to be supportive of people, now they're ripping off everybody."

Within this narrative, governments and politicians are the betrayers who sold out the generation who sacrificed to get ahead, and banks are the parasites who feed off their subsequent financial hardship. As one man said indignantly, 'Why are we penalised for our own sacrifices'. Others saw a reverse mortgage as a way of endlessly condemning them to a lifetime of sacrifice as prisoners of the mortgage cycle. One man said:

"I spent 30 years paying off one mortgage. I don't want to take out another one."

Others who were more candid about capitalising upon their assets saw reverse mortgages as the answer to their financial problems:

"Reverse mortgage to pay for a near new car and to pre-pay for my funeral."

"...Good for more enjoyment in later years"

When asked about the alternative to the government and the banks, it seems it is taboo to ask the children to take responsibility, but definitely not taboo to be resentful and hostile towards them when they don't. This is an interesting stance – as the sacrifice generation they do not ask for sacrifice from their Baby Boomer children but express their displeasure when they don't get it. Reverse mortgages are also met with extreme suspicion because they can be seen to represent the banks exploiting the tensions and fault lines within the family structure itself. To many people, banks are seen to feed off these weaknesses in family relations and hence are to be regarded with suspicion.

3.8 Intergenerational and Intrafamilial Assistance

The research clearly reveals a shift in the norms and values of the Australian family as what we might call 'post modern' family structures increasingly replace previous nuclear families – divorce and serial marriages create blended families, single parent families, childless couples, same sex couples and transformations within traditional ethnic families. This is evident in the shift from roots-based family and personal values which emphasise production and reproduction to the increasingly prevalent values of consumption and lifestyle. This may be viewed as a rejection of the 'sacreds' of

previous generations where home and family were the primary source of personal identity.

The symbolic dimension of the home as the foundation for personal identity is now somewhat blurred as the values of consumption and lifestyle begin to take precedence. This is not to say that the family is not still the basis for many people's sense of identity, as the family continues to provide the foundation for most people's lives. It is more a case of how the relationship between government and family is now construed within popular political rhetoric and news and current affairs representation. We have witnessed how the 'family values' rhetoric has dominated conservative political discourse over the last few election cycles. Young families in particular have been heavily targeted in those elections, but not solely from the traditional position of promising increased government services. The tax cut manifestos of recent years positions voters not as citizens with rights to government services, but more as independent consumers with rights to spend as they please. The role of government in this sense is to provide them with money to do so.

Within this new social and political context our research suggests that older Australians as a group are beginning to shift their attitudes towards their children from one of self sacrifice to one of self interest. There is a growing recognition that older people will increasingly have to fund their own old age is one factor that has contributed to this. As one woman said:

"We need to hang on to our assets as we don't have a crystal ball to see how long we shall live and how much we'll need to pay for our health and other needs."

Although more than one third of respondents suggested that they had previously given financial assistance to their children or younger family members to purchase a home and many recognised that with rising prices it was now more difficult for children to purchase a home, in almost all cases assistance was in the form of a loan not a gift. Mostly the loan was informal with no interest, but not always. For some respondents the loan had not been repaid and there was resentment about this. Many said that they thought their children were too profligate, living beyond their means and had too high expectations of what parents should provide. To legitimate their resentment, we found people mobilising narratives of personal sacrifice and intergenerational betrayal. Within the moral framework of familial exchange relations, their sacrifices implicitly demand reciprocity but are instead met with self-interest, which in this context constitutes a form of betrayal, thus providing grounds for resentment. Typical responses were:

"No-one helped us. We worked hard and did without all the luxuries. Because kids today want more and they want it now, they will go for the home they want, rather than the home they can afford."

"Today's young people are not prepared to go without anything. They expect to move into a house with everything their parents have at home, forgetting it's taken 25 years or more for us to acquire that."

Fate is an important component of this narrative formation and is two sided for the war generation, those over sixty and more particularly those aged over seventy. In global economic terms their early fate can be defined negatively due to the effects of the depression and the war. Yet as they grew to adulthood, at a national level, both economically and politically, fate provided great opportunities with a strong welfare

state, a rapidly rising standard of living, full employment and affordable housing. As a result there was tremendous upward mobility as signified in that well-cited master narrative of 20th century Australia, the huge growth of the middle classes and rise of suburbia. But to achieve this class transition, people had to work extremely hard. And it follows that they had to make great sacrifices in terms of their own personal desires. As one woman said:

"We were frugal and did not have expensive holidays, perhaps we should have enjoyed ourselves more".

The payoff would therefore come through opening up new pathways of opportunity for their children, the greatest investment of all. One man said:-

"We sacrificed everything to help our children, to give them a good education so they would be financially secure".

Conversely, the Baby Boomers were not as affected by negative global events, except for the Vietnam War which had more of a political rather than an economic impact on society. At the national level, Baby Boomers continued to benefit from a peak in Australian standards of living, expanding educational opportunities and the last phase of great opportunity on the real estate and employment fronts. As the first 'media' generation (in Australia television came in 1956) they were also exposed to cultural change arising from global social movements – feminism, civil rights, multiculturalism, the sexual revolution, drugs and alternate lifestyles. They were also the first generation who travelled overseas in significant numbers and saw the multiple possibilities for lifestyle on offer in different cultural sites across the globe. Suddenly there was more to life than work and raising a family. One need only witness the attitudes to Sydney beach real estate as evidence of this. Previous generations did not value beachfront real estate because of the dangers of property erosion, the material value of assets was what counted. Now, cultural assets like views and access to lifestyle are what really matters. One baby boomer commented:

"We have a great lifestyle. Our house is in a good location near the ocean, we have good neighbours, close to a bus stop and a shopping centre".

To be able to make this shift in ways of seeing and being in the world, a generation needs strong material foundations. In the meta-narrative of modern Australia, fate had been kind to them.

On the other side of the Baby Boomers, the so called Generation Xers and beyond were not affected by events on a global level, such as war and depression, but they were to feel the pinch as global economics began to have an impact. This meant that on the national level they were negatively affected by fate as rising unemployment, higher real estate prices, a more competitive environment in education and employment transformed their expectations for home ownership and family formation. In terms of fate they have had to make choices, sacrifices as to how they are to position themselves in a more competitive world. This generation, often the grandchildren of the oldest of the war generation, can be said to be worthy of sacrifice because they have had to make sacrifices of their own. It was often mentioned that while older people had been able to afford a house when there was one breadwinner, it was now almost impossible for younger people to afford a house even with the sacrifice of both partners having to work. Their grandparents, many of them our respondents, were ready to acknowledge this. One woman commented:-

"I now don't think my children should have any of my money, so I will be changing my will to leave my assets to my grandchildren."

As expressed by respondents in the narratives, the theme of a corrupting modern world was at the centre. It could be expressed ambiguously in a phrase such as:

"I believe that children need assistance now as their standards are so high."

to straight out criticism of the 'we had nothing but they want it all' kind, where fate and sacrifice dominate. Classic examples were:

"No one helped us to buy a house...they live for today and let others pick up the tab...should be taught values in schools like work ethics...we made our own way...they want it all now like light fittings and plasma TVs, mobile phones, cars, expensive weddings and honeymoons etc. etc..... they want it all, they forget it took their parents 30 years (of sacrifice)."

The data demonstrated the explicit outcomes – that is that people whose parents had paid off their home or people whose parents or parent had already moved into a retirement village were far more likely to be provided with financial assistance to buy a home. Also, that people whose parents are renting have very little prospect of gaining parental assistance for home purchase. Yet the discussions from respondents were more about their desires and expectations for retirement lifestyles in the context of reciprocal obligations surrounding intergenerational and intrafamilial assistance. The themes were endlessly repeated like mantras. The narrative stream links the big themes seamlessly – Fate: we were never given anything, those times were hard. Sacrifice: of our youth and capacity for pleasure, the biggest sacrifice of all. Resentment: they want it all without having to sacrifice- implicit in this is that fate has been kinder to them. Betrayal: they've been privileged with education and opportunities we never had so they should know better. Revenge: if they are selfish, they are betraying us and the values we stand for, and their expectations will not be fulfilled.

3.9 Bequests and Inheritance and Intergenerational Relations – The Demise of Universal Home Ownership; the Great Australian Dream Unrealisable

The attitudes of many of men and women towards inheritance has shifted as to what previously would have been considered 'the right thing to do' in terms of obligations and responsibilities to their children. Our data strongly suggest that many older people's attitudes have taken on more those of their Baby Boomer children; that is 'put yourself first'. The desire to bequeath assets to the next generation seems to be significantly diminishing. One man said:

"I'm not worrying about the children. I'm just thinking about me and my wife and our life. If there's any money left at the end of our time well so be it, if not stiff cheddar".

More than one quarter of respondents overall (28%) suggested that they expected to use up all their assets while they were alive. Some respondents referred to themselves

as OWLS (Oldies Withdrawing Loot Sensibly). More than one third of the Baby Boomer cohort (33.3%) expected that to be the case. Indeed, in popular culture we now have the acronym 'SKI', which stands for 'Spend Kids' Inheritance' to define this new behaviour. One woman commented:

"You only live once so enjoy it while you are here".

Another man said:

"The lifestyle is actually the thing that has been important in my retirement, doing the kinds of thing myself and my wife always wanted to do."

How this attitudinal change is expressed and legitimated within the narratives of contemporary Australians is very much a function of the shift from the sorts of identity values which were derived from lived experience within fixed communities to identity values derived from mass exposure to virtual sources through media representations, which of course encourage and idealise consumption and lifestyle. In this research data, this is borne out by the generation formed in social roots-based communities expressing opinions which are very contemporary in the way they openly express the 'me first' types of values previously associated with younger generations. One woman commented:

"I've been doing a lot of travelling all over South East Asia . The future can be anything from 10 minutes away to 10 years away so you have to do what you want right now."

It is clear that both contemporary political discourse and the representational field of the mass media have played their parts in normalising these values. Within political discourse in particular, people once defined as citizens, a term which defined them as social beings with attendant responsibilities, are now constructed as consumers of political policies, which are now deliberately codified as 'packages'. The concept of 'rights' has shifted from the domain of civil responsibility to the domain of economic pragmatism. The meta-narrative is precise and straightforward – everyone of all ages has the right to be selfish because it's good for the economy. And so, the argument goes, what's good for the economy must be good for the individual.

Many respondents said their children had told them to go ahead and spend their money, but many stated that they still felt their children had some expectations that they would inherit at least the family home. However, there are strong indications that the expectations of Baby Boomers, and of their children the Generation X-ers, that they will inherit the family home of older Australians will not be realised. Increasing longevity and user-pays policies for health and residential care will place what might be unexpected and crippling burdens upon the retirement savings and home equity of the war generation and so too on their Baby Boomer children. This coupled with the aforementioned "put yourself first because you deserve it" attitude offers bleak prospects for the expected legacies of the Baby Boomers and even less for their Generation X children.

For the war generation to now feel comfortable about their right to think of their own self-interest first, it is necessary for them to be able to legitimise their new position within their own communities of experience. To achieve this they mobilise narratives, myths to use the popular term, about their fate and the sacrifices they made throughout their lives to both society, as conscientious tax-payers, and to their children as diligent parents. This legitimates their feelings of resentment at the lack of reciprocity of their

children and justifies their actions of self-interest as an inevitable consequence. Those steps are necessary if they are to successfully challenge the old order of family values in society, being that one must, without question, hang onto one's assets and hand them onto the children. And the most powerful narratives which contest that old order and reinforce self-interest come from the advertising media. When directed towards the new retirement demographic they repeatedly invoke the theme of sacrifice and reward. Why, the question goes - 'because you deserve it'.

This change in attitude can however produce uneasiness and reservations in some people, because it represents a challenge to assumed moral truths about parental care and protection. To think of one's children as betraying their sacrifices and good faith can be a somewhat disturbing prospect. In some cases therefore, it is necessary and desirable to relocate the source of betrayal to a domain outside of the family with the most obvious source being governments, and politicians in particular. This is the narrative of betrayal of the social contract as manifest in the noble idea of the welfare state. One woman, a self-funded retiree, commented:

"We denied ourselves of many things saving hard for retirement and now we are being penalised by the government for doing so."

And a man aged 59 commented:

"I am extremely angry that I was told lies 30 years ago that if I had a low income I could expect Government support in old age. Now all that is unravelling and I shall have to work until I drop dead."

And so the 'Great Australian Dream' of universal home-ownership - that cornerstone of our egalitarian society - may be no more. As young people now make lifestyle choices opting for inner-city apartment living or a long term rental accommodation, no longer will their longer term expectations of parental support or inheritance be available to meet that ever diminishing chance of meeting the deposit, let alone the loan repayments, for the suburban home on the quarter-acre block.

3.10 Family Legacies

Within this narrative structure, the notion of the gift is far more transparent and is generally dealt with in a far more measured form. Almost all respondents said that they had a will. Housing tenure was a strong predictor of having made a will. Almost all home-owners had made a will, while living in rental accommodation (both private and public) was associated with a lower likelihood of having made a will. Not surprisingly older people were more likely to have made a will than younger people, and having children was positively associated with having made a will. Most respondents said they would like to leave something for their children. Yet many said that they intended to spend all the rest of their assets, but hoped that they might be able to leave the house for their children. Many recognised that this would not necessarily be the family home. They expected that they would have moved to a smaller unit or into a retirement village, and if it were strata-titled there would be some residue left for their children.

Even this was not by any means unanimous. More than one quarter of respondents to the survey (28%) stated that they expect to use up all their assets before they die. Only self-funded retirees were confident that they would leave a legacy, only 17 per

cent expecting to use up all their assets before they die. Over a third of Baby Boomers expect to use up all their assets and almost 70 per cent of people renting (private renters 69.8%; public renters 66.7%) said they will leave no assets behind when they die. Some respondents said that they hoped that there would be enough left for their funeral, but that would be about all. A surprisingly small number of respondents (only 7%) had made provision in their wills for charitable bequests. Baby Boomers in particular (5.5%) were only half as likely to make such bequests as were respondents aged over 75 (10.8%). Respondents living alone (13.4%) were those most likely to leave legacies for churches and other charitable institutions.

People who had remarried or were in new relationships said that they had made special provisions in their wills for their respective children. One man said:

"We each have two children from previous marriages. We've kept our capital largely separate so that our respective children benefit."

Some people reported bad experiences themselves with parents who had disregarded them in favour of new wives and children, and some anticipated that there may be problems ahead in conflict over their assets. Indeed, in our research we found that the issue of inheritance within the new world of blended families is an issue which has drawn comment from many in the legal community who now regularly have to deal with the increasing phenomenon of bitter contestation of wills by descendants of these new family structures. Some respondents commented that this was the best reason for them to spend all their money while they were alive, that they had always tried to provide the best education for their children in their first or second or even third families, but that there was a lot of hostility between the children of different families.

Discussions in the focus groups and chat rooms were even more equivocal. Once again, Fate is important here – one allocates gifts through a moral desire to balance what the universe has designated. Sacrifice is a far trickier narrative move because if articulated in a transparent way one can always be open to accusations of guilt mongering. Sacrifice takes a far more implicit form in the narratives of older people who are the parents of the Baby Boomers. Within cycles of gift exchange, if a gift has not been reciprocated, this can be construed as a form of betrayal of expectations. When taken to heart, as many of the personal stories revealed, resentment and even hostility can follow. Clearly the greatest form of hostility in their case is to complete the circle and reconstitute Fate. As one man said:

"It will be the Boomers' fate not to inherit because they brought it upon themselves."

If one looks at contemporary media narratives of the Baby Boomers in the current conservative cultural climate, it is clear that the Baby Boomers have become the embodiment of all that was wrong with the cultural revolutions of the sixties and seventies. It is not surprising that the current narratives position Baby Boomers in such a negative way, considering the conservative political and cultural shift in Australian society. The narrative sequence expressed by respondents is as follows - Fate had been kind to them. Sacrifice was required of them. None eventuated which was seen as a betrayal. Resentment thus ensued, and sometimes even a form of revenge. Typical comments were:

"...they're wasteful of money... they don't appreciate sacrifice...we had a sorry time with our children...I don't think my children should have any of my money... their attitude towards me has made me hesitate."

At the extreme end one parent summed up the impact of their selfishness:

"I've come to the conclusion that we need a law to protect the old against their children."

And so the grandchildren in many cases are often positioned as the new recipients of inheritances because, in a sense, they are still innocent and not capable of the sorts of betrayals of their Baby Boomer parents:

"The younger generation require help because the cost of housing has leapt ahead of their income...I will be changing my will to leave any income for my grandchildren's education...cousin's grandchild's education."

Although these shifts towards questioning the tradition of passing on everything to the children are still in the minority, we would argue that there are grounds to believe that this phenomenon will only increase as the current cultural and political climate continues to espouse the virtues of self interest over collective responsibility. And this will have extremely important ramifications for politicians, policy-makers, banks and the housing sectors in the oncoming years.

3.11 Postscript –Attitudes to Euthanasia

Perhaps the most surprising issue which surfaced entirely without provocation in responses to the survey and in discussions in the focus groups and the chat rooms was people's desire to be able to end their lives painlessly and at the time of their own choosing, in other words, euthanasia. Very many respondents wrote eloquently on the questionnaire of their desire to have the freedom to make such a decision. It was interesting that the question which provoked these responses asked whether they intended to use up all their assets before they died. It is sobering to consider that being old and having no money perhaps loomed as such a dire prospect that ending one's life seemed the only option. The fear of infirmity, loss of independence and the dismal spectre of being in a nursing home were topics which also were raised in the group discussions. Typical comments were:

"My greatest fear is long life. I want to have euthanasia so I can say goodbye at my time of choice"... Going into a nursing home would be worse than death. I saw my mother in there for six months and I want to be able to end my life myself"... "I want to have the technology to end my life painlessly and when I am ready to go"...I don't want the government telling me I cannot decide for myself when I will die."

Unfortunately, up to the present there continues to be an absence of fora to deal with the issue of euthanasia in a rational and non-emotive way, without partisan politics, institutional religion or cultural lobby groups deliberately capturing the issue for their own moral ends. From the evidence of our respondents expressing a desire to deal with the issue openly and honestly, it seems that there is a need to have widespread debate on this issue that takes into account the needs and wishes of Australian individuals and families. The issue of death, and therefore quality of life, is one which has both deep metaphorical resonances and also severe economic and pragmatic consequences. Considering that Australia has a rapidly ageing population of Baby Boomers to whom quality of life issues have always been foundational to their way of life, the debate seems long overdue. The realities of an ageing population with access

to scientifically managed states of morbidity have far reaching consequences, not only for the structure and meanings of family, but also for the economy. These people, used to being able to choose a 'way of life' will certainly demand to be able to choose a 'way of death'.

3.12 Final Summary

These far reaching transformations in personal identities and family values in Australian society are ongoing. The findings of this project are in some cases revelatory and certainly warrant the close attention of the community as a whole. The findings will doubtless provoke discussion within Australian families, and in so doing, some of the previously unexpressed resentments and hostilities may well be resolved or at the very least result in more open communication between generations. These are particularly important issues for, as was reported in the previous Positioning Paper, legal challenges to wills are escalating and court proceedings only waste money which could more productively be used by family members of whichever generation.

As indications of the trajectories of future intentions and aspirations of older Australians, these findings provide important information to politicians and policy-makers in governments, both federal and state, and to decision-makers in community organisations and in the private sector. As the limitations of the research precluded a random population sample, the findings are not representative of the views of every older Australian. But they do however represent the views of a very broad-ranging sample of more than 7,000 Australians aged over 50 years of age and must therefore be seen as salutary guidance to future choices of older Australians.

The results of this research provide an impetus for more extensive research, most particularly to examine how people's attitudes can and will change over time. Future research priorities are discussed in the following final section of this report. As well, these findings do give important indications of the policy directions which may advisedly be appropriate and acceptable for Australian citizens. Hence some broad policy priorities are also detailed in the following last section of the Report.

CHAPTER 4: RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH AND POLICY PRIORITIES

The previous results and discussion provide indications of the challenges ahead in Australia for individuals, families and policy decision-makers in both the private and public sectors as a result of the continuing demographic changes. In order to meet those challenges and enhance the opportunities for the greatly increased numbers of older men and women in Australia in light of their anticipated enhanced longevity, there will need to be continuing and substantial awareness and policy responsiveness in both the public and the private sectors. Such awareness must be both proactive and responsive to the changing demands and expectations of the older population, while at the same time being cognisant of the impacts of such demands on their ongoing sustainability by the broader Australian population, particularly younger taxpayers. This is, and will continue to be, a difficult task. There is widespread antipathy to the introduction of user-pays services for older citizens and yet ambiguity and almost delusion in expectations about future provision of government support. Perhaps this is due to the fact that in terms of public awareness we are still in a somewhat transitional phase between the perception of government as traditional service provider and government as facilitator of private sector initiatives in areas such as health, education, pensions and superannuation. Continuing research and readiness to consider how policies can be effective and dynamic, and at the same time acceptable to the citizenry, are essential. It is imperative that governments both educate older citizens and provide incentives, in partnership with the financial sector through initiatives such as tax incentives, to avoid future dissatisfaction when services fall short of expectations. This Section proposes that our research findings, and the anticipated continuity of such widespread changes, indicate the need for both new directions in the approaches to policy development and implementation and continuing research. Some immediate policy priorities are first detailed. Opportunities and some challenges for future research follow.

4.1 Lifestyle Living for Older Australians

The findings demonstrated the desire for independence and autonomy of older Australians. Respondents' declared strong preferences for independent living, and the findings revealed that older men and particularly older women are increasingly choosing to live alone. Recent findings from the ABS (Social Trends Cat 4102.0, 2005) confirm these findings, predicting large future increases in the numbers of older people living alone, particularly women. Of note also, this study identified the widespread antipathy by respondents towards moving in with children when a spouse or partner dies. Also, the findings revealed that living near friends continues to be an important priority in either ageing in place or moving location. While family relationships continue to be important for many respondents, for many others it was most important to have friends living nearby. This was a dominant narrative not only among those living alone, but also among couples. Respondents who had already moved from their family home, and who had done so with greatest success, identified that they had moved to an area where they already had friends or an area in which they had spent holidays in the past and knew local residents. These were regarded as the best guarantees for successful retirement lifestyles. Of note also, many respondents in this research, who were already living in a retirement village, stated that

the best thing about their move had been the opportunity for social contact and social activities.

There was also frequent discussion among respondents of the desirability of groups of friends choosing to live together, rather than go into a retirement village or into a nursing home with complete strangers. People spoke of buying a motel or a block of flats to thereby create their own community. Some respondents spoke fondly of the communities of older residents living in caravan parks, although one respondent warned that many such parks were being closed and older people left homeless as some local councils sold what was now highly priced beach front coastal real estate. What we are witnessing is the emergence of new forms of community living – the creation of intentional communities by the choices and preferences of older people themselves.

These aspirations offer challenges but also opportunities for private building developers and for the future direction of public housing developments. There are already models in Denmark and other countries which address these challenges. In particular, there will need to be more open and flexible consideration of such developments by town planners and for local government ordinances. There may also be possibilities of forms of shared titles, tax advantages, and service provision to facilitate these sorts of intentional communities. There is a need for acceptance of co-operative villages, sometimes called eco-villages, building permits and land titles. These are already accepted in rural areas, and could well be considered for urban environments. The desire by many older people to downsize their family home and remain in their urban area and to be near to friends suggests this would be a preferred possibility for some older people.

4.2 Retirement Villages

The commercial priorities and authoritarian management structures of private retirement villages were seen as particularly unacceptable by many respondents. Nursing homes were regarded as anathema, worse than death. This research demonstrated that while those people who had moved to a retirement village were satisfied with their choice, many respondents expressed a general reluctance about purchasing a unit in a privately-operated retirement village. Even where the retirement village is owned and operated by religious or community organizations, respondents stated they were generally distrustful about the terms and conditions of entry to a retirement village, about the standard of management of retirement villages, and the perceived lack of control and loss of independence by residents and unit holders. Most particularly there was distrust expressed concerning the lack of regulation of service provision and of maintenance payments to villages. It is important that governments at the national and state levels collaborate with peak bodies representing the Retirement Village proprietors to ensure full financial disclosure by retirement village companies as well as regulation of disclosure of terms and condition of entry to each retirement village.

4.3 Unlocking Household Equity

Older people's recognition of the family home as the conduit to lifestyle choices and the fact that the family home was for most their only financial asset provide the context for greater acceptance of financial products for equity extraction or equity conversion such as reverse mortgage products. The results of this study suggest there may be a growing willingness to access home equity by future retirees, and that the desire to bequeath assets to the next generation is diminishing in Australian families. In the past two years there has been an increase in the number of reverse mortgages in the Australian market from three to eleven. However, few respondents had taken up a reverse mortgage product. Respondents expressed distrust and reservations about the equity conversion loans or reverse mortgage products which are currently available in the market. Of note, for example, the Australian Government-provided Pension Loans Scheme (PLS), which is available to part-rate pensioners and some self-funded retirees who own real estate, has had a low take-up rate. The recent widely publicised failure of a similar equity conversion product (while not essentially a reverse mortgage product) will further foster market distrust. A review of the market by the financial services regulator ASIC is also imminent and may fuel further public distrust.

There is a need for the development of an equity conversion or extraction product through some form of collaborative public private partnership which holds some form of government bond guarantee. Some form of government regulation is also necessary in the largely unregulated reverse mortgage market sector. There is also a need for review of taxation and pensioner benefit eligibilities as they affect the take-up of a reverse mortgage for home equity conversion for the following purposes:

- as a planned step early in retirement to enhance retirement income; or
- to access small amounts of equity for household maintenance or provide for renewal of motor vehicles or household whitegoods; or
- later in retirement if they have largely drawn down their other assets.

Currently some equity can be accessed for a 90 day period without infringing age pension eligibility. But taxation incentives and other ways of sequestering family home equity may be able to be developed to encourage older Australians to unlock equity in the family home.

It is proposed that:

- 1) research be conducted into models of public/private partnerships in overseas countries or in the research literature on equity conversions, the development of a housing futures market or a derivatives market on housing; and
- 2) that a seminar on alternative models of public/private collaboration on home equity conversion be held at which proposals for such initiatives could be explored.

4.4 Future Housing for Non-Home Owner Elderly

The research identified significant differences in the probability of future house changes and in family relationships among older people living in rental accommodation

(both public and private). Those living in private rental accommodation, particularly women, were most fearful about a lack of future housing security. Increased longevity is also expected to create demand pressures on the availability of adequate public housing for older Australians. There is a need to develop policy initiatives to address these issues.

It is important to examine the trajectories of how private renters will accommodate shifts in later life. The availability of affordable rental accommodation is an issue of particular import. It is also important to examine particularly the housing trajectories of those older men and women who live alone. A special targeted qualitative research project among older men and particularly women in rental accommodation and/or who live alone is an important initiative. Discussions with officers of the Departments of Housing indicate that as longevity affects public housing tenants there will be untenable strains upon the already overextended public housing sector. It will be important to examine what proportions of public housing tenants live in shared accommodation with younger family members, and what impact this may have upon housing transfers and so public housing vacancies in the future.

4.5 Retirement Savings, Financial Literacy and Policy Communications

Low levels of household savings, particularly low preparedness concerning retirement savings in Australia has long been a focus of Government concern. Public policies, particularly the extensive and successful policy initiatives regarding occupational superannuation, were addressed in the previous Positioning Paper. The findings of this Report demonstrate the low levels of preparedness among older Australians with regard to their earlier retirement savings and financial planning for the future. One policy priority is that the newly established Financial Literacy Foundation pay particular attention to the financial literacy of older Australians.

The findings of the study also revealed a persistence of low levels of knowledge regarding government policies for provision of benefits and entitlements for older Australians. One of the dominating narratives in the research was respondents' concern and uncertainty about the future, even to the point of expressions of extreme anxiety. The prime concern was how people would cope with the existential possibilities of deteriorating health, sudden morbidity, or extended periods of illness and dependency. The proliferation of government policy changes also consistently dominated discussions by respondents. These are important fiscal issues for all governments which will continue to challenge policy decision-makers and are outside the scope of this research. But one factor is important, and that is that at the very least a greater emphasis needs to be placed on the provision of accessible and understandable communications regarding age pension and other benefits by all government departments and agencies.

4.6 Intergenerational Relationships

Issues of sharing accommodation with children, financial support from children or financial assistance given to children, and bequests and inheritance were revealed as incipient sources of conflict within families. Many respondents said their children's

expectations of inheritance would not be met. Respondents who were most confident of their family relationships were those who said they had made their intentions clear to their children. But from what respondents said, there appears to be lots of 'shadow-boxing' around these family discussions. While it is to be hoped that this research will bring the issue into greater public discussion, there are also strategies which policy-makers could explore. For example, the Family Relationship Centres recently announced by the Federal Government could be asked to include discussions of inheritance and intergenerational support in their service descriptions.

4.7 Need for Longitudinal Research

The value of a major cross-sectional study, such as this, lies in the establishment of an awareness of the ways in which social transformations are experienced in the real lives of individual men and women, and how those transformations impact upon the family values and relationships, personal identities and material aspirations in society. As such, they can only ever be seen as a benchmark of what is happening in society at one time. What is needed is research which builds upon such a benchmark to assess and evaluate how these attitudes change over time. Longitudinal studies are important to achieve such assessments and evaluations.

It has already been proposed that a two-year follow-up study will be conducted as part of this Project. A follow-up survey of respondents two years subsequent to the original field study in order to determine changing expectations and actual shifts in housing tenure and evolving patterns of family relationships as they relate to possible further housing transfers, housing support and assistance. The research will be conducted through telephone interviews with previous focus group participants and email contact with Internet chat room participants. It is our intention to use the sample from the qualitative research to make contact with at least 100 respondents. The study will provide longitudinal data for analysis of actual behaviour, which can then be compared against expectations and attitudes of respondents expressed in the baseline survey, and group discussions. The intentions of the research will be to identify what, if any, changes in housing tenure and/ or housing transfers have taken place within this two year period, and whether decisions concerning housing transfers have been made or changed during the two year period. A Final Report and a Research and Policy Bulletin will be prepared at the completion of the project. This research will further contribute to policy development on home-ownership, ageing in place and accommodation options for the aged, and the balance between public and user financing of services and consumption among the aged.

4.8 Baby Boomers – Home, Place and Family

Major shifts have been identified in the responses of the different age cohorts in this study. The clearest differences are between the oldest cohort, those 75 and over and the first cohort of Baby Boomers, aged between 50 and 59. As discussed earlier the middle cohort of respondents, those still active and independent men and women aged between 60 and 74, expressed remarkably similar values and intentions to their Baby Boomer children in terms of their privileging of lifestyle, individualism and consumerism. This research provides substantial indications of the behavioural shifts and attitudes of Australians over 50, including the first cohort of Baby Boomers. It is

important to conduct a similar study among later cohorts of Baby Boomers, that is those born between 1956 and 1966. While there has been considerable research conducted on the attitudes and aspirations of Baby Boomers, there is little research which specifically concerns their housing intentions and family relationships with their parents and their Generation X children and Generation Y grandchildren. This Report has identified the importance of lifestyle as a major narrative for Baby Boomers and the influence of globalisation. These are important for further exploration, as are also the effects of changing workplace practices and occupational career trajectories upon the housing tenure and future intentions of younger Baby Boomers.

4.9 Assisting Ageing in Place

This Project identified the difficulties of household and garden maintenance, health problems and access to housing equity as major triggers for people's decision to move from their present home. Some respondents were concerned that mobility problems in the future or the need for care if they were ill (particularly a concern for those living alone) would precipitate a move from their present home. Yet many people wished to age in place in terms of location, although not necessarily in the same dwelling. Respondents negatively regarded a previous move or an imminent move where such a move incurred loss of friends and contact with their known local area. Many people were concerned that even with the sale of their home they would not have sufficient capital to purchase a retirement village unit within the same area, or that the purchase of a retirement village unit in their area would entirely use up all their financial resources and then they would be unable to meet continuing maintenance costs in the retirement village. It is appropriate that research be conducted on:

- 1) the availability of household support services within the Home and Community Care program, in the Commonwealth Employment Program and in local Government Councils to assess the degrees of availability of household and garden maintenance services and gaps within those services;
- 2) the availability of special loans to assist with home renovations to accommodate reduced mobility or loans for short term care (more than HACC);
- 3) the availability and affordability of retirement village and other shared accommodation in metropolitan and centres; and
- 4) Council ordinances on shared accommodation or intentional communities in local communities.

4.10 Ageing and Diversity

Some of our findings suggest that there is variation in attitudes and behaviour between Australian-born older citizens and those who come from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds. We are anxious to probe these differences in the area of home ownership and inheritance of housing assets. One of the limitations of this research has been the small numbers of participants from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds. We found that as they age, many are reluctant to respond to self-report

questionnaires in English. This means that our survey has not reached significant sections of the community who are of culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds. We are aware that there is a high level of home ownership among citizens from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds, especially those who have been resident in Australia for at least a generation and who constitute a large proportion of older persons in their particular communities. It is evident that a self-report questionnaire and a follow-up qualitative field study, addressing the same questions as in this project, is the most effective method of doing this.

The difficulty of accessing a national sample of culturally and linguistically diverse communities is well known. It is suggested that the best method will be to approach a range of these respondents through their own organizations, and that the questionnaire be translated into community languages and distributed through those organisations. It is proposed that five community groups be selected for the research. Each of those groups has a large proportion of their community who were born overseas, and who have been resident in Australia for a long time. They also have high proportions of older men and women. The groups are the Greek community, the Italian community, the Arabic speaking community (mostly Lebanese), the Chinese community and the Vietnamese community. The proportions of those communities which are first generation men and women from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds are Greek (37.8%); Italian, (30.9%), Arabic (43.7%); Chinese (74.1%); and Vietnamese (73.8%) (ABS, Cat 4102.0, 2003). It has been our previous experience that older people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds are somewhat reluctant also to respond to questionnaires which require them to provide details of their financial circumstances, particularly their ownership of assets. We would therefore propose to personally present and discuss the questionnaires, either in community senior citizens groups or in other types of community clubs. We have some experience of doing this, and have found it to be the most effective means of procuring respondent support from community samples.

Many of the above initiatives are long term strategies and it is our intention to open up these issues for discussion. The current demographic changes are entirely unprecedented. And the challenges of Australia's ageing population preclude the possibility of quick fix solutions. Continuing multidisciplinary research with policy development and evaluation and assessment is the touchstone for the future. For the mark of a just and equitable and harmonious society is one in which all sectors of society are adequately provided for and are mindful and respectful of the needs and desires of others.

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APPENDIX A: NATIONAL SURVEY QUESTIONNAIRE



Have your say...

Our expectations for the future are changing. The value of real estate is at an all time high, and there are proposals for us all to work longer and increasingly provide for ourselves in retirement. Have these issues affected your outlook on the future?

To have your say, simply complete and return the following 4 page questionnaire in a sealed envelope (no stamp is necessary) to:

REPLY PAID 61244
Housing & Retirement Survey
Research Centre on Ageing & Retirement
University of NSW
Sydney NSW 2052

The University of New South Wales Research Centre on Ageing & Retirement invites you to share your opinions by completing the following questionnaire. The results of this Australia-wide survey will be shared with the Australian Housing and Urban Research Institute, an independent research organisation which looks at the housing needs of Australia's population. Survey findings will be published in 50 Something later this year.

Please tick your answer ☒ – tick several answers if more than one answer applies to you.

Q.1 Where do you live?

☐ Own home – no mortgage

☐ Own home – with a mortgage

☐ Renting Privately

☐ Other (explain) _____

☐ Renting Public Housing

☐ In a Retirement Village

☐ In a hostel or nursing home

Q.2 Apart from providing a place to live, people may have different opinions about owning their home (please answer whether homeowner or not).

Please circle the number which best matches your opinion on each of the following statements.

	Strongly Disagree		to		Strongly Agree
i It is an investment for the future	1	2	3	4	5
ii It is cheaper to buy than rent	1	2	3	4	5
iii Owning a home means one is free to make decisions about how one lives	1	2	3	4	5
iv It is something of value which one can pass on to one's family	1	2	3	4	5
v A person can sell it or borrow against it to provide for needs in old age	1	2	3	4	5



Q.3 Have you moved house in the past 5 years? ☐ Yes ☐ No (Go to Q.5)

Q.4 If yes, what were your reason/s for moving?

- ☐ Moved to smaller home – no more need for big house, less work & maintenance
- ☐ Moved location – Better retirement lifestyle
- ☐ Moved to live with family
- ☐ Downsized to release money to live on
- ☐ Downsized to release money to help children, or other family
- ☐ Moved because of health or disability
- ☐ Other (explain) _____

Q.5 Do you think in the foreseeable future you might move from your present home? ☐ Yes (Go to Q.7) ☐ No

Q.6 As you intend to stay living in your present home, what is your reason/s for doing so?

- ☐ Suits me financially
- ☐ Suits me in comfort
- ☐ Suits me in location
- ☐ Other (explain) _____
- ☐ Emotional attachment, don't want to move
- ☐ Want to stay near friends/family
- ☐ Can't afford to move

Q.7 If you intend to make a move in the foreseeable future, what are your reason/s?

- ☐ Move to smaller home – no more need for big house, less work & maintenance
- ☐ Move location - Better retirement lifestyle
- ☐ Move to live with family
- ☐ Downsize to release money to live on
- ☐ Downsize to release money to help children, or other family
- ☐ Move because of actual or expected health or disability
- ☐ Other (explain) _____

Q.8 Imagine at some time in the future you were to need nursing, security, company or other forms of assistance (maybe even residential care), how would you pay for it?

- ☐ Out of savings, superannuation or insurance
- ☐ Sell or rent the family home to get the money
- ☐ Haven't considered this issue
- ☐ Take out a loan on my home with a bank or other lending institution
- ☐ Ask my children to pay for it
- ☐ Use government services
- ☐ Other _____



Q.9 The Media are full of debates about the possibility of up front payment for nursing home accommodation. What is your opinion of up front payment bonds?

- ☐ Fair and appropriate
- ☐ Totally unfair and inappropriate
- ☐ Should be means tested against assets & income including the family home
- ☐ Should be paid out of estates after death not up front
- ☐ Should be shared equally between government & individuals
- ☐ Don't fully understand how they work
- ☐ Other (explain) _____

Q.10 Have you made a will? ☐ Yes ☐ No (Go to Q.12)

Q.11 If you have made a will, how have you left your estate?

- ☐ Everything to my spouse
- ☐ Everything equally divided among my children
- ☐ Some to charity, church or other institution
- ☐ Other _____
- ☐ Everything to my grandchildren
- ☐ Certain things to particular people
- ☐ To people according to their needs

Q.12 How many children do you have, if any? _____

Q.13 How many grandchildren do you have, if any? _____

Q.14 Have you ever given your children or other younger family members financial assistance to purchase a home? ☐ Yes ☐ No (Go to Q.16)

Q.15 If yes, what were your reasons?

- ☐ They were unable to get their own home without help
- ☐ Provided them with additional investment asset/income
- ☐ Disposed of assets which would deny me my aged pension
- ☐ Ensured their future security
- ☐ Other (explain) _____

Q.16 Do you expect to use up all your assets while you are alive?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

Comment _____



Now a few questions about you...

Q.17 Are you? ☐ Male ☐ Female

Q.18 Age? _____ years

Q.19 Do you live in a ...? *(Please tick your one primary place of residence)*

☐ Major city ☐ Regional city ☐ Country/Coastal Town ☐ Rural area

Q.20 Please include your Postcode _____

(in order to assist us to know that we have a fair representation across Australia)

Q.21 What is your household status?

☐ Living with spouse/partner

☐ Living with Family or others

☐ Living alone

☐ Other _____

Q.22 My personal income comes from?

☐ Working Full-time

☐ Self-funded Retiree

☐ Working Part-time

☐ Pensioner/Part Pensioner

☐ Other _____

Additional Comments _____

DO NOT include your name or address on the questionnaire or envelope as it is necessary that all responses are anonymous.

THANK YOU FOR YOUR TIME.

The UNSW Research Centre on Ageing & Retirement is a resource centre conducting independent academic research, seminars and workshops across all issues relating to Australia's ageing population.

APPENDIX B: COMPARING THE RESPONDENTS TO NATIONAL SURVEY AND CENSUS DATA

ABS 1999 Australian Housing Survey		2001 Census of Population and Housing (65 years & over)	
Total home owners	81.4%	Total home owners	79.9%
Without mortgage	77.5%	Without mortgage	75.5%
With mortgage	3.9%	With mortgage	4.4%
Renting privately	6.6%	Renting privately	5.2%
Public housing	5.7%	Public housing	4.9%
		Nursing home (over 45)	3.1%
		(includes disabled as well as aged)	

AHURI National Project 70223 Sample

(respondents aged 50 years & over)

Total home owners	91.3%
Without mortgage	78.7%
With mortgage	12.6%
Renting privately	3.7%
Public housing	1.1%
Retirement village	3.9%

APPENDIX C: COMPARISONS OF HOUSEHOLD MOBILITY

Age Cohorts by %

Australians who had moved residence between 1996 and 2001 Census (Compared to AHURI Project Sample)

45 - 59	29% (38%)
65 – 74	21% (33.4%)
75 & over	20% (24.6%)

APPENDIX D: PROFILE OF RESIDENTS BY GENDER (%)

	Males	Females
Age		
50-59	24.5	38.1
60-74	53.9	47.4
75 & over	21.7	14.5
Primary Place of Living		
Major city	53.3	52.4
Regional city	17.4	19.1
Country/coastal town	22.1	20.1
Rural area	7.1	8.3
Household Status		
Living with spouse/partner	74.0	45.7
Living alone	21.5	45.7
Living with family/partner/other	4.5	8.5
Income Status*		
Working full-time	16.4	21.1
Working part-time & other income	11.2	18.4
Self-funded retiree	49.8	31.3
Pensioner/part pensioner	35.1	37.7
Housing Tenure		
Own Home – no mortgage	81.5	76.8
Own home - mortgage	11.4	13.3
Renting privately	2.9	4.2
Renting public	0.8	1.4
Retirement village	3.5	4.3

*Some duplication of responses on Income Status

APPENDIX E: PROFILE OF RESPONDENTS BY AGE COHORTS (%)

	50-59 (n=2240)	60-74 (n=3367)	75 & over(1167)
Gender			
Male	28.6	41.5	48.3
Female	71.4	58.5	51.7
Primary Place of Living			
Major city	50.8	52.1	57.5
Regional city	20.2	18.2	16.0
Country/coastal town	19.5	21.9	21.0
Rural area	9.6	7.8	5.5
Household Status			
Living with spouse/partner	64.8	57.5	39.4
Living alone	24.6	36.9	56.6
Living with family/partner/other	8.7	3.8	2.1
Income Status*			
Working full-time	34.1	9.6	0.5
Working part-time	26.4	12.9	1.9
Self-funded retiree	22.9	45.5	46.2
Pensioner/part pensioner	12.9	43.7	61.3
Other income	16.1	10.6	11.4
Housing Tenure			
Own Home – no mortgage	68.2	85.1	80.1
Own home - mortgage	25.3	7.8	2.2
Renting privately	4.9	3.3	2.4
Renting public	1.2	1.1	1.3
Retirement village	0.5	2.7	14.0

*Some duplication of responses on Income Status

APPENDIX F: RESPONDENT MOBILITY IN PAST 5 YEARS

Question 3: Have you moved house in the past 5 years?

	N	Yes (%)
Gender		
Male	803	32.9
Female	1334	33.7
Age		
50-59	792	38.0
60-74	1075	33.4
75 and over	277	24.6
Primary Place of Living		
Major city	878	29.1
Regional city	439	32.4
Country/costal town	633	43.5
Rural area	174	21.4
Household Status		
Living with spouse/partner	1216	33.4
Living alone	803	34.4
Living with family/partner/other	72	29.1
Income Status		
Working full-time	329	32.6
Working part-time & other income	324	29.7
Self-funded retiree	791	35.2
Pensioner/part pensioner	822	35.3
Housing Tenure		
Own Home – no mortgage	1351	27.4
Own home - mortgage	318	41.4
Renting privately	162	73.1
Renting public	29	41.3
Retirement village	152	63.1

Pearson Chi-Square is generally $p=0.05$

APPENDIX G: DETAILED LOGISTIC REGRESSION RESULTS

The following tables summarise the logistic regression results. All explanatory variables were categorical (ordinal or nominal). Where a variable consists of more than two categories, p-values are presented for the variable as a system, and for the individual odds-ratios between the modal categories and the other categories. Where the variable consists of two categories, the p-value of the system and of the individual odds-ratio are equal. The reference categories of each variable are described in the text of the main report.

Table G1: Results of regression for expectations of moving home in future

	Degrees of freedom	Estimated parameter	p
Intercept	1	-0.8123	<.0001
Sex (male)	1	0.0844	0.1573
Age	2	n/a	0.0097
50-59	1	0.1246	0.0710
75+	1	-0.1823	0.0297
Children (none)	1	-0.0501	0.5823
Housing tenure	4	n/a	<.0001
Owner with mortgage	1	0.2661	0.0017
Retirement village, hostel or nursing home	1	-1.1034	<.0001
Renter - private	1	1.4624	<.0001
Renter - public housing	1	-0.1292	0.6201
Source of income	3	n/a	0.0002
Self - funded retiree	1	0.0351	0.6288
Working (not retired)	1	0.3228	0.0001
Semi retired	1	-0.00884	0.9312
Region	3	n/a	0.7379
Country/coastal town	1	-0.0055	0.9385
Regional city	1	0.0272	0.7118

Rural area	1	0.1103	0.2905
Household Status	2	n/a	0.3297
Alone	1	-0.0343	0.6027
Family or friends	1	0.1373	0.2139

Table G2: Results of regression for having made a will

	Degrees of freedom	Estimated parameter	p
Intercept	1	4.1214	<.0001
Sex (male)	1	-0.3838	0.0202
Age	2	n/a	0.0211
50-59	1	-0.2855	0.1213
75+	1	0.6378	0.0379
Children (none)	1	-0.5890	0.0057
Housing tenure	4	n/a	<.0001
Owner with mortgage	1	-0.5895	0.0057
Retirement village, hostel or nursing home	1	-0.1961	0.7125
Renter - private	1	-2.2542	<.0001
Renter - public housing	1	-2.0849	<.0001
Source of income	3	n/a	0.0034
Self - funded retiree	1	0.6847	0.0094
Working (not retired)	1	-0.2189	0.3028
Semi retired	1	0.3562	0.2394
Region	3	n/a	0.3613
Country/coastal town	1	0.2161	0.3239
Regional city	1	-0.0778	0.6950
Rural area	1	-0.3051	0.2336

Household Status	2	n/a	0.3391
Alone	1	-0.0525	0.7766
Family or friends	1	-0.3779	0.1448

Table G3: Results of original regression for intergenerational assistance

	Degrees of freedom	Estimated parameter	p
Intercept	1	-0.6313	<.0001
Sex (male)	1	0.1541	0.0116
Age	2	n/a	<.0001
50-59	1	-0.2850	<.0001
75+	1	0.3586	<.0001
Children (none)	1	-2.2140	<.0001
Housing tenure	4	n/a	<.0001
Owner with mortgage	1	-0.2160	0.0216
Retirement village, hostel or nursing home	1	0.00685	0.9638
Renter - private	1	-0.6859	0.0001
Renter - public housing	1	-1.3021	0.0006
Source of income	3	n/a	<.0001
Self - funded retiree	1	0.7588	<.0001
Working (not retired)	1	0.1953	0.0273
Semi retired	1	0.3792	0.0002
Region	3	n/a	0.2458
Country/coastal town	1	-0.0273	0.7057
Regional city	1	-0.1252	0.1008
Rural area	1	-0.1615	0.1453
Household Status	2	n/a	<.0001

Alone	1	-0.0751	0.2655
Family or friends	1	-0.6697	<.0001

Table G4: Results of modified regression for intergenerational assistance (Household status not used as an explanatory variable)

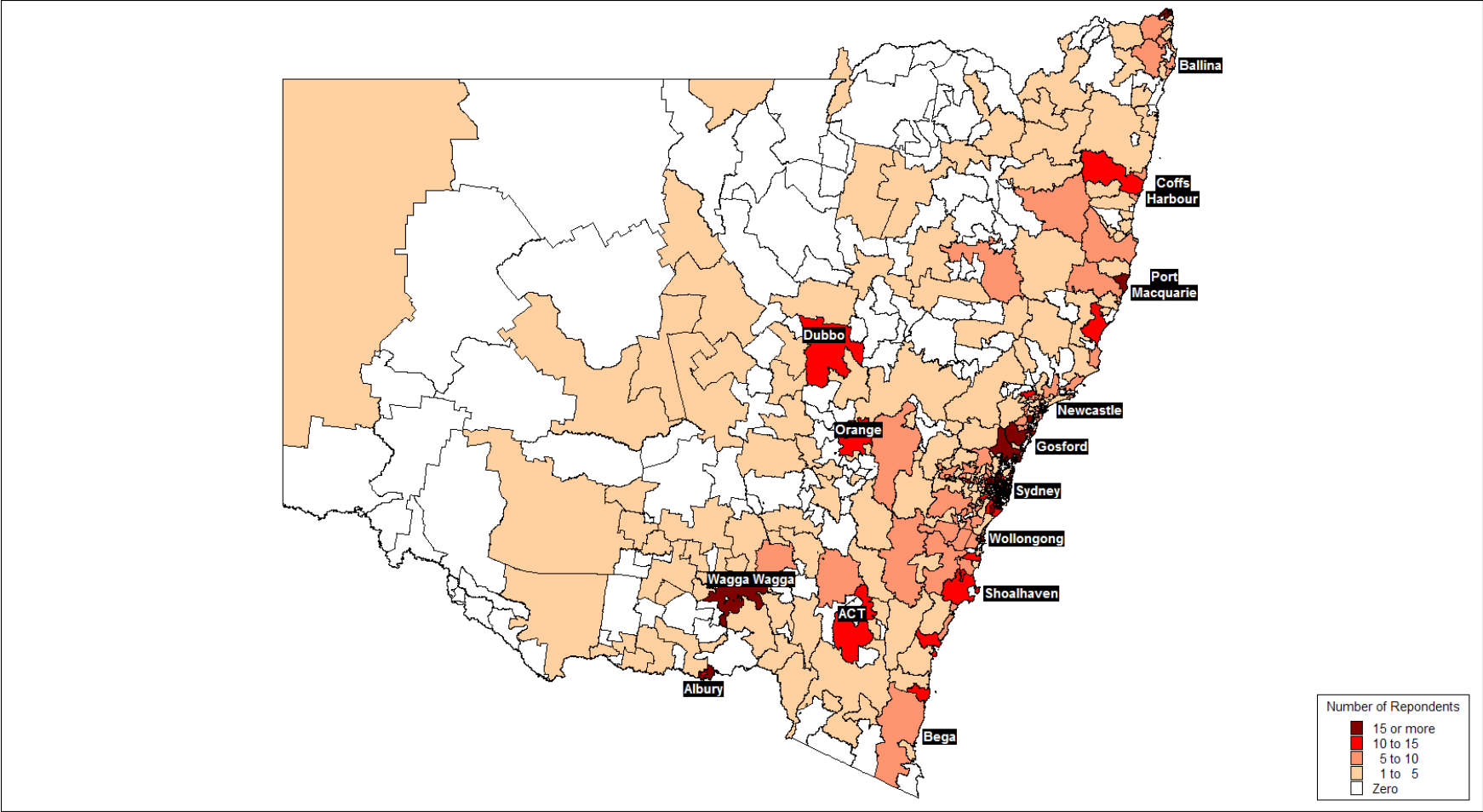
	Degrees of freedom	Estimated parameter	p
Intercept	1	-0.7138	<.0001
Sex (male)	1	0.1981	0.0006
Age	2	n/a	<.0001
50-59	1	-0.2938	<.0001
75+	1	0.3489	<.0001
Children (none)	1	-2.2443	<.0001
Housing tenure	4	n/a	<.0001
Owner with mortgage	1	-0.2502	0.0073
Retirement village, hostel or nursing home	1	0.0061	0.9676
Renter - private	1	-0.7140	<.0001
Renter - public housing	1	-1.3790	0.0003
Source of income	3	n/a	<.0001
Self - funded retiree	1	0.7693	<.0001
Working (not retired)	1	0.1917	0.0296
Semi retired	1	0.3843	0.0002
Region	3	n/a	0.3177
Country/coastal town	1	-0.00238	0.9736
Regional city	1	-0.1120	0.1407
Rural area	1	-0.1411	0.2009

Table G5: Results of regression for using assets while alive

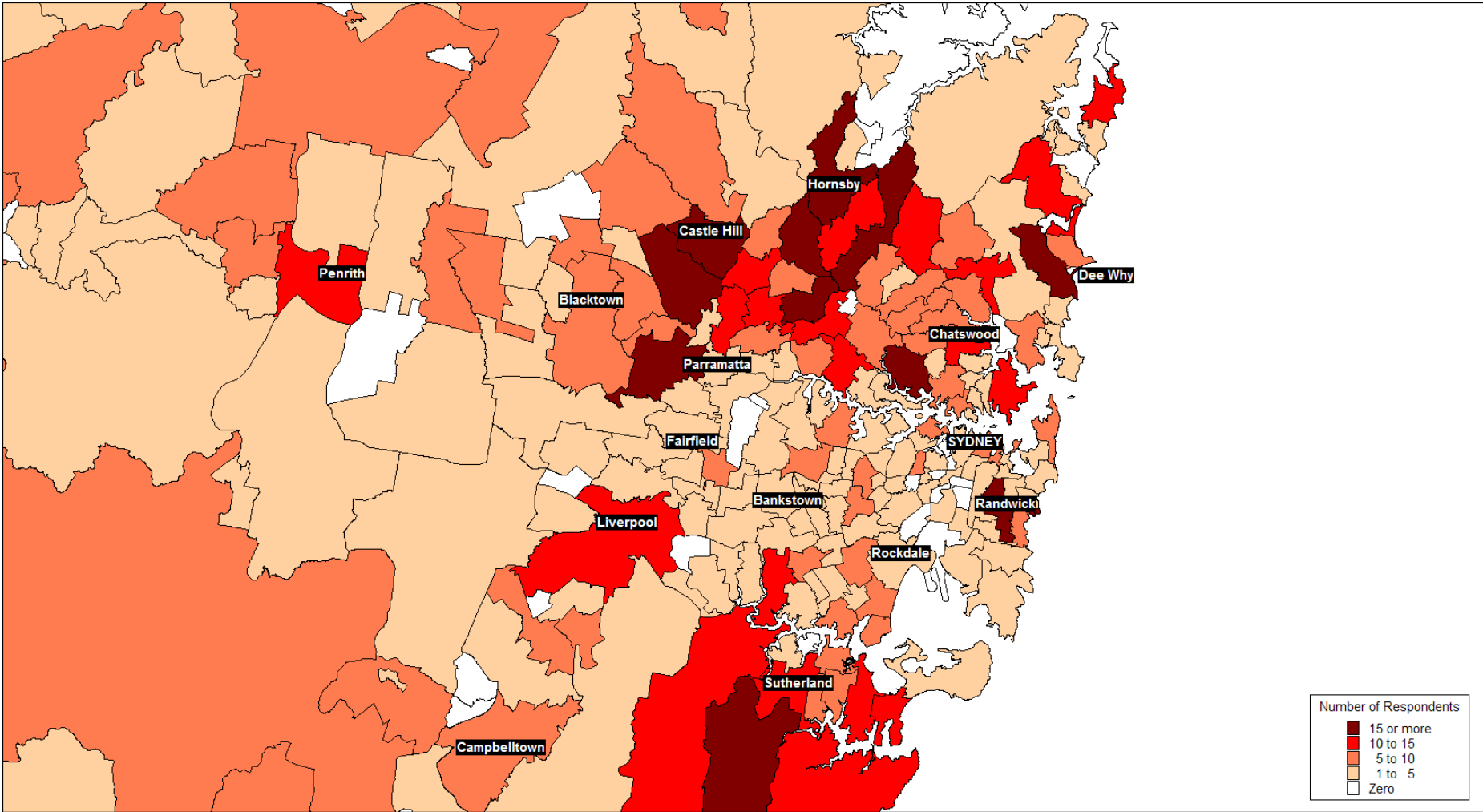
	Degrees of freedom	Estimated parameter	p
Intercept	1	-0.7233	<.0001
Sex (male)	1	-0.3459	<.0001
Age	2	n/a	<.0001
50-59	1	0.00274	0.9718
75+	1	-1.1250	<.0001
Children (none)	1	0.5538	<.0001
Housing tenure	4	n/a	<.0001
Owner with mortgage	1	0.3945	<.0001
Retirement village, hostel or nursing home	1	0.3174	0.0683
Renter - private	1	1.6885	<.0001
Renter - public housing	1	1.5256	<.0001
Source of income	3	n/a	<.0001
Self - funded retiree	1	-0.9472	<.0001
Working (not retired)	1	-0.0727	0.4246
Semi retired	1	-0.2419	0.0312
Region	3	n/a	0.0631
Country/coastal town	1	0.1581	0.0506
Regional city	1	0.1950	0.0184
Rural area	1	0.0774	0.5168
Household Status	2	n/a	0.2654
Alone	1	0.1206	0.1034
Family or friends	1	0.0436	0.7317

**APPENDIX H: GEOGRAPHICAL LOCATION OF RESPONDENTS (BY POSTCODE) –
ACCORDING TO EACH STATE AND CITY**

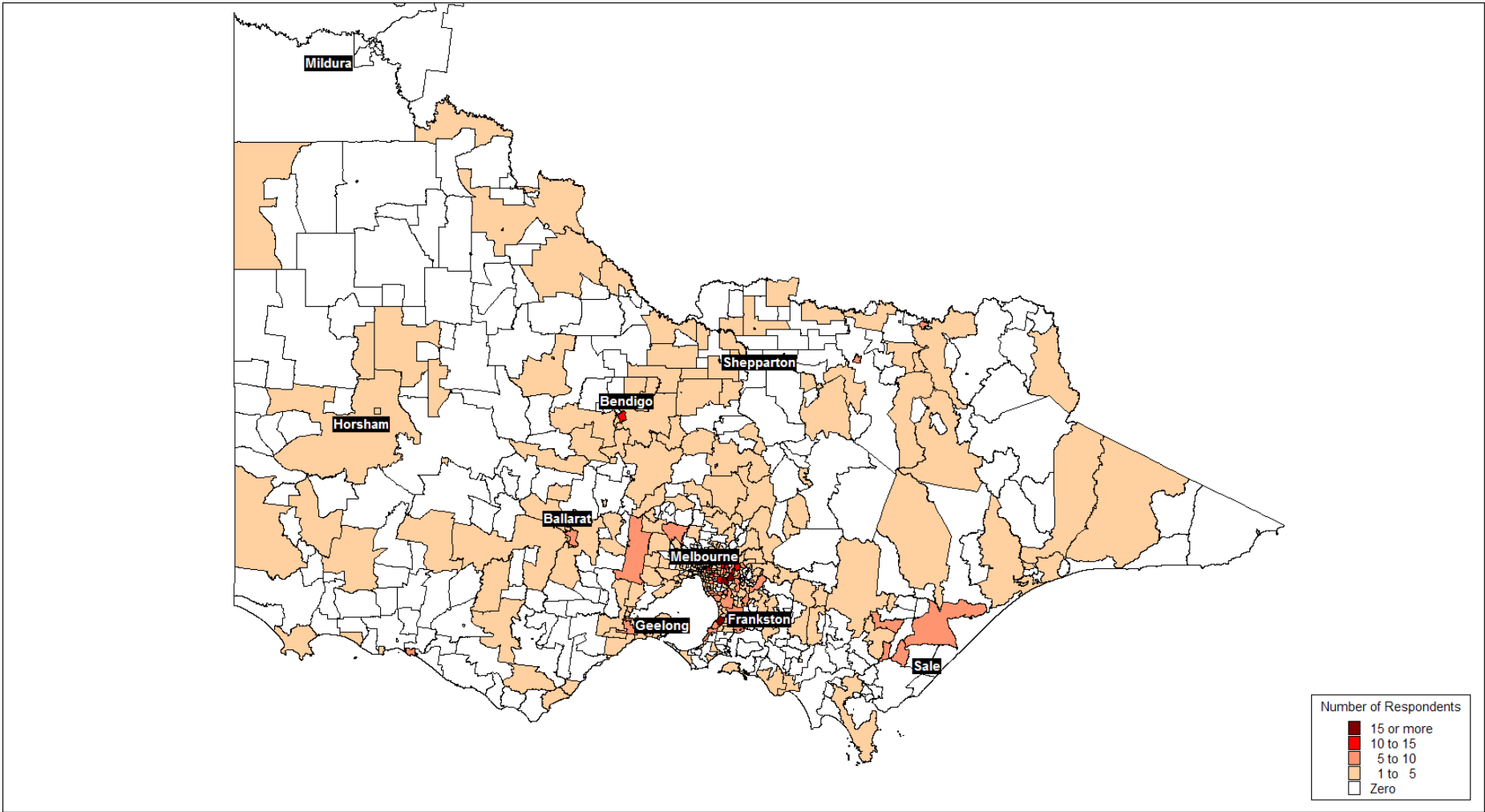
NSW



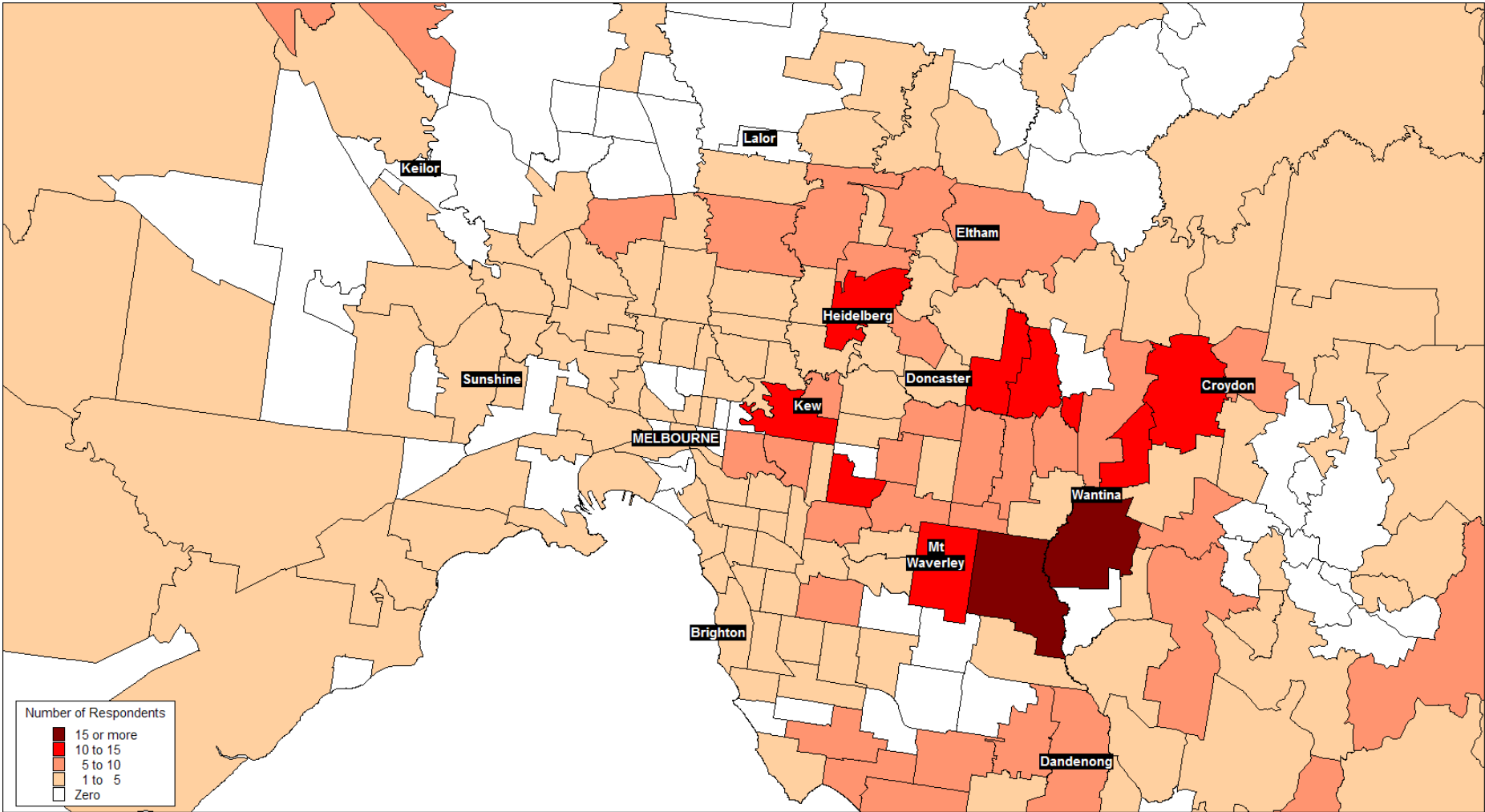
Sydney



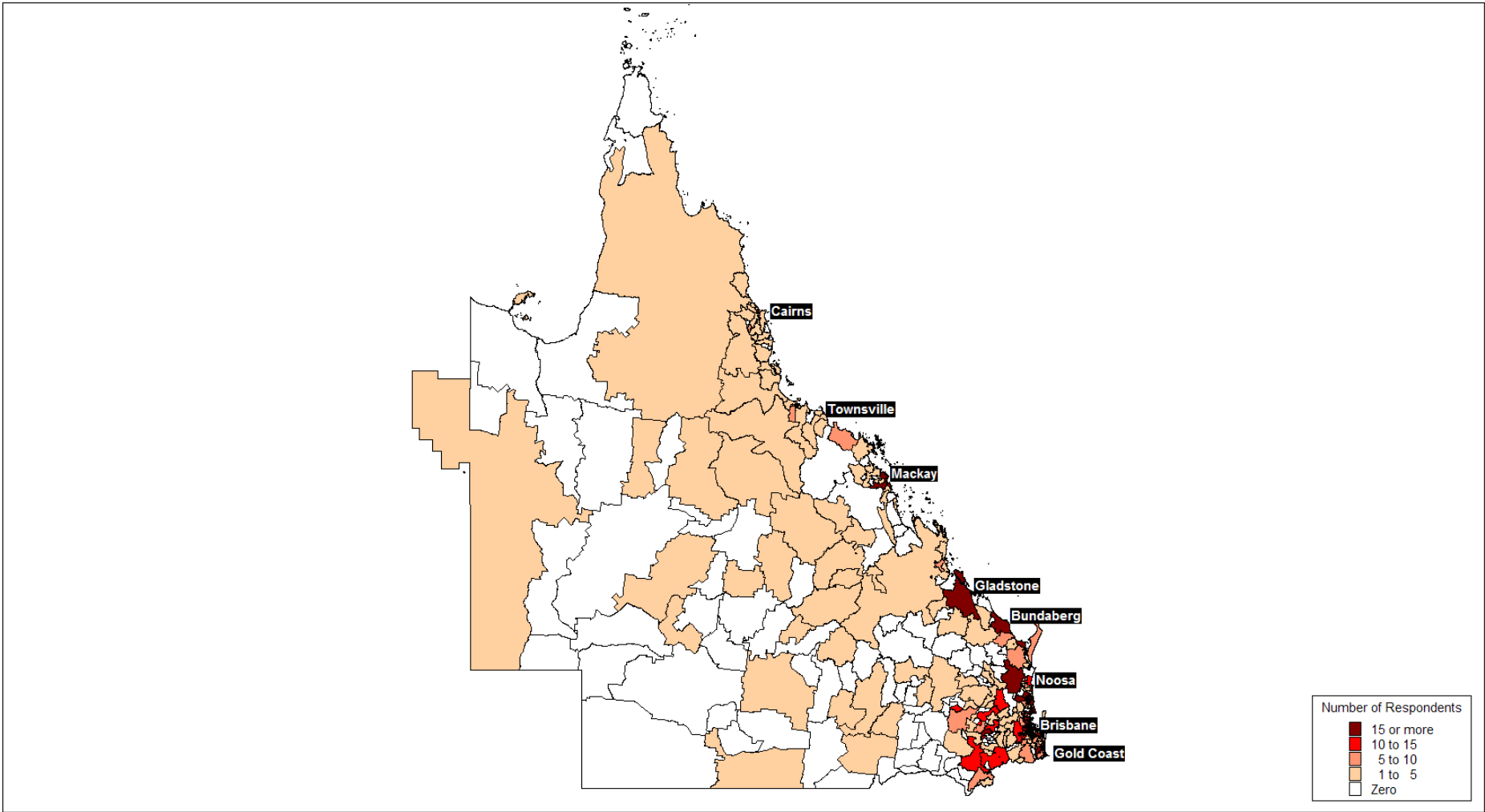
VIC



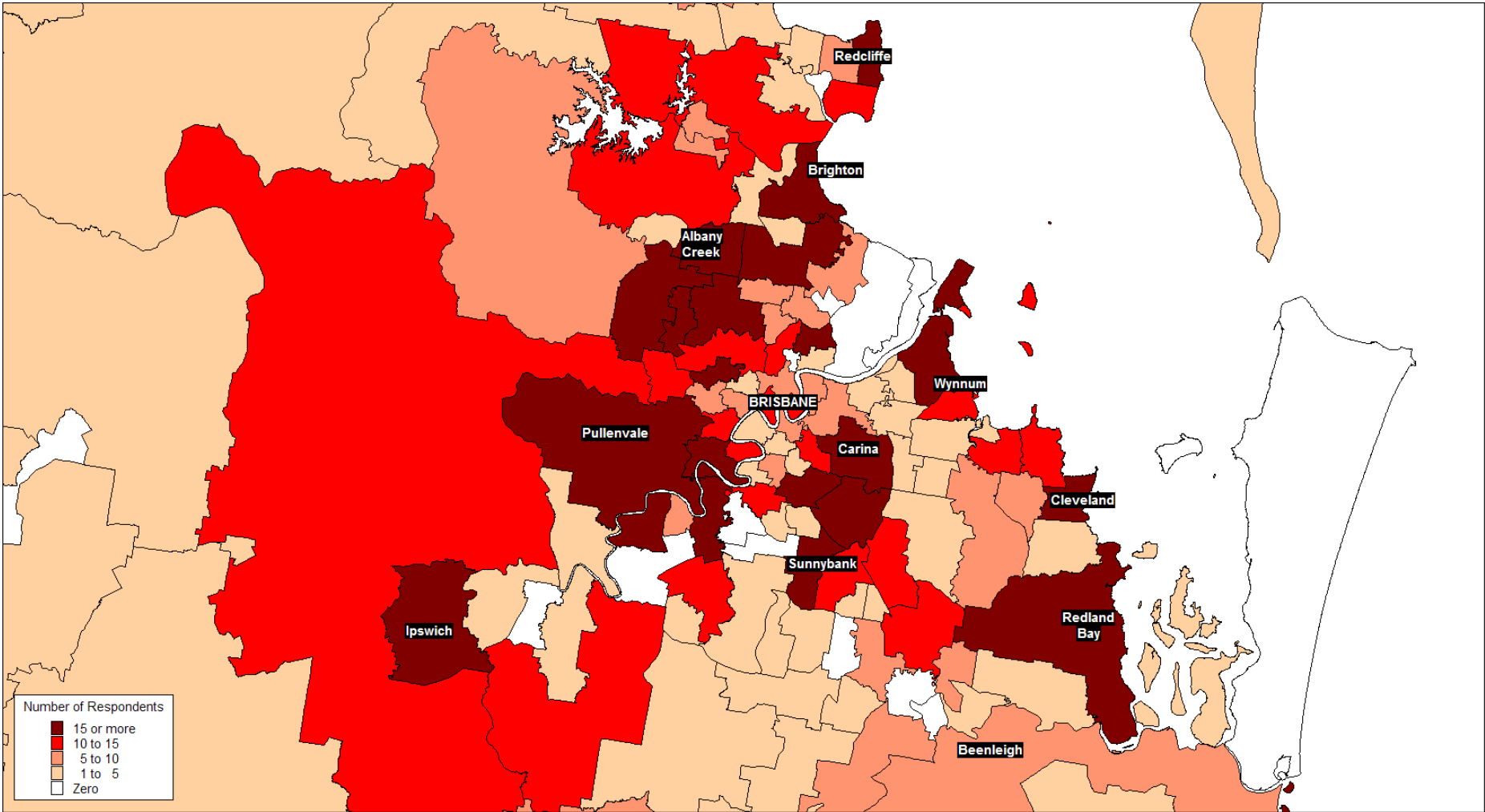
Melbourne



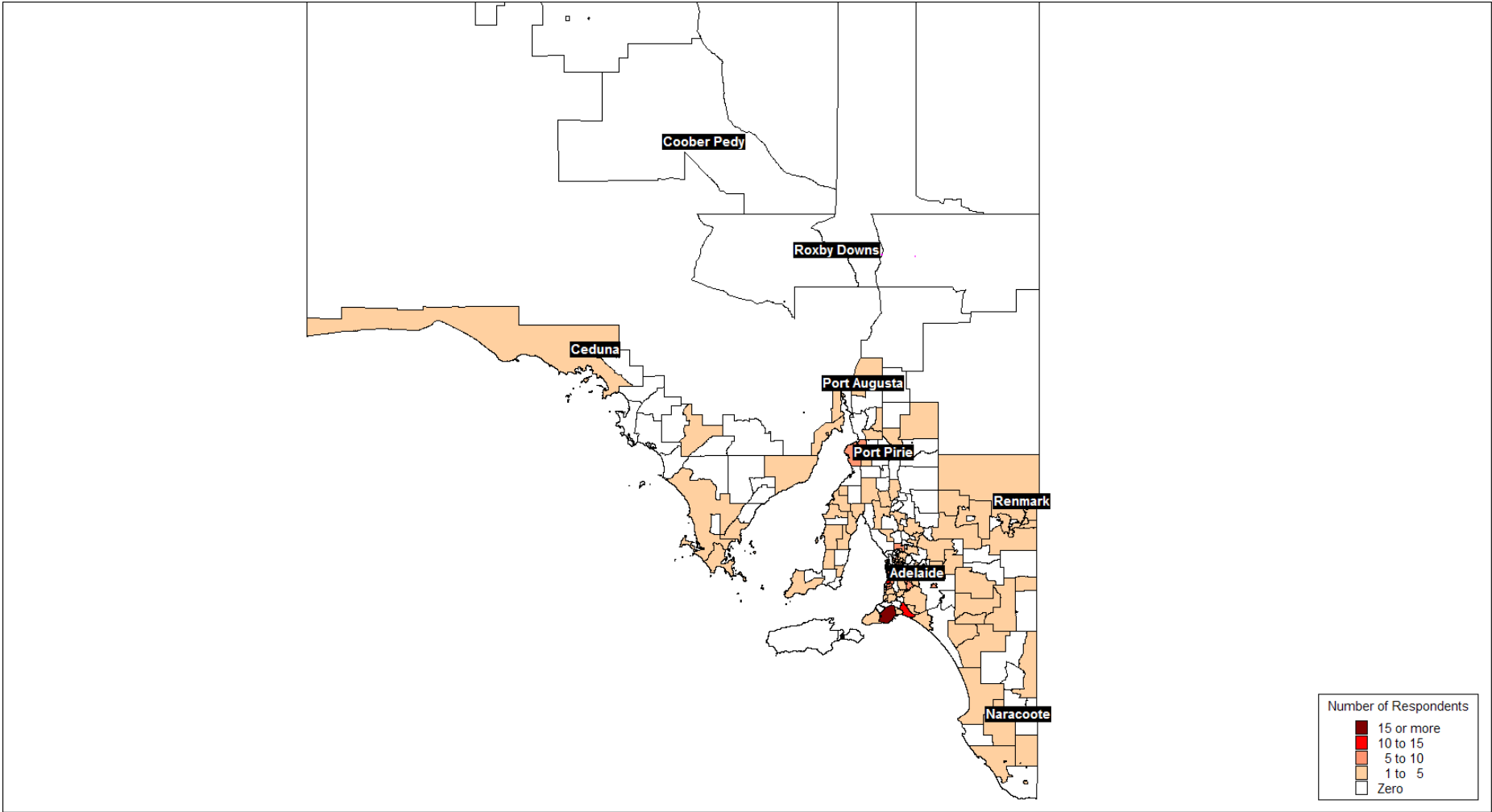
QLD



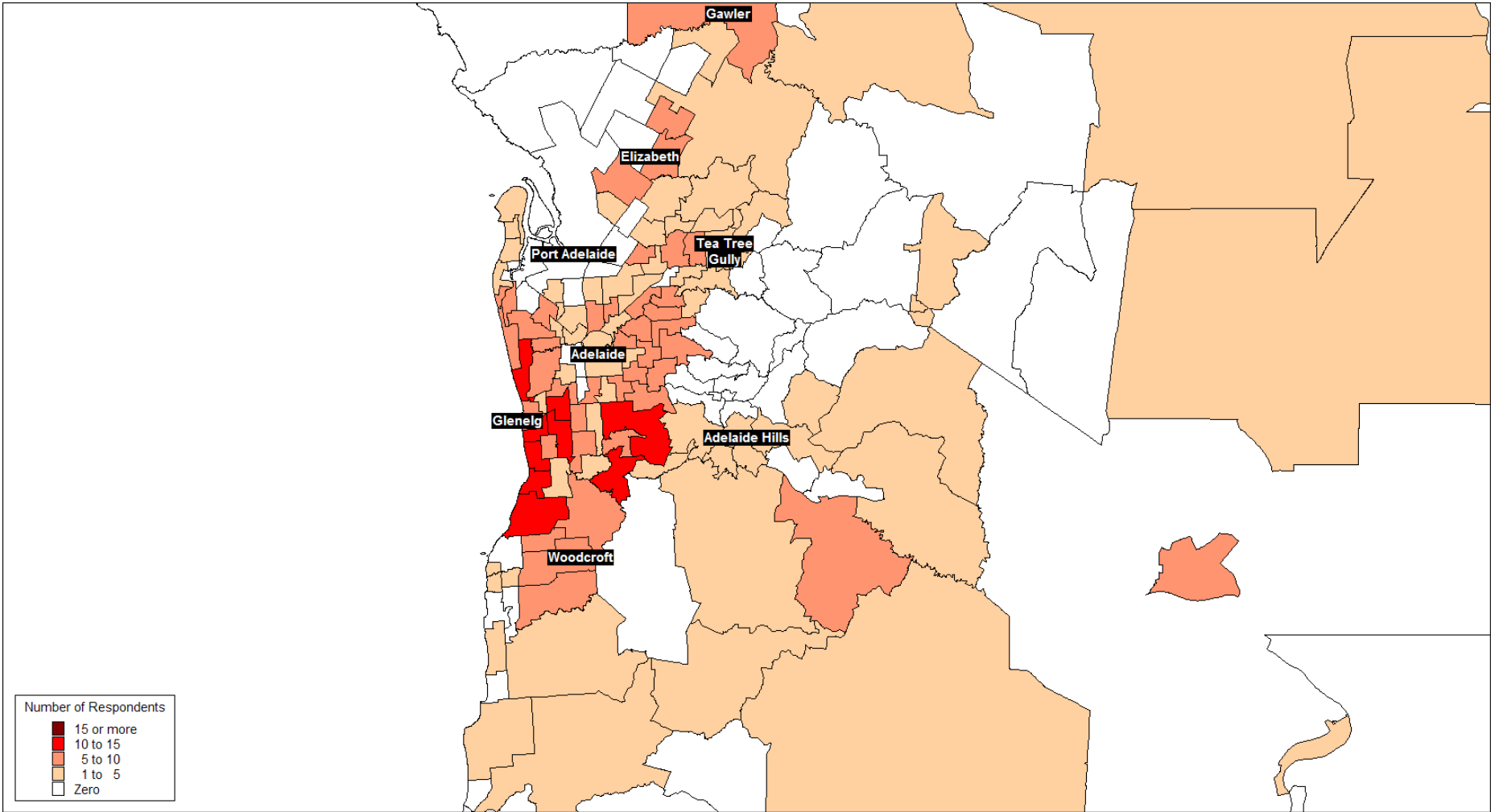
Brisbane



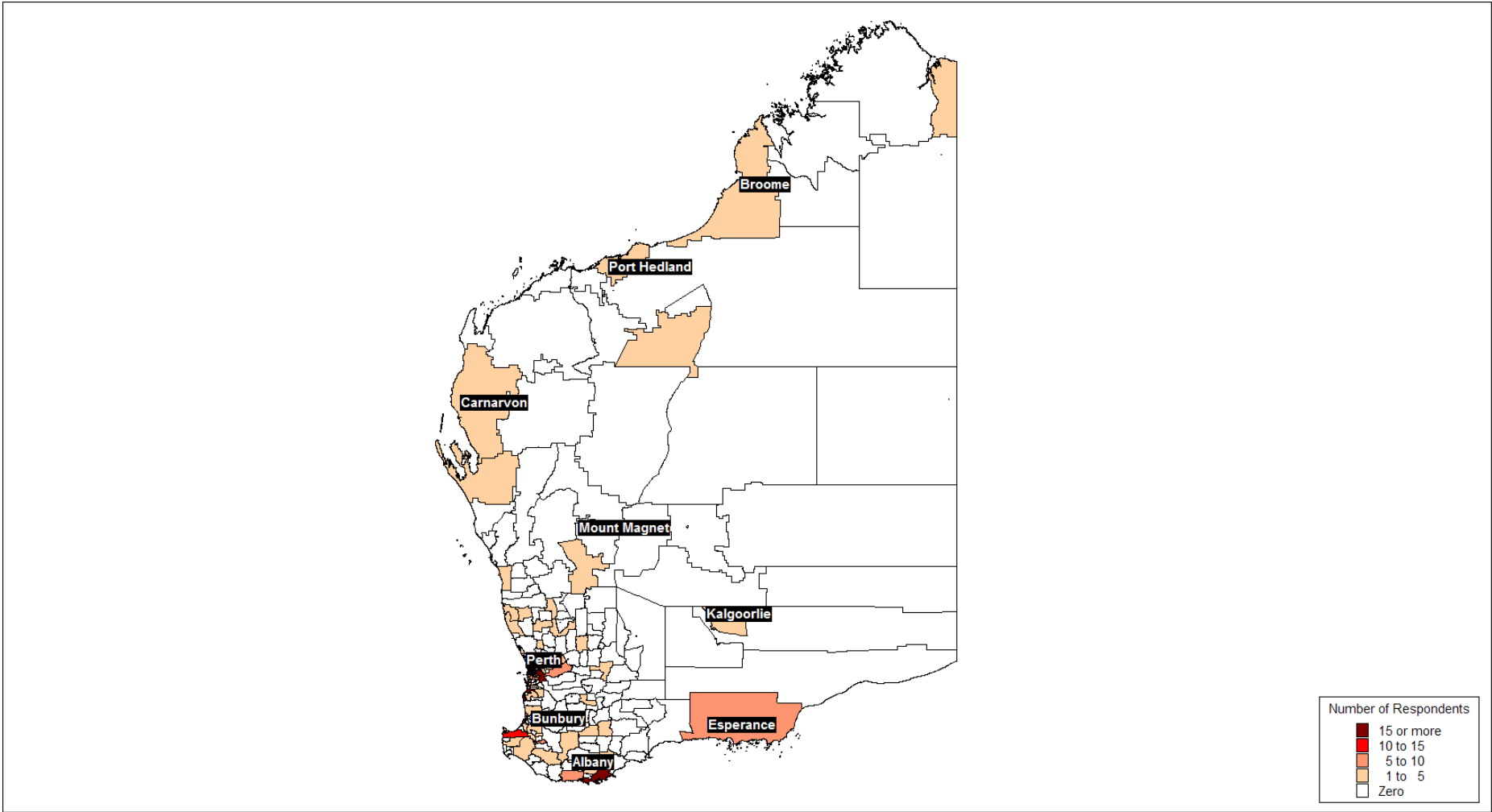
SA



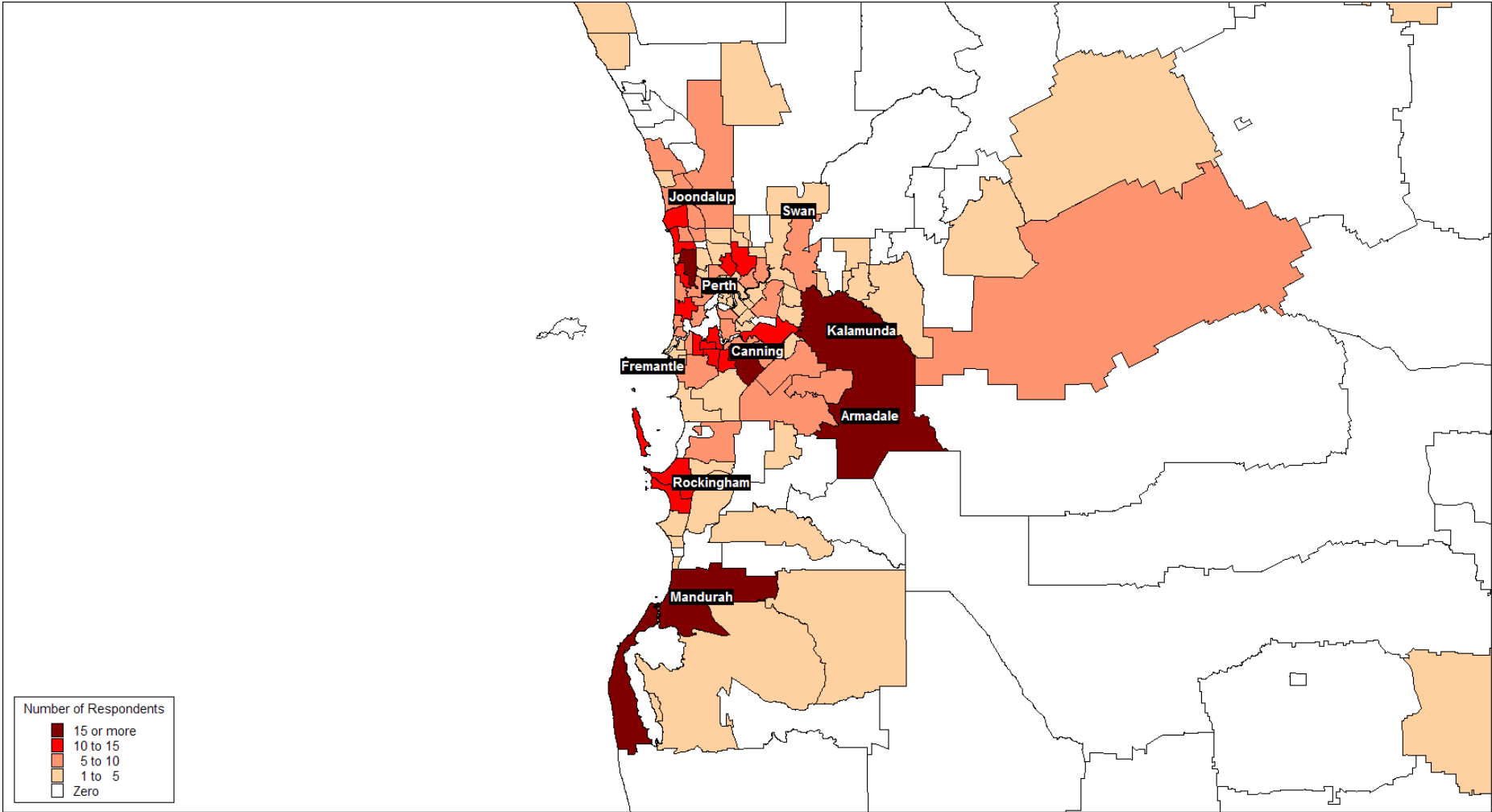
Adelaide



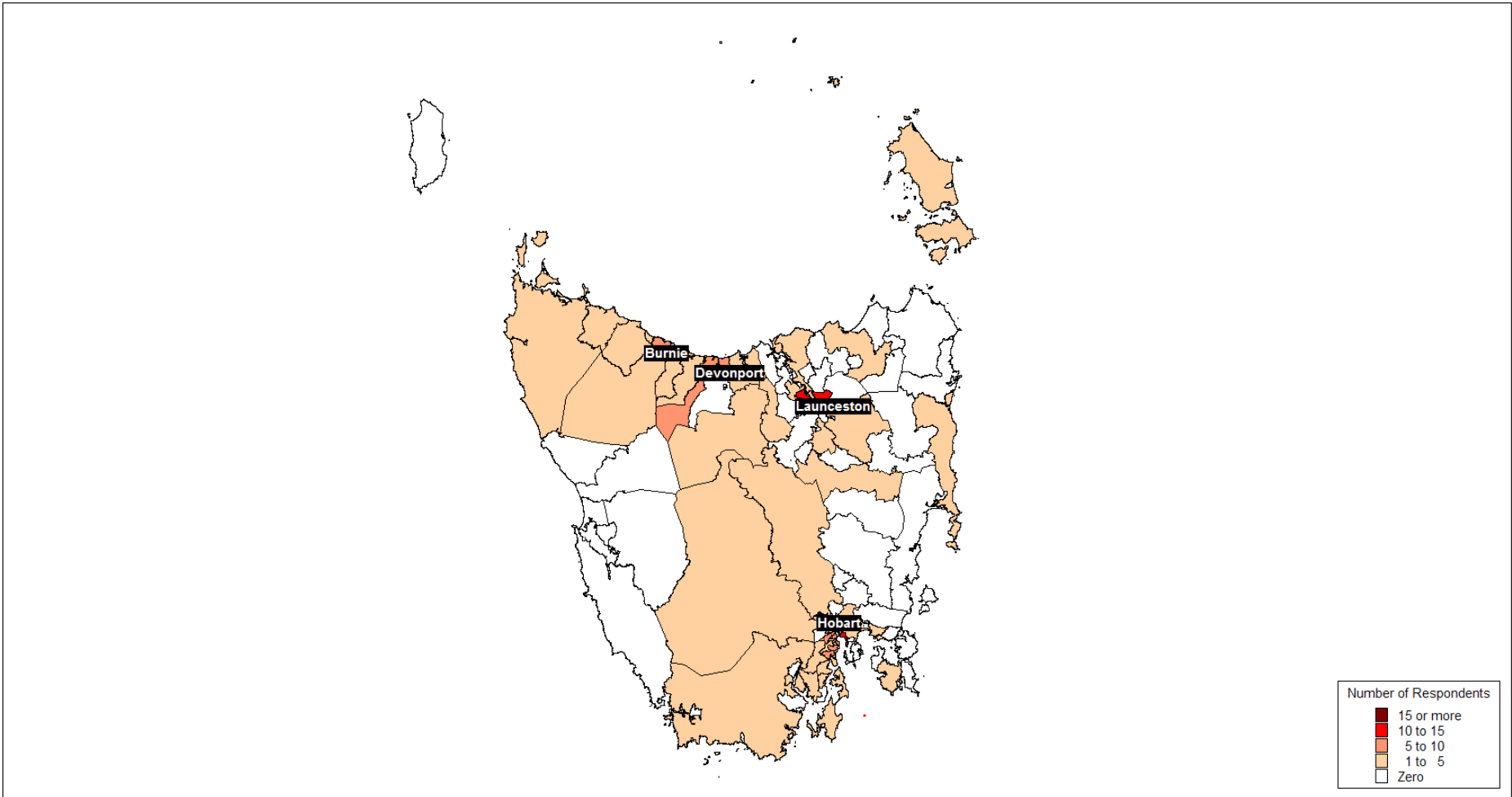
WA



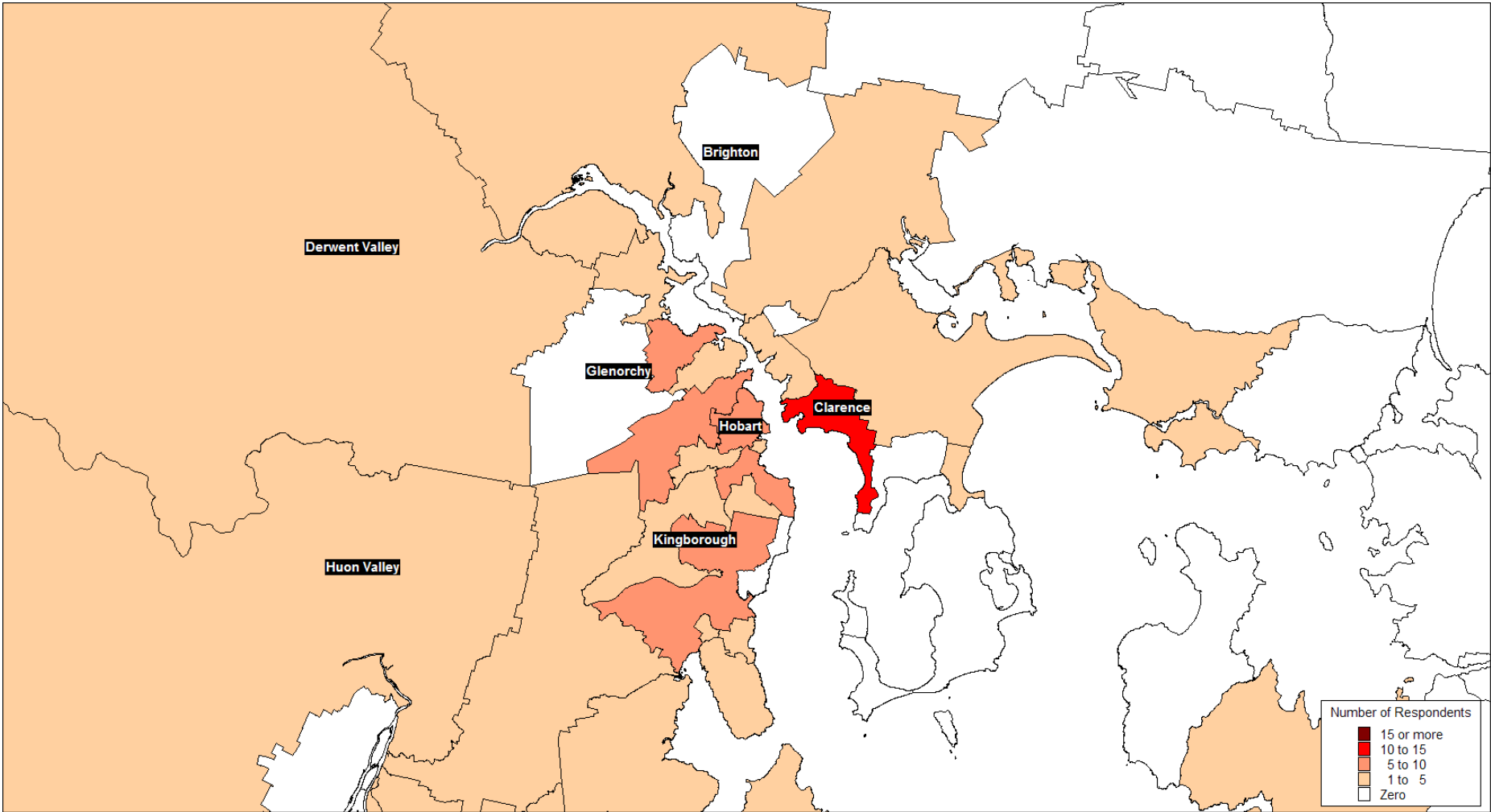
Perth



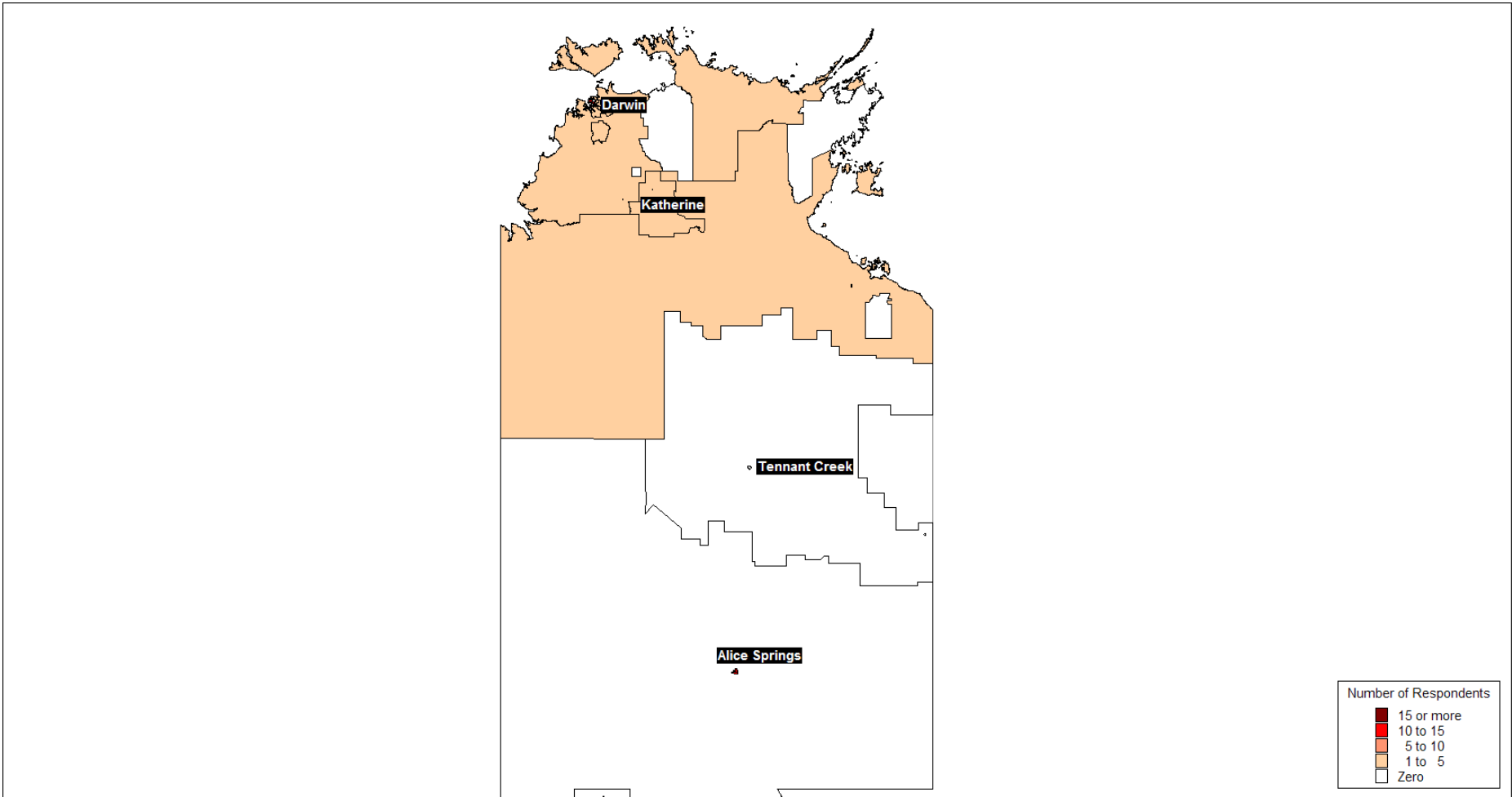
TAS



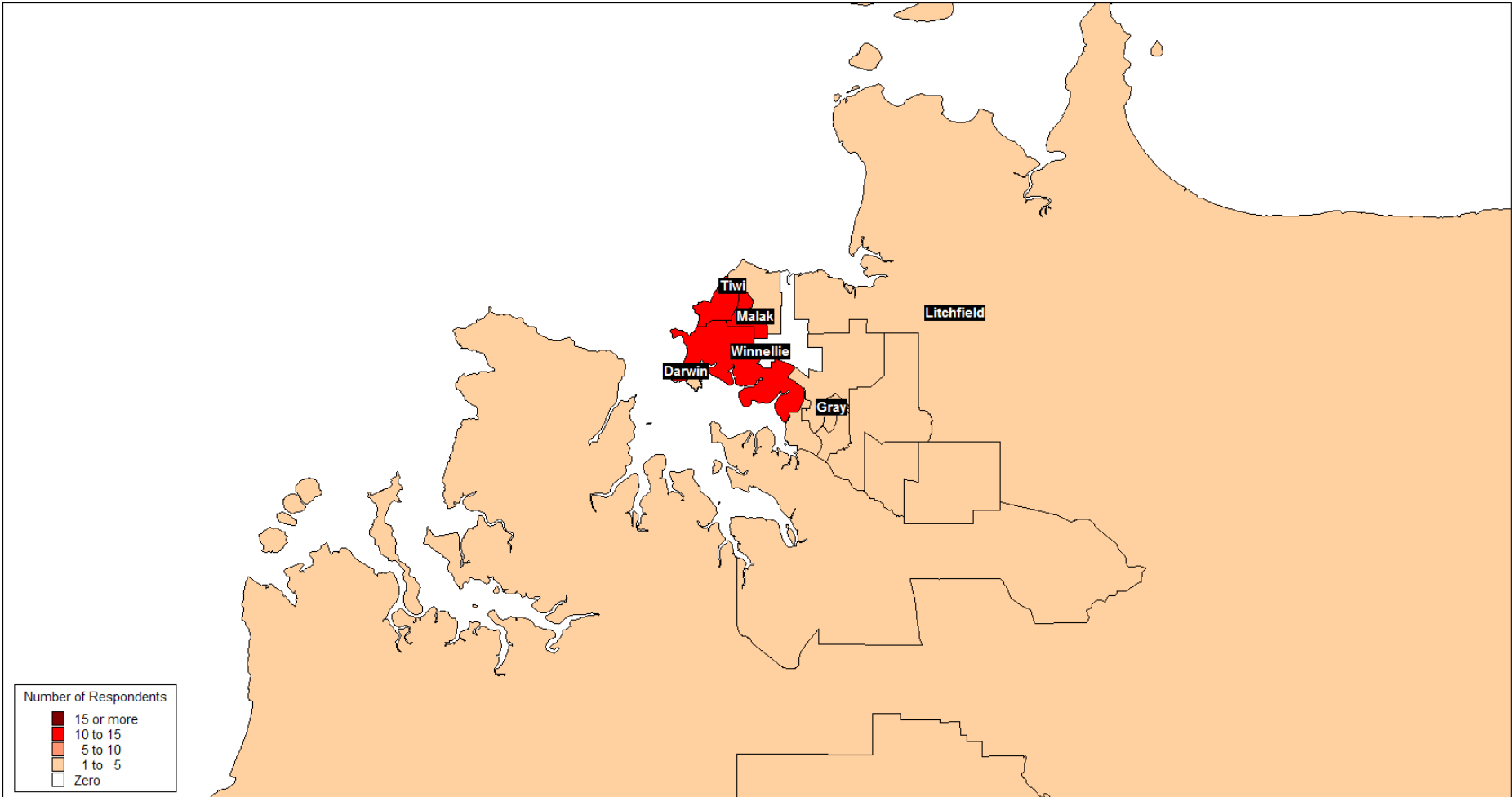
Hobart



NT



Darwin



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