

**Families on the Fringe:
A report on a study of social exclusion in
non-metropolitan communities**

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Overview

- Snapshot of non-metropolitan growth
- Relocators' perspectives on:
 - Reasons for relocating
 - Contributors to social exclusion
 - Contributors to social inclusion
- Policy & Practice Implications

Snapshot of Population Growth (2001-2006)

- Increasing population growth Australia
(6.6% growth between 2001 and 2006)
- Strongest growth: Qld, NSW & VIC
- Non-capital city growth strongest in Queensland

	Total Pop'n growth	No. to non-capital Cities areas
QLD	462,600	271,300 (58.7%)
NSW	242,000	85,900 (35.4%)
VIC	244,600	50,800 (20.7%)

Characteristics of Non-Metro Growth

- Population growth concentrated in relatively advantaged areas
- In coastal areas close to capital cities or regional growth areas & within commuting distance to work
- Inland migration appears to be motivated by different factors

Impact of non-metro migration

- Increased population growth is associated with increased relative advantage and displacement of disadvantage (usually towards inland areas)

Qualitative Methodology

- 4 diverse locations in NSW & QLD (coastal x2, urban fringe and inland)
- 55 service provider interviews
- 43 interviews with parents with young children
- Purposive sample
- Recent arrivals (majority < 2 years)
- Semi-structured interviews

Reasons for relocation:

Push & pull factors

	Employment	Lifestyle	Housing
Central Coast (NSW)	X	√	√
Urban Fringe (NSW)	X	√	√
Inland Rural (Qld)	√	√	√ (public)
Central (Qld), coastal	√	X	X

Reasons for Relocation

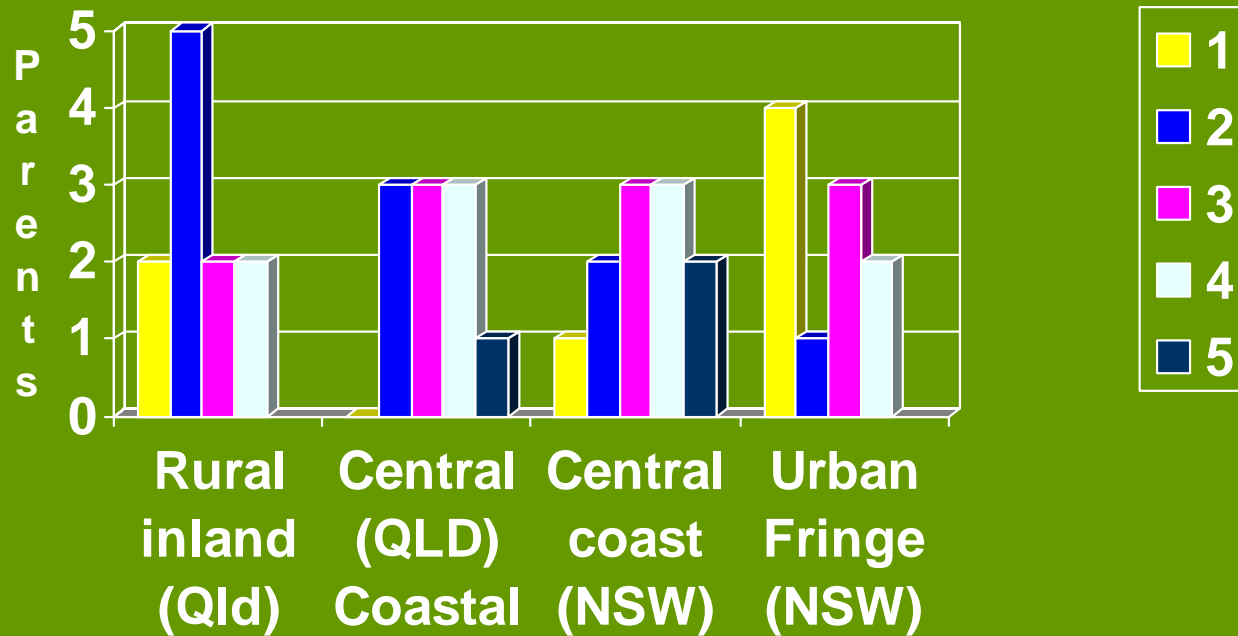
'Where I was living before in western Sydney, I was paying \$180 a week in a unit and it was horrible. So I thought, why not pay rent at the same price and actually be able to move to the beach?' (Parent)

I mean I've sort of lived in cities all my life, and do prefer the country. (Parent)

A lot of people that I'm in contact with move here for work, whether it be the army base – that's a big thing for young families to move to this area. The meat works is another one, so – mainly work-related, or family ties – because this is a community where families are generational. They're very large families, and they've been here for generations. (Service provider)

Sense of belonging

Parent rating of belonging
1=Not at all 3=Somewhat 5=Completely



Factors contributing to social exclusion

	Dislocation	Transport systems	Commuting for work	Inadequate Service Systems
Central Coast (NSW)	√	√	√	√
Urban Fringe (NSW)	√	√	√	√
Inland rural (Qld)	√	√	X	√
Central (Qld) coastal	√	√	X	√

Sometimes I feel a bit lonely and left out, but I just think kind of, 'Well what I can I do?' You know? And especially not having friends in the area, and my husband is working all the time so I don't think it's an issue for him now. (Parent)

I have sought [support services] to see if they are available, so I have actually searched the local government website to see what sort of services that are available because there are—without having um a supporting network made up of family or close friends, I sort of feel like I do need ideas professionally or someone you know am I being a bad parent by doing it [laughs] you know, all those sort of things um yeah so I do know there are a couple of services available but again it would be a matter of whether I would be able to access them because I work full time. (Parent)

So we've got a whole range of issues for kids - if both parents work in Sydney, in terms of long hours in childcare. Or kids - older kids that probably aren't really old enough, being left at home. Coming home from school and not having anyone home.... Or you've just got one parent, or both parents going to Sydney - as being a long time away from their families every day. So when they get home at night, you know - they're tired, they don't have much ability to participate in their communities. And think that prevents you from building a community of social networks. (Service Provider)

There's been a significant impact on the social human services sector, in that with the huge population influxes that [the] region are experiencing they're having several thousand people entering the community in such a short space of time. This is impacting on things like housing, healthcare facilities as well as community services such as counselling services (Service provider)

Contributors to Social Inclusion

- “Universal” opportunities for low key engagement
- Quality public amenities
- Social and educational services as facilitators

Both my neighbours when I first moved in here, they both come popping their head out of the fence saying hi, how are you and introducing themselves, yeah I got along well with one neighbour but you can't have two good neighbours (laughs)... I wouldn't move back to Sydney, put it that way. (Parent)

The community runs a number of events here that are aimed at getting community involved together. They have a GOATTS festival – which is 'Go Out and Talk To Someone'. And there is a youth driven art exhibition and that. So they do that. They have picnics in the parks and things like that, where the youth and the local services are all involved. And that gets people to know each other and network together. (Service provider)

I think from a community perspective it lies really more in the community's hands, to extend that welcome and say like, 'Come round for a barbie' you know? Not everything's solved by funding and social services. (Service provider)

Policy Implications

- Reducing the “push” factors that lead to relocation
- Improving planning, transport and service infrastructure in non-metropolitan areas
- Building community capacity to engage young families – inc low-key outreach of neighbours & colleagues, affordable recreational networks, proactive outreach of existing services

Policy & Practice Implications

- ↑ low-key outreach of neighbours & colleagues, affordable recreational networks, proactive outreach of existing services
- Adequate multi-service hubs in high profile locations plus capacity for assertive outreach
- Flexibility to provide mobile services
- Flexible funding focussed on outcomes relevant to local communities
- Workforce strategies to attract & retain professionals in non-metro areas