

# Mobility and multiple residential dynamics in contemporary city regions

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**Abstract:** This paper will explore the impacts of multiple home ownership and use of multiple residences on cities and regions in affluent societies. Trends of increasing affluence and mobility expose the shortcomings of conventional planning methods based on measures such as 'usual' residence. The paper considers ideas about 'sea change' and 'tree change', which figure prominently in the Australian media, and the impacts of multiple dwelling ownership, mobility and migration between metropolitan and non-metropolitan areas. Affluent incomers have both positive and negative impacts on many coastal and country areas. These processes are of interest to a range of policy makers as well as many citizens active in local community organizations. Comparative evidence will be introduced from Ireland and Victoria and related to an international literature on mobility, lifestyles, life courses, absentee home owners, household consumption, investment strategies, and public policy debates. The authors have conducted research separately on aspects of the ownership of second homes ('holiday homes') in Australia and Ireland and are currently undertaking further work on changing patterns of mobility, the impact of these changes on communities and public policy issues especially strategic land-use planning and intergovernmental fiscal relations.

## 1. Introduction

Increasing affluence and mobility have influenced the growth in multiple home ownership and multiple residences. Both coastal and inland areas have come under pressure from population growth and increases in part-time populations and visitors.

Important to this discussion is recognition of the terms 'sea change' and 'tree change' which have captured attention in recent population debates (Burnley & Murphy 2003; Salt 2004). In one sense these trends of lifestyle migration to coastal or inland areas are not new. In Australia and elsewhere they can be traced back to counterurbanisation trends of the 1970s and 1980s. One problem with both terms is that they can be used to describe a range of quite different trends associated with growth along the coast and peri-urban regions. Such growth trends may include: commuter populations; permanent residents; part time residents, holiday home owners or visiting populations (tourists and day trippers). Overall, the increase in population mobility can be traced to a number of factors such as:

- changing work-life-residence patterns;
- socio-economic and demographic changes;
- more flexible life styles and life style choices; and
- life course planning combining investment and consumption.

Such trends call into question some of the basic premises upon which planners and service providers operate. Place-based services have usually been seen in the context of resident rather than mobile populations and the funding mechanisms for providing those services have reflected this premise. While research on mobile populations is relatively new, some recent studies have provided insights into some of the implications arising for planning and service delivery. This paper will review international and Australian literature on the topic and then discuss in more detail some of the specific implications for planning.

## 2. Recent research

### *International*

There has been rapid growth of second home ownership in affluent countries, associated with growing household wealth and assets, especially housing assets, as well as growing mobility for large sections of the population (for a review, see Paris 2007). In England, for example, the most recent Survey of English Housing (SEH) shows that the number of households with second homes increased from around 339,000 in 1994-95 to nearly 600,000 by 2006. The SEH definition of second

homes corresponds with the Australian term holiday homes, i.e. dwellings owned and used by family and friends for leisure purposes, not rented out. Although the use of such dwellings is primarily for leisure, some scholars have identified the purchase of second homes as an element of life-course planning as many second home owners plan to move permanently to these homes on retirement. Other motivations include personal or family investment strategies (Coppock 1977; Hall & Muller 2004; Gallent *et al* 2005; Paris 2007; Smith 2005). Such dwellings are thus both part of both housing and leisure markets (Dower 1977).

Second home ownership figures prominently in housing policy debates in many countries as many politicians, community groups, environmental activists and organisations campaign against further development (ARHC 2006; Joseph Rowntree Foundation 2006; Paris 2007; Wallace *et al* 2005). Policy-related concerns about the impact of second homes are often expressed in terms of conflicting interests of 'locals' and 'outsiders'. Many commentators, however, have demonstrated the weakness of using such a simple dichotomy as it falsely implies that locals all share the same interests and priorities (Gallent *et al* 2005; Gustafson 2006; Hall & Muller 2004; McIntyre *et al* 2006). Hall and Muller (2004) also cite many studies that record benefits accruing to local economies as a result of growing second home ownership. Overall, the impact of second homes is often strongly contested but growing second home ownership is rarely the only factor affecting a town or region (Butler 1998; Gallent *et al* 2005; Newby 1979).

It also has implications for inter-governmental transfers, especially relating to local service provision, in those countries where central governments allocate funding to lower tiers of government on a per capita basis.

Much of the writing on second home ownership has followed empirical or theoretical perspectives deriving from applied public policy analysis or planning (Gallent & Tewdr-Jones 2001; Gallent *et al* 2005). Following Coppock (1977) most other scholarly writing on second homes derives from leisure and tourism studies, rural studies, and cultural studies (Gallent *et al* 2005; Hall 2005; Hall & Muller 2004; Hettinger 2005; McIntyre *et al* 2006). This literature explores the combined effects of growing mobility and enhanced capacities for consumption in affluent societies, the changing nature of tourism as a vital element of enhanced mobility, and the many ways in which places are created, changed and consumed by tourists and other leisure users (Urry 1995, 2000, 2004; Sheller & Urry 2004). Hall (2005, p. 24) argues that time-space structures have changed enormously over the last 25 years and that "advances in transportation and communication technology [have enabled increasing numbers of people] to travel long distances to engage in leisure behaviour [as] part of their routine activities".

There is a substantial literature on international variations and an emerging literature on transnational dimensions of second home ownership (Coppock 1977; Hall & Muller 2004; Gallent *et al* 2005; McIntyre *et al* 2006). There are well-documented traditions of regional or local second homes in many European countries, including: Nordic summer houses (Periainen 2006); country homes in Southern Europe (Leal 2006), and Russian dachas (Renaud 1995; Struyck & Angelici 1996). In many new world countries, second home development was an element in making places, often in previously-unsettled coastal areas. In Australia, for example, self-built second homes in unsettled coastal zones were often followed by subsequent consolidation and growth into distinctive settlements which have become increasingly dominated by commercial development (Selwood & Tonts 2006).

The growth in second home ownership in the UK has been seen as a form of rural gentrification (Paris 2007; Phillips 1993, 2005; Smith 2002; Smith & Phillips 2001). The planning regime in Britain has strictly limited new development in high amenity areas so the only way that second home owners and other higher income groups could acquire second homes was by purchasing existing properties, thus contributing to the transformation of the countryside and coastal villages into gentrified sites for leisure, retirement and/or commuting. Paris (2007) brings together insights from various authors to conceptualise the process of second home development in the UK: the first phase comprised pioneer renovation of abandoned or run-down dwellings, the second phase continued through revitalisation of areas and purchase of existing homes from former lower-income residents, and the current phase comprises largely commercial development and redevelopment. This perspective shows that other

processes of change, including counterurbanisation and retirement migration, often overlap and interrelate with growing second home ownership.

There has been rapid growth of second home ownership across national borders as residents of rich countries purchase houses, apartments, villas, mansions and country estates (Hall & Muller 2004; Gallent *et al* 2005; McIntyre *et al* 2006; Paris 2007). Rising disposable incomes and growing housing assets in rich countries have enabled the export of second home owners to lower cost housing markets in overseas locations (Forrest 2005; Smith 2005). Large developers typically lead second home and resort projects, often combining the marketing of second homes for leisure use and as investments with other leisure and commercial developments: shopping centres, golf courses, marinas, rental holiday homes and retirement accommodation (Hettinger 2005).

### **Australian research**

A number of recent Australian studies have looked at regions with high levels of second home owners or absentee land owners. Studies of absentee landowners in South Australia (Hugo & Rudd 2004) and Western Australia (Kelly, G. and Hosking, K. 2005) found similar characteristics among their survey respondents. Hugo and Rudd's study focused on the Yankalilla region to the south of Adelaide (sample = 386) while Kelly and Hosking examined absentee property owners in the Margaret River region south of Perth (sample = 900).

In both cases, absentee owners were mostly living in the nearby capital cities. Non-permanent residents were found to own their property for a variety of reasons, mostly for lifestyle, retirement options and to maximise financial investments. They were more likely to be working in professional occupations and having higher incomes than non-residents. A high proportion indicated an intention to live permanently in their second home – 43% for Yankalilla (Hugo & Rudd, 2004, p. 34) and 50% for Margaret River (Kelly & Hosking 2005, p. 16). Both surveys found a common commitment to the second home location, appreciation of its natural amenity and concern about potential overdevelopment.

In Victoria, recent research on non-resident landowners includes a survey undertaken in the Shire of Macedon Ranges to the immediate north west of Melbourne (Caddick & Marshall 2006). The study aimed to better understand absentee landowners within the context of land management and natural resource management. A key part of the process was to create a profile of absentee landowners in order to better understand their motivations and land use practices. The final sample of useable survey returns included 131 landowners. For the purposes of the study, an absentee landholder was defined as "someone who owns land two hectares or larger, but does not live on it" (Caddick & Marshall 2006, p. 7). The reason for excluding properties smaller in size than 2 hectares is not clearly explained by the report's authors, but it seems to have created some bias towards working farms rather than small bushblocks or weekenders. The study data indicated that land held by non-resident landowners was being used for: agriculture; recreation, and bush preservation. Motivations for obtaining the property ranged from financial (generating income, tax benefit) to personal (lifestyle, future home site) as well as environmental. A large majority (63%) of the landowners lived in close proximity (less than one hour) to their land, and around half reported visiting their property on a weekly basis. Given the report's context within natural resource management, the exclusion of small land holdings may make sense, however, in the context of second *home* owners (rather than rural property owners), the definition creates some limitation in understanding the broad range of mobile populations.

In 2007, two studies were commissioned by the Victorian Department of Sustainability and Environment to investigate aspects of population mobility in both tree-change and coastal contexts.

The first of these two studies (Sweeney Research 2007) focused on non-resident ratepayers in Mansfield Shire which is located around 2 hour's drive to the north east of Melbourne. The Shire contains many holiday homes and bush blocks with around half the Shire's 7,000 ratepayers having their main residence outside the Shire. A total of 1,200 useable surveys formed the basis of analysis. Eighty percent of the non-resident ratepayers were based in Melbourne and the main reason for purchasing property in the Shire was to use it as a holiday home, or a weekender (45%). In line with the findings of other studies, Mansfield non-residents showed a high level of mobility with visits being frequent and often of short duration. Thirty percent visited more than once a month with 19 percent visiting at least fortnightly. Thirty-six percent of respondents indicated that they were likely to move to the Shire at some point in the future with

the majority expecting to make the move in the coming decade. While the majority (52%) of those intending to move to the Shire were planning to do so as retirees, a significant proportion (35%) were intending to continue working in either a full time or part time capacity.

In coastal areas, second homeowners are only one segment of the non-resident population base with seasonal tourists and day visitors being of major importance. Two coastal locations – Torquay and Phillip Island were chosen as case studies in a study of coastal population fluctuations (SGS 2007; Urban Enterprise 2007). Torquay has a permanent population of 8,500 that is strongly growing owing to its proximity to Geelong and Melbourne. Phillip Island has a permanent population of 9,000 that is growing by attracting many families and retirees. Both locations have a strong summertime population peak owing to the prevalence of holiday homes and attractiveness for daytrippers. The study had two key aims – the first to quantify the level of population fluctuation over an annual period, and the second, to analyse the impacts and implications of this type of fluctuation for planners and service providers. A total of 45 interviews were conducted with infrastructure providers, service planners, and community organizations in order to elicit this information.

Overall, the Australian studies undertaken since 2003 highlight some common characteristics of non-resident populations. In particular, these populations are characterized by high levels of mobility – they visit their second homes frequently. Allied to this is often a level of affluence, although the mix of farmers and small bushblock owners in inland areas distinguish them to some extent from some of the more affluent, high value coastal areas close to capital cities. Furthermore, coastal areas tend to have more concentrated seasonal peaks which creates particular planning issues. These will be explored in the following sections.

### 3. Implications of mobile populations

For planning purposes, it is important to distinguish between different types of mobile populations. Table 1 provides a list of the types of non-permanent residents who may place demands on local infrastructure or services. It is important to note that many of these categories will not be mutually exclusive. Rather they can overlap in time and space, as can their impacts. For example, ‘tree change’ and ‘sea change’ regions will often have a mix of holiday home owners, day visitors and tourists in commercial accommodation making up the part time population of an area.

**Table 1: Types of mobile populations**

Mobile populations	Characteristics & impacts
Part-time residents - non-resident ratepayers - holiday home owners	Coastal areas experience highest peaks in summer, inland areas likely to have part-time residents throughout year.  <i>Service and infrastructure use:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Roads, waste, water &amp; sewerage</li> <li>• Less use of council services like library</li> <li>• Utilisation of local retail businesses</li> </ul>
Tourists - overnight visitors - day visitors	Visitors to coasts and other attractions
Temporary workers - seasonal workers - mobile professionals - construction crews	Can include wide range of skilled and unskilled workers ranging from harvest labour and construction crews through to professionals filling skills shortages by acting as contractors and consultants  <i>Service and infrastructure use:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Roads, waste, water &amp; sewerage</li> <li>• Longer staying temporary workers likely to use range of council services, schools, health services</li> <li>• Utilisation of local retail businesses</li> <li>• Commercial accommodation (can compete with tourists in areas like Mildura)</li> </ul>

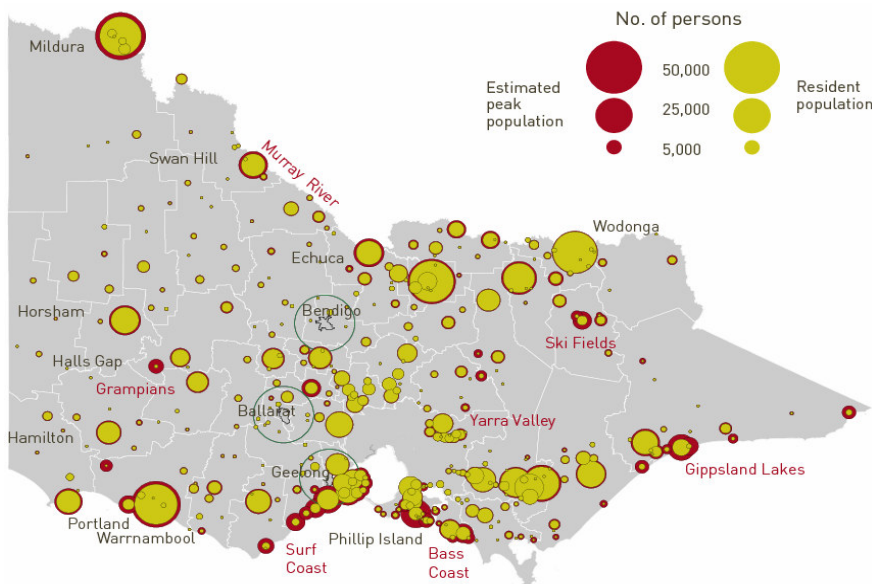
Source: derived from Reynolds 2007

## Population measures

Demographic data most commonly used for planning purposes is provided by the ABS. Five-yearly census data provides a range of information on population and housing characteristics annual estimated resident population (ERP) data provide regular estimates of population numbers and age structure down to the Statistical Local Area (SLA). Both these sets of data provide information on *resident* populations so they are limited in terms of revealing the nature of mobile populations except for Census questions relating to migration. Census data do not provide a picture of peak population, although the number of vacant dwellings counted by the Census can provide a proxy indicator for holiday home numbers in certain locations.

An estimation of peak overnight populations (figure 1) used unoccupied dwellings data from the ABS Census, multiplied by the average household size for regional Victoria in 2001 (2.52 persons). Tourist accommodation data from the RACV was also used to estimate potential overnight tourist numbers on the basis of either 2 persons per bedroom, or a person capacity where this was stated. The estimates do not take into account day visitors.

**Figure 1: Peak population estimates for selected towns, Victoria 2001**



Source: Victorian Government 2006 Regional Matters

Peak populations associated with seasonal labour demands have also been estimated (table 2) however, these numbers will vary from month to month and from year to year depending on harvests, weather, and changes in the application of labour-saving technology.

**Table 2: Estimated labour demands for harvest seasons, Goulburn Murray region 2004**

Location	Peak harvest season	Est'd resident population* 2004	Additional labour required 2004
Mildura	All year	40,633	13,000
Swan Hill	All year	9,559	5,000
Robinvale	All year	3,985	6,000
Echuca	Dec-Apr	10,007	700
Shepparton	Dec-Jul	40,761	11,000

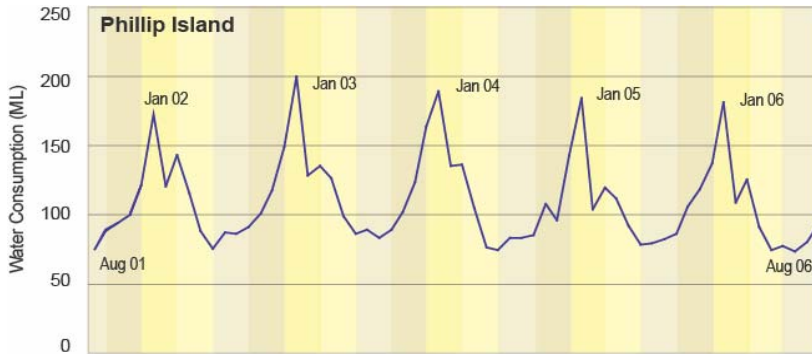
\* Statistical Local Area

Source: Victorian Government 2006 Regional Matters

A more detailed estimate of seasonal population peaks is provided by the Victorian Government coastal population fluctuations report (SGS 2007). In order to estimate the scale of population fluctuations a

number of proxy indicators were examined and their suitability for informing population estimations determined. Indicators included: rubbish collection; tourist centre enquiries; water consumption; traffic counts; tourist visitor survey data, survey of tourist accommodation; ABS census (unoccupied dwellings), and non-resident home owners. Of these indicators, water consumption provided one of the best indications of the pattern of annual peaks and troughs (figure 3).

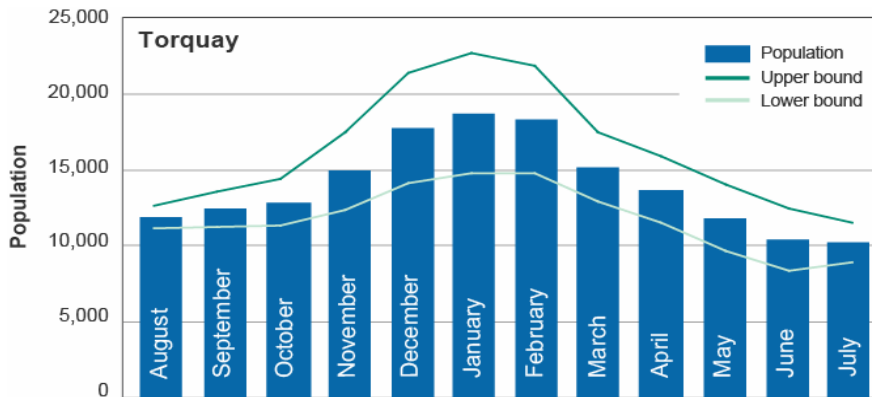
**Figure 3: Annual variation in water consumption, Phillip Island**



Source: SGS 2007

An estimation methodology was then developed for calculating seasonal population fluctuations. The result for Torquay is shown in figure 2.

**Figure 2: Estimated population fluctuation, Torquay**



Source: SGS 2007

One of the key differences between tree change and coastal locations seems to be in the pattern of seasonal peaks. The popularity of coastal areas for summertime holidays and events creates very strong peak populations over the summer months. This is heightened by large visitor populations – including day trippers, who can have a very concentrated impact on coastal areas. In contrast, evidence from Mansfield and Macedon Ranges points to a more even pattern of visitation through the year. As discussed earlier, some of this pattern arises from a proportion of non-residents being farmers rather than holiday makers.

#### 4. Planning issues

##### **Local economic development**

The Mansfield survey showed that retail businesses are the main beneficiaries from non-residents. Those most commonly used by non-residents included: groceries (used by 93% overall, 54% often); hardware (89% overall, 50% often) and clothing / homewares (70% overall, 15% often). The Yankalilla study also confirms the use of local businesses for basic provisioning of part-time residents (Sweeney Research 2007).

In coastal areas, tourism can bring in major economic benefits to local businesses, however, some coastal areas can have difficulty maintaining business viability outside of peak periods. This can lead to slow advancements in retail diversity and sophistication of accommodation, cafes, and restaurants. Furthermore, because tourism tends to rely on low paid, low skilled, casualised workforce, the local workforce can have difficulty advancing in terms of skills. The casual workforce usually re-hired and re-trained for the seasonal peak period (SGS 2007).

Nevertheless, there have been improvements in off-peak business conditions in Phillip Is. and Torquay due to growth in permanent/semi-permanent populations. Growth in commuter populations has also boosted permanent populations and sustained new business growth. Coastal towns located further away from large cities are less likely to have this advantage and their economies can remain highly seasonal (SGS 2007).

### ***Infrastructure and service provision***

Findings from Mansfield and the coastal population study highlight some of the implications of non-permanent populations on infrastructure and services (table 3). Inland tree change regions and coastal sea change regions both face the challenge of non-residents with urban expectations in terms of service availability and quality. This can place pressure on regional local government areas, particularly when their funding base and planning capacities are limited. Part time populations may have different socio-economic characteristics which can create polarization or levels of resentment in some receiving communities. Infrastructure issues are likely to arise in coastal or inland areas although the nature of the infrastructure issue will vary. The concentrated nature of coastal populations, focused on beach access and views can create issues of road congestion and high peak demands on certain services. Although demands may be more geographically dispersed in a non-coastal location, there are greater issues surrounding network services like roads water, sewerage and electricity, the maintenance of which may be made difficult and costly where population is dispersed.

### ***Community development***

Literature on mobile populations often highlights perceived or actual issues around community polarization. Recent research evidence suggests a more complex picture of the relationship between permanent and non-permanent populations.

In terms of community involvement, the Mansfield study indicated that non-residents had a limited level of community involvement with local residents. Membership of community clubs or organisations was below 25% among non-residents. The most common type of organisation to be involved with is a sporting club (8%). Time constraints appeared to be a factor especially with younger non-resident landowners with work and family commitments elsewhere. Many expressed an intention to spend more time in the areas in the future. While community involvement may be limited among non-residents, 36% nevertheless indicated that they knew their Mansfield neighbours very well, and a further 43% knew their names or at least said "hello" to them. Experience during recent bushfires suggest that such events can bring residents and non-residents closer together. Non-residents were important in offering financial support to the area during the fires (Sweeney Research 2007).

In coastal areas the degree of resident/non-resident connection can be complicated by the degree of population fluctuations due to high summer tourist numbers as well as the very high value of some coastal property. In Torquay and Phillip Island high visitor numbers were found to create various issues. Roads and parking were reported as being strongly affected by seasonal populations. Traffic congestion can affect the efficient delivery of council services such as meals-on-wheels and garbage collection as well as the delivery of emergency services. A proposal to introduce parking meters in Torquay created controversy partly because of the problem of how to tax visitors not locals. Law and order issues were also reported, especially in relation to major events and specific peak periods like schoolies week and new year 's eve. According to local police, reported crimes increase during peak visitation periods and specific criminal elements can be attracted to areas with high visitor levels. On Phillip Island, the annual clean up costs for major events is around \$32,000 for Council and community. This has led to some conflict between those looking for a quiet escape and those wanting to bring in tourist dollars (SGS 2007).

Income polarisation was also evident in these coastal locations as new development is often geared towards high income earners from outside the region. Exclusive holiday apartments, luxury retirement villages and master-planned golf course estates are examples of such development. In addition many holiday home owners rent their property part-time and rents during major events and peak periods are often greater than could be gained from permanent rentals. As a result, there is little long term rental accommodation available, but high rates of housing vacancy.

**Table 3: Implications of population fluctuations on infrastructure and services**

COASTAL POPULATION STUDY	MANSFIELD STUDY
<p><b>Water supply</b> Infrastructure needs to meet summer peak but funding falls on small rate base.</p> <p><b>Roads</b> Traffic and congestion can be major issues during peak season as population is concentrated along coastal strip and can include holiday makers and day trippers.</p> <p><b>Telecommunications</b> Telecommunications infrastructure encourages semi-permanent residents to stay longer and conduct business – this can have positive spin offs for local economy.</p> <p><b>Boating facilities</b> Increase in boating and fishing activity has created demand for new jetties, moorings, car parks – demand from day visitors who do not form part of the rates base for infrastructure. Sewerage &amp; wastewater from boats – infrastructure required on moorings.</p> <p><b>Public toilets</b> Need to meet peak capacity. Cleaning costs increase during peak while maintenance costs borne throughout off peak season as well.</p> <p><b>Emergency services</b> Increase in numbers of vehicle accidents in holiday season due to higher population and increased traffic. Peak season coincides with fire season - Surf Coast the highest risk fire area in Victoria in terms of fuel availability and location of houses. Volunteer services (CFA, SES), local council, police involved in fire education and in emergency management and logistics. Involvement by State Government agencies during fires. Visitor populations can increase risk of fire ignition.</p> <p><b>Surf life saving</b> Demands are higher in peak summer season. Increasing need for volunteers. Non-locals may be unfamiliar with local conditions creating higher demands than local population.</p> <p><b>Waste collection</b> Greater demand for waste collection in peak periods.</p>	<p><b>Service expectations</b> 20% of non-resident respondents indicated that lack of services was a factor that could prevent them moving permanently to the region.</p> <p><b>Network services</b> The physical dispersal of population through tree change areas like Mansfield can create issues for networked services like water supply, roads and electricity. Roads and road sealing were highlighted as being of particular concern among non-residents with 22% listing this as a key issue. The frequency of travel to properties is likely to raise a range of issues related to road maintenance and potentially place high cost burdens on local government.</p> <p><b>Telecommunications</b> 25% of non-resident respondents indicated that lack of broadband and mobile phone coverage could prevent them moving permanently to the area.</p> <p><b>Council services and facilities</b> Use of swimming pool, library and performing arts centre was relatively low among non-residents although significantly higher for those living in Mansfield township.</p> <p><b>Other service use</b> Nearly half the non-resident respondents had used the hospital. A third had used property maintenance services and a similar proportion had used tourism services.</p> <p><b>Informal service arrangements</b> 59% of Mansfield non-resident respondents ask their neighbours to keep an eye on their property when they are not there, while 18% rely on them for assistance in maintenance issues such as putting out the bin.</p>

Sources: SGS 2007; Sweeney Research 2007.

### **Environmental impacts**

An inherent challenge in regions with high visitor populations is maintaining the natural amenity of the area which attracts people without compromising it through the impacts of those people. There is uncertainty regarding the relative impacts of different population groups – local residents; holiday home owners or short-term visitors and, to some degree, there is a level of blame-shifting that occurs between these groups. Nevertheless the pressure of holiday peak periods clearly exacerbates the overall scale of problems like littering and habitat disturbance.

The coastal population study highlighted some specific environmental impacts of population fluctuations. Issues raised by local authorities and community organisations in Torquay and Phillip Island included:

- Vegetation (removal of natural vegetation; introduction of exotic species / weeds);
- Wildlife (habitat disturbance by pets, noise, trampling, trail bikes, 4WD, firewood collection; increase in road kill during peak periods);
- Littering; and,
- Marine (compliance with maritime and conservation laws).

The costs of dealing with these environmental pressures falls on local and state government as well as local volunteer organisations (SGS 2007).

### **Funding processes**

Funding processes for the provision of local infrastructure and services are often based on the size of local populations. In most cases a measure of resident population is used. However, this assumes that the resident population is a true measure of potential infrastructure and service users.

Current funding for local government is guided by national equity principles outlined in the Grants Commission Funding process, including that of horizontal equalisation:

General purpose grants are to be allocated to councils, as far as practicable, on a full horizontal equalisation basis. This aims to ensure that each council is able to function, by reasonable effort, at a standard not lower than the average standard of other councils in the State/Territory (VGC 2006, p. 12).

In other words, all areas in Australia are to receive funding that will enable basic infrastructure and services to be provided. Some conflict can nevertheless arise between the idea of providing one service per place or one service per person. Per capita funding is based on an assumption that people have one resident location. However, if people are assumed to be connected to a single location and the service funding based on a place-based per capita measure, then people living in two locations will receive less than a full service in each location. On the other hand, if the person is counted in two locations and service provision to be available to them in both places then the funding pool would need to be higher. In either case, there remains a conflict between the physical location of infrastructure and services and the increasing mobility of the people that use them.

The current Grants Commission funding formula takes into account some aspects of a mobile population by considering vacant dwelling rates (non-resident population) and tourism levels (visitor populations). However, the various streams of local government funding do not necessarily cover all aspects of servicing mobile or temporary populations (table 5).

Because mobile populations are still emerging as a topic for detailed research, there is a limited base of evidence and data for such funding processes to be re-examined. Nevertheless, some recent studies do allow some insights into the range of mobile populations and the potential impacts these might have on local government service provision and associated funding issues.

**Table 5: Mobile populations and Local Government funding streams**

LOCAL RATES REVENUE	REVENUE FROM GRANTS COMMISSION FUNDING		
	<i>Dwellings-based</i>	<i>Population based adjusted for vacancies</i>	<i>Population based adjusted for tourism</i>
Paid by resident and non resident ratepayers, but not by visitors or temporary residents	Holiday homes and occupied dwellings are counted. Tourist accommodation is not included	Holiday homes accounted for but not tourist accommodation which may contain temporary residents as well as tourists	Includes overnight stays (tourists and temporary workers) but not day visitors

## **5. Conclusion**

Research on part-time populations is in its infancy. The range of terminology – mobile populations; service populations; absent populations – is itself indicative of the difficulty in labeling a phenomenon that is, by definition, dynamic. Furthermore existing datasets are limited in being able to count mobile

populations. Demographic analysis is traditionally based on the notion of a resident population and an assumption that residence is a single dwelling.

One problem arising from the complexity and dynamism of population mobility is that research can present some confusing findings due to:

- the different objectives they are seeking to achieve (peak population estimation, community, infrastructure/services, socio-economic, environmental, land management);
- the geographical areas being examined (sea change, tree change, peri-urban, coastal); and,
- the different types of people being surveyed (day visitors, overnight tourists, part-time residents, holiday home owners, farmers).

Because of this diverse array of objectives, the studies cited in this paper necessarily used different methodologies. For example, the Macedon Ranges study with its focus on land management excluded small properties (less than 2 hectares). This tended to exclude the small 'weekender' property owner which other researchers may be interested in – the Mansfield study, for example, which wanted to understand issues of infrastructure and service use. Clarity around the population being examined and the purposes for analysing them are important in order to better understand the characteristics of mobile populations, their impacts, and implications for planning policy.

Research to date suggests some tensions in developing adequate policy responses to the issues raised by mobile populations:

- Who reaps the benefits and who carries the costs of mobile and visitor populations?
- How can costs be appropriately placed on visitors and local ratepayers?
- How can competing expectations be dealt with – those wanting a getaway versus those wanting economic development and local wealth creation?

These present multiple and inter-related challenges for community associations, local government, state government and federal funding mechanisms.

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