Final Report

The location and housing needs of lone parents

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Australia has experienced a sharp increase in the proportion of families with dependent children aged 0-14 headed by lone parents. By 1999 lone parents made up about 22 per cent of all such families. Because of their relatively low income and wealth it is widely believed that they are tending to concentrate in low cost housing localities. This research was designed to assess the extent and reasons for such concentrations.

In order to understand the situation of female lone parents the study explored the literature on the socio-economic determinants of lone parent family status. Two main pathways of entry to this status were identified. The fastest growing entry point was those (mainly female) lone parents who had never married and never established a secure partnering relationship. The second, and the largest point of entry in numerical terms, was through the breakdown of established couple relationships. The dominant factor associated with lone parent status is poor economic circumstances. As a consequence, lone parents in Australia, as in the United States and Britain, tend to derive from low income households and possess relatively limited financial resources. Preliminary analysis showed that, in sharp contrast to couple families with children, only a minority of lone parents owned or were purchasing their house. The majority were public or private renters.

Australian data on the distribution of lone parents confirm that they do tend to be concentrated in particular areas. These include poorer outer suburban metropolitan locations, and inland and coastal regional centres. There is much anecdotal evidence that internal migration has contributed to these concentrations. A review of the academic literature gives qualified support for this notion. This literature also suggests two main ways in which migration could contribute. The most frequently cited is the movement of lone parents from relatively high cost metropolitan areas to low cost regional and coastal areas. The other is that lone parents may 'be left at home' in the sense that they tend to be more tied to cheaper accommodation in areas of low economic activity than are couple families. An alternative hypothesis for the growth of lone parent concentrations is that they are a product of 'home grown' factors. That is, they are a consequence of the socio-economic characteristics of the areas in question.

The main empirical focus of this study was an analysis of the statistical evidence for the migration hypothesis. This required the specification of 'typical' high concentration areas, the purchase of customised 1996 Census data which allowed an assessment of the migration of lone parent and couple families by origin and destination. This data base was used to estimate the contribution of migration to lone parent concentrations between 1991 and 1996. This contribution was compared with the actual growth of lone parent families over the same period to determine the proportion of the growth in lone parent concentrations attributable to migration.

The analysis of migration patterns of lone parent households showed that they were a relatively mobile group. However, their movements were primarily local. In the case of metropolitan areas, the main movement was within the same region of the relevant capital city. Only a small proportion moved to rest of state or interstate locations. In the case of regional centres the main migratory movement was from their respective hinterlands. The 'left behind' hypothesis proved not to be a significant factor in contributing to lone parent concentrations. Lone parents do tend to concentrate in public housing, but the net movements into such housing were small and thus only a minor contributor to the growth of lone parent concentrations, even in areas with a higher number of public housing households. The main conclusion from this analysis was that migration was not the main cause of the growth of lone parent concentrations in the areas studied over the period 1991-1996.

It was not possible to test the full potential array of socio-economic factors which shape entry into lone parent status. However, the hypothesised linkages between economic circumstances and the level of lone parent families were examined. This showed that the areas with high levels of unemployment and low male incomes did contain the highest lone parent concentrations. The main causes were linked to the tendency in such areas for women to leave school early and also to begin their partnering and child-bearing careers early, at least relative to women in the same areas who stayed at school to age 17. By contrast, women in the more vibrant economic areas, including Melbourne and Sydney, tended to leave school later and begin their child-rearing careers later. In the areas of high lone parent concentrations it was also found that women tended to begin child rearing outside of marriage more frequently than in other areas and that there was a higher tendency for marital breakdown. The causes of this pattern were linked to the difficulties which prospective male partners or spouses had in providing for the relationship where economic circumstances were poor.

It was concluded that there is no simple solution to the phenomena studied. The main finding that it is 'home grown' factors which largely account for lone parent concentrations means that any solution must be linked to improving the economic circumstances in the relevant areas. Lone parents are vulnerable as far as access to good quality housing is concerned and any assistance such as providing more public housing or higher levels of rental assistance would be important to their families' life chances. However, if state provided housing is located in areas of already high lone parent concentration it is likely that it will attract more lone parents to these areas.

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CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

This report explores the issues surrounding the growth, location and housing needs of Australia's lone parent population. Sole parents constitute a large and growing proportion of families with dependent children but are typically living on very low incomes. As a consequence the issue of whether they are concentrating in particular places, and the socio-economic characteristics of these areas, is a matter of public concern. This project mainly deals with the processes shaping where lone parents locate. There is no scholarly consensus on the extent to which they are concentrating in particular locations and, if so, where. Some commentators (particularly those relying on anecdotal evidence) believe that many lone parents are being driven by out of high housing cost metropolitan areas into regional centres, both big and small, or to the peri-urban fringes of Melbourne, Sydney and Brisbane. Others doubt that this movement is on a large scale.

We first describe recent trends in the growth and broad locational patterns of the lone parent population. This description confirms the view that concentrations are occurring, particularly in some regional areas. Such concentrations raise questions about the capacity of the locations in question to provide the various social and housing services that lone parents and their children need, as well as access to employment for parents and children when the children finish school. But we cannot jump to the conclusion that significant numbers of lone parents are being drawn into these locations. One alternative possibility is that the situation is 'home grown', in other words that it reflects the circumstances shaping partnering decisions in such locations. Another possibility is that high concentrations reflect a residual phenomenon, arising from an exodus of people who are better placed to leave in terms of economic resources or job skills. If this means that lone parents tend to be left behind, then it can result in a rising proportion of lone parent families relative to other families with dependent children. A final possibility is that some combination of all of these processes is occurring in some locations.

The growth of the lone parent population

As Table 1.1 shows, there was a 53.3 per cent increase in the number of female lone parents aged 15-49 years between 1986 and 1996 in Australia. This increase is partly due to a large increase in the number of women in the prime family building years over the same period (see Table 1.2). However, the number of female lone parents has increased much faster than the number of women 'at-risk', particularly amongst women in their twenties. For example, Table 1.1 indicates that there was an increase of 37.2 per cent in the number of female lone parents aged 25-29 over the decade 1986 to 1996. By comparison, Table 1.2 shows that there was an increase of only 5.7 per cent in the number of women in this age group over the same period.

Table 1.1: Female lone parents aged 15-49 years,1986 and 1996

Age group	1986	1996	Change	% Change
15-19	6,868	7,934	1,066	15.5
20-24	27,869	37,409	9,540	34.2
25-29	40,796	55,975	15,179	37.2
30-34	50,237	72,574	22,337	44.5
35-39	58,562	87,527	28,965	49.5
40-44	48,798	83,611	34,813	71.3
45-49	36,316	67,987	31,671	87.2
15-49	269,446	413,647	143,571	53.3

Source: Centre for Population and Urban Research, prepared from 1986 and 1996 Census, customised matrices

Table 1.2: All women aged 15-49 years, 1986 and 1996

Age group	Total women			Ratio of % changes of female lone parents (Table 1.1) to all women
	1986	1996	% Change 1986-96	
15-19	641,415	610,324	-4.8	-
20-24	628,523	656,018	4.4	7.8
25-29	645,450	682,090	5.7	6.6
30-34	616,264	703,210	14.1	3.2
35-39	610,264	716,497	17.4	2.8
40-44	481,176	664,201	38.0	1.9
45-49	397,745	625,631	57.3	1.5
15-49	4,020,837	4,657,971	15.8	3.4

Source: Centre for Population and Urban Research, prepared from 1986 and 1996 Census, customised matrices

For all age groups the numbers of lone parents have increased at a faster rate than the number of all women in the same age group. This is particularly so in the age groups 20-24 and 25-29 years where the percentage change in lone parents is six to eight times that of all women in these age groups (see Table 1.2). There was also a significant percentage increase in the proportion of 15-19 year old women who were lone parents. However, this increase was off such a low base in 1986 that for practical purposes the 15-19 year old cohort is not a major contributor to lone parent numbers. For the shares of women by age group who were lone parents in 1986 and 1996, see Table 1.3.

Table 1.3: Female lone parents as percentage of all women 1986 and 1996

Age group	Female lone parents as % of all women	
	1986	1996
15-19	1.1	1.3
20-24	4.4	5.7
25-29	6.3	8.2
30-34	8.2	10.3
35-39	9.6	12.2
40-44	10.1	12.6
45-49	9.1	10.9
15-49	6.7	8.9

Source: Centre for Population and Urban Research, prepared from 1986 and 1996 Census, customised matrices

The faster growth in lone parents relative to all women shown in Table 1.2 (especially those in their twenties) occurred despite the tendency for later marriage and delays in the timing of the first child. The median age of women at the time of the nuptial first birth increased from 26.5 in 1986 to 28.7 in 1996.[1] In addition a smaller proportion of women are partnered (including those in de facto relationships) [2] and the proportion of partnered women aged 20-34 who are bearing children has fallen (see Table 1.4).

Table 1.4: Proportion of partnered women who are members of families with children aged 0-14 yrs by age*, 1986 and 1996

	1986	1996
15-19	27.7	31.2
20-24	41.3	37.9
25-29	68.1	56.3
30-34	86.6	80.2
35-39	84.7	85.1
40-44	60.6	63.3

* Families with at least one child aged less than 15 years of age
Source: Unpublished census data, 1986 and 1996

The result has been a sharp increase in the proportion of families raising dependent children in Australia who are headed by lone parents, from 14.6 per cent in 1986 to 19.4 per cent in 1996.[3] Analysis of Centrelink family payment data held by the Centre for Population and Urban Research indicates that this percentage increased to around 22 per cent by late 1999.[4] The great majority (around 91 per cent in 1999) of these lone parent families are headed by women.

[1] Australian Bureau of Statistics, Births, 1996
[2] B. Birrell and V. Rapson, *A Not So Perfect Match: The Growing Male/Female Divide 1986-1996*, Centre for Population and Urban Research, Monash University, 1998, p. 3
[3] B. Birrell and V. Rapson, 'Poor families, poor children: who cares for the next generation?', *People and Place*, vol. 5, no. 3, 1997, p. 50
[4] The percentage derived from the Centrelink data has been restricted to families with at least one child aged less than 16 years.

The setting for this research, then, is that the numbers of lone parents has increased sharply since 1986, as has their share of the total number of families with dependent children. We focus on the female component of lone parents because they constitute the great majority and because the situation of male and female lone parents is different. The male lone parents are older (see Table 1.5) and are much more likely to be employed than their female counterparts. For example, the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) Labour Force Survey for June 2000 reported that 50 per cent of male lone parents with children aged 0-14 years were employed full time whereas only 20 per cent of similar females were employed full time. This is partly related to the age of youngest child. Eighteen per cent of male lone parents with children aged 0-14 years had a child aged less than five years old. For female lone parents the figure was fifty per cent.

Table 1.5: Age of male and female lone parents with children aged 0-14 years, 1996

Age	Male lone parent	Female lone parent
15-24	6	13
25-29	8	16
30-34	15	21
35-39	23	23
40-44	23	16
45+	25	11
Total	100	100
Number	44,631	343,682

Source: ABS, 1996 Census, unpublished

Housing tenure patterns also differ, with female lone parents less likely to be purchasing their homes and far more likely to be in the public housing sector than male lone parents[5] (see Table 1.6).

Table 1.6: Housing tenure by family type (with children 0-14 yrs), Australia, 1996

Family type	Number	Tenure type					
		Fully owned/ Being purchased	Public rental	Private rental	Other rental	Other tenure	Total
Male lone parent	44,631	48	12	30	5	6	100
Female lone parent	343,682	36	20	37	4	4	100
Female partner	1,602,620	75	3	16	3	3	100

Source: Customised 1996 Census Matrix, Centre for Population and Urban Research, Monash University

Locational issues

There is also evidence that female lone parents are more concentrated in some localities than others. An initial indication of the extent of variation in these patterns is provided in Table 1.7. This table shows the proportion of all the women in couple and lone parent families with children aged 0-14 years who are lone parents, by major geographical zones in Australia.

[5] S. Watson, *Accommodating Inequality: Gender and Housing*, Allen and Unwin, 1988, p. 78

Table 1.7: Percentage of women aged 15+ yrs in couple and lone parent families with children aged 0-14 yrs who are lone parents, 1996

	No. of women in families	% who are lone parents
Sydney, Melbourne, Brisbane	897,638	17
Other metropolitan	209,689	20
NSW, Vic, Qld large regional centres	102,344	22
NSW, Vic, Qld small regional centres	81,626	21
Rest of rural NSW, Vic, Qld	210,795	15
Remote NSW and Qld	24,693	17
Rest of Australia	419,666	18
Total	1,946,451	18

Source: ABS, Census 1996 customised matrix

The zones shown in the table are based on regional types developed for the *Australia State of the Environment* report in 1996. [6]The 'other metropolitan' areas are Canberra, Hobart, Darwin, the Gold Coast, the Sunshine Coast, Townsville, Geelong, Wollongong and Newcastle. The large regional centres are those with populations more than 25,000. The small regional centres are those with populations between 10,000 and 25,000. The remainder is identified as other rural areas and remote areas which are differentiated mainly by intensification of land use.

Even at the highly aggregated level shown in the table, it is evident that there are significant variations in the concentrations of lone parent families. The highest concentrations are in the large and small regional centres and the other metropolitan areas of Victoria, New South Wales and Queensland (including the Gold Coast and Sunshine Coast). By contrast Sydney, Melbourne and Brisbane exhibit the lowest levels along with the rural and remote areas of NSW, Victoria and Queensland. When more detailed and more recent analysis of these concentrations is undertaken, as with a recent study of regional Victoria,[7] it confirms the significance of large regional centres as sites of concentrations of female lone parents. As indicated in the earlier Work-in-Progress report[8] (and detailed further below), some locations within metropolitan areas also show high and growing concentrations.

There is no doubt that there is indeed a case for concern about the growing numbers of lone parent families and about the extent to which such families are concentrating in particular localities. Further analysis of the level of these concentrations follows after an exploration of the various theoretical ideas in the literature which examine the factors shaping family formation.

[6] *Australia State of the Environment 1996*, CSIRO Publishing, Collingwood, 1996
[7] B. Birrell, J. Dibden and J. Wainer, *Regional Victoria: Why the Bush is Hurting*, Monash Regional Australia Project, Monash University, 2000, p. 25
[8] http://www.ahuri.edu.au/pubs/progress.html

CHAPTER TWO: THE LONE PARENTHOOD POPULATION: THEORY AND EVIDENCE

Theory

Most recent sociological work on family formation and breakdown starts from a 'situational' perspective. This approach assumes that the main influence on men and women when they make decisions about partnering and having children is the changing structure of the social and economic situations they face. This starting point implies that family values or norms, and any changes thereof, are not the main determinant of growth in the lone parent population. While values may be influential, they are themselves likely to be a product of other social and economic factors.

It is true that for an increasing proportion of lone parents today their status reflects their choice. In 1996, only five per cent of lone parents between the age of 15 and 49 were widowed.[9] Most women who become lone parents because of separation, divorce or a decision to have a child outside marriage have some say in these events. However, choices about whether to marry or not, or whether to sever the marriage once established, have a context. It is these contexts which are the main focus of those approaching the issue from a 'situational' perspective.

Most young women still want to get married and have children.[10] Undoubtedly, the traditional 'breadwinner' model of marriage, in which women provide domestic services in return for the financial resources of a male breadwinner has waned. But marriage or partnering is not going out of style. For many young couples, the breadwinner model is being supplanted by a 'collaborative' model in which both partners make a substantial financial contribution to the family's quality of housing and material lifestyle. The expectation in such partnerships is that the male partner will share household tasks.[11] This model appears to be highly adaptive in contemporary affluent societies. Where a couple share their resources this contributes markedly to their economic security, standard of living and dwelling quality. At the same time the partners gain the benefits of companionship, secure sexual expression and, if children are desired, a far greater flow of income than would be available to the woman if she tried to raise the child alone.[12] Why then is the incidence of lone parenthood increasing?

One stream of thought in the literature is that values are changing and that it is much more acceptable for men and women to live alone or, in the case of women, to pursue single parenthood if they wish. Thus some feminist advocates assert that women should not be constrained by unhappy marriages and, at the extreme, that marriage itself is inherently inequitable and restrictive of female aspirations.[13] These ideas may have some influence amongst highly educated women. But the incidence of lone parenthood, especially in women aged in their twenties and early thirties, is far greater amongst women with limited education than amongst their tertiary-educated counterparts.[14] The normative situation is more likely to be important in relation to the 'acceptability' of lone parenthood. When women or men face situations where they have to make decisions about parenthood, if lone parenthood is considered abhorrent within their community or, in the case of migrants, within their

[9] Birrell and Rapson, 1998, op.cit., p. 45
[10] P. McDonald, 'Contemporary fertility patterns in Australia: first data from the 1996 census', *People and Place*, vol. 6, no. 1, 1998, p. 4
[11] D. de Vaus, 'Family values in the nineties', *Family Matters*, no. 48, Spring/Summer, 1997
[12] V. K. Oppenheimer, 'Women's rising employment and the future of the family in industrial societies', *Population and Development Review*, vol. 20, no. 2, 1994
[13] For example, see J. A. Scutt, *Breaking Through: Women, Work and Careers*, Artemis, Melbourne, 1992, p 2-3
[14] Birrell and Rapson, 1998, op. cit., pp. 36-37

ethnic circle, this is likely to be influential. Conversely if lone parenthood is tolerated the impact is likely to be in the opposite direction.[15]

Our assumption is that, in order to understand the circumstances which lead men and women into choices about family and parenthood, the focus should be on the larger economic circumstances they face. The setting in which young people make decisions about these issues has altered sharply as major changes have occurred in the economic system. The restructuring of the Australian labour market is creating a highly differentiated workforce, at one extreme marked by a low-skilled, low paid and casual workers and at the other a well-paid elite proficient in the usage of new technologies. Many blue-collar jobs traditionally held by men are gone and many of the new jobs are within the low-wage service-sector and are mainly held by women.[16] At the more advantaged end of the labour market, women now have far more opportunities to accumulate educational credentials and thus to enter and flourish in the employment market, particularly the middle to higher-end job market, than previously. As a consequence, there is now much less financial pressure on women to begin partnering at an early age, particularly amongst those holding post-school educational credentials. Young men also take far longer to complete their education and establish a secure career than was the case in the early post World War II era. Nevertheless, for the winners in the knowledge economy, circumstances favour (after some delay) the flourishing of 'collaborative' partnerships.

The situation is not nearly so favourable for those at the other end of the spectrum. Employment opportunities are increasing for low skilled women but usually in low paid and often insecure positions. For low skilled men the situation has deteriorated since the 1980s in terms of both security and availability of employment. Though young women in this lower socio-economic group may be interested in family roles (relative to those offered in the job market), the men in their circle are often in no situation to take on the responsibilities of setting up a household or of fatherhood. The combination of these circumstances for both those in the low and high tier job markets have contributed to the sharp decline in the proportion of men and women in Australia who are living as partners, whether in married or de facto relationships. By 1996, 43 per cent of women aged 25-29 and 30 per cent of women aged 30-34 were not partnered (up from 33 per cent and 23 per cent respectively in 1986).[17]

Before further exploration of theory about why these circumstances may promote lone parent outcomes it is important to distinguish the main points of entry to lone parenthood.

Entry points to lone parent status

Analyses up to the late 1980s generally linked the growth of lone parenthood in Australia to higher rates of separation and divorce rates and lowered rates of remarriage.[18] But recent data show that the proportion of lone parents who have never married has increased significantly. Table 2.1 indicates that the share of never married female lone parents aged 15-49 years in Australia increased from 21 per cent in 1986 to 30 per cent in 1996 and that, by 1996, the majority of lone female parents in their twenties were never married. The 30 per cent figure understates the proportion of lone mothers who were not married during the initial phase of their career as mothers because it does not include the significant minority who married someone other than the biological father (and subsequently breaking up with the

[15] M. Abrahamson, *Out-of-Wedlock Births: the United States Perspective*, Praeger, Westport, 1998, pp. 96, 127-132
[16] E. A. Mulroy, *The New Uprooted: Single Mothers in Urban Life*, Auburn House, Westport, Conn., 1995, p. 34
[17] Birrell and Rapson, 1998, op.cit., p. 2
[18] Watson, op. cit., p. 56

them). The table also does not tell us anything about the length of any period of de facto partnership that may have preceded the birth. Unfortunately, information on this issue is scarce.

Table 2.1: Marital status of female lone parents aged 15-49 years, 1986 and 1996

	Registered marital status (%)						
	Never married	Widowed	Divorced	Separated	Married	Total	Number
1986							
15-19	94	0	1	4	2	100	6,868
20-24	68	1	7	21	3	100	27,869
25-29	37	3	25	32	4	100	40,796
30-34	17	5	43	32	4	100	50,237
35-39	8	8	51	29	4	100	58,562
40-44	4	14	52	25	5	100	48,798
45-49	3	25	47	21	5	100	36,316
Total 15-49	21	9	39	27	4	100	269,446
1996							
15-19	96	1	1	2	1	100	7,934
20-24	84	0	3	11	2	100	37,409
25-29	59	1	13	24	3	100	55,975
30-34	33	3	28	33	3	100	72,574
35-39	18	4	40	33	3	100	87,527
40-44	10	7	48	31	4	100	83,611
45-49	5	13	51	26	5	100	67,987
Total 15-49	30	5	34	28	4	100	413,017

Source: B. Birrell and V. Rapson, *A Not So Perfect Match*, Centre for Population and Urban Research, Monash University, 1998, p. 45

This brief analysis indicates that a declining share of the lone parent population derives from marriage breakdowns. This will affect the resources available to the mother. At one extreme lone parenthood occurs well into a marriage at the point where substantial household assets, including a house relatively free of mortgage obligations, have been accumulated. The mother involved may be able to begin living as a lone parent with a reasonably solid financial base, including the dwelling. On the other hand, if the original relationship with the father did not involve a marriage or a de secure facto relationship and there was only a limited period of partnership, the mother may have little or nothing to draw on when she becomes a lone parent. As indicated, the trend has been for the latter group to become an increasingly important component of the lone parent population. The implication is that the increased share of never married lone parents means that more lone parents are to be found at the precarious end of the financial spectrum.

Entry in to lone parent status without marriage

As a consequence of the changing economic and social circumstances as described above, many women in their twenties and thirties face a situation in which partnering and marriage is delayed, yet they are nevertheless interested in establishing a partnering relationship and are sexually active. Young women who are engaged in higher education or just beginning careers using this education have a very strong financial incentive to prevent motherhood from interfering with the rewards they can gain in the labour market. Very few of such women become lone parents. However, for women with less education and much more limited job prospects the situation is different. The attractions of partnering and having children are, relatively speaking,

much greater. The main problem is to find a male who can provide a reliable flow of resources with whom to share a partnership.[19]

The clearest example of how situations approximating the latter circumstances can lead to the almost total breakdown of the conventional family is to be found in inner city areas of the United States amongst black Americans.[20] For example, in inner city Chicago, only 28 per cent of black children live with both parents.[21] In this setting there are few black men who can provide the stable flow of resources expected of a male partner. As a result, the majority of families with dependent children are headed by female lone parents, most of whom have never married. The young women in question are apparently prepared to take the risk of bringing a pregnancy to term even though not married and not certain that the father will provide a stable partnership. This is a relatively unexplored area in Australia. Both emotional and practical issues are likely to be involved. On the practical side, our hypothesis is that they have the baby because other alternatives, including deferring child rearing while they take up employment or wait for a potential secure marriage partner to come on the scene, are not compelling. Evidence from the UK suggests that few young women who become pregnant are prepared to consider abortion. Other UK research shows that the proportion of all pre-marital conceptions that ended in termination dropped from 40 per cent in 1975 to 33 per cent in 1993.[22]

There has been great controversy in the United States as to how important the availability of welfare benefits are in such decisions. This debate has recently surfaced in Australia in the context of the Howard government's welfare reform proposals.[23] One influential American view is that changes to access to assistance for single mothers in the 1960s led to a sharp increase in the number of sole parent households.[24] An alternative, and perhaps more reasonable, point of view is that welfare is not the key factor. Abrahamson[25] notes that to choose unmarried motherhood while dependent on welfare would not be rational if the women in question could find men with jobs. If the latter were available, it would be economically advantageous to defer childbearing until after marriage because of the much greater household income resulting. This argument again draws attention to the situation of the men who move in the social circle of the young women who live in inner city areas or elsewhere who have limited education and job prospects. If the job prospects of these men deteriorate then this is likely to influence the extent of lone parenthood. There is evidence in the United States that 'the employment position of high school dropouts and high school graduates has substantially worsened, particularly that of drop outs and especially of black males'.[26] Thus the conclusion of one researcher that:

male joblessness seemed consistently to be the beginning of a chain leading to higher out-of-wedlock ratios. …[Even when looking at welfare] we have found that a shortage of marriageable men seems to be the most important variable in leading single mothers to traditional welfare and that marriage to a working partner seems to

[19] K. Rowlinson and S. McKay, *The Growth of Lone Parenthood*, Policy Studies Institute, London, 1998, p.12
[20] W. J. Wilson, *When Work Disappears*, Knopf, New York, 1997, pp. 96-97
[21] Wilson, ibid., p. 89
[22] I. Allen and S. B. Dowling, 'Teenage mothers: decisions and outcomes', *Changing Britain: Families and Households in the 1990s*, S. McRae (Ed), Oxford University Press, 1999, pp. 339-341
[23] See the discussion in P. Saunders (Ed), *Reforming the Australian Welfare State*, Australian Institute of Family Studies, Melbourne, 2000.
[24] C. Murray, *Losing Ground: American Social Policy, 1950-1980*, Basic Books, New York, 1984, pp. 154-166
[25] M. Abrahamson, op. cit, pp. 154-155
[26] Oppenheimer, op. cit., p. 331

be the most permanent means for single mothers to permanently leave traditional welfare.[27]

In such settings, the availability of welfare for single mothers does not appear to be central in the causal chain leading to lone parenthood. Nevertheless, once a woman becomes a lone parent and cannot draw on accumulated household assets, she will be anxious to draw on whatever welfare support is available. In the United States context such women are likely to have limited education and job prospects. If welfare provides as much income as part time work, it will be preferable. In this situation the availability of welfare facilitates lone parenthood. Such a choice may repel middle class residents, because as a Canadian commentator notes 'many middle class people recoil from the proposition that lone mothers and others can make a rational economic comparison between welfare and the job opportunities available to them and choose welfare'.[28]

The research discussed so far only serves as a guide to the factors influencing the entry to lone parent status at the more precarious end of the financial spectrum. Fortunately, there is no parallel in Australia to the potent mix of minority racial enclave and inner city decline in the United States. However, the factors identified in the United States setting are a useful starting point for an explanation why there are relatively high concentrations of lone parents in certain states and regional areas in Australia. The regional centres identified earlier where such concentrations occur are amongst those with the weakest economic performance and highest unemployment levels in Australia.

Entry into lone parent status via marriage breakdown

Even though the never married proportion of lone parents is increasing, especially amongst those in the younger age groups, as shown earlier (Table 2.1), the majority of lone parent mothers aged over 30 have been married at some point in their lives. With the proviso that some of these women may have married someone other than the father of their children, it is evident that most lone parent mothers aged over 30 are the product of marriage breakdown.

The contemporary emphasis on individualisation, as expressed in demands for the widening of individual rights without any parallel obligations to family, community or nation, strikes at the heart of the institution of marriage. This and other societal wide changes help to explain the underlying drift towards delay in marriage and the increasing incidence of marriage breakdown. However, our concern is to explain why marital breakdown occurs at quite different rates across Australia, particularly why it affects some socio-economic categories more than others. In particular, the preceding comments point to the importance of changing economic circumstances in marital breakdown. One source of evidence is the strong correlation between the incidence of divorce and economic circumstances. Men with high income and men with degree-level qualifications are far less likely to be divorced or separated than their lower income counterparts. For example, of men aged 35-39 in 1996 who had ever married, eight per cent of those with degree credentials were divorced or separated compared with 18 per cent of those in the same age group who had no post-school qualifications.[29] The implication is that men without the relatively high income and security associated with higher levels of education are more prone to marital tensions and perhaps difficulties in providing the continuing resource base for a compatible marriage. Another contributing factor to the higher proportion of low

[27] Abrahamson, op. cit., p. 159
[28] D. Allen 'Some comments regarding divorce, lone mothers, and children', in *Family Matters*, M. D. Dooley, R. Finnie, S. A. Phipps and N. Naylor, CD Howe Institute, Toronto, 1995, pp. 261
[29] Birrell and Rapson, 1998, op. cit., pp. 22-24

income ever married men who report that they are divorced or separated is that in the event of marriage breakdown the men with fewer resources find more difficulty attracting a new partner. The evidence to follow on low child support payments to lone parents provides grounds for the theory that poor economic circumstances are important contributors to marriage breakdown.

The implications of pathways to lone parenthood for income

The analysis points strongly to the conclusion that, whatever the pathway, the women heading lone parent families are likely to be in a weak financial position. The ability and willingness of non-custodial fathers to provide continuing child support after relationship breakdown is crucial to the financial and material circumstances of female lone parent families, particularly those families where the mother is not employed. If marriage breakdown is occurring more amongst low income men, their ex-partners are not likely to have access to sufficient assets and ongoing child support to prevent substantial economic disadvantage following the dissolution of the relationship.

In theory, previously married women are able to draw on the accumulated assets of the marriage when they become lone parents. All custodial parents, regardless of how they entered the status, are required to claim on the income of the non-custodial parent (usually the father) through the Child Support Agency for maintenance, if they wish to receive the Additional Family Allowance (now the above basic rate part of Family Tax Benefit Part A) from Centrelink. In principle this payment can be substantial if the father is in receipt of even a moderate taxable income (since the criterion is that a payer must provide 18 per cent of taxable income for the first child above an exempt threshold, currently around $9,000). However, around half of all Sole Parent Pension recipients (excluding widows) did not receive any child support payments in 1997.[30] This suggests that many divorced or separated lone parents derive from households in which the husband was earning a relatively low income and that he continues to be in this income category after the breakdown. Even though the previously married female lone parents were better off in this respect than single female lone parents, Table 2.2 confirms that well over 40 per cent of separated and divorced female lone parents were not receiving any child support payments in 1997. If this is so, then the expectation that all previously married lone parents are much better off financially than never married lone parents needs to be modified.

[30] Birrell and Rapson, 1998, op. cit., p. 49

Table 2.2: Per cent of female Sole Parent Pensioners receiving no child support by current marital status, 1997

	Female Sole Parent Pensioners	Per cent receiving no child support
Aged 20-29 yrs		
Divorced	837	47
Separated	66,459	45
Single	39,513	59
Married/De Facto	9,336	39
Total	116,134	49
Aged 30-39 yrs		
Divorced	6,700	45
Separated	113,434	41
Single	33,578	63
Married/De Facto	15,639	37
Total	158,341	44

Source: Centrelink, unpublished

Despite these qualifications, women who become lone parents after marriage tend to be older and to be drawn from a wider educational and job experience spectrum than unmarried lone parents. Women with higher levels of education are better equipped to remain in the job market while raising a family. The point should not be overstated, since there have been a number of studies pointing to the unfavourable financial situation of female lone parents relative to their former husbands. The major Australian study on the situation of women post divorce (which followed a cohort of such women who separated in the early 1980s through the decade) confirms that divorced lone parent mothers are better educated than never married mothers.[31] However, the situation regarding possession of the marital dwelling after divorce was less clear cut. Though more of the women affected kept the house than their former husbands, various circumstances prompted a substantial proportion to move from the original house.[32]

Evidence of poor financial situation of female lone parents

An indication of the difficult financial situation faced by most female lone parents is provided in Table 2.3. It shows that 46 per cent of female lone parents aged 15-44 received less than $300 per week (or $15,600 a year) in 1996. The main source of income for these women is the Parenting Payment Single (formerly known as the Sole Parent Pension) and the family allowance payment. Data analysed for 1999 shows that 75 per cent of the female lone parents on Centrelink's Family Payment database were receiving PPS.[33] The worst off group is those lone parents who have never been married. This is true across all age groups (see Table 2.4) and is not just a result of the tendency for the never married to be younger than divorced and separated women.

[31] K. Funder, 'Women's post-separation employment and reliance on social security', in *Settling Down: Pathways of Parents After Divorce*, K. Funder, M. Harrison and R. Weston (Eds), Australian Institute of Family Studies, Melbourne, 1993, p. 88).

[32] S. Khoo, 'Housing after marriage breakdown: a longer-term perspective', in Funder et al., op. cit., pp. 67-82

[33] Unpublished data held by Centre for Population and Urban Research, Monash University

Table 2.3: Weekly income and labour force status of female lone parents* aged 15-44 years by marital status, 1996

Marital status	Weekly income					Labourforce status			
	< $300	$300 - $599	$600 - $999	$1,000+	Total	Employed	Un-employed	Not in labour force	Total
Never married	61	34	4	1	100	31	11	57	100
Divorced	39	48	12	2	100	56	10	34	100
Separated	37	52	9	1	100	47	9	44	100
Total	46	44	9	1	100	45	10	45	100

* Excludes those who did not state their income or labour force status.
Source: 1996 Census customised matrix

Table 2.4: Never married, divorced and separated female lone parents aged 15-44 years, weekly income and labour force status by age and marital status, 1996

Registered marital status	< $300	$300 - $599	$600 - $999	$1,000+	Total	No.	Em-ployed	Unem-ployed	Not in labour force	Total	No.
15-24											
Never married	74	25	1	0	100	6,972	20	13	68	100	7,210
Divorced	67	32	1	0	100	226	30	15	55	100	239
Separated	58	40	2	0	100	793	19	13	69	100	816
Total	72	27	1	0	100	7,991	20	13	68	100	8,265
25-34											
Never married	57	39	4	1	100	11,659	32	11	57	100	11,917
Divorced	43	50	7	1	100	6,419	45	11	45	100	6,528
Separated	40	53	6	1	100	8,361	37	9	53	100	8,508
Total	48	46	5	1	100	26,439	37	10	53	100	26,953
35-44											
Never married	51	37	11	2	100	5,041	47	10	43	100	5,146
Divorced	37	47	14	2	100	17,782	60	10	30	100	18,094
Separated	35	51	12	2	100	12,974	55	9	36	100	13,174
Total	38	47	13	2	100	35,797	56	9	34	100	36,414

Excludes those who did not state their income or labourforce status.
Source: 1996 Census, customised matrix, unpublished

Housing

Under these circumstances it should not surprise that only a minority of female lone parents own or are purchasing the house they live in. Table 2.5 compares the housing situation of female parents with and without partners. Most female lone parents depend on rental properties for housing and only 36 per cent live in an owned home. The private rental market is the prime provider of housing for female lone parents, particularly for those aged less than 35. (This age group forms half the total number of female lone parents. See Table 1.5.) Public housing provides housing for one-fifth of female lone parents. Given the low income of female lone parents it is reasonable to conclude that housing costs will be an important factor in shaping decisions about residential location. It is also plausible that the location of public housing will be of particular significance because of its low price and security of tenure. These issues are examined in the next chapter.

Table 2.5: Housing tenure of female sole parents and female partnered women with children 0-14 yrs, by age group, Australia, 1996

	Age	Total	Per cent Fully owned/ Being purchased	Public rental	Private rental	Other	Total
Female lone parent	15-24	45,182	20	22	48	10	100
	25-29	55,988	20	24	47	9	100
	30-34	71,356	30	22	41	8	100
	35-39	78,265	41	19	34	7	100
	40-44	55,922	51	15	27	6	100
	45+	36,969	55	17	21	8	100
	Total	343,682	36	20	37	8	100
Female partner	15-24	73,066	34	8	46	11	100
	25-29	217,369	60	5	26	9	100
	30-34	393,271	73	4	17	7	100
	35-39	447,253	80	3	12	5	100
	40-44	309,526	84	2	9	4	100
	45+	162,135	84	3	8	5	100
	Total	1,602,620	75	3	16	6	100

Source: Customised 1996 Census Matrix, Centre for Population and Urban Research, Monash University

CHAPTER THREE: LITERATURE ABOUT CONCENTRATIONS OF LONE PARENTS

Explanations for lone parent concentrations have been focused around two major hypotheses. These revolve around 'migration related' and 'home grown' factors. The most prominent in the literature is the first. Migration may contribute to concentrations in two different ways. One is as a result of a higher rate of in-movement of lone parent families than of couple families. Alternatively concentrations may be a consequence of a 'residual factor' such as where lone parent households tend to get stuck in locations which provide low cost housing but few job opportunities. If in such circumstances couple families leave at a higher rate than lone parent families this will increase the concentration of lone parent families. The second hypothesis is that these concentrations are 'home grown'. That is, they reflect the social and economic circumstances of the areas in question.

Migration factors

The in-migration hypothesis

The essence of this view is that high concentrations reflect the in-movement of lone parents from elsewhere. One prominent position is that in-movers are being 'pushed out' from areas where housing and living costs are relatively expensive to areas where these costs are lower. This may happen at different spatial scales — within metropolitan areas, between metropolitan, regional centres and rural areas. Flood found that, generally speaking, people not in the labour force, including welfare recipients and people on fixed incomes, were moving out of the cities and the employed were moving into the cities.[34] On the other hand, a more recent study by Morrow found that unemployment beneficiaries tended to move to the major urban areas in search of work.[35] Within cities, movements of low-income families, including single parent families, have been characterised as forced moves to 'urban wastelands where prices are lower'.[36]

The movement of people out of the major cities, often termed counter-urbanisation, was a prevalent theme in scholarly work on the issue throughout the 1970s and 1980s.[37] Proponents of this idea thought that population movements were increasingly diverging from employment-based movements in that people were leaving the large cities despite the apparent concentration of employment opportunities within them. It was argued that people who were surplus to the (relatively highly skilled) employment needs of the metropolises were the most likely to out-migrate.[38] Goss and Paul[39] also point to the benefits of workers of moving to low cost from high cost areas if their salary or wages remain the same. This latter point also applies to those outside the labour force who are on fixed incomes, including welfare payments. Flood raises two possible interpretations of this out-migration. One is a 'Two Australias' scenario in which people are driven out by high metropolitan costs of living. Alternatively, out-movement can be seen as a rational

[34] J. Flood, 'Internal migration in Australia', *Urban Futures, Special Issue 5*, February 1992, p 47
[35] I. Morrow, The internal migration of workforce age welfare recipients in Australia, paper presented to APA Conference, 2000, p. 20
[36] Watson, op. cit., p. 25
[37] See G. Hugo, 'Counterurbanisation', in *Population Shift: Mobility and Change in Australia*, P. W. Newton and M. Bell (Eds), AGPS, Canberra, 1996, p. 130-131, and p. 143-144 other papers authored by Hugo and others
[38] K. O'Connor and R. Stimson 'Convergence and divergence of economic and demographic trends', in P. W. Newton and M. Bell, op.cit., p. 116-7
[39] P. C. Goss and C. Paul, 'The impact of unemployment insurance benefits on the probability of migration of the unemployed', *Journal of Regional Science*, vol. 30, no. 3, pp. 349-358

economic response on the part of people on fixed incomes who are seeking a pleasant location offering relatively low costs of living.[40] Such migration might be regarded as consumption-driven in that people are thought to be moving out of cities for reasons other than the availability of employment.

These ideas were behind the hypothesis that much of the counter-urbanisation process is welfare related. Wulff and Bell in their study[41] of the 1986-1991 internal migration of households in the workforce age group found four key patterns that supported this hypothesis:

- substantial outflows of low-income earners from Sydney and Melbourne
- net gains of low-income earners in coastal areas
- net gains of some low-income groups in many inland regions that are experiencing out-migration; and
- net gains in the two slow growing capitals of Adelaide and Hobart.

This counter-urbanisation theme has been continued in some recent observations[42]that lower income groups flow from major cities to small towns in search of cheaper living. Lone parent households were identified by Budge[43]as one of the key groups relocating into the rural communities in his case studies. There is a continuing flow of anecdotal reports of such movements of lone parents which seems to support this thesis. These reports often emphasise the alleged attractions of low-cost public housing and private rental properties in non-metropolitan areas. However, while it may be economically rational for low fixed-income households to move away from high housing cost areas,[44] Wulff and Bell found that, even though lone parents were just as mobile as the unemployed and more mobile than the employed, they were insignificant in counter-urbanisation flows during the 1986 to 1991 inter-censal period.[45] They found that around 80 per cent of the lone parent moves occurred within non-metropolitan regions. Nearly half of all lone parent moves were local moves and only five per cent of lone parent moves were interstate.[46] Other work by Wulff and Newton[47] showed that around half of lone parent moves were within the one urban area and only six per cent were from urban to rural areas. In the case of marital breakdown, Watson suggested that many women move from rural areas to cities because the marital home had been linked to the husband's employment whereas women's employment opportunities, rental accommodation and child care were more readily available in urban areas.[48]

More recent work on welfare recipients by Morrow[49] indicated that for sole parents mobility was at its highest level when they first take up the Sole Parent Pension (SPP). He also found that, over the one year under study, SPP recipients were mainly leaving high housing costs of inner and middle parts of the major cities,[50] whereas growth was occurring on the outer reaches, particularly in low socio-economic areas.[51] (See Table 3.1.)

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[40] Flood, op. cit., pp. 50-51
[41] M. Wulff and M. Bell, *Internal Migration, Social Welfare and Settlement Patterns*, DIMA, 1997, p. ix
[42] See for example T. Budge, 'Population decline in Victoria and Tasmania', in *Population Shift: Mobility and Change in Australia*, op. cit., Hugo 1998 cited in I. Morrow, 'The Internal Migration of Workforce Age Welfare Recipients in Australia', Paper presented to APA Conference, 2000, p. 6
[43] Budge 1996, op. cit., p. 200
[44] Wulff and Bell op. cit., p 9
[45] ibid., p 25 and p 33
[46] ibid., p 48
[47] M. Wulff and P. Newton, 'Mobility and Social Justice' in *Population Shift: Mobility and Change in Australia*, op. cit.
[48] Watson, op. cit., p. 82
[49] I. Morrow, op. cit., p. 19
[50] ibid., p. 30
[51] ibid., p. 23-25

Table 3.1: Sole parent pensioners migration movements, Sep. 1996 - Sep. 1997

	Outflow to region listed on side from	Inflow from region listed on side to	Net Gain/Loss
	Coastal	Coastal	Coastal
Inner middle capital	1,057	1,271	214
Outer capital	1,406	1,764	358
Rural remote	888	883	-5
Regional Centre	573	656	83
Total	3,924	4,574	650
	Inner middle capital	Inner middle capital	Inner middle capital
Coastal	1,271	1,057	-214
Outer capital	4,362	3,569	-793
Rural remote	1,728	1,514	-214
Regional Centre	695	673	-22
Total	8,056	6,813	-1,243
	Outer capital	Outer capital	Outer capital
Coastal	1,764	1,406	-358
Inner middle capital	3,569	4,362	793
Rural remote	1,331	1,206	-125
Regional Centre	704	653	-51
Total	5,604	6,221	617
	Rural remote	Rural remote	Rural remote
Coastal	883	888	5
Inner middle capital	1,514	1,728	214
Outer capital	1,206	1,331	125
Regional Centre	1,620	1,612	-8
Total	4,340	4,671	331
	Regional Centre	Regional Centre	Regional Centre
Coastal	656	573	-83
Inner middle capital	673	695	22
Outer capital	653	704	51
Rural remote	1,612	1,620	8
Total	2,938	3,019	81

Source: Prepared from data from I. Morrow Appendix D

Outside the metropolitan areas, Morrow reported that there were net movements to the coast and to rural-remote areas.[52] There were, however, fewer movers from 'inner and middle' capital locations to the coast than to outer capital locations. Regional centres were generally stable. Those living in the relatively more disadvantaged areas were more mobile than those residing in the advantaged areas,[53]and those in the younger age groups more likely to move than older recipients. The least mobile group were female lone parent pensioners in their late 30s to mid 50s.[54]

Despite the definitional issues in comparing findings, it does appear that the urban to rural movement is not a large component of lone parent moves. These findings should not surprise given the value of support from family and friends to those rearing children alone. For many lone parents, leaving established networks, schools and childcare, and employment opportunities is not a feasible option.[55]

[52] ibid., p. 19 and p. 30
[53] ibid., p. 18
[54] ibid., p. 14
[55] Watson, op. cit., p. 85

Much of this research, apart from that of Morrow, focuses on the 1980s. In NSW and Victoria — the two most populous states — the pattern of population movement has changed during the 1990s. Both Nugent[56] and O'Leary[57] found that there were only very limited net flows out of Melbourne and Sydney to their respective rest of state areas (though continued net losses to Queensland) and that these losses were much lower than those of the 1980s. Mukherjee also observed that even though there was still a net loss of people between 1991 and 1996 there had been a decline in the number of people moving out of Sydney compared with 1986-1991.[58] Nugent and O'Leary also point out that there are quite different movement patterns for various age groups, with the regions losing 15 to 29 year olds to the city and gaining other age groups. Bell and Hugo, who had done much to raise the counterurbanisation issue, have noted that during the 1991 to 1996 period the non-metropolitan areas of NSW and Victoria accounted for substantially greater shares of the net interstate losses of their respective state.[59] Thus recent internal migration movements question the relevance of the counter-urbanisation thesis to the 1990s.

This evidence does not seem to have put to rest anecdotal views about the phenomenon as we discovered when releasing a report[60] on Victorian regional areas in the Victorian Parliament in 2000. A cross section of regional parliamentarians insisted (despite evidence to the contrary) that lone parents were moving into their districts to take advantage of cheap housing (including public housing).

A left behind phenomenon

A second migration-related process possibly contributing to a residential concentration of lone parents occurs when other demographic groups out-migrate and lone parents do not. This is more likely to happen in a situation of regional decline where those who are able to leave do so. Out movement is likely to be inhibited where savings are tied up in a house in an area of declining values, thus trapping residents in their housing.[61] Those who leave are likely to have skills that are useful in the broader labour-market. Also, there is a well documented out-movement (noted by Nugent and O'Leary above) of young people free of partnering constraints who are anxious to pursue educational and employment opportunity elsewhere.

This residual process is implicit in Wulff and Bell's observation of high net gains of low income groups in areas of high out-migration.[62] A similar pattern was observed in metropolitan Melbourne where the better-off had a higher out-migration rate from areas with high spatial concentrations of poorer households.[63] Hugo and Bell[64] acknowledge the potential role of retention of low income groups in shaping concentrations of such people but do not develop the point. This pattern of the poor being left behind in depressed rural areas has also been reported in the US.[65]

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[56] S. Nugent, ' Why Sydney keeps on growing – trends in population distribution in New South Wales, 1991 to 1996', *People and Place*, vol. 6, no. 4, p. 24

[57] J. O'Leary, 'The resurgence of Marvellous Melbourne – trends in population distribution in Victoria, 1991 to 1996, *People and Place*, vol. 7, no. 1, pp. 33-38

[58] R. Mukherjee, 'Sydney: it's labour market, housing and internal migration between 1986 and 1996', Paper presented to APA Conference 2000, p 4

[59] M. Bell and G. Hugo, *Internal Migration in Australia 1991 to 1996*, Joint Commonwealth, State, Territory Population Migration and Multicultural Research Program, Canberra, 2000, p. 96

[60] B. Birrell, J. Dibden and J. Wainer, op. cit.,

[61] Budge, op. cit., p. 198

[62] Wulff and Bell, op. cit., p. 49 and p. 50

[63] B. Birrell, K. O'Connor and V. Rapson, 'Explaining spatial concentrations of the poor in metropolitan Melbourne', *People and Place*, vol. 7, no. 1, pp 56-57

[64] Hugo and Bell, 'The hypothesis of welfare led migration to rural areas: the Australian case', in *Migration into Rural Areas: Theories and Issues*, P. Boyle and K. Halfacre (Eds), John Wiley & Sons, Brisbane, 1998, p. 112 and p. 121

[65] Cromartie 1993, Garkovich 1989, Lichter et al 1994 cited in Hugo and Bell , ibid., p. 127

Where there are substantial amounts of public housing in a depressed area it is plausible that this accommodation might inhibit movement of lone parent families out of the area.

The role of housing

The preliminary evidence cited above concerning an apparent decline of movers out of the cities to non-metropolitan locations suggest that the emphasis which some commentators have placed on the role of housing costs in shaping movement patterns of lone parents may be misplaced. Housing costs consume a substantial part of the budget of lone parents. But for those located in high cost metropolitan areas an alternative way to handle these costs is to live in lower quality or amenity housing areas in the same vicinity. Such decisions make rental accommodation the most likely outcome. Percival[66] found that many low and middle-income households rely on private rental accommodation through economic necessity rather than choice, with those who are unable or unwilling to move to home purchasing exchanging long-term tenure security for a higher current standard of living.

While female lone parents are usually financially disadvantaged compared with couple families, those who have never married or been in a stable relationship long enough to build up some joint assets are especially so. For older women, particularly in the case where both parents have been employed, marital break-up implies a division of joint property that may include the family home. Young never-married lone parents, who tend as a group to have less educational qualifications and so lower earnings, are unlikely to have recourse to such assets. The mothers in question are likely to be trapped in the private rental market unless public housing becomes an option. Winter and Stone[67] add to this rather grim picture with their finding that, if the low skilled and low paid do not enter homeownership prior to age 35, they never gain entry and their housing consumption becomes a further element of permanent disadvantage.

When viewed through the perspective of 'housing careers', divorce can be seen as a highly disruptive factor. With marital break up, divorced lone mothers may slip down to renting or move to cheaper housing areas.[68] However, there is no inevitable sequence of events:

The events of divorce and changing residence usually do not occur close together in time but interact over a period of months or years. In most instances, one or more of the partners leaves the initial home long before the divorce is official. Many people find temporary housing before they make a 'restart' as an independent unit in the housing market.[69]

Rental assistance and mobility

On the other hand, changes in government policy which put more emphasis on assisting low income people in the private rental market would seem likely to promote residential mobility. The reassignment of government housing support away from public housing towards subsidising private rent in the form of the payment of rental

[66] R. Percival, *Changing Housing Expenditure, Tenure Trends And Household Incomes In Australia*, 1975-76 to 1997, Discussion Paper No 28, NATSEM, Fac of Management, Uni of Canberra, 1998, pp. 47-49

[67] I. Winter and W. Stone, 'Social polarisation and Housing Careers', Working Paper 13, Paper presented to APA Conference 1998, Australian Institute of Family Studies, Melbourne, 1998, p. 15 and p. 17

[68] Watson, op. cit., p. 99

[69] W. A. V. Clark and F. M. Dieleman, *Households And Housing: Choice And Outcomes In The Housing Market*, Rutgers, New Jersey, 1996, p. 126

assistance to lone parent pensioners and other low-income lone parents allows for mobility of the recipient. It also is less costly for governments than the provision of public housing (according to NATSEM calculations, household assistance for social housing averages $74 per week and rent assistance is $31 per week).[70] However, its effectiveness depends on a supply of appropriate low cost housing[71] and it only works if increased housing demand does not drive up rental prices.[72] Yates and Wulff found that low cost rental stock had declined over the period 1986 to 1996, although the decline was variable across different cities and regions.[73] Because rent assistance takes no account of local rental costs it is likely that its recipients will seek out rental properties in cheaper housing areas. Such areas may be in places that lack employment opportunities and facilities such as childcare.[74]

Public housing

There may be a special case for public housing in shaping lone parents' residential decisions, at least for those excluded from home ownership. As indicated above, it is commonly thought that the availability of public housing is an important determinant of lone parent residential concentrations. The Australian Institute of Housing and Welfare claims that public housing is better at providing affordable housing than the private rental sector[75] and it is true that there are greater concentrations of lone parents in public housing than couples with dependent children. For example, in the case of South Australia, lone parents form four per cent of all households yet 18.5 per cent of public housing tenants.[76] Analysis of the public housing stock available in 1991 showed that regional cities contain a substantial proportion of public housing in all states.[77]

However, given that the proportion of households living in public housing has contracted during the 1990s (between 1994 and 1999 the proportion fell from 6.2 per cent to 5.1 per cent[78]), it is doubtful whether public housing continues to be an important source of attraction to lone parent movers. Preliminary research on regional Victoria showed that there was only a small net inflow of lone parents from Melbourne to regional centres over the 1991 to 1996 period in which public housing played a part. The researchers felt that cheaper housing (of all types) may have a greater role in keeping lone parents in regional areas rather than in attracting them out of Melbourne.[79]

Morrow[80]also argues that public housing is not attracting clients from metropolitan to non-metropolitan areas because the migration patterns of people entering public housing were similar to those leaving public housing. In addition, the public housing migration patterns of SPP recipients showed the same pattern as other SPP recipient movers who were not in the public housing sector. He did, however, find that more SPP recipients (7,726) entered public housing than left (5,911) and, although 1,601 of these were movements from one public rental property to another, most entrants

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[70] ACOSS, op. cit., p. 6 and p. 14
[71] *National Housing Policy: Reform and Social Justice*, Ecumenical Housing Inc, 1997, p. 78
[72] ibid., p. 23
[73] J. Yates and M. Wulff, 'W(h)ither low cost rental housing?' *Urban Policy and Research*, vol. 19, no. 1, 2000
[74] Watson, op. cit., p. 66
[75] B. Badcock and A. Beer, *Home Truths: Property and Housing Wealth in Australia*, Melbourne University Press, 2000, p. 171
[76] R. Percival, J. Landt and S. Fischer, *The Distributional Impact of Public Rent Subsidies in South Australia*, April 1997, NATSEM, Discussion Paper no. 26, 1998
[77] A. Beer, A. Bolam, A. Maude, *Beyond The Capitals: Urban Growth In Regional Australia*, AGPS, Canberra, 1994, p. 97
[78] Australian Bureau of Statistics, *1999 Housing Survey*, Cat No. 4182.0
[79] B. Birrell, J. Dibden, J. Wainer, op. cit., p. 27-29
[80] Morrow, op. cit., p 33-35

came from private rental. The public housing movements of SPP recipients show losses from inner and middle capital city regions and regional centres for both those entering and leaving public housing. The largest gains were in coastal areas. (See Table 3.2.)

Table 3.2: Migration patterns of Sole Parent Pensioner clients entering and leaving public housing sector, Sep. 1996 - Sep. 1997

	Entering the public housing sector from other tenure Net gain/loss	Leaving the public housing sector for other tenure Net gain/loss
Inner Middle Capital	-305	-238
Outer Capital	54	59
Coast	495	353
Regional Centres	-315	-244
Rural remote	119	71
Total	48	1

Source: Calculated from Morrow, Appendix G

Nevertheless, to the extent that public housing is attracting lone parents, it will be influential in shaping the life chances of the parents and their children. Even within the large urban areas, public housing has been noted by a variety of commentators to be less well located than private rental (except the centrally located high rise). This is particularly so for the stock of older and larger public housing estates, because of their location nearby industrial sites — sites affected by manufacturing restructuring and reductions in industry protection.[81] Foord et al[82] also noted that many public housing tenants had greater difficulty in gaining access to services such as shops, health and community services and public transport than tenants in private rental accommodation. He also found that public tenants who moved had less choice about the actual decision to move or the location of the new dwelling than households who left public housing or moved within the private rental market. [83]

Public housing can create poverty traps because of the withdrawal of the public housing rebate as income increases. Public housing tenants may not choose to take employment in another region if it would mean moving back into the private rental market.[84] For all its claimed disadvantages and apart from its relative cheapness, public rental does have the advantage over private rental in its security of tenure.[85] Other research has shown that those who enter the public rental sector seldom leave.[86] These factors suggest that public housing may act to retain public housing tenants in areas from which other family types are leaving and so contribute to the left behind phenomenon.

This review of the literature on the migration hypothesis implies a degree of scepticism about its role in shaping lone parent concentrations. Nevertheless, there is clearly a need for a detailed analysis of the idea. This is conducted in Chapter 5.

[81] *National Housing Policy: Reform and Social Justice*, Ecumenical Housing Inc, 1997, p. 23 and p. 32
[82] G. Foord et al, *Public Housing in Australia* ,Australian Institute of Health and Welfare, 1994 p. 94
[83] ibid., p. 117
[84] ACOSS, Priced out of the Market: Low income People and Affordable Housing, ACOSS, 1998, p 6.
[85] Foord et al, op. cit., p. 117 and ACOSS, ibid.
[86] Wulff and Newton, op. cit., 1995, p. 12

A ‘home grown’ phenomenon

An alternative focus is the role of ‘home grown’ factors in shaping lone parent residential concentrations. The literature explored in Chapter Two suggested that women are more likely to become lone parents in areas where the economic opportunities available to both women and men are low and where both men and women have limited resources (including education) of the type needed to pursue work opportunities. In the Australian context these circumstances are unlikely to be evident in inner metropolitan locations because these are increasingly locations of industries and people working in the new economy (although there may be concentrations of lone parents in inner areas where public housing is located). However, there are grounds for exploring this hypothesis in regional areas because of the impact of rural economic decline and industrial restructuring, and because rural residents have lower qualification levels than metropolitan residents. These circumstances could prompt women to consider partnering and raising children earlier than their metropolitan counterparts, yet in a context not favourable to anxiety-free partnering relationships. In this situation, dependence on welfare may become the only viable lifestyle alternative.

The rapidly growing coastal urban areas of NSW and Queensland present a more difficult interpretative task. They are areas of relatively high lone parent concentrations. The socio-economic circumstances in these areas, notably limited job opportunities, low income and high dependency on welfare would be expected to contribute to family breakdown. However, many of the people living in these areas are the products of migration prior to the 1990s. Since the focus of this research is on the migration impact during the 1990s, for analytical purposes pre 1990s migrants are treated as part of the ongoing communities and any tendency for marital breakdown since the early 1990s is regarded as part of the ‘home grown’ phenomenon.

Another factor may be the demographic characteristics of different areas. If there are high numbers of people in the ‘at-risk’ age group and ‘at-risk’ circumstances (namely families with children) it is likely that the proportion of total population who are lone parents would also be high.

As argued in Chapter Two, there are a host of factors including broad changes in values which appear to be affecting the propensity of people to couple and to disengage. It is beyond the scope of this study to examine the extent to which such changes may be impacting on particular localities. However, it is to be expected that any such changes will be magnified where economic circumstances do not favour secure partnering.

Regional and rural Australia is usually thought to be conservative on family values, at least relative to metropolitan Australia. However, as the analysis below shows, the incidence of lone parent families is much higher in regional than metropolitan centres. It could be that the strength of ‘home grown’ factors over-ride the conservatism usually associated with regional settings. But where, as is the case in regional centres, one in every five families is headed by a female lone parent, this seems unlikely. Paradoxically the presence of high ethnic community concentrations in capital cities may suggest a solid core of people with conservative views about marriage and the family. These issues are explored below.

Implications of lone parent concentrations

Whatever the extent of, and whatever the reason for, lone parent concentrations, those living in these areas will be greatly affected by the bundle of services associated with the location. These include the quality and accessibility of schools, jobs, shops, and other local neighbourhood features.

Since the late 1980s policies have been introduced to help lone mothers gain skills which will enable them to find paid work.[87] To the extent that these mothers are concentrated in areas characterised by economic disadvantage and decline, particularly in rural areas where services are being cut back, this will harm their prospects of entering the workforce. Even for mothers with appropriate skills, child care and transport costs and distance may be barriers to their entering the workforce.[88]

[87] M. McHugh and J. Miller 'Australia: supporting mothers to seek work', *Single Mothers in an International Context: Mothers or Workers?,* S. Duncan and R. Edwards (Eds), UCL Press, London, 1997, p. 149
[88] ibid., p. 168

CHAPTER FOUR: METHODOLOGY

The data employed to test the hypotheses in question include both Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) Census and population data as well as information derived from administrative databases held by Centrelink and the Child Support Agency (CSA). These data sets provide both trend and cross-sectional data. In addition some of the Census data and the CSA data provide longitudinal information which permits following individuals over a sequence of years.

All lone parents examined in this research are those with dependent children. Even so, because the data are drawn from various sources, there are differences in the subsets of lone parents covered. The Census data sets used include only those lone parents who have at least one dependent child aged 0-14 years whereas the Centrelink data used include lone parents with at least one dependent child aged 0-15 years. In addition, the Centrelink file, because of its administrative nature, includes only those families who have claimed the Family Payment. In practice, however, the great majority of all lone parents with dependent children of the appropriate age are included. Although the Family Payment is means-tested, only those lone parent families where the parent is a high-income earner would be excluded. This is because the means test for the Minimum Family Payment in 1999 was set at $66,403 per annum for a family with one child.[89] A further sub-set of the Centrelink data covers lone parents who are in receipt of the Sole Parent Pension (SPP), now known as Parenting Payment Single (PPS). These parents are those who qualify to receive this payment through their low income (or total lack of income). The CSA data set provides information on all persons where there has been a relationship breakdown regardless of whether the parties have remarried or not. The CSA has provided a longitudinal file for all those entering its books in the first half of 1997 by their location and circumstances by mid 1999.

The first step was to establish where lone parents, particularly the poorer lone parents, are concentrated and the trend lines in these concentration patterns. To this end counts of Sole Parent Pension recipients were derived from the Centrelink Family Payments data sets for both 1995 and 1999 by postcode. These trend data are supplemented by data derived from the 1999 file which show the location of additional lone parent families who do not qualify for the SPP but do receive Family Payments. By using the ABS postcode to Statistical Local Area (SLA) population concordance the counts of SPP and lone parents were assigned to SLAs. The concorded SLA counts could then be matched against ABS data on the age and sex of estimated resident population for SLAs. Estimates of the total number of families in these SLAs were prepared from estimates of the number of children aged 0-15 years and the mean size of families in each SLA as derived from the Centrelink data. These data sets were then used to calculate ratios of families headed by lone parents to all families in the locality.

The SLAs were then matched against a classification which was prepared for the *State of the Environment* report in 1996. The classification groups SLAs according to which state and type of region they are in. The regional types include the metropolitan areas (the five mainland state capitals), other metropolitan areas (Canberra, Hobart, Darwin, the Gold Coast, the Sunshine Coast, Townsville, Geelong, Wollongong and Newcastle), large regional centres with populations more than 25,000, small regional centres with populations between 10,000 and 25,000, other rural areas and remote areas. A coastal indicator is also included. Using these indicators of location, size and function, SLAs and regions could be aggregated and/or disaggregated to categorise the level of concentrations of SPP and lone parents. SPP change could also be measured against population change.

[89] Centrelink, *A Guide to Commonwealth Payments*, 1 July to 19 September 1999, p. 18

Three indicators were calculated for each SLA and aggregated region:

- the level of SPP concentration in 1999 measured as the percentage of all families in the area
- the level of lone parent concentration in 1999 measured as the percentage of all families in the area
- the changes occurring in SPP numbers between 1995 and 1999 in the region or SLA.

These three indicators were used to classify regions into high or low growth and high or low concentrations relative to the overall Australian level, both in terms of levels in 1999 and rates of change over time. This classification was used to identify locations for which further data was procured from ABS in the form of customised matrices. The first included data on families with at least one child aged 0-14 years and included residence 1991 and 1996 by marital status, relationship in household, age, income and housing tenure in order to investigate whether lone parents' residential movements display different characteristics to those of couple families. A second matrix based on the same locations in 1996 included all women and show marital status, relationship in household, ethnicity, age and whether they have borne a live child. These data sets enabled an investigation of the role of the three migration processes contributing to concentrations.

A major objective of the migration analysis was to determine how much of the growth in lone parent concentrations was attributable to migration. This inquiry covered selected locations chosen because they appeared to represent areas with high or low concentration levels. The period examined was 1991 to 1996. The method used was to compare the overall growth in lone parents and couple households (with at least one child aged less than 15 years) between 1991 and 1996, as indicated by 1991 and 1996 Census counts, with estimates of the net movements of such households in or out of the areas in question. The residual provided an estimate of the proportion of growth (or decline) in lone parent concentrations which could only be explained by the influence of 'home grown' factors.

As argued in the chapter on theory, our main hypothesis was that regardless of the two entry points or routes by which people became lone parents, the main determinant was economic circumstances within the location in question. The approach to exploring this hypothesis was largely statistical. This means that we could not examine factors such as changing values or norms concerning family relationships. The only exception was that by incorporating a birthplace identifier in our Census data sets we were able to examine the impact of ethnic background on family outcomes. The data chosen for this analysis of 'home grown' factors was shaped by data availability. Data indicating with actual outcomes for people notably income, unemployment levels and factors likely to contribute to these outcomes including age left school were utilised. These data were then examined in relations to actual levels of lone parent families by location and some of the antecedents of lone parent status, including the incidence of family breakdown (as indicated by levels of divorce or separation). Standard regression techniques were employed in this analysis.

CHAPTER FIVE: THE ROLE OF MIGRATION

Table 5.1 lists all localities in 1999 where the proportion of families with children 0-15 who are lone parent families exceeds 24 per cent. The Australian level was 22.2 per cent. The table also shows localities where the proportion of families with children aged 0-15 who are in receipt of the Parenting Payment Single (PPS) exceeds the Australian level of 16.5 per cent. Table 5.2 indicates the trend in PPS families from 1995 to 1999. The locations included in the table are those where there were more than 250 PPS families and the growth rate was more than 15 per cent over the four year period.

The data in these tables were utilised to choose representative metropolitan and non-metropolitan locations with high levels of lone parent concentrations for the two customised matrices drawn from the 1996 census as described in the previous chapter. The places chosen are listed in subsequent tables. For the metropolitan locations specific Statistical Local Areas were chosen. However, locations outside the five major metropolitan areas were aggregated into regional categories consisting

Table 5.1: NSW, Victoria and Queensland areas where the estimated proportion of families with children aged 0-15 who are headed by a lone parent is > 24% and/or sole parent pensioner is > 16.5% (Australian average=22.2% and 16.5% respectively), 1999

	State	CLASS	TYPE	SD	SSD/region	slaname	Estimated no. of families*	Lone Parent families > 24%	Parenting Payment Single (PPS) Families (> 16.5%)	% of Lone Parents who receive PPS
Metropolitan Areas	NSW	met	core	Sydney	Inner Sydney	South Sydney (C)	5,123	29	21	73
	NSW	met	out	Sydney	Blacktown-Baulkham Hills	Blacktown (C)	35,099	28	21	75
	NSW	met	out	Sydney	Gosford-Wyong	Gosford (C)	18,973	25	19	74
	NSW	met	out	Sydney	Gosford-Wyong	Wyong (A)	15,900	31	25	81
	NSW	met	out	Sydney	Outer South Western Sydney	Campbelltown (C)	21,887	31	24	78
	NSW	met	out	Sydney	Outer Western Sydney	Penrith (C)	23,991	24	17	72
	Vic	met	core	Melbourne	Inner Melbourne	Melbourne (C) - Remainder	2,422	31	25	80
	Vic	met	core	Melbourne	Inner Melbourne	Port Phillip (C) - St Kilda	3,095	24	17	69
	Vic	met	core	Melbourne	Inner Melbourne	Port Phillip (C) - West	2,148	25	18	73
	Vic	met	core	Melbourne	Inner Melbourne	Yarra (C) - North	3,423	30	23	75
	Vic	met	core	Melbourne	Inner Melbourne	Yarra (C) - Richmond	1,951	27	20	75
	Vic	met	inner	Melbourne	Western Melbourne	Maribyrnong (C)	6,359	31	24	78
	Vic	met	mid	Melbourne	Frankston City	Frankston (C) - West	8,637	31	24	78
	Vic	met	mid	Melbourne	Greater Dandenong City	Gr. Dandenong – Dand'g	6,815	25	19	76
	Vic	met	mid	Melbourne	Greater Dandenong City	Gr. Dandenong (C) Bal	8,367	24	18	75
	Vic	met	mid	Melbourne	Hume City	Hume (C) - Broadmeadows	9,048	27	21	78
	Vic	met	mid	Melbourne	Moreland City	Moreland (C) - North	4,716	25	19	75
	Vic	met	mid	Melbourne	Northern Middle Melbourne	Darebin (C) - Preston	8,250	28	22	77
	Vic	met	mid	Melbourne	Western Melbourne	Brimbank (C) - Sunshine	9,329	28	22	80
	Vic	met	out	Melbourne	Melton-Wyndham	Melton (S) Bal	5,212	26	20	76
	Vic	met	out	Melbourne	Mornington Peninsula Shire	Mornington P'sula (S) - Sth	4,165	30	24	80
	Vic	met	out	Melbourne	South Eastern Outer Melb.	Casey (C) - South	1,386	25	19	75
	Vic	met	out	Melbourne	Yarra Ranges Shire Part A	Yarra Ranges (S) - North	1,595	25	19	77
	Qld	met		Brisbane	Caboolture Shire Part A		14,154	27	22	82
	Qld	met		Brisbane	Gold Coast City Part A		6,165	29	23	78
	Qld	met		Brisbane	Ipswich City (Part in BSD)		15,990	29	22	78
	Qld	met		Brisbane	Logan City		23,637	29	22	77
	Qld	met		Brisbane	Redcliffe City		5,334	33	26	78

Table 5.1 continued

	State	CLASS	TYPE	SD	SSD/region	slaname	Estimated no. of families*	Lone Parent families > 24%	(PPS Families (> 16.5%)	% of Lone Parents who receive PPS
Non metropolitan areas (large rural centres have populations > 25,000 and small rural centres have populations 10,000-25,000)	NSW	other metro			Newcastle SSD		56,326	26	20	77
	NSW	rur	large	Murray	Albury	Albury (C)	5,181	28	21	75
	NSW	rur	large	North Western	Central Macquarie	Dubbo (C)	5,102	29	23	78
	NSW	rur	large	Mid-North Coast	Hastings	Hastings (A)	6,991	27	21	78
	NSW	rur	large	Richmond-Tweed	Richmond-Tweed SD Bal	Lismore (C)	5,375	32	25	78
	NSW	rur	large	Northern	Northern Slopes	Tamworth (C)	4,543	27	20	76
	NSW	rur	large	Murrumbidgee	Central Murrumbidgee	Wagga Wagga (C)	7,053	25	18	74
	NSW	rur	small	Central West	Bathurst-Orange	Bathurst (C)	3,488	25	19	75
	NSW	rur	small	Hunter	Hunter SD Bal	Great Lakes (A)	3,196	30	24	81
	NSW	rur	small	Illawarra	Illawarra SD Bal	Shoalhaven (C)	9,967	27	22	81
	NSW	rur	small	Mid-North Coast	Clarence	Coffs Harbour (C)	7,491	31	25	82
	NSW	rur	small	Mid-North Coast	Clarence	Grafton (C)	2,006	29	24	81
	NSW	rur	small	Mid-North Coast	Hastings	Greater Taree (C)	5,282	26	21	80
	NSW	rur	small	Northern	North Central Plain	Moree Plains (A)	2,022	29	23	79
	NSW	rur	small	Northern	Northern Tablelands	Armidale (C)	2,462	27	19	71
	NSW	rur	small	Richmond-Tweed	Richmond-Tweed SD Bal	Ballina (A)	4,281	29	23	78
	NSW	rur	small	South Eastern	Sth Tablelands (exc Q'nbeyan)	Goulburn (C)	2,587	26	20	76
	NSW	rur	other	Central West	Lachlan	Parkes (A)	1,967	24	19	78
	NSW	rur	other	Mid-North Coast	Clarence	Bellingen (A)	1,662	31	25	83
	NSW	rur	other	Mid-North Coast	Hastings	Kempsey (A)	3,357	32	27	84
	NSW	rur	other	Mid-North Coast	Clarence	Maclean (A)	1,775	26	22	85
	NSW	rur	other	Mid-North Coast	Clarence	Nambucca (A)	2,104	34	29	84
	NSW	rur	other	Murrumbidgee	Central Murrumbidgee	Junee (A)	636	29	23	79
	NSW	rur	other	North Western	Central Macquarie	Gilgandra (A)	600	30	25	83
	NSW	rur	other	North Western	Central Macquarie	Narromine (A)	830	28	24	84
	NSW	rur	other	North Western	Central Macquarie	Wellington (A)	1,047	39	33	86
	NSW	rur	other	North Western	Macquarie-Barwon	Coonamble (A)	612	33	27	83
	NSW	rur	other	Northern	Northern Slopes	Quirindi (A)	553	25	19	76
	NSW	rur	other	Northern	Northern Tablelands	Glen Innes (A)	711	25	19	77
	NSW	rur	other	Northern	Northern Tablelands	Guyra (A)	506	28	25	88
	NSW	rur	other	Northern	Northern Tablelands	Inverell (A) - Pt B	1,307	26	21	81
	NSW	rur	other	Richmond-Tweed	Richmond-Tweed SD Bal	Byron (A)	3,846	38	32	84
	NSW	rur	other	Richmond-Tweed	Richmond-Tweed SD Bal	Kyogle (A)	1,278	34	28	82
	NSW	rur	other	Richmond-Tweed	Richmond-Tweed SD Bal	Richmond River (A)	1,318	26	22	84
	NSW	rur	other	Richmond-Tweed	Richmond-Tweed SD Bal	Tweed (A) - Pt B	3,785	29	25	84
	NSW	rur	other	South Eastern	Lower South Coast	Bega Valley (A)	3,554	24	20	83
	NSW	rur	other	South Eastern	Lower South Coast	Eurobodalla (A)	3,478	31	26	83
	Vic	rur	large	Central Highlands	Ballarat City		9,334	27	21	79
	Vic	rur	large	Loddon	Greater Bendigo City Part A		9,198	28	22	80
	Vic	rur	large	Goulburn	Gr Shepparton City Part A	Gr. Shepparton (C) - Pt A	5,245	28	21	78
	Vic	rur	large	Ovens-Murray	Wodonga	Wodonga (RC)	4,084	27	21	75
	Vic	rur	small	East Gippsland	East Gippsland Shire	E. Gippsland (S) Bairnsdale	2,686	24	19	78
	Vic	rur	small	Barwon	West Barwon	Colac-Otway (S) - Colac	1,092	29	24	80
	Vic	rur	small	Gippsland	La Trobe Valley	La Trobe (S) - Moe	2,273	27	22	82
	Vic	rur	small	Gippsland	La Trobe Valley	La Trobe (S) - Morwell	2,776	34	28	82
	Vic	rur	small	Goulburn	North Goulburn	Campaspe (S) - Echuca	1,339	24	19	79
	Vic	rur	small	Wimmera	South Wimmera	Horsham (RC) - Central	1,556	25	19	76
	Vic	rur	small	Ovens-Murray	West Ovens-Murray	Wangaratta (RC) - Central	1,916	27	22	80
	Vic	rur	other	Central Highlands	East Central Highlands	Hepburn (S) - East	865	26	22	85
	Vic	rur	other	Gippsland	South Gippsland	Bass Coast (S) - Phillip Is.	655	26	22	83
	Vic	rur	other	Gippsland	South Gippsland	Bass Coast (S) Bal	1,748	26	20	78
	Vic	rur	other	Goulburn	South Goulburn	Delatite (S) - Benalla	1,017	33	26	80
	Vic	rur	other	Goulburn	South West Goulburn	Mitchell (S) - North	1,519	26	20	78
	Vic	rur	other	Loddon	North Loddon	C. Goldfields (S) M'borough	853	25	21	81
	Vic	rur	other	Loddon	North Loddon	C. Goldfields (S) Bal	581	26	21	81
	Vic	rur	other	Loddon	North Loddon	Mt Alexander (S) - C'maine	776	36	27	76
	Vic	rur	other	Loddon	North Loddon	Mount Alexander (S) Bal	1,146	24	18	75
	Vic	rur	other	Mallee	East Mallee	Swan Hill (RC) Robinvale	517	24	19	79
	Qld	other metro			Gold Coast and area		42,856	28	22	79
	Qld	other metro			Sunshine Coast and area		29,048	28	23	83
	Qld	other metro			Townsville and Thuringowa		16,010	25	18	72
	Qld	rur	large	Wide Bay-Burnett	Bundaberg		6,823	26	22	84
	Qld	rur	large	Far North	Cairns City Part A		14,060	30	22	73
	Qld	rur	large	Fitzroy	Rockhampton	Rockhampton (C)	7,042	28	21	75
	Qld	rur	small	Wide Bay-Burnett	Wide Bay-Burnett SD Bal	Cooloola (S) - Gympie only	1,903	26	21	81
	Qld	rur	small	Wide Bay-Burnett	Wide Bay-Burnett SD Bal	Hervey Bay (C)	5,093	30	25	82
	Qld	rur	frin	Moreton	Moreton SD Bal	Laidley (S)	1,675	27	22	83
	Qld	rur	other	Far North	Far North SD Bal	Atherton (S)	1,250	29	23	81
	Qld	rur	other	Far North	Far North SD Bal	Douglas (S)	1,102	40	32	79
	Qld	rur	other	Far North	Far North SD Bal	Eacham (S)	820	29	23	80
	Qld	rur	other	Wide Bay-Burnett	Wide Bay-Burnett SD Bal	Kingaroy (S)	1,377	25	20	81
	Qld	rur	other	Wide Bay-Burnett	Wide Bay-Burnett SD Bal	Kolan (S)	615	25	22	88
	Qld	rur	other	Wide Bay-Burnett	Wide Bay-Burnett SD Bal	Miriam Vale (S)	574	25	22	88
	Qld	rur	other	Wide Bay-Burnett	Wide Bay-Burnett SD Bal	Murgon (S)	633	42	35	83
	AUSTRALIA						2,213,771	22	17	74

* Number of families was estimated using Estimated Resident Population by age divided by the average number of children in families receiving Family Allowance. Areas with less than 500 families not shown. Lone parent families include all families who were not recorded as living as a married or de facto couple by Centrelink.
Source: Calculated from ABS, Estimated Resident Population and Age and Sex by SLA, Australia; and Centrelink, Family Payment file, 1999, unpublished

Table 5.2: Sole Parent Pensioners (SPP): SLAs and selected regions in NSW, Vic and Qld with more than 250 SPP in 1999, and increase from 1995-1999 greater than 15 per cent

	State	Class	Type	SD	SSD	SLA name	Total SPP 1999	Change 1995-99	% change 1995-99
Metropolitan	NSW	Met	mid	Sydney	Canterbury-Bankstown	Bankstown (C)	3,003	430	16.7
	NSW	Met	mid	Sydney	St George-Sutherland	Kogarah (A)	577	89	18.3
	NSW	Met	out	Sydney	Fairfield-Liverpool	Fairfield (C)	4,597	1,009	28.1
	NSW	Met	out	Sydney	Fairfield-Liverpool	Liverpool (C)	3,206	425	15.3
	NSW	Met	out	Sydney	Gosford-Wyong	Gosford (C)	3,557	471	15.3
	NSW	Met	out	Sydney	Gosford-Wyong	Wyong (A)	3,933	722	22.5
	NSW	Met	out	Sydney	Outer South Western Sydney	Camden (A)	677	228	50.9
	NSW	Met	out	Sydney	Outer South Western Sydney	Wollondilly (A)	692	116	20.1
	NSW	Met	out	Sydney	Outer Western Sydney	Blue Mountains (C)	1,478	220	17.5
	NSW	Met	out	Sydney	Outer Western Sydney	Hawkesbury (C)	1,254	179	16.6
	Vic	Met	core	Melbourne	Inner Melbourne	Melbourne (C) – Rem.	602	83	16.0
	Vic	Met	mid	Melbourne	Frankston City	Frankston (C) - East	758	221	41.3
	Vic	Met	mid	Melbourne	Greater Dandenong City	Gr. Dandenong (C) Bal	1,506	275	22.3
	Vic	Met	mid	Melbourne	Moreland City	Moreland (C) - North	873	165	23.2
	Vic	Met	mid	Melbourne	Western Melbourne	Brimbank (C) - Sunshine	2,080	521	33.4
	Vic	met	mid	Melbourne	Western Melbourne	Hobsons Bay (C) - Altona	1,161	195	20.2
	Vic	met	out	Melbourne	Eastern Outer Melbourne	Knox (C) - South	423	127	43.1
	Vic	met	out	Melbourne	Eastern Outer Melbourne	Maroondah (C) - Croydon	1,072	164	18.1
	Vic	met	out	Melbourne	Hume City	Hume (C) - Craigieburn	497	185	59.5
	Vic	met	out	Melbourne	Hume City	Hume (C) - Sunbury	513	91	21.6
	Vic	met	out	Melbourne	Melton-Wyndham	Melton (S) Bal	1,026	172	20.1
	Vic	met	out	Melbourne	Melton-Wyndham	Wyndham (C)	1,780	447	33.5
	Vic	met	out	Melbourne	Mornington Peninsula Shire	Mornington P'sula (S) - East	823	153	22.8
	Vic	met	out	Melbourne	Mornington Peninsula Shire	Mornington P'sula (S) - West	725	99	15.8
	Vic	met	out	Melbourne	Northern Middle Melbourne	Banyule (C) - North	800	119	17.5
	Vic	met	out	Melbourne	Northern Outer Melbourne	Nillumbik (S) - South	256	39	17.8
	Vic	met	out	Melbourne	Northern Outer Melbourne	Nillumbik (S) - Sth-West	260	69	35.9
	Vic	met	out	Melbourne	Northern Outer Melbourne	Whittlesea (C) - South	1,800	318	21.4
	Vic	met	out	Melbourne	South Eastern Outer Melb.	Cardinia (S) - North	408	62	17.9
	Vic	met	out	Melbourne	South Eastern Outer Melb.	Cardinia (S) - Pakenham	363	113	45.2
	Vic	met	out	Melbourne	South Eastern Outer Melb.	Casey (C) - Berwick	937	354	60.8
	Vic	met	out	Melbourne	South Eastern Outer Melb.	Casey (C) - Cranbourne	1,275	278	27.8
	Vic	met	out	Melbourne	South Eastern Outer Melb.	Casey (C) - South	261	56	27.5
	Vic	met	out	Melbourne	Western Melbourne	Brimbank (C) - Keilor	1,510	495	48.8
	Vic	met	out	Melbourne	Western Melbourne	Moonee Valley (C) - West	509	94	22.7
	Vic	met	out	Melbourne	Yarra Ranges Shire Part A	Yarra Ranges (S) - Central	404	55	15.7
	Qld	met	out		Ipswich City (Part in BSD)		3,575	490	15.9
	Qld	met	out		Logan City		5,246	877	20.1
	Qld	met	out		Caboolture Shire Part A		3,091	858	38.4
	Qld	met	out		Gold Coast City Part A		1,410	329	30.4
	Qld	met	out		Beaudesert Part A		524	159	43.7
	Qld	met	out		Pine Rivers		2,153	453	26.6
	Qld	met	out		Redlands		2,010	272	15.6
Non-metropolitan areas (large rural centres have population > 25,000, small rural centres have population 10,000-25,000)	NSW	other metro			Newcastle and area		11,668	1,647	16.4
	NSW	rur	large	North Western	Central Macquarie	Dubbo (C)	1,165	195	20.1
	NSW	rur	large	Mid-Nth Coast	Hastings	Hastings (A)	1,465	222	17.9
	NSW	rur	small	Central West	Cent Tablelands ex Bath'st-O'ge	Greater Lithgow (C)	480	71	17.3
	NSW	rur	small	Hunter	Hunter SD Bal	Great Lakes (A)	773	117	17.9
	NSW	rur	small	Illawarra	Illawarra SD Bal	Shoalhaven (C)	2,212	378	20.6
	NSW	rur	other	Central West	Lachlan	Parkes (A)	371	84	29.4
	NSW	rur	other	Mid-Nth Coast	Clarence	Maclean (A)	383	87	29.2
	NSW	rur	other	North Western	Central Macquarie	Wellington (A)	350	67	23.8
	NSW	rur	other	Richmond-Tw'ed	Richmond-Tweed SD Bal	Byron (A)	1,235	195	18.8
	NSW	rur	other	Richmond-Tw'ed	Richmond-Tweed SD Bal	Kyogle (A)	362	60	19.9
	NSW	rur	other	Richmond-Tw'ed	Richmond-Tweed SD Bal	Richmond River (A)	287	60	26.2
	NSW	rur	other	Richmond-Tw'ed	Richmond-Tweed SD Bal	Tweed (A) - Pt B	928	207	28.8
	NSW	rur	other	South Eastern	Lower South Coast	Bega Valley (A)	712	144	25.4
	NSW	rur	other	South Eastern	Lower South Coast	Eurobodalla (A)	905	216	31.3
	NSW	rem	cent	Far West	Far West	Broken Hill (C)	598	86	16.8
	Vic	rur	large	Loddon	Greater Bendigo City Part A		2,026	285	16.4
	Vic	rur	large	Goulburn	Greater Shepparton City Pt A	Gr. Shepparton (C) - Pt A	1,126	161	16.7
	Vic	rur	small	Goulburn	North Goulburn	Campaspe (S) - Echuca	254	49	24.1
	Vic	rur	small	Wimmera	South Wimmera	Horsham (RC) - Central	292	39	15.4
	Vic	rur	small	Gippsland	La Trobe Valley	La Trobe (S) - Traralgon	596	89	17.6
	Vic	rur	small	Ovens-Murray	West Ovens-Murray	Wangaratta (RC) - Central	420	58	15.9
	Vic	rur	frin	Loddon	South Loddon	Macedon Ranges (S) Bal	277	63	29.4
	Vic	rur	frin	Goulburn	South West Goulburn	Mitchell (S) - South	292	47	19.0
	Vic	rur	frin	CentHighlands	East Central Highlands	Moorabool -Bacchus Marsh	333	67	25.2
	Vic	rur	other	Gippsland	South Gippsland	Bass Coast (S) Bal	351	65	22.8
	Vic	rur	other	Goulburn	North Goulburn	Moira (S) - West	337	54	19.1
	Vic	rur	other	Goulburn	South West Goulburn	Mitchell (S) - North	309	49	18.8
	Qld	other metro			Gold Coast and area		9,524	2,205	30.1
	Qld	other metro			Sunshine Coast and area		6,607	1,353	25.7
	Qld	rur	large	WideBay-Burnett	Bundaberg		1,511	251	19.9
	Qld	rur	large	Far North	Cairns City Part A		3,113	466	17.6
	Qld	rur	large	Mackay	Mackay City Part A		1,412	198	16.3
	Qld	rur	small	WideBay-Burnett	Wide Bay-Burnett SD Bal	Cooloola (S) - Gympie	396	68	20.7
	Qld	rur	small	WideBay-Burnett	Wide Bay-Burnett SD Bal	Hervey Bay (C)	1,270	321	33.9
	Qld	rur	frin	Moreton	Moreton SD Bal	Beaudesert (S) - Pt B	568	165	40.9
	Qld	rur	frin	Moreton	Moreton SD Bal	Esk (S)	341	70	26.0
	Qld	rur	fringe	Moreton	Moreton SD Bal	Laidley (S)	374	112	42.8
	Qld	rur	other	Fitzroy	Fitzroy SD Bal	Livingstone (S)	587	89	17.8
	Qld	rur	other	Mackay	Mackay SD Bal	Whitsunday (S)	253	34	15.5
	Qld	rur	other	Moreton	Moreton SD Bal	Gatton (S)	258	80	44.6
	Qld	rur	other	WideBay-Burnett	Wide Bay-Burnett SD Bal	Burnett (S) - Pt B	287	46	19.0
	Qld	rur	other	WideBay-Burnett	Wide Bay-Burnett SD Bal	Cooloola (S) (excl. Gympie)	440	93	26.8
	Qld	rur	other	WideBay-Burnett	Wide Bay-Burnett SD Bal	Kingaroy (S)	274	46	20.3
	Qld	rem	other	Far North	Far North SD Bal	Torres (S)	320	56	21.2
						AUSTRALIA	**365,584**	**40,758**	**12.5**

Source: Centrelink unpublished data, 1995, 1999

of other metropolitan areas, large regional centres, small regional centres and other rural or remote ares. Coastal and inland areas within these two categories of regional centres for NSW, Victoria and Queensland were aggregated separately. (See Appendix I, Work-in Progress Paper, for the basis of this classification.)

Table 5.3 shows the levels of female lone parent concentrations for the various areas chosen. The table shows two measures of concentration. The first is the percentage of women aged less than 45 years who are a lone parent with at least one child aged less than 15 years of age. This shows the propensity of women in the area to be a lone parent. The second is the percentage of families with at least one child aged less than 15 years who are headed by a female lone parent. This gives a measure of family breakdown (or the inability to form a two-parent family). The table shows the parts of the three metropolitan areas selected for their high levels of concentration and the residual part of these cities. It also indicates that lone parents are more concentrated in the small and large rural centres than in the other rural and remote areas. Earlier work on Victoria drew attention to the significant differences in the proportions of families with children aged 0-15 years who are headed by a sole parent according to location.[90] The present research examines the processes behind these differences and extends the analysis beyond Victoria to the rest of eastern Australia.

In this chapter the role of migration in contributing to the level of concentration shown in Table 5.3 is examined. The period in question is 1991-1996. Though the base population of the areas chosen would in many cases have been influenced by migration prior to 1991 such flows are not considered in the following analysis. Our objective is to identify the extent to which migration affected changes in the concentration of lone parents between 1991 and 1996, and the factors shaping such changes.

[90] B. Birrell, J. Dibden, and J. Wainer, op. cit, p. 23

Table 5.3: Measures of female lone parent concentration, percentage of women aged < 45 who are lone parents, percentage of families who are headed by a female lone parent, chosen areas, 1996

	Total women 45+	Female lone parents as % of women	Families with children < 15 years	Female lone parents as % of families
Sydney Campbelltown	36,093	12	21,069	22
Sydney Blacktown and Penrith	97,311	10	54,294	19
Sydney Gosford and Wyong	52,968	11	30,597	21
Sydney Rest of Sydney SD	687,321	6	300,634	15
Wollongong and Newcastle	156,482	9	82,212	19
NSW Rural Large North Coast - Hastings	10,012	11	6,011	20
NSW Rural Large Rest	55,708	11	29,643	22
NSW Rural Small Centres North Coast	30,621	11	18,039	21
NSW Rural Small Centres South Coast	14,168	12	8,951	21
NSW Rural Small Rest	35,324	9	18,457	20
NSW Rural Other North Coast	26,721	13	16,461	23
NSW Rural Other South Coast	10,298	11	6,328	19
NSW Rural Other/Fringe/Rest of NSW	100,255	8	60,520	15
NSW Remote Other and Centres	14,609	9	8,447	17
ACT and Queanbeyan	82,748	7	38,628	17
Melbourne Frankston City	24,062	10	12,770	21
Melb. Moreland Nth & Darebin Northcote	21,222	7	8,039	19
Rest of Melbourne SD	702,884	6	321,468	15
Geelong	41,217	9	20,682	19
VIC Rural Fringe	23,535	8	13,890	14
VIC Rural Large	56,210	10	28,553	21
VIC Rural Small	45,253	10	25,199	20
VIC Other Rural	91,453	7	54,410	14
Brisbane SD Ipswich and Logan	66,878	10	37,260	20
Rest of Brisbane SD	285,483	7	129,344	17
Gold Coast City(inc Tweed Pt A)	74,081	10	34,804	22
Sunshine Coast	42,945	11	24,251	22
Townsville	29,381	8	14,122	19
QLD Rural Fringe	12,920	8	7,628	15
QLD Rural Large Toowoomba	19,619	9	8,904	22
QLD Rural Large Coastal	64,590	9	32,062	21
QLD Rural Small	23,541	10	13,146	19
QLD Rural Other	96,740	7	56,602	13
QLD Remote	29,893	8	17,051	17
Rest of Australia	858,050	8	430,457	18
Total**	4,031,646	8	1,990,933	17

** Total women includes 11,050 who were not counted in defined regions.
Source: 1996 Census, unpublished customised matrices

Scale of growth in numbers of lone parent families

Table 5.4 provides counts of the numbers of female lone parent families with children aged 0-14 in each of the areas chosen for study in 1991 and 1996. Most of the areas show high growth rates relative to the Australian total. This is to be expected given that most of the areas were chosen for this reason. The task is to assess how far migration over the 1991-1996 period was responsible for the increases shown. This is not a simple matter because the question is not just the growth in the numbers of lone parents but their growth relative to couple families with dependent children. In the subsequent analysis, growth rates of other family groups are compared with female lone parents in order to estimate the extent to which female lone parent households are growing as a proportion of all family households in the areas in question. These calculations are shown below in Table 5.5 For example,

Campbelltown is shown in the table as experiencing relatively modest growth of 20 per cent in the number of female lone parent families. However, further analysis

Table 5.4: Female lone parent families with at least one child aged 0-14 yrs, 1991 and 1996, and percentage change 1991-1996, Australia

Area	Counts		Change 1991-1996	
	1991	1996	Count	Per cent
Sydney Campbelltown	4,351	5,211	860	20
Sydney Blacktown and Penrith	8,740	11,669	2,929	34
Sydney Gosford and Wyong	4,821	7,126	2,305	48
Sydney Rest of Sydney SD	39,286	50,266	10,980	28
Wollongong and Newcastle	12,929	17,452	4,523	35
NSW Rural Large North Coast - Hastings	902	1,399	497	55
NSW Rural Large Rest	5,619	7,199	1,580	28
NSW Rural Small Centres North Coast	3,102	4,375	1,273	41
NSW Rural Small Centres South Coast	1,439	2,102	663	46
NSW Rural Small Rest	3,388	4,127	739	22
NSW Rural Other North Coast	3,022	4,346	1,324	44
NSW Rural Other South Coast	1,008	1,388	380	38
NSW Rural Other/Fringe/Rest of NSW	8,600	10,365	1,765	21
NSW Remote Other and Centres	1,515	1,736	221	15
ACT and Queanbeyan	541	707	166	31
Melbourne Frankston City	2,109	2,856	747	35
Melb. Moreland Nth & Darebin Northcote	1,435	1,739	304	21
Rest of Melbourne SD	42,296	55,139	12,843	30
Geelong	3,271	4,299	1,028	31
VIC Rural Fringe	1,552	2,238	686	44
VIC Rural Large	5,142	6,604	1,462	28
VIC Rural Small	4,377	5,579	1,202	27
VIC Other Rural	6,797	8,536	1,739	26
Brisbane SD Ipswich and Logan	5,722	8,632	2,910	51
Rest of Brisbane SD	18,449	25,669	7,220	39
Gold Coast City (inc Tweed Pt A)	5,221	8,755	3,534	68
Sunshine Coast	3,416	5,902	2,486	73
Townsville	2,335	3,081	746	32
QLD Rural Fringe	872	1,299	427	49
QLD Rural Large Toowoomba	1,705	2,087	382	22
QLD Rural Large Coastal	5,311	7,555	2,244	42
QLD Rural Small	1,965	2,946	981	50
QLD Rural Other	6,280	8,799	2,519	40
QLD Remote	2,775	3,431	656	24
Rest of Australia	74,913	93,992	19,079	25
Total	295,206	388,606	93,400	32

Source: ABS: Census, 1991 and 1996, CDATA96 and unpublished matrices

(shown in Table 5.5) showed a sharp increase in the concentration levels of female lone parent households in this locality from 18 to 22 per cent of families. This increase is mainly a product of far greater out-movement of couple families relative to female lone parent families.

As indicated earlier, the research strategy was to examine first the role of migration in accounting for the growth in numbers and concentration levels of female lone parent households relative to other households. Then, to the extent that the migration factor left an unexplained residuum, the analysis moves to exploring the factors shaping that residuum.

The role of migration

Migration patterns and lone parent concentrations

If migration contributes to locations with high lone parent concentrations (relative to all families with dependent children) one would expect to find the number of lone parent families in these locations to be growing rapidly relative to other families. Table 5.5 allows an initial review of this expectation. It details the changes in concentration levels of lone parent families relative to all families with dependent children throughout the East Coast of Australia between 1991 and 1996. The only circumstances where the migration hypothesis might hold without the number of lone parents increasing more rapidly than other families is in 'residual' locations. These are the locations where lone parent concentrations are increasing because a smaller proportion of lone parents is leaving the area relative to other families with dependent children.

Table 5.5 shows that the increase in the proportion of families headed by female lone parents in most of the areas where it was thought likely that migration was contributing to concentrations is indeed higher than for Australia as a whole (which had an increase of 3.6 percentage points). Table 5.5 also provides information on our estimates of the contribution which the net movements of families (with children 0-14 years) over the years 1991 to 1996 made to the overall change in concentration levels identified.

Table 5.5: Concentration levels of female lone parent families, 1991 and 1996, and impact of net internal migration on concentration levels

	% of families who were female lone parent		Change in concentration level 1991-1996	Contribution of net movement 1991-96 to 1996 percentage*	Concentration change 1991-96 not linked to net movement
	1991	1996			
1) AREAS WHERE INTERNAL MIGRATION IS ADDING TO CONCENTRATIONS OF FEMALE LONE PARENT FAMILIES					
a) Areas where the rate of net movement of female lone parent families is higher than total families					
Sydney Gosford and Wyong	16.1	21.1	5.1	0.4	4.6
Wollongong and Newcastle	14.6	19.1	4.5	0.5	3.9
NSW Rural Large North Coast - Hastings	15.4	20.3	4.9	0.4	4.5
NSW Rural Small Centres North Coast	16.5	21.2	4.7	0.3	4.4
NSW Rural Small Centres South Coast	16.0	20.9	4.9	0.7	4.2
Geelong	14.2	18.8	4.6	1.1	3.5
VIC Rural Large	17.1	20.7	3.6	1.4	2.2
Brisbane SD Ipswich and Logan	14.6	20.5	5.9	1.0	4.9
Rest of Brisbane SD	14.0	17.5	3.5	0.2	3.3
Gold Coast (incl Tweed Pt A)	16.8	22.4	5.6	0.9	4.7
Sunshine Coast	16.0	21.6	5.6	0.7	4.9
Townsville	15.5	19.5	4.0	0.3	3.7
QLD Rural Large Coastal	16.3	21.1	4.8	1.5	3.2
QLD Rural Small	15.0	19.4	4.3	0.8	3.5
b) Locations where female lone parent families are increasing but total families are decreasing					
NSW Rural Large Rest	17.6	21.6	4.0	0.7	3.3
Melbourne Frankston City	15.3	20.6	5.3	1.3	4.0
VIC Rural Small	15.2	19.6	4.4	1.2	3.2
QLD Rural Large Toowoomba	18.0	21.9	4.0	3.3	0.6
c) Areas where female lone parents and total families are decreasing but female lone parents at a slower net rate					
Sydney Campbelltown	18.4	22.4	4.0	0.4	3.6
Melb. Moreland North & Darebin Northcote	16.1	19.5	3.3	2.0	1.3
NSW Rural Small Rest	16.2	19.4	3.2	0.8	2.4
2) AREAS WHERE INTERNAL MIGRATION IS REDUCING FEMALE LONE PARENT FAMILY CONCENTRATIONS					
a) Rural areas					
NSW Rural Other North Coast	17.2	22.5	5.3	-0.4	5.6
NSW Rural Other South Coast	14.6	18.9	4.4	-1.1	5.5
NSW Rural Other/Fringe/Rest of NSW	11.8	14.8	2.9	-1.6	4.5
NSW Remote Other and Centres	14.3	17.3	3.0	-2.2	5.2
VIC Rural Fringe	10.1	13.8	3.7	-1.2	4.9
VIC Other Rural	10.1	13.6	3.5	-1.1	4.6
QLD Rural Fringe	11.6	14.8	3.1	-1.9	5.0
QLD Rural Other	9.8	13.1	3.2	-1.7	4.9
QLD Remote	12.8	16.9	4.1	-2.1	6.1
b) Urban areas					
Sydney Blacktown and Penrith	15.3	19.4	4.2	-0.2	4.4
Sydney Rest of Sydney SD	12.0	14.9	2.9	-0.3	3.2
Rest of Melbourne SD	11.8	15.4	3.5	0.0	3.6
ACT and Queanbeyan	14.3	17.4	3.0	-0.3	3.3
3) REST OF AUSTRALIA					
Rest of Australia	14.6	17.7	3.1	1.7	1.4
AUSTRALIA	13.6	17.3	3.6	0.0	3.6

* Last column of Table 5.6 following. Source: 1991 and 1996 Censuses, unpublished

The overall contribution of migration

This estimate of the contribution of migration is a very important finding. Perhaps for the first time we can move beyond speculative comment about the relative weight of migration and 'home grown' contributions to the changing level of concentrations of lone parent families. The findings shown in Table 5.5 are very strong because what is being compared is the overall change in the share of families who are headed by lone parents between 1991 and 1996 and the contribution of migration over the same period.

In order to calculate the changing share of female lone parents customised counts from the 1991 and 1996 censuses of all family types (apart from same sex couples) with at least one child aged 0-14 were ordered. These are actual counts of families at two points in time (shown earlier in Table 5.4). However, we are comparing concentration levels of lone parents based on these counts with estimates of the contribution of net movement over the same years derived solely from the 1996 data. There are also some complex problems to overcome in making an assessment of the role of migration in lone parent concentrations because these concentrations are expressed relative to other families.

Methodology

In order to assess the migration component of the overall growth in the share of female lone parent households to all households with dependent children by locality over the 1991-1996 period, the following method was used. The migration component is treated as the difference between the proportion of families in a location in 1996 headed by each family type excluding the impact of net movement between 1991 and 1996 and the proportion of each family type when the net movement over the years 1991-1996 was included. The results of this initial analysis are shown in Table 5.6.

Table 5.6: Impact of internal migration on concentration levels of female lone parent families, 1991-1996 (data for 1996 includes those who were overseas or did not state where they had lived in 1991)

		Net moves	Total counted 1996 excl. net movement	Total 1996	Per cent of total counted 1996 excl. net movement	Per cent of total counted 1996	Difference between 1996 concentrations with/ without net movement
1) AREAS WHERE INTERNAL MIGRATION IS ADDING TO CONCENTRATIONS OF FEMALE LONE PARENT FAMILIES							
a) Areas where the rate of net movement of female lone parent families is higher than total families							
Sydney Gosford and Wyong	Male lone parent	37	671	708	2.4	2.3	
	Female lone parent	**739**	**5,723**	**6,462**	**20.7**	**21.1**	**0.4**
	Female partner	2,163	21,264	23,427	76.9	76.6	
	Total	2,939	27,658	30,597	100.0	100.0	
Wollongong and Newcastle	Male lone parent	-11	1,780	1,769	2.2	2.2	
	Female lone parent	**681**	**14,992**	**15,673**	**18.5**	**19.1**	**0.5**
	Female partner	646	64,124	64,770	79.3	78.8	
	Total	1,316	80,896	82,212	100.0	100.0	
NSW Rural Large North Coast Hastings	Male lone parent	33	131	164	2.6	2.7	
	Female lone parent	**233**	988	**1,221**	**19.9**	**20.3**	**0.4**
	Female partner	774	3,852	4,626	77.5	77.0	
	Total	1,040	4,971	6,011	100.0	100.0	
NSW Rural Small Centres North Coast	Male lone parent	70	493	563	3.1	3.1	
	Female lone parent	**467**	3,357	**3,824**	**20.9**	**21.2**	**0.3**
	Female partner	1,463	12,189	13,652	76.0	75.7	
	Total	2,000	16,039	18,039	100.0	100.0	
NSW Rural Small Centres South Coast	Male lone parent	-6	222	216	2.7	2.4	
	Female lone parent	**222**	1,652	**1,874**	**20.2**	**20.9**	**0.7**
	Female partner	570	6,291	6,861	77.0	76.7	
	Total	786	8,165	8,951	100.0	100.0	
Geelong	Male lone parent	9	398	407	1.9	2.0	
	Female lone parent	**266**	3,618	**3,884**	**17.7**	**18.8**	**1.1**
	Female partner	-61	16,452	16,391	80.4	79.3	
	Total	214	20,468	20,682	100.0	100.0	
VIC Rural Large	Male lone parent	36	605	641	2.1	2.2	
	Female lone parent	**476**	5,437	**5,913**	**19.3**	**20.7**	**1.4**
	Female partner	-130	22,129	21,999	78.6	77.0	
	Total	382	28,171	28,553	100.0	100.0	
Brisbane SD Ipswich and Logan	Male lone parent	42	894	936	2.5	2.5	
	Female lone parent	**614**	7,015	**7,629**	**19.5**	**20.5**	**1.0**
	Female partner	561	28,134	28,695	78.1	77.0	
	Total	1,217	36,043	37,260	100.0	100.0	
Rest of Brisbane SD	Male lone parent	130	2,858	2,988	2.3	2.3	
	Female lone parent	**1,417**	21,206	**22,623**	**17.3**	**17.5**	**0.2**
	Female partner	5,226	98,507	103,733	80.4	80.2	
	Total	6,773	122,571	129,344	100.0	100.0	
Gold Coast (incl Tweed Pt A)	Male lone parent	167	759	926	2.6	2.7	
	Female lone parent	**1,427**	6,380	**7,807**	**21.6**	**22.4**	**0.9**
	Female partner	3,617	22,454	26,071	75.9	74.9	
	Total	5,211	29,593	34,804	100.0	100.0	
Sunshine Coast	Male lone parent	77	618	695	3.3	2.9	
	Female lone parent	**1,265**	3,965	**5,230**	**20.9**	**21.6**	**0.7**
	Female partner	3,943	14,383	18,326	75.8	75.6	
	Total	5,285	18,966	24,251	100.0	100.0	
Townsville	Male lone parent	21	336	357	2.4	2.5	
	Female lone parent	**67**	2,680	**2,747**	**19.2**	**19.5**	**0.3**
	Female partner	64	10,954	11,018	78.4	78.0	
	Total	152	13,970	14,122	100.0	100.0	
QLD Rural Large Coastal	Male lone parent	153	806	959	2.6	3.0	
	Female lone parent	**802**	5,962	**6,764**	**19.6**	**21.1**	**1.5**
	Female partner	661	23,678	24,339	77.8	75.9	
	Total	1,616	30,446	32,062	100.0	100.0	
QLD Rural Small	Male lone parent	30	334	364	2.7	2.8	
	Female lone parent	**285**	2,263	**2,548**	**18.6**	**19.4**	**0.8**
	Female partner	644	9,590	10,234	78.7	77.8	
	Total	959	12,187	13,146	100.0	100.0	

Table 5.6: Impact of internal migration on concentration levels of female lone parent families, 1991-1996 (continued)

		Net moves	Total counted 1996 excluding net movement	Total 1996	Per cent of total counted 1996 excl. net movement	Per cent of total counted 1996	Difference between 1996 concentrations with/ without net movement
b) Locations where female lone parent families are increasing but total families are decreasing							
NSW Rural Large Rest	Male lone parent	41	717	758	2.4	2.6	
	Female lone parent	**204**	6,211	**6,415**	**20.9**	**21.6**	**0.7**
	Female partner	-300	22,770	22,470	76.7	75.8	
	Total	-55	29,698	29,643	100.0	100.0	
Melbourne Frankston City	Male lone parent	3	218	221	1.7	1.7	
	Female lone parent	**161**	2,475	**2,636**	**19.3**	**20.6**	**1.3**
	Female partner	-216	10,129	9,913	79.0	77.6	
	Total	-52	12,822	12,770	100.0	100.0	
VIC Rural Small	Male lone parent	-1	554	553	2.1	2.2	
	Female lone parent	**128**	4,822	**4,950**	**18.5**	**19.6**	**1.2**
	Female partner	-1,024	20,720	19,696	79.4	78.2	
	Total	-897	26,096	25,199	100.0	100.0	
QLD Rural Large Toowoomba	Male lone parent	39	127	166	1.4	1.9	
	Female lone parent	**255**	1,697	**1,952**	**18.6**	**21.9**	**3.3**
	Female partner	-514	7,300	6,786	80.0	76.2	
	Total	-220	9,124	8,904	100.0	100.0	
c) Areas where female lone parents and total families are decreasing but female lone parents at a slower net rate							
Sydney Campbelltown	Male lone parent	0	475	475	2.2	2.3	
	Female lone parent	**-124**	**4,837**	**4,713**	**22.0**	**22.4**	**0.4**
	Female partner	-821	16,702	15,881	75.9	75.4	
	Total	-945	22,014	21,069	100.0	100.0	
Melbourne Moreland (C) North & Darebin (C) Northcote	Male lone parent	-15	217	202	2.3	2.5	
	Female lone parent	**-112**	**1,677**	**1,565**	**17.4**	**19.5**	**2.0**
	Female partner	-1,458	7,730	6,272	80.3	78.0	
	Total	-1,585	9,624	8,039	100.0	100.0	
NSW Rural Small Rest	Male lone parent	-45	409	364	2.9	2.8	
	Female lone parent	-97	2,645	2,548	18.9	19.4	0.4
	Female partner	-678	10,912	10,234	78.1	77.8	
	Total	-820	13,966	13,146	100.0	100.0	
		Net moves	Total counted 1996 excluding net movement	Total 1996	Per cent of total counted 1996 excl. net movement	Per cent of total counted 1996	Difference between 1996 concentrations with/ without net movement
2) AREAS WHERE INTERNAL MIGRATION IS REDUCING FEMALE LONE PARENT FAMILY CONCENTRATIONS							
a) Rural areas							
NSW Rural Other North Coast	Male lone parent	30	605	635	4.1	3.9	
	Female lone parent	**289**	3,417	**3,706**	**22.9**	**22.5**	**-0.4**
	Female partner	1,216	10,904	12,120	73.1	73.6	
	Total	1,535	14,926	16,461	100.0	100.0	
NSW Rural Other South Coast	Male lone parent	24	169	193	2.9	3.0	
	Female lone parent	**37**	1,160	**1,197**	**20.0**	**18.9**	**-1.1**
	Female partner	468	4,470	4,938	77.1	78.0	
	Total	529	5,799	6,328	100.0	100.0	
NSW Rural Other/Fringe/Rest of NSW	Male lone parent	-41	1,457	1,416	2.4	2.3	
	Female lone parent	**-973**	9,914	**8,941**	**16.4**	**14.8**	**-1.6**
	Female partner	1,002	49,161	50,163	81.2	82.9	
	Total	-12	60,532	60,520	100.0	100.0	
NSW Remote Other and Centres	Male lone parent	-18	221	203	2.3	2.4	
	Female lone parent	**-373**	1,837	**1,464**	**19.5**	**17.3**	**-2.2**
	Female partner	-579	7,359	6,780	78.1	80.3	
	Total	-970	9,417	8,447	100.0	100.0	
VIC Rural Fringe	Male lone parent	-12	253	241	1.9	1.7	
	Female lone parent	**-48**	1,963	**1,915**	**15.0**	**13.8**	**-1.2**
	Female partner	856	10,878	11,734	83.1	84.5	
	Total	796	13,094	13,890	100.0	100.0	

VIC Other Rural	Male lone parent	-63	1,254	1,191	2.3	2.2	
	Female lone parent	**-562**	7,947	**7,385**	**14.7**	**13.6**	**-1.1**
	Female partner	903	44,931	45,834	83.0	84.2	
	Total	278	54,132	54,410	100.0	100.0	
QLD Rural Fringe	Male lone parent	24	144	168	2.2	2.2	
	Female lone parent	**58**	1,068	**1,126**	**16.6**	**14.8**	**-1.9**
	Female partner	1,131	5,203	6,334	81.1	83.0	
	Total	1,213	6,415	7,628	100.0	100.0	
QLD Rural Other	Male lone parent	33	1,296	1,329	2.5	2.3	
	Female lone parent	**-345**	7,743	**7,398**	**14.7**	**13.1**	**-1.7**
	Female partner	4,383	43,492	47,875	82.8	84.6	
	Total	4,071	52,531	56,602	100.0	100.0	
QLD Remote	Male lone parent	-131	663	532	3.4	3.1	
	Female lone parent	**-795**	3,679	**2,884**	**19.0**	**16.9**	**-2.1**
	Female partner	-1,416	15,051	13,635	77.6	80.0	
	Total	-2,342	19,393	17,051	100.0	100.0	
B) Urban areas							
Sydney Blacktown and Penrith	Male lone parent	25	1,078	1,103	2.0	2.0	
	Female lone parent	**-123**	10,683	**10,560**	**19.7**	**19.4**	**-0.2**
	Female partner	59	42,572	42,631	78.4	78.5	
	Total	-39	54,333	54,294	100.0	100.0	
Sydney Rest of Sydney SD	Male lone parent	-365	5,865	5,500	1.8	1.8	
	Female lone parent	**-3,686**	48,400	**44,714**	**15.2**	**14.9**	**-0.3**
	Female partner	-13,520	263,940	250,420	82.9	83.3	
	Total	-17,571	318,205	300,634	100.0	100.0	
Rest of Melbourne SD	Male lone parent	-206	5,979	5,773	1.8	1.8	
	Female lone parent	**-1,616**	50,984	**49,368**	**15.4**	**15.4**	**0.0**
	Female partner	-7,845	274,172	266,327	82.8	82.8	
	Total	-9,667	331,135	321,468	100.0	100.0	
ACT and Queanbeyan	Male lone parent	-3	932	929	2.4	2.4	
	Female lone parent	**-143**	6,850	**6,707**	**17.6**	**17.4**	**-0.3**
	Female partner	-82	31,074	30,992	80.0	80.2	
	Total	-228	38,856	38,628	100.0	100.0	

1996 Totals include people who reported living overseas or did not report where they lived in 1996.

For most of the areas under study, internal migration between 1991 and 1996 does contribute to the proportion of families headed by sole parents in 1996. These areas are listed under Sections 1a, 1b and 1c in Table 5.6. For example, the female lone parent share of 21.1 per cent of all families with dependent children aged 0-14 in Gosford and Wyong in 1996 included a component of 0.4 per cent which was attributable to the net influx of female lone parent families between 1991 and 1996. By far the highest migration contribution was in Toowoomba where internal migration contributed to 3.3 per cent of the share of female lone parent families in the area in 1996.

The net migration component of lone parent family concentrations in an area is a product of the respective flows in and out of the area of all family types. An increase in lone parent concentrations will only occur if the in-movement of lone parent families occurs at a greater rate than for other families or if the out-movement is less than for other families. In order to show how this relative movement influences the migration factor, Table 5.7 indicates the rates of movement in and out of particular areas by each family type. The table shows that for most of the areas where migration is adding to concentrations of female lone parents the rate of net movement to these areas of lone parents is greater than that of other families. The largest group of these locations is shown in Table 5.7 under category 1a).

This pattern can be seen clearly with the Gold Coast, the Sunshine Coast and the NSW coastal locations listed as well as for the other metropolitan centres of Wollongong/ Newcastle, Geelong, and Townsville, the Brisbane metropolitan area and the large rural centres in Victoria. In every case, there is a higher rate of in-movement of female lone parent families than couple families to these locations. It is

also notable that lone parents move out (column 7 of Table 5.7) at a greater rate than do other families in the same area. However, in each of the locations listed in category 1a) the relatively high rate of in-movement more than compensates for the high out-migration level. As a consequence, the net migration of lone parent families over the 1991-1996 period makes a significant contribution to the lone parent family concentrations shown in Table 5.6 for these localities. For example, it contributes 0.9 to the concentration level for the Gold Coast and 0.7 for the Sunshine Coast.

Table 5.7: Impact of internal migration on concentration levels of female lone parent families with children aged 0-15 yrs, aggregated areas, 1991-1996 (does not include people who were overseas or did not state where they lived in 1991)

		Persons reporting that they lived in area in 1991	Movement 1991-1996				Movement as % of 1991 (Col 1)			
			Stayer	Out mover	In mover	Net moves	Stay rate	Out rate	In rate	Net rate
		Column 1	Column 2	Col. 3	Col. 4	Col. 5	Col. 6	Col. 7	Col. 8	Col. 9
1) AREAS WHERE INTERNAL MIGRATION IS ADDING TO CONCENTRATIONS OF FEMALE LONE PARENT FAMILIES										
a) Areas where the rate of net movement of female lone parent families is higher than total families										
Sydney Gosford and Wyong	Male lone parent	602	500	102	139	37	83	17	23	6
	Female lone parent	**5,396**	**4,308**	**1,088**	**1,827**	**739**	**80**	**20**	**34**	**14**
	Female partner	20,313	17,503	2,810	4,973	2,163	86	14	24	11
	Total	26,311	22,311	4,000	6,939	2,939	85	15	26	11
Wollongong and Newcastle	Male lone parent	1,656	1,446	210	199	-11	87	13	12	-1
	Female lone parent	**14,217**	**12,421**	**1,796**	**2,477**	**681**	**87**	**13**	**17**	**5**
	Female partner	61,689	55,088	6,601	7,247	646	89	11	12	1
	Total	77,562	68,955	8,607	9,923	1,316	89	11	13	2
NSW Rural Large North Coast - Hastings	Male lone parent	125	101	24	57	33	81	19	46	26
	Female lone parent	**932**	**724**	**208**	**441**	**233**	**78**	**22**	**47**	**25**
	Female partner	3,732	3,139	593	1,367	774	84	16	37	21
	Total	4,789	3,964	825	1,865	1,040	83	17	39	22
NSW Rural Small Centres North Coast	Male lone parent	463	379	84	154	70	82	18	33	15
	Female lone parent	**3,145**	**2,351**	**794**	**1,261**	**467**	**75**	**25**	**40**	**15**
	Female partner	11,737	9,662	2,075	3,538	1,463	82	18	30	12
	Total	15,345	12,392	2,953	4,953	2,000	81	19	32	13
NSW Rural Small Centres South Coast	Male lone parent	222	174	48	42	-6	78	22	19	-3
	Female lone parent	**1,552**	**1,162**	**390**	**612**	**222**	**75**	**25**	**39**	**14**
	Female partner	6,056	4,853	1,203	1,773	570	80	20	29	9
	Total	7,830	6,189	1,641	2,427	786	79	21	31	10
Geelong	Male lone parent	386	329	57	66	9	85	15	17	2
	Female lone parent	**3,432**	**2,925**	**507**	**773**	**266**	**85**	**15**	**23**	**8**
	Female partner	15,835	13,841	1,994	1,933	-61	87	13	12	0
	Total	19,653	17,095	2,558	2,772	214	87	13	14	1
VIC Rural Large	Male lone parent	562	457	105	141	36	81	19	25	6
	Female lone parent	**5,124**	**4,009**	**1,115**	**1,591**	**476**	**78**	**22**	**31**	**9**
	Female partner	21,464	17,067	4,397	4,267	-130	80	20	20	-1
	Total	27,150	21,533	5,617	5,999	382	79	21	22	1
Brisbane SD Ipswich and Logan	Male lone parent	765	566	199	241	42	74	26	32	5
	Female lone parent	**6,387**	**4,646**	**1,741**	**2,355**	**614**	**73**	**27**	**37**	**10**
	Female partner	26,223	19,644	6,579	7,140	561	75	25	27	2
	Total	33,375	24,856	8,519	9,736	1,217	74	26	29	4
Rest of Brisbane SD	Male lone parent	2,497	2,044	453	583	130	82	18	23	5
	Female lone parent	**19,293**	**15,640**	**3,653**	**5,070**	**1,417**	**81**	**19**	**26**	**7**
	Female partner	90,584	77,545	13,039	18,265	5,226	86	14	20	6
	Total	112,374	95,229	17,145	23,918	6,773	85	15	21	6
Gold Coast (incl Tweed Pt A)	Male lone parent	630	537	93	260	167	85	15	41	27
	Female lone parent	**5,583**	**4,403**	**1,180**	**2,607**	**1,427**	**79**	**21**	**47**	**26**
	Female partner	20,240	17,029	3,211	6,828	3,617	84	16	34	18
	Total	26,453	21,969	4,484	9,695	5,211	83	17	37	20
Sunshine Coast	Male lone parent	563	449	114	191	77	80	20	34	14
	Female lone parent	**3,537**	**2,751**	**786**	**2,051**	**1,265**	**78**	**22**	**58**	**36**
	Female partner	13,368	11,292	2,076	6,019	3,943	84	16	45	29
	Total	17,468	14,492	2,976	8,261	5,285	83	17	47	30
Townsville	Male lone parent	294	216	78	99	21	73	27	34	7
	Female lone parent	**2,478**	**1,681**	**797**	**864**	**67**	**68**	**32**	**35**	**3**
	Female partner	10,290	7,116	3,174	3,238	64	69	31	31	1
	Total	13,062	9,013	4,049	4,201	152	69	31	32	1

QLD Rural Large Coastal	Male lone parent	697	562	135	288	153	81	19	41	22
	Female lone parent	**5,397**	**3,876**	**1,521**	**2,323**	**802**	**72**	**28**	**43**	**15**
	Female partner	22,237	16,362	5,875	6,536	661	74	26	29	3
	Total	28,331	20,800	7,531	9,147	1,616	73	27	32	6
QLD Rural Small	Male lone parent	301	211	90	120	30	70	30	40	10
	Female lone parent	**2,124**	**1,391**	**733**	**1,018**	**285**	**65**	**35**	**48**	**13**
	Female partner	9,165	6,568	2,597	3,241	644	72	28	35	7
	Total	11,590	8,170	3,420	4,379	959	70	30	38	8
		Persons reporting that they lived in area in 1991	Movement 1991-1996				Movement as % of 1991 (Col 1)			
			Stayer	Out mover	In mover	Net moves	Stay rate	Out rate	In rate	Net rate
		Column 1	Col. 2	Col. 3	Col. 4	Col. 5	Col. 6	Col. 7	Col. 8	Col. 9
b) Locations where female lone parent families are increasing but total families are decreasing										
NSW Rural Large Rest	Male lone parent	660	492	168	209	41	75	25	32	6
	Female lone parent	**5,890**	**4,237**	**1,653**	**1,857**	**204**	**72**	**28**	**32**	**3**
	Female partner	22,066	16,674	5,392	5,092	-300	76	24	23	-1
	Total	28,616	21,403	7,213	7,158	-55	75	25	25	0
Melbourne Frankston City	Male lone parent	212	148	64	67	3	70	30	32	1
	Female lone parent	**2,339**	**1,739**	**600**	**761**	**161**	**74**	**26**	**33**	**7**
	Female partner	9,698	7,464	2,234	2,018	-216	77	23	21	-2
	Total	12,249	9,351	2,898	2,846	-52	76	24	23	0
VIC Rural Small	Male lone parent	519	411	108	107	-1	79	21	21	0
	Female lone parent	**4,545**	**3,347**	**1,198**	**1,326**	**128**	**74**	**26**	**29**	**3**
	Female partner	20,069	15,685	4,384	3,360	-1,024	78	22	17	-5
	Total	25,133	19,443	5,690	4,793	-897	77	23	19	-4
QLD Rural Large Toowoomba	Male lone parent	118	85	33	72	39	72	28	61	33
	Female lone parent	**1,612**	**1,112**	**500**	**755**	**255**	**69**	**31**	**47**	**16**
	Female partner	7,019	4,585	2,434	1,920	-514	65	35	27	-7
	Total	8,749	5,782	2,967	2,747	-220	66	34	31	-3
c) Areas where female lone parents and total families are decreasing but female lone parents at a slower net rate										
Sydney Campbelltown	Male lone parent	451	330	121	121	0	73	27	27	0
	Female lone parent	**4,505**	**3,258**	**1,247**	**1,123**	**-124**	**72**	**28**	**25**	**-3**
	Female partner	15,773	12,076	3,697	2,876	-821	77	23	18	-5
	Total	20,729	15,664	5,065	4,120	-945	76	24	20	-5
Melbourne Moreland (C) North & Darebin (C) Northcote	Male lone parent	196	118	78	63	-15	60	40	32	-8
	Female lone parent	**1,511**	**824**	**687**	**575**	**-112**	**55**	**45**	**38**	**-7**
	Female partner	7,050	4,180	2,870	1,412	-1,458	59	41	20	-21
	Total	8,757	5,122	3,635	2,050	-1,585	58	42	23	-18
NSW Rural Small Centres	Male lone parent	483	345	138	93	-45	71	29	19	-9
	Female lone parent	**3,552**	**2,439**	**1,113**	**1,016**	**-97**	**69**	**31**	**29**	**-3**
	Female partner	14,474	10,912	3,562	2,884	-678	75	25	20	-5
	Total	18,509	13,696	4,813	3,993	-820	74	26	22	-4
		Persons reporting that they lived in area in 1991	Movement 1991-1996				Movement as % of 1991 (Col 1)			
			Stayer	Out mover	In mover	Net moves	Stay rate	Out rate	In rate	Net rate
		Column 1	Col. 2	Col. 3	Col. 4	Col. 5	Col. 6	Col. 7	Col. 8	Col. 9
1) AREAS WHERE INTERNAL MIGRATION IS REDUCING FEMALE LONE PARENT FAMILY CONCENTRATIONS										
a) Rural areas										
NSW Rural Other North Coast	Male lone parent	564	438	126	156	30	78	22	28	5
	Female lone parent	**3,209**	**2,295**	**914**	**1,203**	**289**	**72**	**28**	**37**	**9**
	Female partner	10,515	8,512	2,003	3,219	1,216	81	19	31	12
	Total	14,288	11,245	3,043	4,578	1,535	79	21	32	11
NSW Rural Other South Coast	Male lone parent	145	127	18	42	24	88	12	29	17
	Female lone parent	**1,080**	**752**	**328**	**365**	**37**	**70**	**30**	**34**	**3**
	Female partner	4,331	3,546	785	1,253	468	82	18	29	11
	Total	5,556	4,425	1,131	1,660	529	80	20	30	10
NSW Rural Other/Fringe/Rest of NSW	Male lone parent	1,356	1,053	303	262	-41	78	22	19	-3
	Female lone parent	**9,527**	**6,350**	**3,177**	**2,204**	**-973**	**67**	**33**	**23**	**-10**
	Female partner	47,870	39,263	8,607	9,609	1,002	82	18	20	2
	Total	58,753	46,666	12,087	12,075	-12	79	21	21	0
NSW Remote Other and Centres	Male lone parent	206	170	36	18	-18	83	17	9	-9
	Female lone parent	**1,756**	**1,131**	**625**	**252**	**-373**	**64**	**36**	**14**	**-21**
	Female partner	7,122	5,331	1,791	1,212	-579	75	25	17	-8

	Total	9,084	6,632	2,452	1,482	-970	73	27	16	-11
VIC Rural Fringe	Male lone parent	244	178	66	54	-12	73	27	22	-5
	Female lone parent	**1,912**	**1,297**	**615**	**567**	**-48**	**68**	**32**	**30**	**-3**
	Female partner	10,600	8,582	2,018	2,874	856	81	19	27	8
	Total	12,756	10,057	2,699	3,495	796	79	21	27	6
VIC Other Rural	Male lone parent	1,175	873	302	239	-63	74	26	20	-5
	Female lone parent	**7,606**	**4,962**	**2,644**	**2,082**	**-562**	**65**	**35**	**27**	**-7**
	Female partner	43,898	36,282	7,616	8,519	903	83	17	19	2
	Total	52,679	42,117	10,562	10,840	278	80	20	21	1
QLD Rural Fringe	Male lone parent	132	93	39	63	24	70	30	48	18
	Female lone parent	**1,001**	**521**	**480**	**538**	**58**	**52**	**48**	**54**	**6**
	Female partner	4,961	3,608	1,353	2,484	1,131	73	27	50	23
	Total	6,094	4,222	1,872	3,085	1,213	69	31	51	20
QLD Rural Other	Male lone parent	1,208	917	291	324	33	76	24	27	3
	Female lone parent	**7,316**	**4,530**	**2,786**	**2,441**	**-345**	**62**	**38**	**33**	**-5**
	Female partner	41,799	33,900	7,899	12,282	4,383	81	19	29	10
	Total	50,323	39,347	10,976	15,047	4,071	78	22	30	8
QLD Remote	Male lone parent	618	406	212	81	-131	66	34	13	-21
	Female lone parent	**3,481**	**2,152**	**1,329**	**534**	**-795**	**62**	**38**	**15**	**-23**
	Female partner	14,456	10,240	4,216	2,800	-1,416	71	29	19	-10
	Total	18,555	12,798	5,757	3,415	-2,342	69	31	18	-13
B) Urban areas										
Sydney Blacktown and Penrith	Male lone parent	964	770	194	219	25	80	20	23	3
	Female lone parent	**9,921**	**7,713**	**2,208**	**2,085**	**-123**	**78**	**22**	**21**	**-1**
	Female partner	39,366	32,077	7,289	7,348	59	81	19	19	0
	Total	50,251	40,560	9,691	9,652	-39	81	19	19	0
Sydney Rest of Sydney SD	Male lone parent	5,171	4,325	846	481	-365	84	16	9	-7
	Female lone parent	**43,349**	**35,390**	**7,959**	**4,273**	**-3,686**	**82**	**18**	**10**	**-9**
	Female partner	234,564	204,695	29,869	16,349	-13,520	87	13	7	-6
	Total	283,084	244,410	38,674	21,103	-17,571	86	14	7	-6
Rest of Melbourne SD	Male lone parent	5,428	4,809	619	413	-206	89	11	8	-4
	Female lone parent	**46,814**	**40,932**	**5,882**	**4,266**	**-1,616**	**87**	**13**	**9**	**-3**
	Female partner	253,389	230,607	22,782	14,937	-7,845	91	9	6	-3
	Total	305,631	276,348	29,283	19,616	-9,667	90	10	6	-3
ACT and Queanbeyan	Male lone parent	878	755	123	120	-3	86	14	14	0
	Female lone parent	**6,413**	**5,196**	**1,217**	**1,074**	**-143**	**81**	**19**	**17**	**-2**
	Female partner	28,854	23,861	4,993	4,911	-82	83	17	17	0
	Total	36,145	29,812	6,333	6,105	-228	82	18	17	-1

Source: Customised matrix 1996 Census

Internal migration also added to concentration levels in another smaller group (1b) of locations listed in Table 5.7. For this group there were net gains from migration for lone parent families but net losses for other families. The most striking case was Toowomba where the in-movement of lone parent families was far higher than for couple families. Toowoomba was also exceptional in that there was a higher rate of out-movement of couple families than sole parent families. This is primarily due to a high net in-movement of lone parents into public housing (see Table 5.17).

Finally, in three cases (group 1c of Table 5.7), Campbelltown in Sydney, NSW Rural Small Centres, and Moreland (C) - North and Darebin (C) - Northcote in Melbourne, internal migration added to female lone parent family concentration but in a context where there was an overall decline in households with young families. The cause in these two cases is that there was a higher rate of in-movement amongst female lone parent families than other families.

The remaining locations listed in Tables 5.6 and 5.7 under category 2 are those labelled as 'Areas where internal migration is reducing female lone parent family concentrations'. These are areas where internal migration is contributing to lower concentrations of female lone parent families than would have otherwise been the case in the absence of internal migration. Most of these areas are rural areas (group 2a), including the fringes of the metropolitan centres, and the remote areas of both Queensland and NSW. Their distinctive characteristic is that there was a much higher out-migration of lone parent families relative to other families. This pattern is consistent with the hypothesis that where family breakdown occurs in areas distant from town services and accessible housing the lone parent will have a motive to

move to towns and cities that provide such services. The other group of locations where internal migration is acting to reduce female lone parent concentrations is those under category 2b). The greatest impact of this factor (see Table 5.6, category 2b) is in Rest of Sydney and the ACT-Queanbeyan. In both locations (but particularly Sydney), the rate of out-migration of female lone parents is much higher than for other families. This outcome is consistent with the expectation that high housing and rental prices in Sydney have contributed to the decision of some lone parent families to leave the city.

In the earlier discussion of the literature it was hypothesised that in some areas high lone parent concentrations may be the consequence of a residual factor. The expectation was that in relatively economically depressed locations, where job opportunities were limited but housing prices low, that perhaps female lone parent households might be more reluctant to move than couple families. This could be because, in such circumstances, women reliant on the sole parent pension may not wish to leave a low rental situation or, if a home owner, may be reluctant to sell up and move to higher cost areas. The rural areas covered by group 2a could be considered potential candidates for this outcome. But as Table 5.7 shows, this is clearly not the case. Nor did we find any other cases amongst the selected areas where this 'residual' factor appeared to operate. Female lone parent families show much higher rates of out-migration from group 2a areas, as well as most other areas, than their couple family counterparts. Part of the explanation is probably that referred to above — female sole parents coming from rural areas may wish to avail themselves of the services offered by regional towns. Further analysis of the factors shaping migratory movements (including housing accessibility) follows after a description of migration patterns.

Movement patterns

The material discussed earlier (see Table 5.6) showed the rates of in and out movement and net flows to the areas under study of female lone parents over the period 1991 to 1996. Tables 5.8 and 5.9 provide initial cross-tabulations of the direction of these movements. Table 5.8 shows these movements aggregated to metropolitan and rest of state level. Of those who moved out of Melbourne or Sydney about half moved to the rest of their respective state and half interstate, with the Rest of Queensland being the most popular destination. In the case of Brisbane, the dominant destination was the Rest of Queensland.

For those leaving the Rest of Victoria and Rest of NSW, Melbourne and Sydney were respectively the largest single destinations. However, Melbourne was a far more important location for Rest of Victoria movers than Sydney was for Rest of NSW movers. Almost as many of the latter moved to Queensland as Sydney.

These findings confirm Wulff and Bell's conclusions about the relatively minor role of interstate migration in lone parent movements.[91]

[91] op.cit., p. 48

Table 5.8: Residence 1991 and 1996 of women who were lone parents with children aged 0-14 yrs in 1996

Residence 1991	Residence 1996 Sydney	Rest of NSW	ACT/Queanbeyan	Melbourne	Rest of Vic	Brisbane	Rest of Qld	Rest of Aust	Total
Sydney	55,927	3,747	226	362	129	817	1,297	666	63,171
Rest of NSW	2,231	38,818	501	342	504	734	1,460	577	45,167
ACT/Queanbeyan	150	471	5,196	86	33	129	199	149	6,413
Melbourne	327	414	49	45,449	2,362	507	783	773	50,664
Rest of Vic	105	419	48	1,750	19,094	272	554	586	22,828
Brisbane	281	346	34	168	84	22,254	2,248	265	25,680
Rest of Qld	452	782	87	299	228	2,431	27,931	683	32,893
Rest of Aust	504	553	129	641	445	567	1,076	67,354	71,269
Overseas 1991	3,494	481	206	2,161	186	1,165	916	1,823	10,432
Unknown 1991	2,978	1,925	231	2,311	982	1,376	1,992	3,370	15,165
TOTAL	66,449	47,956	6,707	53,569	24,047	30,252	38,456	76,246	343,682
Per cent of 1996 total									
Sydney	88.5	5.9	0.4	0.6	0.2	1.3	2.1	1.1	100.0
Rest of NSW	4.9	85.9	1.1	0.8	1.1	1.6	3.2	1.3	100.0
ACT/Queanbeyan	2.3	7.3	81.0	1.3	0.5	2.0	3.1	2.3	100.0
Melbourne	0.6	0.8	0.1	89.7	4.7	1.0	1.5	1.5	100.0
Rest of Vic	0.5	1.8	0.2	7.7	83.6	1.2	2.4	2.6	100.0
Brisbane	1.1	1.3	0.1	0.7	0.3	86.7	8.8	1.0	100.0
Rest of Qld	1.4	2.4	0.3	0.9	0.7	7.4	84.9	2.1	100.0
Rest of Aust	0.7	0.8	0.2	0.9	0.6	0.8	1.5	94.5	100.0
Overseas 1991	33.5	4.6	2.0	20.7	1.8	11.2	8.8	17.5	100.0
Unknown 1991	19.6	12.7	1.5	15.2	6.5	9.1	13.1	22.2	100.0
TOTAL	19.3	14.0	2.0	15.6	7.0	8.8	11.2	22.2	100.0

Source: Customised matrix 1996 Census

Table 5.9 provides a more detailed picture of the direction of movement of female lone parents, this time providing details for each of the areas chosen for study. The table allows an assessment of the extent to which lone parents who lived in the metropolitan areas in 1991 and who moved over the 1991-1996 period moved to other metropolitan areas or moved intra or inter-state. For most metropolitan locations female lone parents were much more likely to move elsewhere in their respective metropolis than to move outside its borders. For example of the 28 per cent of those moving out of Campbelltown, 17 per cent moved elsewhere in Sydney and 11 per cent moved out of Sydney. For Frankston, of the 26 per cent who moved out, 17 per cent moved elsewhere in Melbourne. It is notable that this point also applies to female lone parents living in Ipswich and Logan. Most movers from these locations moved elsewhere in the Brisbane Statistical Division (SD), despite their proximity to coastal locations elsewhere in South East Queensland. The main exception to this pattern was female lone parents who lived in Gosford and Wyong in 1991. Most movers from this area moved to points further north in NSW. The main locations of these movers were Wollongong and Newcastle (probably the latter) and coastal towns to the north.

In the case of female lone parents living in non-metropolitan NSW in 1991, the dominant pattern was for those who moved out to go to other non-metropolitan locations in NSW. This again supports previous findings for the 1986-1991 period.[92] To a lesser extent they also moved to interstate locations, particularly those in the Rest of Queensland. Out-movers from rural areas not large enough to meet the rural 'small' or 'large' town criteria tended to move to such towns within the Rest of NSW. Similarly, for those living in the Rest of Victoria in 1991, most movers did not choose to move to Melbourne. Instead they moved to other locations in Victoria or to interstate locations (particularly in the Rest of NSW and Rest of Queensland. There

[92] Wulff and Newton, op. cit.

was a closer balance between interstate and other Victorian locations than was the case for NSW. However, as in NSW, those moving from rural areas tended to move to 'small' or 'large' centres within Victoria. The interstate locations to which Rest of Victoria lone parents moved were predominantly located in the Rest of NSW and Rest of Queensland. Though not shown in Table 5.9, these were predominantly coastal areas of Queensland (mainly the Gold Coast, the Sunshine Coast and Cairns). Non-metropolitan residents of Queensland followed a similar pattern. A much higher percentage of the movers relocated to other areas in the Rest of Queensland than to Brisbane. The main location, though not shown in Table 5.9, was Queensland Rural Large Coastal Centres (which include Cairns and Bundaberg).

Table 5.9: Residence 1991 and 1996 of women who were lone parents with children aged 0-14 yrs in 1996, NSW, Victoria and Queensland

Residence 1991	Total	Within State					Interstate - % to								
		% non movers	% in State capital	% moved to elsewhere in state	% non-metro part of state	% elsewhere in state	Total interstate	Sydney	Rest of NSW	ACT Queanbeyan	Melbourne	Rest of Vic	Brisbane	Rest of Qld	Rest of Aust	Total
Sydney Campbelltown	4,505	72	89	17	6		5				0.4	0.2	1.8	2.0	0.7	100
Sydney Blacktown & Penrith	9,921	78	90	12	6		5				0.3	0.2	1.0	2.1	0.9	100
Sydney Gosford and Wyong	5,396	80	86	6	9		5				0.4	0.1	0.9	2.7	0.8	100
Rest of Sydney SD	43,349	82	89	7	6		5				0.7	0.2	1.4	2.0	1.2	100
Wollongong and Newcastle	14,217	87	4		92	5	4				0.2	0.2	1.1	2.2	0.7	100
NSW Rural Large North Coast - Hastings	932	78	7		88	11	5				0.3	0.3	0.3	2.6	1.0	100
NSW Rural Large Rest	5,890	72	5		85	13	10				1.1	2.1	2.2	3.1	1.8	100
NSW Rural Small Centres North Coast	3,145	75	5		86	11	9				1.2	0.4	2.3	4.1	1.0	100
NSW Rural Small Centres South Coast	1,552	75	8		84	9	9				1.5	1.0	1.5	3.1	1.5	100
NSW Rural Small Rest	3,552	69	6		84	16	10				0.5	0.9	2.1	5.0	1.2	100
NSW Rural Other North Coast	3,209	72	4		85	13	11				0.8	0.4	2.8	5.3	1.7	100
NSW Rural Other South Coast	1,080	70	4		87	17	9				2.2	2.5	0.8	1.7	1.7	100
NSW Rural Other/ Fringe/Rest of NSW	9,527	67	5		86	20	9				0.9	2.0	1.4	3.3	1.0	100
NSW Remote Other and Centres	1,756	64	4		82	18	14				1.4	3.4	1.0	3.9	4.3	100
ACT and Queanbeyan	6,413	81	2		7		9				1.3	0.5	2.0	3.1	2.3	100
Sydney	63,171	89	89		6		5				0.6	0.2	1.3	2.1	1.1	100
Rest of NSW	45,167	86	5		87		8				0.8	1.1	1.6	3.2	1.3	100
TOTAL NSW/ACT	114,751	93	51		43		7				0.7	0.6	1.5	2.6	1.2	100
Melb. Frankston City	2,339	74	92	17	4		4	0.1	0.9				0.6	1.5	1.2	100
Melb. Moreland Nth & Darebin Nthcote	1,511	55	88	33	5		7	1.0	1.4				0.6	3.0	1.0	100
Rest of Melbourne SD	46,814	87	90	2	5		6	0.7	0.8	0.1			1.0	1.5	1.6	100
Geelong	3,432	85	4		90	5	5	0.2	0.8	0.1			0.8	2.0	1.6	100
VIC Rural Fringe	1,912	68	19		77	9	4	0.5	0.3				0.5	2.0	1.1	100
VIC Rural Large	5,124	78	5		86	8	9	0.4	2.0	0.4			1.4	2.8	2.1	100
VIC Rural Small	4,545	74	6		83	10	11	0.7	2.4	0.1			1.4	2.7	3.7	100
VIC Other Rural	7,606	65	9		82	17	9	0.4	2.2	0.3			1.3	2.0	2.8	100
Total Melbourne SD	50,664	90	90		5		6	0.6	0.8	0.1			1.0	1.5	1.5	100
Rest of Victoria	22,828	84	8		84		9	0.5	1.8	0.2			1.2	2.4	2.6	100
TOTAL VIC	73,492	93	64		29		7	0.6	1.1	0.1			1.1	1.8	1.8	100
Brisbane SD Ipswich and Logan	6,387	73	87	15	9		4	1.0	1.4		0.4	0.3			0.7	100
Rest of Brisbane SD	19,293	81	86	5	9		5	1.1	1.3	0.2	0.7	0.3			1.1	100
Gold Coast (incl Tweed Pt A)	5,583	79	5		85	6	10	2.2	3.8	0.2	1.2	0.8			1.8	100
Sunshine Coast	3,537	78	7		85	8	7	1.5	2.3	0.2	1.3	1.0			1.0	100
Townsville	2,478	68	8		83	15	9	1.2	1.7	0.5	0.8	1.1			4.1	100
QLD Rural Fringe	1,001	52	24		67	15	8	2.1	3.6		0.6				2.1	100
QLD Rural Large Toowoomba	1,612	69	8		88	19	4	0.6	1.7	0.2	0.6	0.2			1.1	100
QLD Rural Large Coastal	5,397	72	6		87	15	7	1.6	1.2	0.3	1.1	0.7			2.2	100
QLD Rural Small	2,124	65	9		84	19	7	0.6	2.3	0.6	0.8	1.0			1.6	100
QLD Rural Other	7,316	62	7		87	25	6	0.9	2.3	0.3	0.5	0.7			1.4	100
QLD Remote	3,481	62	6		87	25	6	0.8	2.0	0.1	0.4	0.2			3.0	100
Brisbane SD	25,680	87	87		9		5	1.1	1.3	0.1	0.7	0.3			1.0	100
Rest of Qld	32,893	85	7		85		8	1.4	2.4	0.3	0.9	0.7			2.1	100
QLD TOTAL	58,573	94	42		52		6	1.3	1.9	0.2	0.8	0.5			1.6	100

Additional data on the pattern of movement of female lone parents living in metropolitan settings is provided for Melbourne in Table 5.10. These data are derived from a customised 1996 matrix held by the Centre for Population and Urban Research but procured for research unrelated to this project. Nevertheless, it is of value in showing the direction of movement for metropolitan female lone parents over the 1991-1996 period. It was hypothesised above that lone parents would be sensitive to housing prices in deciding on any movement. However, it was also suggested that they would probably be reluctant to move a long way from their previous address because of the break this implied for links with family, children's friends and perhaps the former spouse. Table 5.10 confirms this expectation. There is a clear pattern of movement from core towards outer Melbourne. This is consistent with the direction of housing prices. But most moves are contiguous, that is from core/inner to middle and from middle to outer suburbs.

Table 5.10: Net movement 1991-1996 female lone parents, Victoria, 1996

	Core/ Inner	Middle	Outer	Geelong area	Peri-Urban Fringe	Large Centres	Small Centres	Other Rural	Rest Of Australia	Total Australia
Core/Inner		883	407	40	23	77	53	67	276	1,826
Middle			680	42	38	62	51	118	319	427
Outer				30	-8	26	20	71	335	-613
Geelong area					-12	10	-29	-59	19	-183
Peri-Urban Fringe						15	-2	21	44	37
Large Centres							-58	-329	72	-505
Small Centres								-237	143	-129
Other Rural									218	566
Rest Of Australia										-1,426
Total Australia										0

Positive means top row gained from those listed at side, negative means the top row lost to those on side.
Source: 1996 Census customised matrix

More recent data on this movement pattern were drawn from the Child Support Agency data set, which describes the origin and destinations of movements between 1997 and 1999 of agency clients who were new cases registered in the first six months of 1997. As discussed earlier, because we are dealing with the early and unstable phase of the lone parent experience, it is likely that during this period that movement will be common. Table 5.11 aggregates these movements by metropolitan zone, rest of state and interstate metropolitan and non-metropolitan regions throughout Australia. The pattern for metropolitan locations for NSW Victoria and Queensland is clear. Most movements are to the contiguous zones within the metropolis in question. For example, in Melbourne, of the 20 per cent of payees who moved out of the inner zone, nine per cent moved to the middle zone and four per cent to the outer zone. As was established earlier with 1991-1996 Census data, only a minority moved to rest of state or interstate locations from the major metropolises.

Table 5.11: Movements of Child Support Agency payees registered Jan.-Jun 1997, metropolitan zones and rest of state, NSW, Victoria, and Queensland, 1997-1999

Residence 1997		Total 1997	Residence 1999								
			Own state						Other state		
			core	inner	mid	out	rest	Total	metro	rest	Total
NSW	core	367	**78**	4	7	4	4	97	1	2	3
	inner	435	3	**81**	5	5	3	97	1	2	3
	mid	1,532	1	1	**84**	9	2	97	1	1	3
	out	4,716	0	0	2	**90**	4	97	1	1	3
	rest	6,202	0	0	0	2	**92**	95	2	4	5
	Total	13,252	3	3	11	35	45	**96**	2	2	4
Vic	core	264	**82**	6	5	2	0	96	3	1	4
	inner	791	2	**80**	9	4	1	97	2	1	3
	mid	2,448	1	2	**84**	8	3	97	1	1	3
	out	2,612	0	1	5	**89**	2	97	1	2	3
	rest	2,982	0	1	1	3	**90**	95	2	3	5
	Total	9,097	3	8	25	29	31	**96**	1	2	4
Qld	core	305	**66**	5	11	7	6	95	2	3	5
	inner	171	4	**62**	19	8	3	95	1	4	5
	mid	1,134	2	2	**73**	14	4	96	2	2	4
	out	2,307	1	1	5	**83**	7	96	2	2	4
	rest	5,364	0	0	1	3	**90**	95	2	3	5
	Total	9,281	3	2	11	24	55	**95**	2	3	5
ACT	rest	650	0	0	0	0	**92**	**92**	4	4	8

Percentages may not add because of rounding.
Source: Child Support Agency, unpublished

As would be expected, these movements are also over relatively short distances and mainly occur between neighbouring or nearby municipalities. To illustrate this point, Table 5.12 shows movements into and out of the two Melbourne municipalities of Maroondah and Frankston of women aged 25-44 years who are members of lone parent families. These municipalities were chosen because they are in established middle and outer suburbs where the price of housing is low relative to adjoining municipalities. For this data source (which was not a customised order for this project) one qualification is necessary — it includes women aged 25-44 who are adult children in families headed by older male and female lone parents as well the female single parents in this age group. The pattern of net movement into these municipalities is from more expensive suburbs like Monash and Bayside in the case of Frankston and Manningham and Whitehorse in the case of Maroondah.

Table 5.12 : Women aged 25-44 years in lone parent families*: non-movers and numbers moving to and from Melbourne origins supplying more than ten in-movers 1991-1996, plus overseas 1991, Maroondah and Frankston

	Non-mover	Origin	Destination	Net
Maroondah (outer zone)				
Non movers	1,058			
Yarra Ranges (outer)		168	117	51
Manningham (middle)		52	12	40
Whitehorse (middle)		80	55	25
Booroondara (inner/middle)		19	0	19
Banyule and Darebin (outer)		20	5	15
Monash (middle)		16	6	10
Yarra (core)		13	6	7
Knox (outer)		89	84	5
Bayside and Glen Eira (inner)		15	21	-6
Rest of Melbourne		63	57	6
Total Melbourne		367	246	121
Overseas		25	-	
Frankston				
Non movers	1,727			
Kingston (middle)		111	52	59
Gtr Dandenong - Balance (middle)		28	0	28
Monash (middle)		35	9	26
Bayside and Glen Eira (inner)		42	21	21
Banyule and Darebin (outer)		20	6	14
Casey - Hallam (outer)		18	6	12
Port Phillip (core)		17	6	11
Melton and Wyndham (outer)		12	3	9
Gtr Dandenong - Dandenong (middle)		21	12	9
Mornington Peninsula (outer)		134	131	3
Cardinia (outer)		18	15	3
Casey - Cranbourne & Casey Sth (outer)		44	45	-1
Rest of Melbourne		77	81	-4
Total Melbourne		577	387	190
Overseas		44	-	

* As well as the heads of female lone parent families, these data include women aged 25-44 who are adult children in families headed by older male and female lone parents.
Source: Customised matrix, 1996 Census

The cost of housing and other factors

The widely held presumption that migration is an important factor in sole parent concentrations is partly based on the expectation that lone parents will be attracted to relatively low housing cost locations. The data cited earlier which showed that lone parents were generally living on very low incomes lend credence to this expectation. Largely as a consequence, most lone parents lived in rented accommodation. The link between this situation and the 'migration' hypothesis is that lone parents might well be attracted to locations offering lower cost rental housing, especially if they lived in high cost metropolitan locations. Table 5.13 shows the housing tenure situation of lone parents by region. The table indicates that lone parents tend to rely on rental accommodation throughout Australia. Thus it is possible that the relative price of rental accommodation could be influential in shaping their choice of residence.

Table 5.13: Tenure type of female lone parent families with at least one child aged 0-14 yrs, 1996

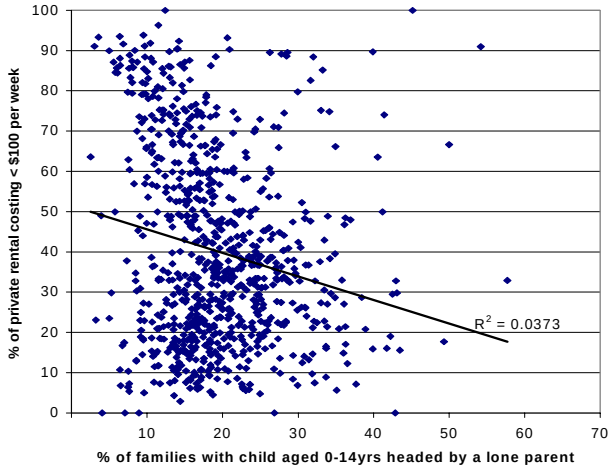
Location	Total female lone parents	Type of tenure (%) Fully owned/ Being purchased	Public rental	Private rental	Other rental	Other tenure	Total
Sydney Campbelltown	4,713	26	49	20	3	3	100
Sydney Blacktown and Penrith	10,560	33	34	28	3	3	100
Sydney Gosford and Wyong	6,462	35	15	46	2	3	100
Sydney Rest of Sydney SD	44,714	37	18	38	3	4	100
Wollongong and Newcastle	15,673	32	25	37	2	3	100
NSW Rural Large Nth Coast Hastings	1,221	34	11	50	2	3	100
NSW Rural Large Rest	6,415	29	28	35	5	3	100
NSW Rural Small Centres Nth Coast	3,824	29	13	50	4	3	100
NSW Rural Small Centres Sth Coast	1,874	32	16	43	5	4	100
NSW Rural Small Rest	3,641	28	27	36	6	3	100
NSW Rural Other North Coast	3,706	35	8	48	5	5	100
NSW Rural Other South Coast	1,197	30	13	46	6	4	100
NSW Rural Other/Fringe/Rest	8,941	35	18	37	6	5	100
NSW Remote Other and Centres	1,464	37	16	25	15	6	100
ACT and Queanbeyan	6,707	35	36	24	3	2	100
Melbourne Frankston City	2,636	43	13	36	4	3	100
Moreland Nth & Darebin N'thcote	1,565	38	10	43	4	5	100
Rest of Melbourne SD	49,368	44	13	36	3	4	100
Geelong	3,884	37	18	38	4	3	100
VIC Rural Fringe	1,915	49	11	33	4	4	100
VIC Rural Large	5,913	32	24	37	4	3	100
VIC Rural Small	4,950	32	26	34	5	3	100
VIC Other Rural	7,385	42	14	35	4	5	100
Brisbane SD Ipswich and Logan	7,629	30	26	38	3	3	100
Rest of Brisbane SD	22,623	36	19	40	3	2	100
Gold Coast (incl. Tweed Pt A)	7,807	30	9	55	4	3	100
Sunshine Coast	5,230	32	9	53	2	3	100
Townsville	2,747	25	27	42	3	3	100
QLD Rural Fringe	1,126	43	4	46	2	4	100
QLD Rural Large Toowoomba	1,952	29	17	47	5	2	100
QLD Rural Large Coastal	6,764	26	21	45	4	3	100
QLD Rural Small	2,548	26	19	47	5	3	100
QLD Rural Other	7,398	34	10	42	9	6	100
QLD Remote	2,884	24	18	24	24	10	100
Rest of Australia	76,246	35	24	33	4	4	100
Total	343,682	36	20	37	4	4	100

Source: Customised 1996 Census Matrix,

In order to assess the extent to which housing prices may shape residential patterns the relationship between the proportion of lone parent households to total households in an area and rental price levels was examined. The figures below show the link between the proportion of rental dwellings in each SLA in Eastern Australia where rent was below $100 per week[93] in 1996 and the proportion of families headed by lone parents living in these localities. Surprisingly, there is only a weak relationship between these two variables when all Eastern Australian SLAs are considered (Figure 5.1).

[93] The next class range for the amount of private rental paid available in CDATA96 was $100-199 per week.

Figure 5.1: Correlation between presence of lone parent families and cheap rental, NSW, Victoria, and Queensland SLAs, 1996

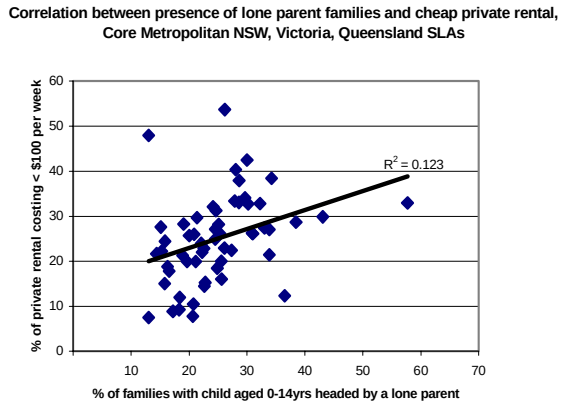


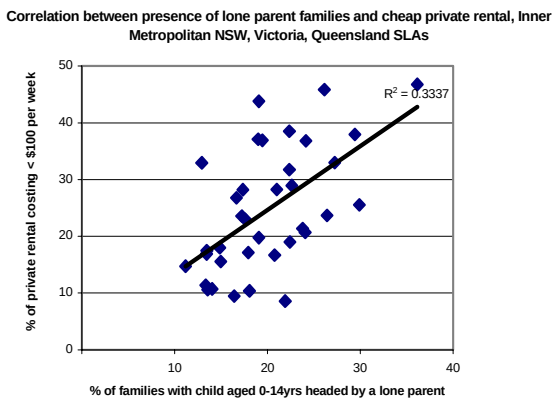
Source: CDATA96

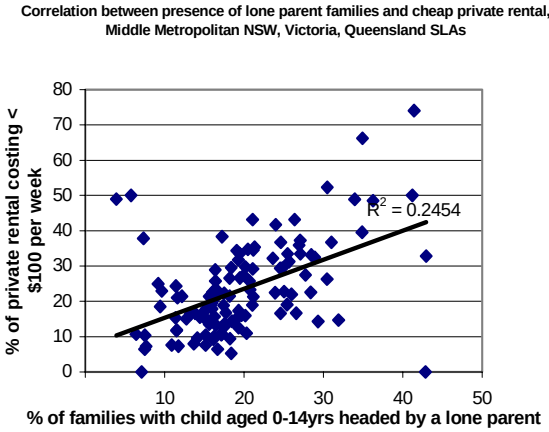
However, when the analysis is confined to metropolitan areas, a relatively strong relationship is revealed, particularly in metropolitan regions outside the 'core' area. Around 25-30 per cent of the distribution of lone parent households in the 'inner', 'middle' and 'outer' regions of Melbourne, Sydney and Brisbane appears to be accounted for by the low rent factor. (See Figure 5.2.)

Since rental prices tend to be highest in 'core' areas this finding is consistent with the possibility that housing cost pressures may be driving some lone parents into lower cost metropolitan areas. On the other hand, when the analysis is confined to the

Figure 5.2: Correlation between presence of lone parent families and cheap rental, zones of Sydney, Melbourne and Brisbane, 1996







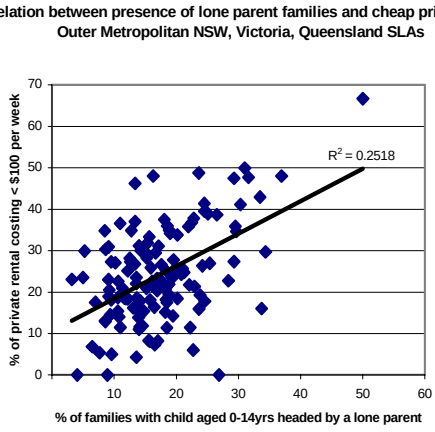
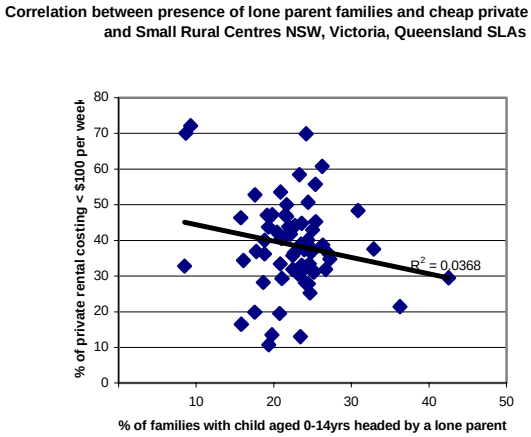
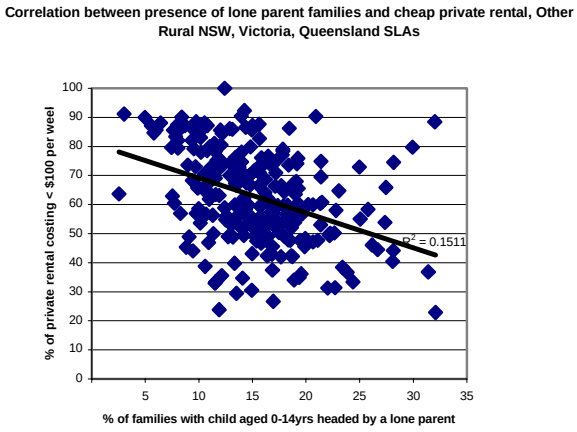


Figure 5.3: Correlation between presence of lone parent families and cheap rental, regional areas of NSW, Victoria, Queensland, 1996





residential distribution of sole parents in non-metropolitan SLAs, where rental costs are much lower than in metropolitan areas (see Table 5.14), one would expect to find a weaker relationship. This is because a generally lower rental environment implies less financial pressure to relocate to areas of lower cost of housing. This expectation is confirmed in Figure 5.3 for rural small and large centres, and other rural locations.

Table 5.14: Per cent of households in private rental who pay less then $100 per week, 1996

Location	Private rental < $100 per week
Sydney Campbelltown	41
Sydney Blacktown and Penrith	33
Sydney Gosford and Wyong	26
Sydney Rest of Sydney SD	20
Sydney SD	23
Wollongong and Newcastle	37
NSW Rural Large North Coast - Hastings	31
NSW Rural Large Rest	41
NSW Rural Small Centres North Coast	33
NSW Rural Small Centres South Coast	40
NSW Rural Small Rest	42
NSW Rural Other North Coast	37
NSW Rural Other South Coast	38
NSW Rural Other/Fringe/Rest of NSW	58
NSW Remote Other and Centres	71
ACT and Queanbeyan	30
ACT and Rest of NSW	41
Melbourne Frankston City	32
Melbourne Moreland North & Darebin Northcote	35
Rest of Melbourne SD	27
Melbourne SD	27
Geelong	41
VIC Rural Fringe	44
VIC Rural Large	40
VIC Rural Small	50
VIC Other Rural	64
Rest of Victoria	51
Brisbane SD Ipswich and Logan	32
Rest of Brisbane SD	27
Brisbane SD	28
Gold Coast City (inc Tweed Pt A)	14
Sunshine Coast	21
Townsville	33
QLD Rural Fringe	40
QLD Rural Large Toowoomba	33
QLD Rural Large Coastal	28
QLD Rural Small	37
QLD Rural Other	60
QLD Remote	71
Rest of Queensland	36
Rest of Australia	48
Total	35

Source: Prepared from ABS CDATA96

Given the generally low rental cost situation in non-metropolitan areas, it is plausible that lone parents living in metropolitan areas might be prompted to leave on this account. Table 5.15 gives a picture of the availability of rental housing across Australia. It shows that the proportion of the dwelling stock which is utilised for private rental is actually lower in non-metropolitan areas (apart from in some of the large centres) than in metropolitan areas. Thus any attraction to non-metropolitan areas on this account will be due to the cost rather than extent of rental accommodation available.

Table 5.15: Housing tenure, occupied private dwellings containing family, group and lone person households, 1996

Location	Total dwellings	Tenure of households in location, 1996 (%) Owned/ being purchased	State Housing rental	Other (mostly private) rental	Other tenure	Total
Sydney Campbelltown	43,482	65	16	16	3	100
Sydney Blacktown and Penrith	124,235	69	10	17	4	100
Sydney Gosford and Wyong	97,739	71	4	20	5	100
Sydney Rest of Sydney SD	1,023,912	64	5	26	5	100
Sydney SD	1,289,368	65	6	25	4	100
Wollongong and Newcastle	259,518	69	7	20	4	100
NSW Rural Large North Coast - Hastings	21,434	69	4	22	6	100
NSW Rural Large Rest	85,974	64	7	25	4	100
NSW Rural Small Centres North Coast	59,975	68	4	23	5	100
NSW Rural Small Centres South Coast	28,781	72	4	19	5	100
NSW Rural Small Rest	55,312	64	7	25	5	100
NSW Rural Other North Coast	50,197	69	3	22	6	100
NSW Rural Other South Coast	21,520	70	3	22	6	100
NSW Rural Other/Fringe/Rest of NSW	184,452	71	3	19	7	100
NSW Remote Other and Centres	25,895	66	4	20	10	100
ACT and Queanbeyan	114,443	65	10	23	3	100
ACT and Rest of NSW	907,501	68	6	21	5	100
Melbourne Frankston City	37,725	74	3	18	4	100
Melb. Moreland Nth & Darebin Northcote	33,927	66	3	26	5	100
Rest of Melbourne SD	1,038,504	72	3	21	4	100
Melbourne SD	1,110,156	72	3	21	4	100
Geelong	68,592	73	4	19	4	100
VIC Rural Fringe	35,969	79	2	14	5	100
VIC Rural Large	87,805	68	6	22	4	100
VIC Rural Small	78,136	70	6	19	5	100
VIC Other Rural	173,777	76	3	15	7	100
Rest of Victoria	444,279	73	4	17	5	100
Brisbane SD Ipswich and Logan	89,466	67	7	23	3	100
Rest of Brisbane SD	434,689	67	4	25	4	100
Brisbane SD	524,155	67	5	25	4	100
Gold Coast City(inc Tweed Pt A)	130,871	62	2	31	5	100
Sunshine Coast	77,471	67	2	26	5	100
Townsville	40,443	58	7	32	4	100
QLD Rural Fringe	20,465	75	1	18	6	100
QLD Rural Large Toowoomba	30,024	63	4	29	4	100
QLD Rural Large Coastal	97,288	60	5	31	4	100
QLD Rural Small	41,366	66	4	25	4	100
QLD Rural Other	157,745	67	2	24	7	100
QLD Remote	42,917	55	4	30	11	100
Rest of Queensland	638,590	64	3	28	6	100
Rest of Australia	1,367,769	68	8	20	5	100
Total	6,281,818	68	5	22	5	100

Source: Prepared from ABS CDATA96

These findings still leave open the issue of causation. There is no doubt that lone parents are heavily dependent on rental accommodation and that they tend to concentrate in areas with relatively low rental prices (see Table 5.14 and Table 5.16). These concentrations may be a product of pressures on lone parents to move to lower rental cost locations within metropolitan areas. But equally, they could be partially a consequence of 'home grown' factors.

These points also apply to the role of public housing in shaping residential decisions of lone parents. The low cost, but high security of tenure in public housing implies that to the extent such accommodation is available it would be particularly attractive to lone parents. Table 5.16 shows that lone parents are relatively heavy users of the public housing stock. Lone parents with children aged 0-14 were occupying 21 per cent of the entire occupied public housing stock in Australia in 1996. This is more than double the share such households occupy of the 'other rental' stock and seven times the share they occupy of dwellings being owned or purchased. As Table 5.8 shows, with the exception of 'Rest of Sydney', Hastings (NSW), Moreland North and Darebin Northcote (Victoria), and the Rest of Australia, lone parent families with children 0-14 occupy 20 per cent or more of the public housing stock throughout the locations listed.

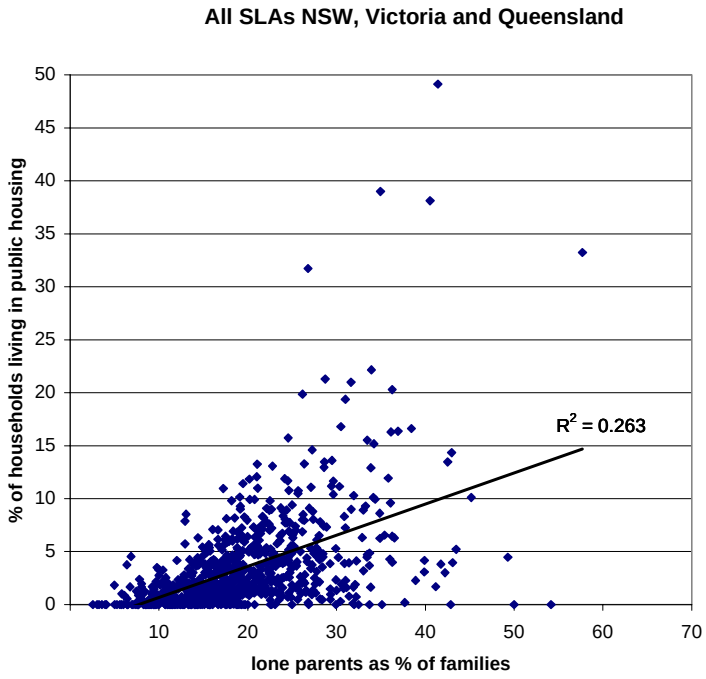
An investigation of the relationship between the proportion of all households living in public housing and the proportion of families with children 0-14 headed by a lone parent (both male and female) shows that there is a moderately strong linkage (See Figure 5.4). The figures following show that this linkage is especially strong in core areas of the three metropolises and, to a lesser extent, in the inner middle and outer SLAs of these areas. In the case of non-metropolitan areas the strongest relationship is seen in the large and small rural centres. However, again, it remains to be established that movement to areas offering public housing is a significant contributor to lone parent family concentrations.

Table 5.16: Occupied private dwellings by tenure type and per cent occupied by female lone parents with children aged 0-14, 1996

Location	Count of households in location, tenure type					Per cent occupied by lone parents				
	Owned/ being pur-chased	State Housing rental	Other rental	Other tenure	Total dwellings	Owned pur-chas'g	State Hous'g rental	Other rental	Other tenure	Total
Sydney Campbelltown	28,269	6,841	7,010	1,362	43,482	4	33	15	10	11
Sydney Blacktown and Penrith	86,052	12,070	21,577	4,536	124,235	4	29	15	7	9
Sydney Gosford and Wyong	69,558	3,652	19,417	5,112	97,739	3	26	16	3	7
Sydney Rest of Sydney SD	658,226	50,436	268,260	46,990	1,023,912	3	16	7	4	4
Sydney SD	842,105	72,999	316,264	58,000	1,289,368	3	20	8	4	5
Wollongong and Newcastle	178,251	19,017	51,324	10,926	259,518	3	21	12	4	6
NSW Rural Large N. Coast Hastings	14,703	775	4,676	1,280	21,434	3	17	14	2	6
NSW Rural Large Rest	54,614	6,215	21,664	3,481	85,974	3	29	12	6	7
NSW Rural Small Centres Nth Coast	40,681	2,460	13,912	2,922	59,975	3	21	15	4	6
NSW Rural Small Centres Sth Coast	20,608	1,268	5,542	1,363	28,781	3	23	16	5	7
NSW Rural Small Rest	35,148	3,803	13,714	2,647	55,312	3	26	11	4	7
NSW Rural Other North Coast	34,872	1,318	11,186	2,821	50,197	4	22	18	6	7
NSW Rural Other South Coast	14,985	628	4,708	1,199	21,520	2	25	13	4	6
NSW Rural Other/Fringe/Rest	130,346	6,228	34,841	13,037	184,452	2	26	11	3	5
NSW Remote Other and Centres	17,085	936	5,256	2,618	25,895	3	26	11	4	6
ACT and Queanbeyan	73,986	11,264	26,074	3,119	114,443	3	22	7	5	6
ACT and Rest of NSW	615,279	53,912	192,897	45,413	907,501	3	23	12	4	6
Melbourne Frankston City	28,041	1,143	6,881	1,660	37,725	4	31	15	5	7
Moreland Nth & Darebin Nthcote	22,518	1,033	8,749	1,627	33,927	3	15	8	5	5
Rest of Melbourne SD	744,608	30,776	217,767	45,353	1,038,504	3	20	9	5	5
Melbourne SD	795,167	32,952	233,397	48,640	1,110,156	3	20	9	5	5
Geelong	50,201	2,823	12,795	2,773	68,592	3	25	13	4	6
VIC Rural Fringe	28,521	814	4,908	1,726	35,969	3	25	14	4	5
VIC Rural Large	59,946	5,203	19,213	3,443	87,805	3	27	13	5	7
VIC Rural Small	54,601	4,820	15,151	3,564	78,136	3	26	13	4	6
VIC Other Rural	131,745	4,739	25,663	11,630	173,777	2	22	11	3	4
Rest of Victoria	325,014	18,399	77,730	23,136	444,279	3	25	12	4	5
Brisbane SD Ipswich and Logan	59,540	6,235	20,884	2,807	89,466	4	32	15	7	9
Rest of Brisbane SD	290,522	19,284	108,510	16,373	434,689	3	22	9	3	5
Brisbane SD	350,062	25,519	129,394	19,180	524,155	3	24	10	4	6
Gold Coast City (inc Tweed Pt A)	80,697	3,237	40,448	6,489	130,871	3	21	11	4	6
Sunshine Coast	52,150	1,842	19,797	3,682	77,471	3	26	15	5	7
Townsville	23,257	2,738	12,871	1,577	40,443	3	27	10	6	7
QLD Rural Fringe	15,355	190	3,664	1,256	20,465	3	26	15	4	6
QLD Rural Large Toowoomba	18,871	1,162	8,785	1,206	30,024	3	28	12	3	7
QLD Rural Large Coastal	58,184	4,845	30,090	4,169	97,288	3	29	11	5	7
QLD Rural Small	27,502	1,617	10,447	1,800	41,366	2	29	13	4	6
QLD Rural Other	106,135	2,851	37,359	11,400	157,745	2	27	10	4	5
QLD Remote	23,441	1,832	13,061	4,583	42,917	3	29	11	6	7
Rest of Queensland	405,592	20,314	176,522	36,162	638,590	3	27	11	4	6
Rest of Australia	925,996	102,799	273,598	65,376	1,367,769	3	18	10	4	6
Total	4,259,215	326,894	1,399,802	295,907	6,281,818	3	21	10	4	5

Source: Prepared from ABS CDATA96 and customised matrix

Figure 5.4: Per cent of families with at least one child aged 0-14 years who are headed by a lone parent and per cent of households living in public housing, NSW, Victoria and Queensland SLAs 1996



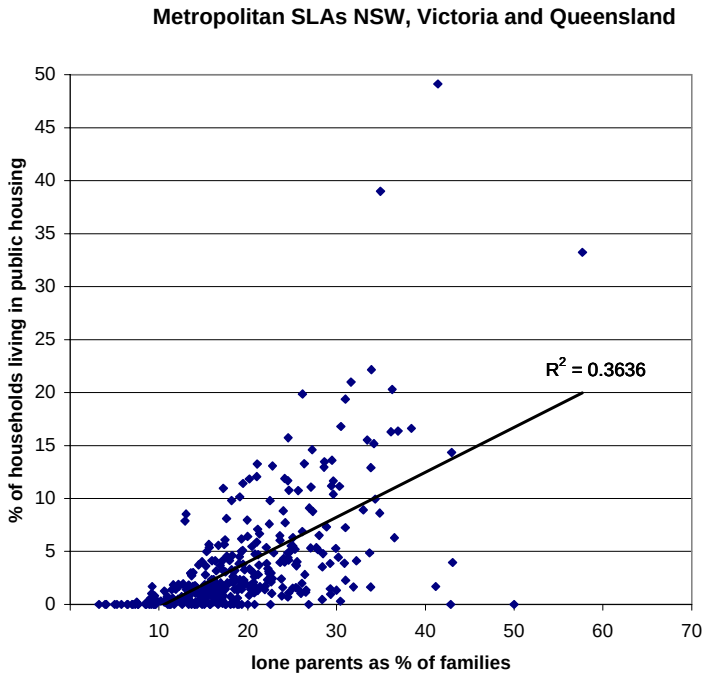
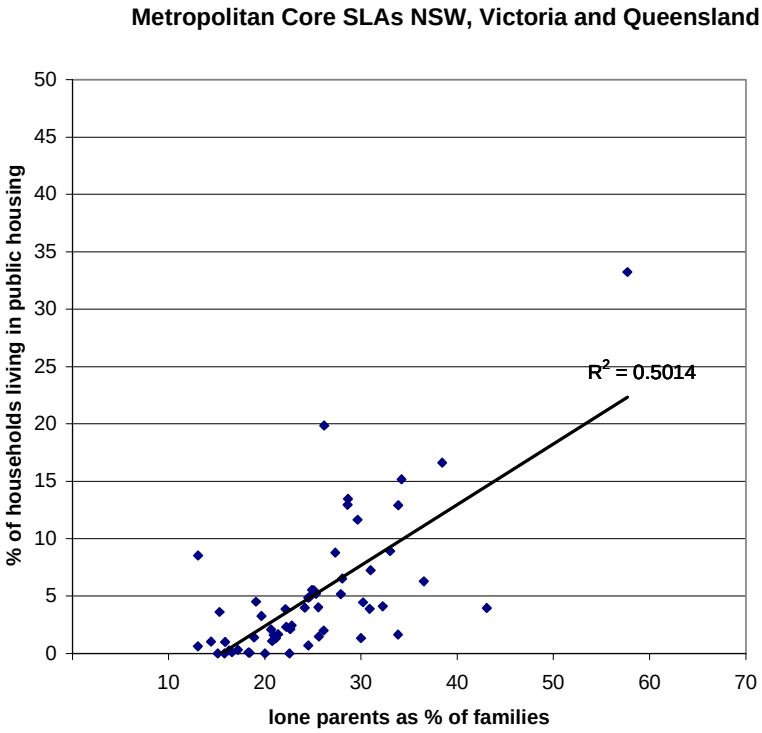
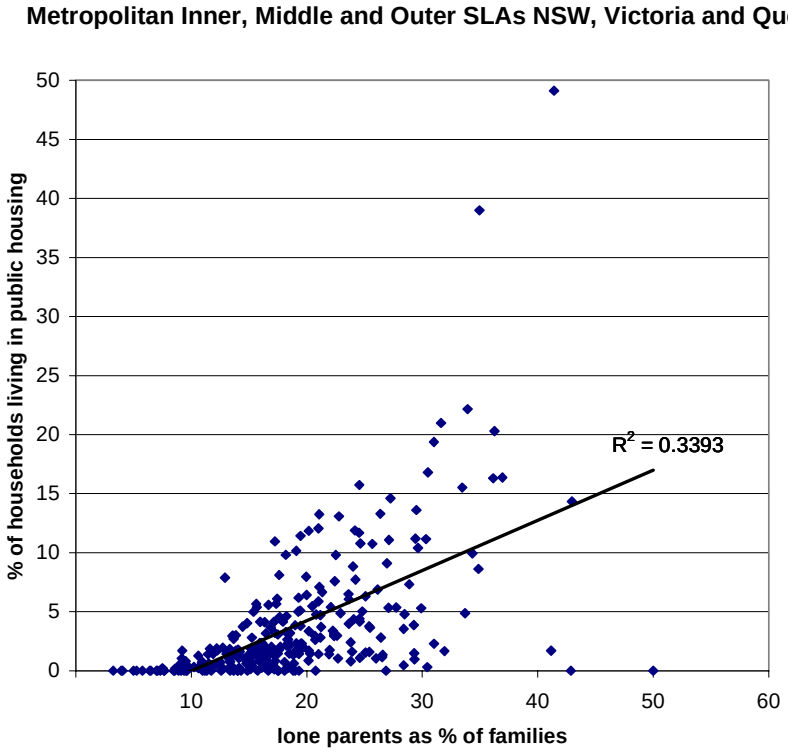


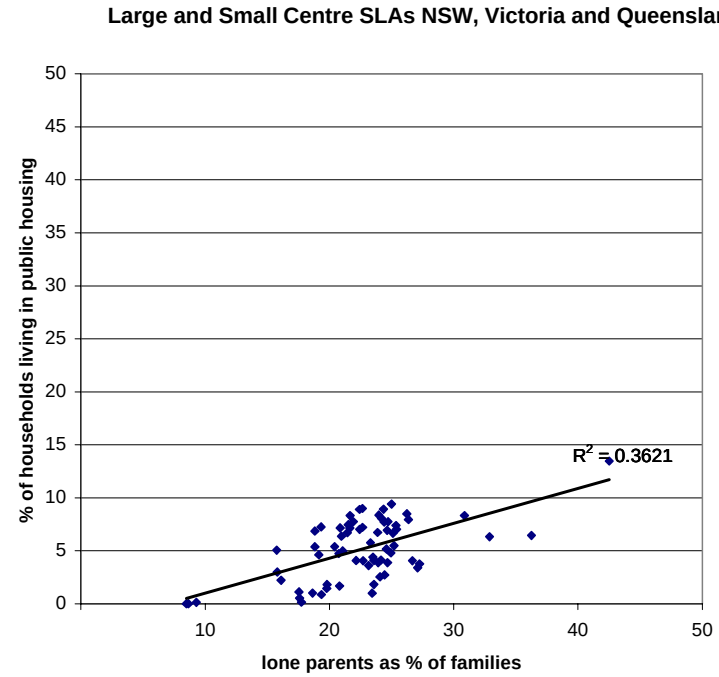
Figure 5.4: Per cent of families with at least one child aged 0-14 years who are headed by a lone parent and per cent of households living in public housing, NSW, Victoria and Queensland SLAs 1996

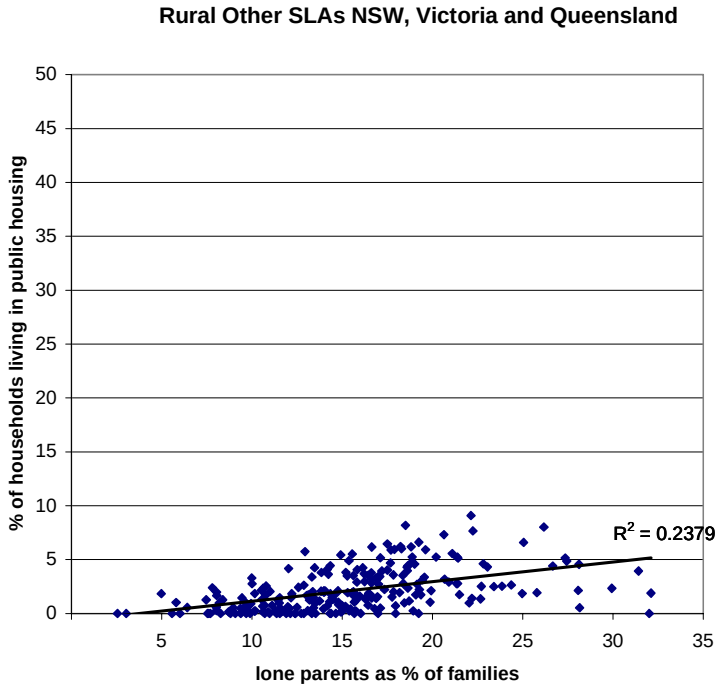




The R^2 values for the separate zones were: inner zone 0.3892, middle zone 0.3142, outer zone 0.3861.

Figure 5.4: Per cent of families with at least one child aged 0-14 years who are headed by a lone parent and per cent of households living in public housing, NSW, Victoria and Queensland SLAs 1996





Is housing tenure a significant factor?

The hypothesis articulated earlier was that the availability of relatively low cost rental accommodation was likely to be a factor in lone parent concentrations. This was supported by Figures 5.1 to 5.3. Table 5.17 shows the percentages of female lone parents who were non movers over the 1991–1996 period by locality and housing tenure 1996 and the percentages of those who moved in and out of the areas also by their housing tenure in 1996. There is a very clear pattern. Both those who fully own or were purchasing their homes and those in public rental were over-represented amongst the non-movers and conversely under-represented amongst the out-movers. In all of the localities studied, at least 50 per cent of those who moved out were private renters in 1996. Clearly private renters are far more mobile than their counterparts in other tenure types. This analysis does not provide a clear indication of the direction of movement of these renting out-movers. However, it is evident from the table that for all areas under study, including those with relatively high in movements, only a very small proportion of lone parents have purchased or are purchasing their homes. For example, only 21 per cent of the in-movers to the Gold Coast, 22 per cent of the in-movers to the Sunshine Coast and 20 per cent of those moving to Ipswich and Logan had purchased their homes. The great majority of in-movers were in either private rental or public rental.

Table 5.17: 1996 housing tenure lone parents with children aged 0-14, by whether they lived elsewhere in 1991 (*Total includes those who did not state where they lived or were overseas in 1991)

Area	Tenure of housing in 1996	Count Non-mover	In mover	Out mover	Total *	Per cent of area Non mover	In mover	Out mover	Total*
		column 1	column 2	column3	column4	column 5	column 6	column 7	column 8
Sydney Campbelltown	Fully owned/Purchasing	968	208	213	1,219	30	19	17	26
	Public rental	1,593	548	343	2,287	49	49	28	49
	Private rental	561	292	624	946	17	26	50	20
	Other rental	67	48	49	124	2	4	4	3
	Other tenure	69	27	18	137	2	2	1	3
	Total	3,258	1,123	1,247	4,713	100	100	100	100
Sydney Blacktown and Penrith	Fully owned/Purchasing	2,864	455	456	3,453	37	22	21	33
	Public rental	2,725	622	458	3,550	35	30	21	34
	Private rental	1,755	898	1,158	2,966	23	43	52	28
	Other rental	167	65	85	270	2	3	4	3
	Other tenure	202	45	51	321	3	2	2	3
	Total	7,713	2,085	2,208	10,560	100	100	100	100
Sydney Gosford and Wyong	Fully owned/Purchasing	1,766	410	196	2,236	41	22	18	35
	Public rental	703	220	186	955	16	12	17	15
	Private rental	1,658	1,103	643	2,955	38	60	59	46
	Other rental	85	48	21	145	2	3	2	2
	Other tenure	96	46	42	171	2	3	4	3
	Total	4,308	1,827	1,088	6,462	100	100	100	100
Sydney Rest of Sydney SD	Fully owned/Purchasing	14,658	925	2,229	16,590	41	22	28	37
	Public rental	6,940	577	1,488	8,072	20	14	19	18
	Private rental	11,536	2,471	3,736	16,859	33	58	47	38
	Other rental	924	201	308	1,341	3	5	4	3
	Other tenure	1,332	99	198	1,852	4	2	2	4
	Total	35,390	4,273	7,959	44,714	100	100	100	100
Wollongong and Newcastle	Fully owned/Purchasing	4,466	444	397	5,044	36	18	22	32
	Public rental	3,322	466	308	3,948	27	19	17	25
	Private rental	4,040	1,412	980	5,841	33	57	55	37
	Other rental	265	92	66	384	2	4	4	2
	Other tenure	328	63	45	456	3	3	3	3
	Total	12,421	2,477	1,796	15,673	100	100	100	100
NSW Rural Large North Coast - Hastings	Fully owned/Purchasing	293	112	39	420	40	25	19	34
	Public rental	89	42	30	131	12	10	14	11
	Private rental	299	272	127	609	41	62	61	50
	Other rental	21	9	12	30	3	2	6	2
	Other tenure	22	6	0	31	3	1	0	3
	Total	724	441	208	1,221	100	100	100	100
NSW Rural Large Rest	Fully owned/Purchasing	1,488	350	324	1,876	35	19	20	29
	Public rental	1,207	483	252	1,795	28	26	15	28
	Private rental	1,253	881	936	2,250	30	47	57	35
	Other rental	176	98	96	294	4	5	6	5
	Other tenure	113	45	45	200	3	2	3	3
	Total	4,237	1,857	1,653	6,415	100	100	100	100
NSW Rural Small Centres North Coast	Fully owned/Purchasing	826	271	151	1,125	35	21	19	29
	Public rental	388	104	85	515	17	8	11	13
	Private rental	935	838	483	1,904	40	66	61	50
	Other rental	113	33	39	155	5	3	5	4
	Other tenure	89	15	36	125	4	1	5	3
	Total	2,351	1,261	794	3,824	100	100	100	100
NSW Rural Small Centres South Coast	Fully owned/Purchasing	428	154	66	606	37	25	17	32
	Public rental	213	69	78	291	18	11	20	16
	Private rental	426	332	204	813	37	54	52	43
	Other rental	56	36	30	95	5	6	8	5
	Other tenure	39	21	12	69	3	3	3	4
	Total	1,162	612	390	1,874	100	100	100	100
NSW Rural Small Rest	Fully owned/Purchasing	798	195	203	1,020	33	19	18	28
	Public rental	694	219	157	977	28	22	14	27
	Private rental	756	485	694	1,303	31	48	62	36
	Other rental	130	90	41	235	5	9	4	6
	Other tenure	61	27	18	106	3	3	2	3
	Total	2,439	1,016	1,113	3,641	100	100	100	100
NSW Rural Other North Coast	Fully owned/Purchasing	926	320	209	1,280	40	27	23	35
	Public rental	215	63	100	296	9	5	11	8
	Private rental	921	736	554	1,766	40	61	61	48
	Other rental	136	42	33	193	6	3	4	5
	Other tenure	97	42	18	171	4	3	2	5
	Total	2,295	1,203	914	3,706	100	100	100	100

Table 5.17 (Continued		Count				Per cent of area			
Area	Tenure of housing in 1996	Non-mvr column 1	In mover column 2	Out-mvr column3	Total * column4	Non-mvr column 5	In mover column 6	Out-mvr column 7	Total* column 8
NSW Rural Other South Coast	Fully owned/Purchasing	268	78	51	361	36	21	16	30
	Public rental	118	33	48	160	16	9	15	13
	Private rental	288	245	190	555	38	67	58	46
	Other rental	50	6	24	68	7	2	7	6
	Other tenure	28	3	15	53	4	1	5	4
	Total	752	365	328	1,197	100	100	100	100
NSW Rural Other/Fringe/ Rest of NSW	Fully owned/Purchasing	2,505	545	588	3,114	39	25	19	35
	Public rental	1,245	310	520	1,605	20	14	16	18
	Private rental	1,986	1,146	1,898	3,302	31	52	60	37
	Other rental	355	114	105	500	6	5	3	6
	Other tenure	259	89	66	420	4	4	2	5
	Total	6,350	2,204	3,177	8,941	100	100	100	100
NSW Remote Other and Centres	Fully owned/Purchasing	483	54	105	543	43	21	17	37
	Public rental	184	36	121	240	16	14	19	16
	Private rental	248	102	342	368	22	40	55	25
	Other rental	162	45	27	219	14	18	4	15
	Other tenure	54	15	30	94	5	6	5	6
	Total	1,131	252	625	1,464	100	100	100	100
ACT and Queanbeyan	Fully owned/Purchasing	2,008	256	326	2,363	39	24	27	35
	Public rental	2,053	212	137	2,426	40	20	11	36
	Private rental	930	528	667	1,591	18	49	55	24
	Other rental	104	51	72	178	2	5	6	3
	Other tenure	101	27	15	149	2	3	1	2
	Total	5,196	1,074	1,217	6,707	100	100	100	100
Melbourne Frankston City	Fully owned/Purchasing	894	221	173	1,145	51	29	29	43
	Public rental	249	85	85	355	14	11	14	13
	Private rental	489	397	297	947	28	52	50	36
	Other rental	63	37	21	109	4	5	4	4
	Other tenure	44	21	24	80	3	3	4	3
	Total	1,739	761	600	2,636	100	100	100	100
Melbourne Moreland (C) North & Darebin (C) Northcote	Fully owned/Purchasing	424	134	176	588	51	23	26	38
	Public rental	83	60	129	158	10	10	19	10
	Private rental	248	338	343	676	30	59	50	43
	Other rental	27	25	27	58	3	4	4	4
	Other tenure	42	18	12	85	5	3	2	5
	Total	824	575	687	1,565	100	100	100	100
Rest of Melbourne SD	Fully owned/Purchasing	19,915	969	1,479	21,820	49	23	25	44
	Public rental	5,230	386	872	6,192	13	9	15	13
	Private rental	13,038	2,586	3,085	17,612	32	61	52	36
	Other rental	1,308	162	282	1,696	3	4	5	3
	Other tenure	1,441	163	164	2,048	4	4	3	4
	Total	40,932	4,266	5,882	49,368	100	100	100	100
Geelong	Fully owned/Purchasing	1,224	167	109	1,424	42	22	21	37
	Public rental	566	104	60	706	19	13	12	18
	Private rental	931	443	299	1,466	32	57	59	38
	Other rental	122	32	24	166	4	4	5	4
	Other tenure	82	27	15	122	3	3	3	3
	Total	2,925	773	507	3,884	100	100	100	100
VIC Rural Fringe	Fully owned/Purchasing	751	178	169	938	58	31	27	49
	Public rental	126	72	43	204	10	13	7	11
	Private rental	335	267	347	629	26	47	56	33
	Other rental	41	31	40	75	3	5	7	4
	Other tenure	44	19	16	69	3	3	3	4
	Total	1,297	567	615	1,915	100	100	100	100
VIC Rural Large	Fully owned/Purchasing	1,544	321	232	1,907	39	20	21	32
	Public rental	994	335	124	1,415	25	21	11	24
	Private rental	1,214	826	684	2,171	30	52	61	37
	Other rental	173	67	36	258	4	4	3	4
	Other tenure	84	42	39	162	2	3	3	3
	Total	4,009	1,591	1,115	5,913	100	100	100	100
VIC Rural Small	Fully owned/Purchasing	1,271	269	219	1,595	38	20	18	32
	Public rental	882	336	164	1,273	26	25	14	26
	Private rental	939	636	731	1,684	28	48	61	34
	Other rental	171	64	42	254	5	5	4	5
	Other tenure	84	21	42	144	3	2	4	3
	Total	3,347	1,326	1,198	4,950	100	100	100	100
VIC Other Rural	Fully owned/Purchasing	2,480	591	576	3,138	50	28	22	42
	Public rental	693	284	361	1,020	14	14	14	14
	Private rental	1,423	1,029	1,538	2,591	29	49	58	35
	Other rental	161	100	94	294	3	5	4	4
	Other tenure	205	78	75	342	4	4	3	5
	Total	4,962	2,082	2,644	7,385	100	100	100	100

Table 5.17 (continued)		Count				Per cent of area			
Area	Tenure of housing in 1996	Non-mvr	In mover	Out mvr	Total *	Non mvr	In mover	Out mvr	Total*
		column 1	column 2	column3	column4	column 5	column 6	column 7	column 8
Brisbane SD Ipswich and Logan	Fully owned/Purchasing	1,753	465	397	2,321	38	20	23	30
	Public rental	1,193	606	262	1,970	26	26	15	26
	Private rental	1,497	1,132	977	2,899	32	48	56	38
	Other rental	104	107	60	229	2	5	3	3
	Other tenure	99	45	45	210	2	2	3	3
	Total	4,646	2,355	1,741	7,629	100	100	100	100
Rest of Brisbane SD	Fully owned/Purchasing	6,532	1,206	806	8,177	42	24	22	36
	Public rental	3,216	723	530	4,214	21	14	15	19
	Private rental	5,151	2,870	2,058	9,000	33	57	56	40
	Other rental	395	190	184	669	3	4	5	3
	Other tenure	346	81	75	563	2	2	2	2
	Total	15,640	5,070	3,653	22,623	100	100	100	100
Gold Coast (incl Tweed Pt A)	Fully owned/Purchasing	1,625	538	264	2,315	37	21	22	30
	Public rental	523	112	123	675	12	4	10	9
	Private rental	1,995	1,792	730	4,265	45	69	62	55
	Other rental	145	108	45	306	3	4	4	4
	Other tenure	115	57	18	246	3	2	2	3
	Total	4,403	2,607	1,180	7,807	100	100	100	100
Sunshine Coast	Fully owned/Purchasing	1,136	460	177	1,678	41	22	23	32
	Public rental	298	154	68	485	11	8	9	9
	Private rental	1,181	1,332	481	2,764	43	65	61	53
	Other rental	49	63	24	129	2	3	3	2
	Other tenure	87	42	36	174	3	2	5	3
	Total	2,751	2,051	786	5,230	100	100	100	100
Townsville	Fully owned/Purchasing	519	135	161	681	31	16	20	25
	Public rental	482	196	130	732	29	23	16	27
	Private rental	582	482	419	1,153	35	56	53	42
	Other rental	52	24	63	88	3	3	8	3
	Other tenure	46	27	24	93	3	3	3	3
	Total	1,681	864	797	2,747	100	100	100	100
QLD Rural Fringe	Fully owned/Purchasing	284	179	96	487	55	33	20	43
	Public rental	35	15	67	50	7	3	14	4
	Private rental	166	317	293	514	32	59	61	46
	Other rental	7	12	12	25	1	2	3	2
	Other tenure	29	15	12	50	6	3	3	4
	Total	521	538	480	1,126	100	100	100	100
QLD Rural Large Toowoomba	Fully owned/Purchasing	414	149	122	569	37	20	24	29
	Public rental	188	130	28	331	17	17	6	17
	Private rental	453	419	302	917	41	55	60	47
	Other rental	37	51	33	100	3	7	7	5
	Other tenure	20	6	15	35	2	1	3	2
	Total	1,112	755	500	1,952	100	100	100	100
QLD Rural Large Coastal	Fully owned/Purchasing	1,252	413	350	1,772	32	18	23	26
	Public rental	960	370	194	1,412	25	16	13	21
	Private rental	1,393	1,393	860	3,074	36	60	57	45
	Other rental	175	102	64	302	5	4	4	4
	Other tenure	96	45	53	204	2	2	3	3
	Total	3,876	2,323	1,521	6,764	100	100	100	100
QLD Rural Small	Fully owned/Purchasing	476	168	143	656	34	17	20	26
	Public rental	284	162	87	476	20	16	12	19
	Private rental	531	589	437	1,201	38	58	60	47
	Other rental	69	60	39	135	5	6	5	5
	Other tenure	31	39	27	80	2	4	4	3
	Total	1,391	1,018	733	2,548	100	100	100	100
QLD Rural Other	Fully owned/Purchasing	1,734	680	551	2,491	38	28	20	34
	Public rental	540	178	453	758	12	7	16	10
	Private rental	1,524	1,325	1,567	3,071	34	54	56	42
	Other rental	517	127	148	668	11	5	5	9
	Other tenure	215	131	67	410	5	5	2	6
	Total	4,530	2,441	2,786	7,398	100	100	100	100
QLD Remote	Fully owned/Purchasing	557	91	294	681	26	17	22	24
	Public rental	406	78	219	527	19	15	16	18
	Private rental	385	265	698	700	18	50	53	24
	Other rental	577	69	55	683	27	13	4	24
	Other tenure	227	31	63	293	11	6	5	10
	Total	2,152	534	1,329	2,884	100	100	100	100
Rest of Australia	Fully owned/Purchasing	24,965	911	822	26,993	37	25	21	35
	Public rental	16,463	577	497	18,197	24	16	13	24
	Private rental	20,785	1,967	2,287	24,926	31	53	58	33
	Other rental	2,921	150	204	3,302	4	4	5	4
	Other tenure	2,220	94	105	2,828	3	3	3	4
	Total	67,354	3,699	3,915	76,246	100	100	100	100

As noted earlier there is great deal of speculation about the role of public housing in shaping residential destinations of female lone parents. Table 5.18 provides a summary of the information on this issue. It indicates the extent of the public housing stock in each area and the degree to which female lone parents utilised this stock relative to other forms of tenure in 1996. It also shows the number of female lone parents who moved into the area since 1991 and were living in public housing as of 1996.

Unfortunately it is not possible to determine the extent of any net gain into public housing via migration because the data on out-movers who were living in public housing in 1996 do not indicate whether these out-movers were living in public housing before they left. The data also do not indicate whether the public housing was previously occupied by lone parents or not. However, the table does make clear that it is in the locations where there is a high proportion of households living in public housing that the rate of in-movement (relative to the total number of lone parent households living in the area as of 1996) was quite high. In these areas the availability of public housing probably did contribute to the level of lone parent households. They include Campbelltown, Blacktown-Penrith, the large and small rural centres for all states plus the other metropolitan areas of Wollongong/ Newcastle, Geelong and Townsville. On the other hand the table shows that where the proportion of housing in public rental was low, lone parent in-movement rates were also low. These locations of low in-movement to public housing included some of the areas with the most rapidly growing concentration of female lone parents as identified above. This is true of almost all the coastal locations that showed the highest gains in female lone parent concentration as shown earlier in Table 5.5.

Table 5.18: Indicators of attraction of female lone parents to state housing, 1991-1996

Location	State Housing households as per cent of all households	Per cent of State Housing households who are female lone parents	Number of female lone parents who lived in State housing 1996 who did not live in area in 1991 (in movers)	Total female lone parents living in area 1996	In movers as per cent of total 1996
Sydney Campbelltown	16	33	548	4,713	12
Sydney Blacktown and Penrith	10	29	622	10,560	6
Sydney Gosford and Wyong	4	26	220	6,462	3
Sydney Rest of Sydney SD	5	16	577	44,714	1
Wollongong and Newcastle	7	21	466	15,673	3
NSW Rural Large North Coast Hastings	4	17	42	1,221	3
NSW Rural Large Rest	7	29	483	6,415	8
NSW Rural Small Centres North Coast	4	21	104	3,824	3
NSW Rural Small Centres South Coast	4	23	69	1,874	4
NSW Rural Small Rest	7	26	219	3,641	6
NSW Rural Other North Coast	3	22	63	3,706	2
NSW Rural Other South Coast	3	25	33	1,197	3
NSW Rural Other/Fringe/Rest of NSW	3	26	310	8,941	3
NSW Remote Other and Centres	4	26	36	1,464	2
ACT and Queanbeyan	10	22	212	6,707	3
Melbourne Frankston City	3	31	85	2,636	3
Moreland Nth & Darebin Northcote	3	15	60	1,565	4
Rest of Melbourne SD	3	20	386	49,368	1
Geelong	4	25	104	3,884	3
VIC Rural Fringe	2	25	72	1,915	4
VIC Rural Large	6	27	335	5,913	6
VIC Rural Small	6	26	336	4,950	7
VIC Other Rural	3	22	284	7,385	4
Brisbane SD Ipswich and Logan	7	32	606	7,629	8
Rest of Brisbane SD	4	22	723	22,623	3
Gold Coast City(inc Tweed Pt A)	2	21	112	7,807	1
Sunshine Coast	2	26	154	5,230	3
Townsville	7	27	196	2,747	7
QLD Rural Fringe	1	26	15	1,126	1
QLD Rural Large Toowoomba	4	28	130	1,952	7
QLD Rural Large Coastal	5	29	370	6,764	5
QLD Rural Small	4	29	162	2,548	6
QLD Rural Other	2	27	178	7,398	2
QLD Remote	4	29	78	2,884	3
Rest of Australia	8	18	577	76,246	1
Total	5	21	-	343,682	-

Source: 1996 Census CDATA96 and customised matrix

CHAPTER SIX: THE 'HOME GROWN' FACTORS

Contrary to anecdotal opinion, migration is only one of the factors that have contributed to locations with high concentrations of lone parent families. As indicated, in the areas under study, only a small proportion of the growth in the share of families with children headed by lone parents over the period 1991-1996 in Australia can be explained by migration. The unexplained portion is substantial.

It is a cliché that the institution of marriage in contemporary Australian society is under pressure. Women are less dependent on a partner for their material well-being than was the case in the past. Thus they are in stronger position to choose whether to enter or stay in a partnered relationship. Both men and women take longer to complete their education and settle their careers and therefore are more likely to delay entering a long-term relationship. In addition the secularisation of society has removed much of religious underpinning of the marriage contract. Meanwhile the parallel spread of individualistic values provides further justifications for ending relationships that do not meet the parties expectations. These changes are proceeding across the length and breadth of Australia, so that our information (see Table 5.4) showing an increase in the proportion of lone parents in most locations will not come as a surprise. The pace of change is nevertheless very striking. Over the 1991-1996 period, lone parent families increased in number by 31.5 per cent at the same time as the numbers of couple families (with children aged 0-14) remained virtually unchanged (See Table 6.1).

Table 6.1: Number of families with at least one child aged < 15 years, 1991 and 1996

	Male lone parent	Female lone parent	Total lone parent	Two parents
1991count	35,698	259,508	295,206	1,608,030
1996 count	44,631	343,682	388,313	1,619,203
Change	8,933	84,174	93,107	11,173
Percentage change	25.0	32.4	31.5	0.7

Source: ABS: Basic Community Profiles 1991 and 1996, customised matrices 1991 and 1996

We cannot explore all the possible factors responsible for this increase in lone parent families. The focus here is on the factors that help explain why some locations are marked by high levels and increases in the share of female lone parent families to all families with dependent children.

The focus of the earlier discussion on this issue was the economic well-being of particular areas. It was argued that areas which offered poor employment prospects were the most likely to generate the circumstances which promote lone parent situations. This proposition applied to both routes into lone parenthood. The first was that where a women decided to have a child, yet was either not in a marriage relationship or a stable or committed de facto relationship, and the second where an established relationship subsequently broke down after the birth of the child (or children).

All of the factors mentioned earlier potentially contribute to the circumstances which might lead down either of these two paths. However, it was hypothesised that these factors were likely to have a greater impact where couples are simultaneously coping with the difficulties of a poor job market. In settings where there were relatively few job opportunities, women would have less incentive to stay on in school or post-school training. Also, the attractions of partnering and child-rearing would look correspondingly better in settings where there was little to offer in the job market. Men, for their part, assuming that job prospects for men in the same areas were also limited, would have less to offer as partners. Thus we have (in theory) a potent mix of willingness to take on the housewife/mother role, yet men relatively poorly placed to reciprocate. The environment for married couples, too, would appear to be unfavourable in areas with limited job prospects. All the contemporary stresses on

marriage would be likely to be magnified in settings where men struggled to meet their marital financial obligations on account of difficult economic circumstances.

Testing ideas about the origin of lone parent families

Table 6.2 provides initial data for assessing these ideas. It shows some of the demographic characteristics of the areas under study. Column seven indicates the end product of the process whereby women become lone parents. It shows the proportion of all women who have had a child by age group who are lone parents. In the case of younger women in their twenties, what is distinctive about the demographic experience of locations with high lone parent concentrations is that they are areas where women become mothers relatively early. For example, 60 per cent of women aged 25-29 living in Campbelltown in 1996 have had a child, compared to just 30 per cent of women in the same age group living in Rest of Sydney (column 5). In Rest of Melbourne, 33 per cent of women in the 25-29 age group had had a child in 1996 compared with 49 per cent of women in this age group in Victorian 'rural large' centres. Another notable feature about these areas of high concentration is that the ratio of women in their twenties who are lone parents to all those who have had a child (column 7) is also high. Thus in Campbelltown, 28 per cent of women aged 25-29 with children were lone parents compared with 17 per cent of women in this age group with children in the Rest of Sydney. In demographic terms, therefore, high lone parent concentrations amongst women in their twenties are a consequence of a combination of early child-rearing and a high propensity for the women involved to experience a breakdown of the relationship responsible for the child. Thus the startling outcome that in 1996 only five per cent of women aged 25-29 in Rest of Sydney are lone parents compared with 17 per cent in Campbelltown (column 6).

It is well known that de facto relationships where children are involved are more likely to break down than married relationships.[94] Thus it might be expected that in areas of high lone parent concentrations de facto relationships would be common. This does not seem to be the case. Young women living in partnerships in Campbelltown are more likely to be married than their counterparts in the Rest of Sydney. What is distinctive about women in the 25-29 age group who live in the Rest of Sydney relative to those in Campbelltown is that, whether partnered or not, relatively few have children at this age. So it not the process of partnering itself which is the key risk factor in becoming a lone parent. Rather what we are looking for is some characteristics of locations with high concentrations of lone parents which prompt female residents to make the decision to have a child in the first place.

There is a similar pattern for older women in their thirties in locations with high lone parent concentrations, though it is less marked. By this stage in life it is harder to say anything about their demographic background, since high rates of motherhood reflect their experience in their twenties as well as their experience in their thirties. Nevertheless, areas with high concentrations of lone parents are notable for the relatively high proportion of women aged in their thirties who have children and the high proportion of these women who are single mothers. By this age the proportion of women in partnerships who are married is much higher and there is tendency for the levels to converge across areas of high and low concentrations of lone parents. Thus again, it is not the fact of partnership or propensity to marry within partnerships which is significant in explaining lone parent concentrations amongst women in their thirties. Rather, what is at issue is the factors which prompt more women to have children and, when they have them, to be more vulnerable to partnership breakdown.

[94] C. Kilmartin, 'Children, divorce and one parent families', *Family Matters*, Spring/Summer 1997

Table 6.2: Measures of family characteristics related to female lone parenthood, 1996

Area	Age group	Total women 1996	Age distribution in area	% of women partnered	% of partnered who are married	% of women who have borne child	% of women who are lone parents with chdn < 15yrs	Lone parents with child < 15 as % of women who have had child	% of lone parents with chdn < 15 yrs who have never married
		Column 1	Column 2	Column 3	Column 4	Column 5	Column 6	Column 7	Column 8
Sydney Campbelltown									
	15-24	11,815	33	16	57	17	8	45	89
	25-29	5,691	16	62	83	60	17	28	61
	30-34	6,128	17	73	90	80	15	19	36
	35-39	6,473	18	76	94	87	14	16	18
	40-44	5,986	17	75	94	89	11	12	10
	Total 15-44	36,093	100	53	87	59	12	20	45
Sydney Blacktown and Penrith									
	15-24	31,570	32	19	60	16	6	40	87
	25-29	17,162	18	65	85	57	12	22	59
	30-34	16,634	17	74	90	78	13	17	35
	35-39	16,822	17	77	93	85	12	14	19
	40-44	15,123	16	77	95	88	9	10	10
	Total 15-44	97,311	100	56	87	57	10	18	44
Sydney Gosford and Wyong									
	15-24	15,080	28	18	47	14	5	39	88
	25-29	8,219	16	64	80	55	13	23	59
	30-34	9,809	19	73	87	79	15	19	33
	35-39	10,535	20	74	91	86	14	17	19
	40-44	9,325	18	73	93	88	11	12	11
	Total 15-44	52,968	100	56	85	60	11	18	38
Sydney Rest of Sydney SD									
	15-24	214,261	31	13	62	7	2	30	80
	25-29	123,662	18	51	80	30	5	17	52
	30-34	122,646	18	66	89	57	7	13	32
	35-39	117,972	17	71	92	72	9	12	18
	40-44	108,780	16	72	94	78	8	10	11
	Total 15-44	687,321	100	48	87	42	6	13	32
Wollongong and Newcastle									
	15-24	50,767	32	16	51	12	5	39	88
	25-29	24,882	16	61	80	52	11	22	61
	30-34	26,840	17	73	89	76	13	16	35
	35-39	27,953	18	75	92	85	13	15	18
	40-44	26,040	17	75	94	88	8	10	11
	Total 15-44	156,482	100	53	85	55	9	17	41
NSW Rural Large North Coast - Hastings									
	15-24	2,834	28	18	41	15	5	31	85
	25-29	1,339	13	63	76	58	13	23	62
	30-34	1,724	17	72	85	80	15	19	32
	35-39	2,112	21	74	91	87	15	17	19
	40-44	2,003	20	72	92	89	12	13	8
	Total 15-44	10,012	100	56	83	62	11	18	34
NSW Rural Large Rest									
	15-24	19,001	34	17	44	14	6	40	89
	25-29	8,691	16	58	78	53	13	24	63
	30-34	9,052	16	69	88	76	14	19	37
	35-39	9,868	18	72	92	85	14	17	22
	40-44	9,096	16	71	93	88	11	12	13
	Total 15-44	55,708	100	50	83	55	11	19	44
NSW Rural Small Centres North Coast									
	15-24	8,745	29	18	44	15	5	34	87
	25-29	4,121	13	61	75	60	15	25	59
	30-34	5,176	17	70	86	79	15	19	34
	35-39	6,417	21	72	89	86	15	18	21
	40-44	6,162	20	73	91	88	10	12	13
	Total 15-44	30,621	100	55	82	61	11	18	37
NSW Rural Small Centres South Coast									
	15-24	3,824	27	19	47	17	7	41	86
	25-29	2,072	15	65	79	64	15	24	61
	30-34	2,575	18	72	87	82	16	19	37
	35-39	3,030	21	75	90	88	14	16	20
	40-44	2,667	19	74	92	88	11	12	10
	Total 15-44	14,168	100	58	84	64	12	19	40

continued

Table 6.2: Measures of family characteristics related to female lone parenthood (continued)

Area	Age group	Total women 1996	Age distribution in area	% of women partnered	% of partnered who are married	% of women who have borne child	% of women who are lone parents with chdn < 15yrs	Lone parents with child < 15 as % of women who have had child	% of lone parents with chdn < 15 yrs who have never married
		Column 1	Column 2	Column 3	Column 4	Column 5	Column 6	Column 7	Column 8
NSW Rural Small Rest									
	15-24	12,683	36	17	45	15	5	36	90
	25-29	5,451	15	59	79	54	12	22	62
	30-34	5,814	16	72	88	78	13	16	39
	35-39	5,949	17	74	90	86	13	15	21
	40-44	5,427	15	73	93	88	9	10	14
	Total 15-44	35,324	100	51	83	54	9	17	46
NSW Rural Other North Coast									
	15-24	6,874	26	17	46	16	6	35	90
	25-29	3,308	12	62	72	60	14	23	65
	30-34	4,882	18	70	81	78	16	20	43
	35-39	6,065	23	69	84	85	17	21	29
	40-44	5,592	21	70	88	86	13	15	17
	Total 15-44	26,721	100	55	80	63	13	20	41
NSW Rural Other South Coast									
	15-24	2,549	25	19	41	16	5	32	85
	25-29	1,352	13	65	72	63	13	21	60
	30-34	1,842	18	70	82	79	15	19	40
	35-39	2,370	23	74	85	84	14	16	29
	40-44	2,185	21	74	90	84	9	11	16
	Total 15-44	10,298	100	58	80	63	11	17	41
NSW Rural Other/Fringe/Rest of NSW									
	15-24	28,496	28	20	48	16	5	31	89
	25-29	14,988	15	67	80	60	11	18	64
	30-34	18,112	18	77	88	81	10	13	36
	35-39	20,155	20	79	91	87	10	11	22
	40-44	18,504	18	79	94	88	7	8	11
	Total 15-44	100,255	100	60	85	62	8	13	43
NSW Remote Other and Centres									
	15-24	4,101	28	23	38	22	7	33	92
	25-29	2,594	18	63	70	58	10	17	81
	30-34	2,722	19	72	81	79	12	15	45
	35-39	2,830	19	75	87	86	10	12	29
	40-44	2,362	16	75	90	88	7	8	24
	Total 15-44	14,609	100	58	77	62	9	15	57
Melbourne Frankston City									
	15-24	7,434	31	16	43	11	4	40	87
	25-29	4,184	17	63	76	49	10	21	60
	30-34	4,314	18	73	89	75	13	18	29
	35-39	4,223	18	73	92	85	14	17	14
	40-44	3,907	16	72	93	87	12	13	11
	Total 15-44	24,062	100	53	84	54	10	18	35
Melbourne Moreland (C) North & Darebin (C) Northcote									
	15-24	5,892	28	14	65	8	2	31	81
	25-29	4,492	21	44	81	26	6	22	58
	30-34	4,378	21	57	86	49	8	17	33
	35-39	3,588	17	60	89	63	11	18	23
	40-44	2,872	14	62	90	70	8	12	20
	Total 15-44	21,222	100	43	84	38	7	18	37
Rest of Melbourne SD									
	15-24	221,057	31	12	58	7	2	34	84
	25-29	126,484	18	53	80	33	6	18	56
	30-34	122,803	17	69	90	62	8	13	30
	35-39	120,748	17	73	93	77	10	13	16
	40-44	111,792	16	74	94	82	8	10	10
	Total 15-44	702,884	100	49	88	45	6	14	33

Continued

Table 6.2: Measures of family characteristics related to female lone parenthood (continued)

Area	Age group	Total women 1996	Age distribution in area	% of women partnered	% of partnered who are married	% of women who have borne child	% of women who are lone parents with chdn < 15yrs	Lone parents with child < 15 as % of women who have had child	% of lone parents with chdn < 15 yrs who have never married
		Column 1	Column 2	Column 3	Column 4	Column 5	Column 6	Column 7	Column 8
Geelong									
	15-24	13,560	33	13	51	9	4	44	88
	25-29	6,421	16	57	81	43	10	23	64
	30-34	6,930	17	72	90	74	12	16	28
	35-39	7,321	18	75	94	84	12	15	15
	40-44	6,985	17	74	95	87	9	10	11
	Total 15-44	41,217	100	51	88	52	9	17	37
VIC Rural Fringe									
	15-24	6,385	27	14	46	10	4	36	91
	25-29	3,220	14	68	82	55	9	17	61
	30-34	4,437	19	79	90	78	9	12	31
	35-39	4,998	21	79	93	85	10	12	15
	40-44	4,495	19	81	94	88	7	8	10
	Total 15-44	23,535	100	60	88	60	8	13	35
VIC Rural Large									
	15-24	19,604	35	14	47	11	5	42	87
	25-29	8,798	16	59	80	49	11	23	62
	30-34	9,264	16	69	90	75	14	19	32
	35-39	9,569	17	73	93	85	14	16	17
	40-44	8,975	16	72	94	88	10	11	10
	Total 15-44	56,210	100	49	85	53	10	19	40
VIC Rural Small									
	15-24	13,777	30	19	44	14	5	37	88
	25-29	7,341	16	62	79	56	12	22	60
	30-34	7,910	17	73	89	79	13	17	33
	35-39	8,414	19	74	92	86	13	15	16
	40-44	7,811	17	74	94	88	10	11	9
	Total 15-44	45,253	100	55	84	58	10	17	39
VIC Other Rural									
	15-24	24,786	27	17	48	12	3	28	86
	25-29	12,834	14	67	81	56	9	15	58
	30-34	16,498	18	77	90	80	10	12	35
	35-39	18,947	21	79	92	87	10	11	17
	40-44	18,388	20	80	94	88	7	8	11
	Total 15-44	91,453	100	60	87	61	7	12	36
Brisbane SD Ipswich and Logan									
	15-24	21,982	33	22	49	17	7	38	86
	25-29	11,503	17	64	78	56	13	24	57
	30-34	11,443	17	74	88	78	14	18	29
	35-39	11,367	17	77	92	86	13	15	14
	40-44	10,583	16	76	93	88	9	10	8
	Total 15-44	66,878	100	56	83	57	10	18	41
Rest of Brisbane SD									
	15-24	97,493	34	15	47	9	3	35	86
	25-29	48,612	17	55	76	36	7	20	57
	30-34	46,737	16	69	87	64	10	15	31
	35-39	47,327	17	73	92	78	11	14	15
	40-44	45,314	16	73	93	83	8	10	10
	Total 15-44	285,483	100	49	84	46	7	15	36
Gold Coast City (inc Tweed Pt A)									
	15-24	23,335	31	17	40	11	4	36	87
	25-29	12,746	17	52	71	39	10	26	59
	30-34	12,528	17	65	85	66	13	20	34
	35-39	12,943	17	69	88	79	14	18	17
	40-44	12,529	17	68	91	83	11	13	10
	Total 15-44	74,081	100	49	80	49	10	19	36

Continued

Table 6.2: Measures of family characteristics related to female lone parenthood (continued)

Area / Age group	Total women 1996	Age distribution in area	% of women partnered	% of partnered who are married	% of women who have borne child	% of women who are lone parents with chdn < 15yrs	Lone parents with child < 15 as % of women who have had child	% of lone parents with chdn < 15 yrs who have never married
	Column 1	Column 2	Column 3	Column 4	Column 5	Column 6	Column 7	Column 8
Sunshine Coast								
15-24	11,675	27	19	42	13	5	34	82
25-29	6,269	15	59	72	50	12	25	56
30-34	8,018	19	69	84	74	14	19	30
35-39	8,828	21	72	88	84	15	18	20
40-44	8,155	19	72	91	86	11	13	9
Total 15-44	42,945	100	55	81	58	11	19	34
Townsville								
15-24	10,529	36	21	42	13	5	34	83
25-29	5,045	17	60	74	48	10	21	59
30-34	4,931	17	71	85	72	11	16	35
35-39	4,795	16	74	89	82	12	14	22
40-44	4,081	14	73	92	86	9	11	16
Total 15-44	29,381	100	52	79	51	8	17	43
QLD Rural Fringe								
15-24	3,495	27	20	56	15	4	28	85
25-29	1,953	15	72	79	59	9	16	51
30-34	2,532	20	80	88	78	10	12	27
35-39	2,636	20	80	90	85	11	13	15
40-44	2,304	18	79	93	86	8	9	12
Total 15-44	12,920	100	62	85	61	8	13	33
QLD Rural Large Toowoomba								
15-24	7,912	40	16	49	11	4	35	85
25-29	3,117	16	56	80	47	10	22	57
30-34	2,881	15	67	89	73	14	19	34
35-39	2,922	15	70	93	81	13	16	16
40-44	2,787	14	68	95	85	11	13	5
Total 15-44	19,619	100	45	84	47	9	19	38
QLD Rural Large Coastal								
15-24	21,017	33	20	42	14	5	35	88
25-29	11,179	17	58	71	46	11	23	62
30-34	11,145	17	69	84	71	13	18	36
35-39	11,129	17	72	89	81	13	16	19
40-44	10,120	16	72	91	85	9	11	12
Total 15-44	64,590	100	52	79	52	9	18	42
QLD Rural Small								
15-24	7,372	31	23	44	19	6	33	84
25-29	3,661	16	64	78	58	13	22	58
30-34	4,090	17	72	86	79	14	18	29
35-39	4,394	19	75	90	86	13	15	18
40-44	4,024	17	76	93	89	8	9	12
Total 15-44	23,541	100	57	82	60	10	17	40
QLD Rural Other								
15-24	27,346	28	23	50	17	4	26	86
25-29	15,491	16	70	79	58	8	14	58
30-34	17,955	19	78	87	80	9	11	35
35-39	19,055	20	81	90	87	8	10	21
40-44	16,893	17	81	92	88	6	7	11
Total 15-44	96,740	100	62	84	61	7	11	42
QLD Remote								
15-24	9,072	30	25	38	24	7	28	93
25-29	5,634	19	62	70	59	10	17	76
30-34	5,530	18	74	81	79	9	12	47
35-39	5,265	18	76	87	84	9	11	31
40-44	4,392	15	75	88	86	7	8	22
Total 15-44	29,893	100	57	76	60	8	14	59

Source: 1996 Census, customised matrix

Economic conditions and lone parenthood

Census data on unemployment levels and income have been used to assess the relationship between economic conditions and levels of lone parenthood. Tables 6.3 and 6.4 show the level of unemployment by sex and age group for the areas under study. Unemployment levels of women as of 1996 were relatively high in the regional areas of NSW and Victoria and in the Gold Coast and Sunshine Coast, all of which have been identified as areas of high lone parent concentrations. The links are not so clear in regional Queensland outside the Gold Coast and Sunshine coast or the urban areas of Melbourne and Sydney.

The unemployment rates of men (Table 6.4) were high for all age groups in the traditional manufacturing cities of Wollongong/Newcastle and Geelong as well as in Moreland/Darebin in Melbourne. Male unemployment rates were also high across all age groups in the coastal 'lifestyle' areas of NSW and Queensland. The disparity between the situation in the capital cities and regional areas was very large in 1996. It is also notable that the position was serious even for men aged 25-34 by which time most would have taken on or be contemplating a partnering relationship. With 20 per cent of the male labour force aged 25-34 unemployed in many of the coastal towns of NSW, the prospects for many female residents being able to find financially secure partners must have been bleak.

Table 6.3: Unemployment rate of women by age, selected areas, 1996

	Age group			
	15-19	20-24	25-34	35-44
Sydney Campbelltown	20	12	9	7
Sydney Blacktown and Penrith	16	11	7	6
Sydney Gosford and Wyong	17	13	9	7
Sydney Rest of Sydney SD	13	8	6	6
Wollongong and Newcastle	22	16	10	7
NSW Rural Large North Coast - Hastings	25	22	14	10
NSW Rural Large Rest	19	17	9	6
NSW Rural Small Centres North Coast	23	21	14	11
NSW Rural Small Centres South Coast	22	17	13	9
NSW Rural Small Rest	19	15	9	6
NSW Rural Other North Coast	26	27	18	13
NSW Rural Other South Coast	22	20	14	9
NSW Rural Other/Fringe/Rest of NSW	22	15	9	6
NSW Remote Other and Centres	24	16	11	7
ACT and Queanbeyan	17	10	6	5
Melbourne Frankston City	20	13	8	7
Melb. Moreland North & Darebin Northcote	22	17	10	8
Rest of Melbourne SD	17	12	8	7
Geelong	22	16	10	8
VIC Rural Fringe	19	13	8	6
VIC Rural Large	22	17	9	7
VIC Rural Small	21	15	10	8
VIC Other Rural	20	15	9	6
Brisbane SD Ipswich and Logan	20	15	9	7
Rest of Brisbane SD	17	11	7	5
Gold Coast City (inc Tweed Pt A)	19	16	11	9
Sunshine Coast	20	19	12	11
Townsville	19	13	8	6
QLD Rural Fringe	21	16	10	6
QLD Rural Large Toowoomba	22	13	7	5
QLD Rural Large Coastal	17	13	8	6
QLD Rural Small	21	18	13	10
QLD Rural Other	17	12	9	6
QLD Remote	17	10	7	5
Rest of Australia	18	12	8	6
Australia	18	12	8	6

Source: CDATA96

Table 6.4: Unemployment rates for men by age, selected areas, 1996

	Age group			
	15-19	20-24	25-34	35-44
Sydney Campbelltown	22	15	9	7
Sydney Blacktown and Penrith	19	13	8	6
Sydney Gosford and Wyong	24	18	11	8
Sydney Rest of Sydney SD	15	11	8	6
Wollongong and Newcastle	27	21	12	8
NSW Rural Large North Coast – Hastings	28	30	21	15
NSW Rural Large Rest	22	19	11	8
NSW Rural Small Centres North Coast	28	26	20	14
NSW Rural Small Centres South Coast	24	22	18	13
NSW Rural Small Rest	23	17	9	7
NSW Rural Other North Coast	29	32	24	19
NSW Rural Other South Coast	24	28	20	14
NSW Rural Other/Fringe/Rest of NSW	21	16	10	7
NSW Remote Other and Centres	22	14	12	10
ACT and Queanbeyan	20	15	8	5
Melbourne Frankston City	21	16	9	7
Melb. Moreland North & Darebin Northcote	25	20	13	11
Rest of Melbourne SD	19	15	9	7
Geelong	26	19	12	8
VIC Rural Fringe	18	13	9	7
VIC Rural Large	25	21	13	9
VIC Rural Small	24	20	13	10
VIC Other Rural	19	15	10	8
Brisbane SD Ipswich and Logan	21	17	11	7
Rest of Brisbane SD	19	15	9	6
Gold Coast City (inc Tweed Pt A)	22	22	15	11
Sunshine Coast	28	26	17	14
Townsville	20	14	9	7
QLD Rural Fringe	21	16	10	8
QLD Rural Large Toowoomba	22	14	9	5
QLD Rural Large Coastal	21	18	11	8
QLD Rural Small	27	21	15	11
QLD Rural Other	17	13	9	7
QLD Remote	17	10	7	6
Rest of Australia	19	16	10	7
Australia	20	16	10	7

Source: CDATA96

Another crucial aspect of economic circumstances is income level. Table 6.5 shows the weekly income reported by these men aged 25-44 for the areas under study. The table indicates that in a number of the regional areas with high lone parent concentrations, including the coastal centres of NSW, a third or more of men reported very low earnings of less than $300 per week. The employment available in these coastal centres is largely service oriented and often seasonal. As indicated, men earning such low incomes would have little to offer a woman contemplating setting up a domestic household. For those in long-term relationships the stresses associated with surviving on such a low male contribution to the household would be severe. Previous analysis of national level data showed a much higher proportion of

Table 6.5: Males aged 25-44 yrs, individual weekly income, selected regions, 1996

	Males counted	Per cent not stating income	% of total stating income who earned < $300	$300-599	$600-999	$1000 +	Total stating income
Sydney Campbelltown	21,424	4	17	35	38	10	100
Sydney Blacktown and Penrith	62,359	5	16	37	37	10	100
Sydney Gosford and Wyong	35,084	4	20	35	34	10	100
Sydney Rest of Sydney SD	465,867	5	18	32	31	19	100
SYDNEY SD	584,734	5	18	33	32	17	100
Wollongong and Newcastle	104,633	4	22	31	33	14	100
NSW Rural Large Nth Coast - Hastings	6,596	4	35	38	21	5	100
NSW Rural Large Rest	35,040	4	23	40	30	7	100
NSW Rural Small Centres North Coast	20,491	4	35	39	21	5	100
NSW Rural Small Centres South Coast	9,619	4	31	35	27	6	100
NSW Rural Small Rest	23,917	8	22	39	30	9	100
NSW Rural Other North Coast	18,951	5	43	37	16	3	100
NSW Rural Other South Coast	7,328	5	37	39	20	4	100
NSW Rural Other/Fringe/Rest of NSW	75,134	6	26	42	24	8	100
NSW Remote Other and Centres	11,746	8	33	37	20	10	100
ACT and Queanbeyan	52,157	3	15	26	38	21	100
Melbourne Frankston City	15,882	4	17	38	36	10	100
Melb. Moreland Nth Darebin Northcote	14,650	5	26	38	28	9	100
Rest of Melbourne SD	462,660	5	19	35	32	15	100
MELBOURNE SD	493,192	5	19	35	32	14	100
Geelong & area	26,041	4	20	35	34	11	100
VIC Rural Fringe	15,739	6	20	37	32	11	100
VIC Rural Large	34,580	4	24	41	29	7	100
VIC Rural Small	29,962	5	25	38	29	8	100
VIC Other Rural	68,627	6	28	43	23	6	100
Brisbane SD Ipswich and Logan	42,033	5	19	42	32	6	100
Rest of Brisbane SD	181,628	5	19	36	33	13	100
BRISBANE SD	223,661	5	19	37	33	12	100
Gold Coast City(inc Tweed Pt A)	49,467	6	25	41	26	8	100
Sunshine Coast	29,206	4	31	40	22	6	100
Townsville	19,151	6	18	35	37	10	100
QLD Rural Fringe	9,298	8	25	42	27	5	100
QLD Rural Large Toowoomba	10,777	5	21	42	30	6	100
QLD Rural Large Coastal	44,332	6	20	40	31	9	100
QLD Rural Small	15,981	5	26	37	29	8	100
QLD Rural Other	87,264	6	25	40	24	11	100
QLD Remote	25,528	8	23	32	27	18	100
Rest of Australia	570,204	5	22	35	31	12	100
AUSTRALIA	2,703,356	5	21	35	31	13	100

Source: ABS, CDATA96

ever- married men who were in receipt of incomes of less than $300 per week were divorced or separated than their counterparts earning higher incomes. For example of men aged 35-39 years, 23 per cent in the less than $300 bracket were in this category compared with nine per cent of men reporting incomes of $52,000 or more.[95]

Although parallel data for all the selected Australian locations were not purchased for this project, the Centre for Population and Urban Research does hold a 1996 Census customised matrix which enables an examination of the effect of location and the

Table 6.6: Ever married males aged 35-44, income and location, Victoria, 1996

Location	Individual weekly income	Number ever married (excl. widowers)	Per cent of men on income level	Per cent separated/ divorced
Melbourne SD	< $300	28,853	15	22
	$300 - $599	56,952	30	16
	$600 - $999	62,485	33	12
	$1,000+	39,157	21	9
	Total*	187,447	100	14
Geelong	< $300	1,760	16	26
	$300 - $599	3,351	30	17
	$600 - $999	4,266	38	11
	$1,000+	1,741	16	6
	Total*	11,118	100	15
Metropolitan fringe	< $300	1,325	18	20
	$300 - $599	2,452	33	13
	$600 - $999	2,541	34	9
	$1,000+	1,184	16	6
	Total*	7,502	100	12
Large centres 25,000+	< $300	2,752	19	26
	$300 - $599	5,324	37	17
	$600 - $999	4,954	34	11
	$1,000+	1,455	10	8
	Total*	14,485	100	16
Small centres 10,000+	< $300	2,491	21	27
	$300 - $599	4,036	34	17
	$600 - $999	3,920	33	12
	$1,000+	1,499	13	9
	Total*	11,946	100	16
Very small centres 5,000+	< $300	1,225	24	25
	$300 - $599	2,090	41	14
	$600 - $999	1,479	29	10
	$1,000+	356	7	12
	Total*	5,150	100	15
Other rural	< $300	6,945	27	17
	$300 - $599	10,328	40	13
	$600 - $999	6,548	25	10
	$1,000+	1,915	7	9
	Total*	25,736	100	13

* Total excludes those who did not state their income
Source: 1996 Census, customised matrix

[95] Birrell and Rapson 1998, op. cit., p. 22

income levels of men on marriage breakdown for Victoria. Table 6.6 indicates the proportion of divorced/separated men by income level and location in Victoria. It shows that across all types of locations, the lower the income, the more likely ever-married males aged 35-44 were to be divorced or separated. However, poor males in regional centres were the most likely to be divorced or separated. Because a higher proportion of ever-married men aged 35-44 in the regional centres were poor, the combined effect is to produce a higher overall separated/divorced rate in regional centres (16 per cent than in Melbourne (14 per cent).

These data give some support to the hypothesis. In order to assess the strength of the relationship between poor economic conditions and the incidence of lone parenthood a closer analysis of the linkages was pursued. By using 1996 census data derived from CDATA96 it was possible to examine the relationship between the proportion of men aged 25-44 earning income less than $300 and the share of families headed by lone parents for various locations. The charts in Figure 6.1 show these relationships and the relevant correlation coefficients for SLAs in Eastern Australia. The relationship between these two variables is weak when examined at the level of all such SLAs (first chart) and for all non-metropolitan SLAs (not shown). This weak relationship for non-metropolitan areas is probably partly due to the fact that male income levels in non-metropolitan Australia, particularly in farming areas, are not always a good indication of household resources. However, somewhat to our surprise, the last (sixth) chart in Figure 6.1 shows that there was also a weak relationship between male income and lone parent concentrations in large and small regional centres. It is likely that poorer households in such centres are more likely to be dispersed across the SLAs making up regional centres than is the case in metropolitan SLAs.

The metropolitan regions provide a better basis for exploring the relationship between male income and lone parent status, because there is a much greater differentiation of high and low income males by SLA in metropolitan regions. The results of the analysis for these metropolitan regions are also shown in Figure 6.2 (charts two, three and four). These show that lone parents do tend to concentrate in localities where male income is low.

Figure 6.1: Per cent of families with at least one child aged 0-14 years who are headed by a lone parent and per cent of men aged 25-44 earning less than $300 per week, NSW, Victoria and Queensland SLAs 1996

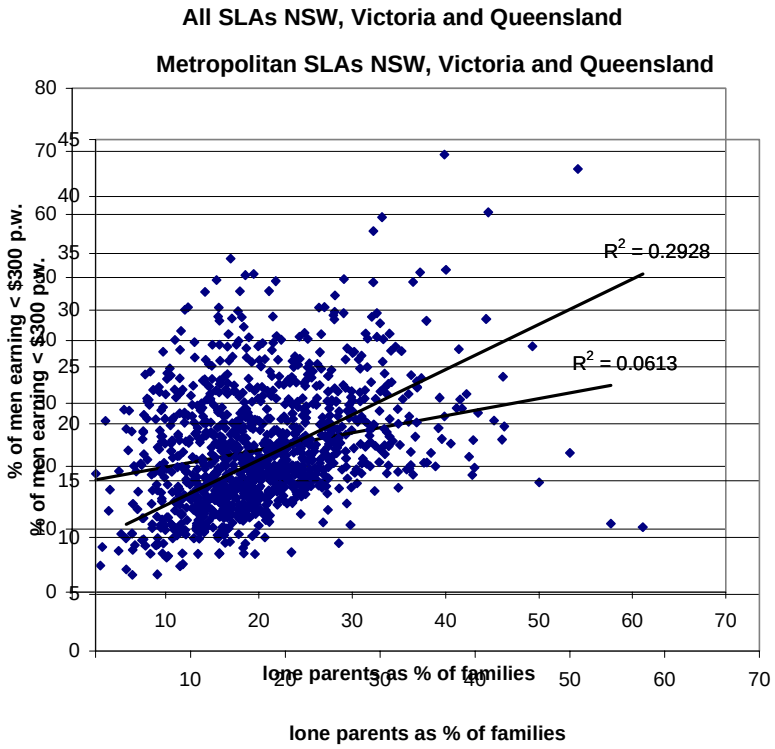


Figure 6.1: Per cent of families with at least one child aged 0-14 years who are headed by a lone parent and per cent of men aged 25-44 earning less than $300 per week, NSW, Victoria and Queensland SLAs 1996 (continued)

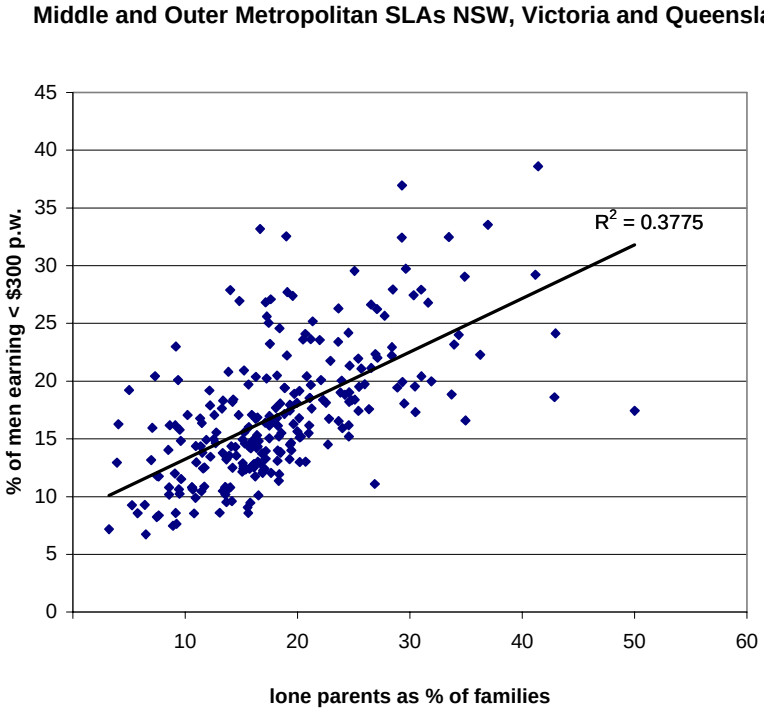
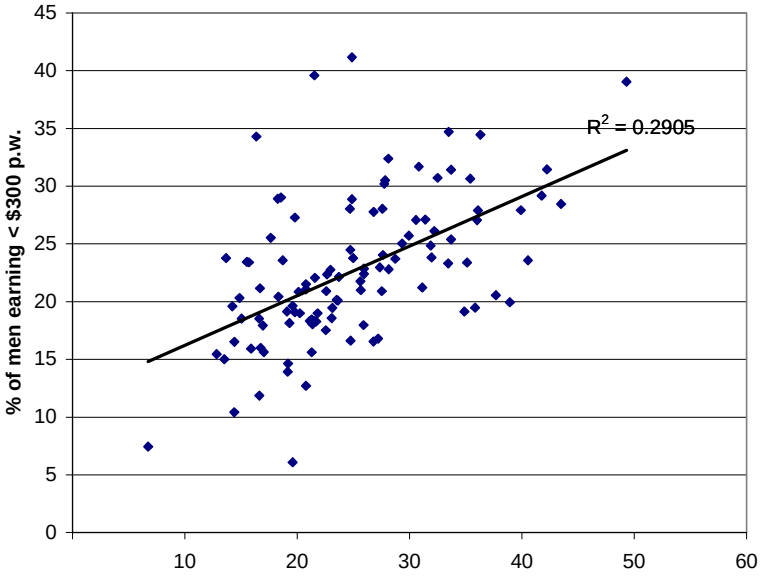
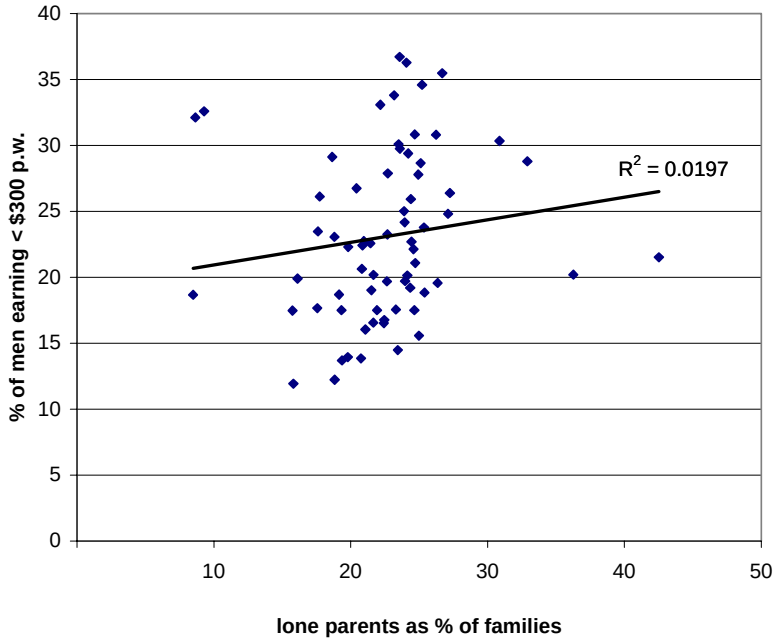


Figure 6.1: Per cent of families with at least one child aged 0-14 years who are headed by a lone parent and per cent of men aged 25-44 earning less than $300 per week, NSW, Victoria and Queensland SLAs 1996 (continued)

'Other Metropolitan' SLAs NSW, Victoria and Queensland



Large and Small Rural Centre SLAs NSW, Victoria and Queensland



Age left school and lone parent concentrations

The income and unemployment data described supports the initial hypothesis about the importance of economic conditions as a contributor to lone parent concentrations. But they are far from a full explanation. Given the diversity of factors that shape family decisions this is not surprising. People faced by difficult economic conditions may respond in a variety of ways, including making do with lower income than would normally be regarded as 'required' in a metropolitan centre.

It was suggested earlier that in settings where employment prospects are poor, young men and women may respond by dropping out of school well before year 12. Why stay if the extra schooling seems to offer no better work prospects, at least within the local community? This idea prompted the further hypothesis that women who leave school early might be particularly inclined to taking on a partnering and associated motherhood role. Those who do leave early are implying by this act that they do not put much store on an employment future. They have much less to lose if they take on motherhood. If this idea were correct we would expect to find that a much higher proportion of women would leave school early in locations where economic conditions were poor. It was also hypothesised that women who left school early and did take to early partnering and motherhood would be particularly vulnerable to relationship breakdown. This is because they would be relating to men who might also be early school leavers and who faced a difficult job situation.

In order to examine this idea, a 1996 Census data set purchased previously for another project on Victoria was used. This enabled an analysis of the implications of early school leaving. Table 6.7 shows the outcome for all Victorian women aged 15-44 by whether they left school before and after 17. The results at this level are striking. For women aged 15-24 and 25-34, the proportion who are lone parents is several times higher for those who left school before age 17 than for those who left school at age 17 or later.

Table 6.7: Relationship in household of women by age and age left school, Victoria, 1996

Age group	Age left school	Total	Husband/ wife	Defacto Partner - opposite sex	Lone Parent	Other	Total
15-24	< 17	42,523	14	12	10	63	100
	17+	171,334	8	7	2	83	101
	Other*	99,746	1	0	1	100	102
	Total	313,603	7	6	3	88	103
25-34	< 17	107,601	56	10	14	24	104
	17+	225,625	54	9	5	37	105
	Other	18,223	36	4	12	54	106
	Total	351,449	53	9	8	36	107
35-44	< 17	147,532	69	5	14	19	108
	17+	174,456	71	4	10	23	109
	Other	21,312	51	3	13	44	110
	Total	343,300	69	5	12	25	111

- Other includes those still attending school.

Source: Customised matrix, Census 1996

Further analysis of this data set, this time utilising our geographical classification of locations produced similar significant results. Figures 6.2 and 6.3 show the percentage of women aged 25-34 who left school before age 17 and after their 17th birthday by location and the proportion of each of these groups who were lone parents. The classification of large and small regional centres in these figures is the same as that used in the preceding analysis. As has been established, these are areas of high lone parent concentrations. Figure 6.2 shows the proportion of women who left school before age 17 and the proportion of these women who were lone parents. Women aged 25-34 who lived in regional Victoria in 1996 were considerably more likely to have left school before age 17 than their metropolitan counterparts. Figure 6.2 also shows that a higher percentage of these early school leavers in the large and small centres of regional Victoria have become lone parents than is the case for early school leavers in Melbourne. Conversely, as Figure 6.3 shows, the proportion of women who left school at age 17 or later is significantly higher in Melbourne than for regional Victorian locations. As with the early school leavers, however, the proportion of older school leavers who become lone parents in Melbourne is lower than for regional Victoria.

These results confirm the hypothesis under study. As expected, where employment opportunities are greater, as has been the case in Melbourne, women are much less likely to leave school early and those who are early school leavers are less likely to

Figure 6.2: Percentage of women aged 25-34 who left school before age 17 and percentage of these women who are lone parents, Victoria, 1996

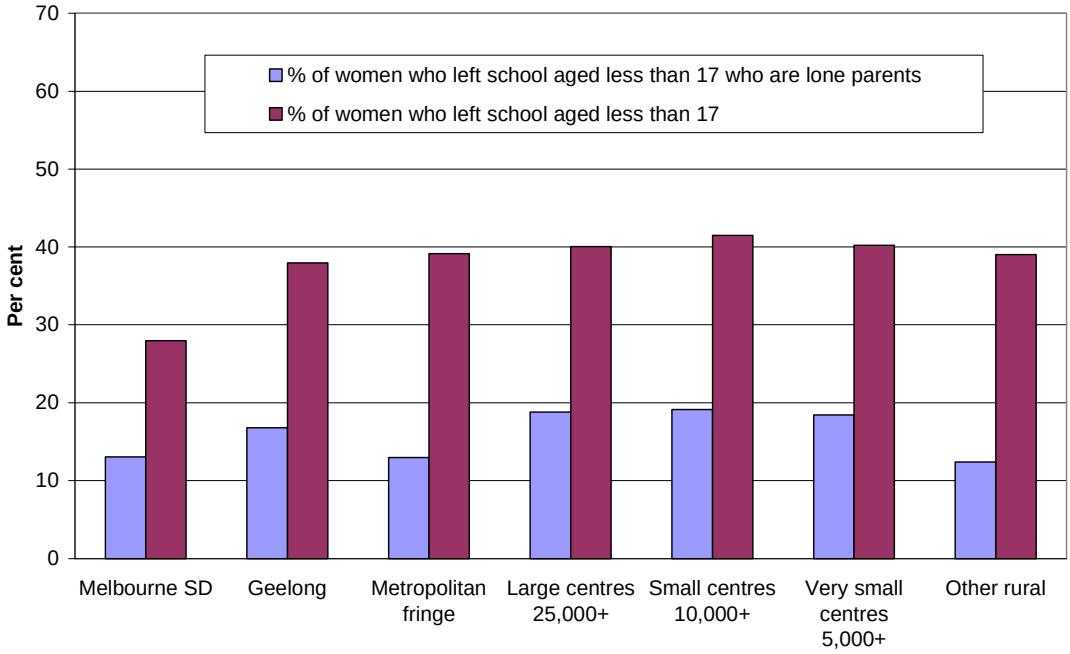


Figure 6.3: Percentage of women aged 25-34 who left school aged 17 or higher and percentage of these women who are lone parents, Victoria, 1996

become lone parents. The likely reason for early school leaving in regional areas, at least in relative terms, is that the work environment offers more to metropolitan women than it does to those living in the regions. But why should women who leave school early in regional centres be more likely to become lone parents than metropolitan women? It is probably partly because early school leavers in Melbourne have more job opportunities, even if they are likely to be low paid. They therefore have less incentive to take on child-rearing responsibilities. But in addition, of those

women who do take on these responsibilities, regional women face circumstances more likely to lead to the breakdown of their partnership than metropolitan women. It is our hypothesis that this occurs in part because the men with whom they form these relationships are less likely to provide the resources needed to sustain the relationship. In addition where the circumstances are less favourable for mothers to work this increases the reliance and the pressures on the male partner.

This argument is supported by an analysis of data on marriage breakdown. Table 6.8 shows that a far higher proportion of the marriages of women aged 25-34 who left school before age 17 have broken down than is the case for the marriages of women who left school at 17 or later. But, especially for those who left school before age 17, the proportion of marriages that have broken up is higher in the regional centres than the proportion in Melbourne. Thus the contribution of poor economic circumstances

Table 6.8: Percentage of ever married women (excluding widows) aged 25-34 years who are no longer married by age left school, Victorian regions, 1996

Age left school	Region	Ever married total	% no longer married
< 17	Melbourne SD	51,087	18
	Geelong	3,579	20
	Metropolitan fringe	2,271	14
	Large centres 25,000+	5,108	20
	Small centres 10,000+	4,449	21
	Very small centres 5,000+	1,689	20
	Other rural	7,119	15
	Total*	75,429	18
17+	Melbourne SD	107,528	11
	Geelong	5,191	12
	Metropolitan fringe	3,279	9
	Large centres 25,000+	6,717	12
	Small centres 10,000+	5,448	11
	Very small centres 5,000+	2,340	10
	Other rural	10,253	8
	Total*	141,009	11

* Total includes no or not stated usual residence and migratory.

Source: 1996 Census customised matrix

to the relatively high lone parenthood rates in regional areas can be thought of as a product of an early school leaving effect as well as the amplifying effect of higher rates of marriage breakdown. Both are associated with limited employment opportunities.

It can be concluded that a major factor differentiating the experience of women in areas of strong opportunity (increasingly the major metropolises) and those in areas with distinctly lesser opportunity is the incentive which this opportunity gives women to have or not to have children. This is at the heart of what divides areas of high lone parent concentrations from those where the incidence of lone parenthood is more modest. Women in the metropolis have more to look forward to, more encouragement to stay on in school and more investment in education to protect. They partner at rates not much below their regional counterparts, often in de facto relationships, but delay or put off having children. Thus the much lower tendency to have children in their twenties. When they do have children it is more likely to be with partners who are better placed by virtue of their investment in education and their job opportunities to invest the resources necessary to sustain the relationship.

Attitudes towards family and lone parenthood

Unfortunately the statistical basis for this project largely precludes any review of other factors, including any changes to attitudes towards family breakdown and maintenance which may contribute to lone parent concentrations. However, it is possible to indirectly assess one aspect of these values through the data available. One indicator of attitudes towards marriage in a community is the incidence of de facto partnerships and of lone parenthood where the mother has never married. In communities showing a high incidence on both dimensions it would seem reasonable to conclude that community attitudes are likely to be fairly liberal or permissive on these matters.

Our initial expectation was that 'progressive' or 'liberal' attitudes towards marriage and parenting would be more widespread in metropolitan settings. Studies of rural communities in the past have tended to suggest that such communities place a high value on marital relationships.[96] However, this seems to be a dated view. There are two indicators of these attitudes which can be drawn from Table 6.9. The first is the proportion of partnered women who are married. In Rest of Sydney, 80 per cent of partnered women aged 25-29 were married, compared with 76 per cent in Hastings, 78 per cent in other NSW rural large centres and less than 80 per cent in most other regional NSW settings. The second is the proportion of women who are lone parents who have never married. In Rest of Sydney, 52 per cent of women aged 25-29 who were lone parents in 1996 had never married compared with around 60 per cent in locations outside Sydney. Similarly, on these criteria, women in Melbourne appear to be more 'conservative' than in women elsewhere in Victoria.

A contributing factor to the apparently more liberal behaviour of non-metropolitan women is the distribution of women of Non-English-Speaking-Background (NESB). Such women are heavily concentrated in metropolitan settings. As various studies have shown most NESB communities place a high valuation on the sanctity of marriage and parenthood within it.[97] In order to assess this idea, data on ethnic background were assembled for two NESB categories, those born overseas from NESB countries (NESB 1) and those born in Australia with both parents born in NESB countries (NESB 2). There proved to be little difference in the propensity to partner, marry, have children or become lone parents on the part of the NESB 1 and NESB 2 groups. Thus for purposes of analysis below the two categories have been amalgamated. The extent of concentration of NESB women so defined by location is shown in Table 6.9. The concentration in metropolitan areas is evident, as is the reciprocal low representation in regional Australia.

On the question of attitudes towards marriage (as shown through the proxies of their marital and parental situation), Table 6.9 provides information on the extent to which NESB and ESB women aged 30-39 who are partnered are married, and the percentage of NESB female lone parents aged 30-39 who have never married. On both counts NESB women prove to be more conservative than their ESB counterparts (ESB includes overseas-born persons from English-speaking countries and Australian-born persons with at least one parent either Australian-born or born overseas in an ESB country). This finding is strongest for the main metropolitan areas. Thus for Rest of Sydney, 95 per cent of NESB women who are partnered are married compared with 87 per cent of ESB women. Even more striking, only 12 per cent of NESB women in Rest of Sydney who are lone parents have never married compared with 32 per cent of their ESB counterparts.

[96] Dempsey, *A Man's Town: Inequality between women and men in rural Australia*, Oxford 1992, pp. 268-269

[97] D. Storer (Ed.) 'Introduction' in *Ethnic Family Values in Australia*, Prentice Hall, Sydney, 1985, p. 24

Table 6.9: Measures of family characteristics related to female lone parenthood, women aged 30-39 years by ethnic background, 1996

	NESB	ESB	% NESB	% of women partnered		% of partnered who are married		% of women who have borne child		Lone parents with child < 15 as % of women who have had child		% of lone parents with chdn < 15 yrs who have never married	
				NESB	ESB	NESB	ESB	NESB	ESB	NESB	ESB	NESB	ESB
Sydney Campbelltown	3,355	8,944	27	80	74	96	90	82	86	14	19	14	31
Sydney Blacktown and Penrith	10,871	21,834	32	83	73	96	89	82	83	9	19	14	31
Sydney Gosford and Wyong	1,720	18,168	8	80	74	91	89	78	84	12	18	19	26
Sydney Rest of Sydney SD	97,957	135,589	41	74	66	95	87	70	63	11	14	12	32
Wollongong and Newcastle	7,656	45,962	14	78	74	95	90	79	82	11	17	14	27
NSW Rural Large Nth CoastHastings	162	3,589	4	76	74	88	89	84	85	15	18	0	26
NSW Rural Large Rest	1,266	17,249	7	74	71	91	90	75	82	14	18	24	30
NSW Rural Small Centres Nth Coast	785	10,565	7	75	72	91	87	79	84	14	19	16	27
NSW Rural Small Centres Sth Coast	463	5,031	8	77	74	96	88	84	86	14	18	27	28
NSW Rural Small Rest	1,071	10,409	9	81	73	94	88	78	83	7	17	7	31
NSW Rural Other North Coast	724	9,945	7	68	70	84	83	73	84	21	20	23	35
NSW Rural Other South Coast	320	3,758	8	82	73	87	84	79	84	14	18	17	35
NSW Rural Other/Fringe/Rest NSW	1,970	35,277	5	82	79	91	90	80	86	9	12	19	29
NSW Remote Other and Centres	249	5,121	4	78	75	94	84	80	85	8	14	0	38
ACT and Queanbeyan	6,474	20,710	23	74	69	93	88	73	73	12	16	16	26
Melbourne Frankston City	1,298	7,016	15	78	73	93	90	78	82	15	18	15	23
Melb. Moreland Nth Darebin Nthcote	3,522	4,221	44	66	53	95	79	63	52	14	21	12	39
Rest of Melbourne SD	90,161	147,257	37	76	69	96	89	73	69	10	15	12	27
Geelong	2,426	11,522	17	77	73	94	92	79	80	12	16	13	22
VIC Rural Fringe	1,073	8,126	11	85	79	93	91	83	83	7	13	23	22
VIC Rural Large	1,469	16,937	8	73	71	94	91	79	82	14	18	15	25
VIC Rural Small	1,881	14,030	12	77	73	93	90	81	84	12	17	16	25
VIC Other Rural	2,490	32,175	7	80	79	92	91	82	85	10	12	24	26
Brisbane SD Ipswich and Logan	3,430	18,808	15	81	75	92	90	81	84	13	17	14	23
Rest of Brisbane SD	15,070	76,779	16	75	71	93	89	73	72	12	15	14	24
Gold Coast City (inc Tweed Pt A)	3,666	21,042	14	73	68	90	86	70	75	15	20	15	26
Sunshine Coast	1,458	14,997	9	73	71	88	86	78	80	17	19	14	26
Townsville	967	8,467	10	76	73	87	87	74	79	12	15	18	29
QLD Rural Fringe	368	4,700	7	80	81	86	89	78	83	11	13	0	22
QLD Rural Large Toowoomba	366	5,276	6	72	70	94	91	72	79	13	18	26	25
QLD Rural Large Coastal	2,349	19,317	11	72	71	88	86	71	78	14	17	17	29
QLD Rural Small	570	7,723	7	81	74	90	88	80	84	14	17	10	24
QLD Rural Other	2,649	33,407	7	82	81	91	89	78	85	8	11	18	29
QLD Remote	826	9,602	8	83	76	91	84	82	83	6	12	14	41
Rest of Australia	53,464	242,618	18	76	72	93	87	74	78	11	15	15	27
AUSTRALIA*	325,028	1,058,100	23	76	72	95	88	73	76	11	15	14	28

* Includes persons not reporting no usual residence
Source: Customised matrix, 1996 Census

It is reasonable to conclude that these outcomes reflect conservative attitudes towards the family in NESB communities and that they contribute to the relatively low rate of lone parenthood amongst NESB women who have had a child. For example, in Rest of Melbourne, this rate is 50 per cent lower, with only 10 per cent of NESB women aged 30-39 being lone parents compared with 15 per cent of ESB women. Thus one of the factors contributing to the high concentration of lone parent families in regional settings is the relative lack of NESB women. This is not to say that ethnic background swamps the other factors considered above. As can be seen from the third last column of data in Table 6.9, the level of lone parenthood amongst ESB women is considerably higher in the areas of high concentration of lone parents (including most regional centres) than it is in areas with lower levels of lone parenthood. For example, 14 per cent of ESB women aged 30-39 in Rest of Sydney who have children were lone parents compared with 18-19 per cent of ESB women of the same age living in regional coastal centres.

CHAPTER 7: CONCLUSION

The provision of housing for lone parents is a major social question in Australia. The share of families with dependent children headed by a lone parent (mainly female) is estimated to have reached 22 per cent in 1999. Over the period in focus for this report (1991 to 1996) lone parent families increased by 32 per cent whereas couple families with dependent children remained static. These lone parent families are amongst the poorest families in Australia. As of 1996, 46 per cent of the female lone parents estimated to be receiving income of less than $300 per week. Some 75 per cent were dependent on the PPS. Since these families are raising around 20 per cent of the next generation this raises major questions about the well-being of the children involved.

As detailed below, most lone parent households were renters. Their rental costs constituted a major component of their household expenditure. There has been wide spread speculation that, because of this, lone parent households have been forced to move to low cost housing areas, particularly those that provide public housing. As a consequence the notion that migration is contributing significantly to lone parent concentrations has wide currency.

This study confirms that there are indeed relatively high concentrations of lone parents relative to other families in areas where housing prices and rental costs are low. However, the analysis has shown that the implied link between lone parent concentrations, low cost housing and lone parent migration is largely spurious. This results from two factors. The first is that, though lone parents are relatively mobile compared with couple families, their movements are usually over short distances. In particular only a tiny minority of lone parents move from the capital cities to regional centres, whether along the coast or inland. Most of the growth in lone parent concentrations over the period 1991 to 1996 in these areas was attributable to 'home grown' factors.

It is acknowledged that in some areas, such as the Sunshine Coast of Queensland and the northern coast of NSW, migration over the last couple of decades has been an important contributor to their rapid growth. Successive studies of this movement have shown that most of the movers were families in the 'battler' strata whose motive for moving was to seek out new employment or business opportunities. These people were often prompted to move by economic difficulties in the metropolitan or regional setting from which they migrated. As such, they constitute part of the socio-economic strata that we have identified as vulnerable to the economic restructuring process. These migrants subsequently found that the glossy images of economic dynamism in the sunbelt locations of South East Queensland and Eastern NSW were illusory. Thus, at the commencement of the period under analysis (1991), the communities in question were composed of people who were particularly vulnerable to the larger regional crisis that has beset Australia during this period and since. Thus in the sense that migration contributed vulnerable people to these regional populations as enumerated at the start of our 1991-1996 period, it can be regarded as contributing factor in the subsequent growth in lone parent concentrations. However, our analysis of the 1991-1996 period distinguishes between the impact of homegrown and migration factors over this time span only. It shows conclusively that migration during this period was not the major factor in the growth in lone parent concentrations which occurred in these localities.

The major hypothesis explored in order to understand these home grown factors was that they reflect underlying poor economic conditions in the areas of high lone parent concentrations. As shown in Chapter Six, the circumstances in these areas favoured early school leaving and early entry into partnering and childbearing on the part of young women. The same economic circumstances also tended to make partnerships, whether married or de facto, vulnerable to breakdown and thus lone parent formation.

These outcomes point strongly to the conclusion that lone parent concentrations are largely a product of the increasing socio-economic divide in Australia between the winners and losers in the process of economic restructuring. The implications differ somewhat for metropolitan and regional centres.

Implications for urban analysis

Within the metropolitan centres, spatial concentrations of rich and poor largely reflect competition for urban amenity. Those with the resources can compete for sites more effectively than those with more limited resources. In large metropolises, like Melbourne and Sydney, residents tend to work and live within particular regions of the city. Concern to locate near employment opportunities is a less significant determinant for lone mothers. Because these regions are large enough to include areas of diverse urban amenity, lone parents tend to be clustered in the low amenity and low cost housing parts of these areas.

The reasons for this are two-fold. First, there is a tendency for lone parents to move out of higher cost to lower cost housing areas. Most moves are from surrounding SLAs, though the direction of movement if predominantly from middle to outer suburbs where housing is cheaper. Thus, in the eastern side of Melbourne, the movement is more towards the middle-outer municipalities such as Maroondah in the east, and Frankston in the south-east.

The second and more important factor leading to high lone parent concentration in areas like Frankston in Melbourne and Gosford-Wyong in Sydney is that parts of these low socio-economic communities tend to display the characteristics which we have identified as likely to promote lone parent status.

In non-metropolitan areas the major concentrations of lone parents were found to be in inland regional centres and the small and large coastal centres in NSW and Queensland. Little evidence was found of spatial differentiation within these centres, at least at the SLA level. Poor people tend to be dispersed across these centres. To the extent there are spatial concentrations within these centres, it at the very local level not detectable by either the postcode or SLA level analysis employed in this study. As stated, migration was only a minor factor in the growth of lone parent concentrations in non-metropolitan areas. Of the net migration of lone parents into regional centres, most originated from hinterland. It was argued that the attraction for local movers was likely to be access to education, health and communal services rather than cheap housing.

Implications for housing issues

The great majority of lone parents are poor. They do need access to low cost housing. Our analysis of housing tenure showed that more than 57 per cent of female lone parents (with at least one dependent child aged 0-14 years) were living in rental housing. Of these renters, 37 per cent were in private rental and 20 per cent were in public rental. By comparison, only three per cent of partnered women (with at least one child aged 0-14) were in public housing and 16 per cent in private rental. As might be expected lone parents were found to be heavily located in areas where a relatively high proportion of private rental households were paying $100 per week or less in rent.

The analysis also showed that, where public housing is available, lone parents with children aged 0-14 are heavy users. Twenty-one per cent of the households living in public housing in Australia in 1996 were headed by female lone parents. (By comparison, only 17 per cent of public rental households were couple families with similar aged children[98] even though this family type is nearly five times more numerous than female lone parents.) But public housing was not a major cause of

[98] Calculated from 1996 Census data (unpublished customised matrix and CDATA96)

lone parent concentrations. This is especially so in coastal areas where public housing makes up a small proportion of the housing stock. To the extent that housing was a factor in migration movements to these coastal areas, it was largely the availability of low cost private rental housing. Whereas only 23 per cent of Sydney households in private rental in 1996 were paying less that $100 per week, in the NSW coastal centre the proportion was around 40 per cent.

In some areas of high lone parent concentrations, public housing does provide a substantial share of the dwellings for households. These include Campbelltown (for 16 per cent of households), Blacktown and Penrith (ten per cent) and NSW large inland rural centres (seven per cent) (See Table 5.16). Lone parent households form a substantial proportion (at least 25 per cent) of these public housing households in the areas cited. In these locations, migration was found to be a factor in increasing lone parent concentrations but, as well as some incoming migration, there was a relative reluctance of lone parent tenants to leave. Again, even taking this factor into account, 'home grown' factors were found to be the main cause for increased lone parent concentrations in these locations over the 1991 to 1996 period.

Policy implications

It would be welcome news if the concerns raised by lone parent concentration could be allayed by some simple solution such as building more public housing accommodation. The problem is that if this housing stock was added in areas of existing concentrations it is likely some of those taking up the new low cost housing would be attracted from outside the locality, it would thus add to lone parent concentrations. This outcome is only likely to be avoided if any new public housing was dispersed throughout metropolitan and regional centres and only if it is not constructed in large aggregates. There is no point in placing public housing in areas of low economic opportunity. Our analysis shows the lone parent occupants of public housing tend to stay put whether they are in areas of high or low economic opportunity.

Rent assistance appears to be a more flexible approach to providing housing assistance to lone parents. However, as rent assistance is paid at the same level throughout Australia regardless of the level of rents in particular localities, housing affordability problems are not necessarily alleviated. This circumstance probably contributes to the attraction of the low cost housing which was evident in all areas of high lone parent concentrations. One policy option for avoiding this outcome would be to provide rental assistance at higher levels (but within the constraints of a capping mechanism) in areas with relatively high rental prices.

The problems under discussion are not amenable to any quick fix solutions. The main lesson from our conclusions is that the tendency towards growing concentrations of lone parent families is a reflection of larger economic forces. It is one of the costs of the pathway of economic growth which Australia, like most other Western capitalist societies, has chosen to follow. It is hoped that our research will at the very least help to focus attention on the heart of the problem rather than the byways prompted by excessive attention to the migration factor.

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