Inmigration to Rural Areas: Issues in Wellbeing, Resilience and Social Cohesion

Volume two

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CHAPTER NINE: RESULTS AND DISCUSSION
Four Key Questions and Four Key Themes

Objectives of this Chapter:

Chapter Nine presents the survey responses to four key questions designed to provide information on immigration, neotribalism, social capital and *habitus*. The results show the level of life satisfaction of the participants.

Section One presents participant reasons for moving to a rural area, thereby contributing to knowledge of immigration in the twenty-first century. The participants self-select into immigrants and locals.

Section Two lists the positive and negative factors related to living in a rural area and Section Three explores resilience by asking participants for the coping strategies they use to overcome negative factors. Wellbeing is central to Section Two and Three, providing information on factors that influence migratory decisions and the establishment of a personally satisfactory *habitus*.

Section Four investigates social cohesion as a contributor to social capital through responses to a question asking participants to describe the support they offer newcomers.
Section One: Reasons for Moving to a Rural Area

This item is designed to add to understanding of immigration to inland Australia in the 21st century. Participants give many reasons for immigration (See Table 9.1.) and there is unavoidable overlap among the categories. These participants moved to improve their personal wellbeing under the influence of economic, emotional, environmental and social factors. As supported by previous research, employment remains their primary motivation, followed by lifestyle and environment (Bell, 1996; Halfacree, 1992, 1998, 2002; Ni Laoire, 1999; 2001: 1993; Moon, 1995).

Of course every category demonstrates an effort to enhance wellbeing and many of the listed categories can be described as lifestyle choices. By adding together the figures for environment, lifestyle, safety, retiree, downshifter, health, alternative lifestyle, and preferences for a small community and like-minded people, I create a group who moved for lifestyle reasons. This is 286 responses or 66.51% of the sample but many participants scored more than one category (employment and a lifestyle choice, or cheap housing and a lifestyle choice) but the figures demonstrate how deeply participants value a desired lifestyle. Results are similar to those found in Williams & Jobes (1990) study of immigrants and by Lundholm et al (2004) who find many of their outmigrants moving for lifestyle reasons.
Table 9.1: Reasons Why Participants Moved to the Country

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>EMPLOYMENT</th>
<th>ENVIRONMENT</th>
<th>LIFESTYLE</th>
<th>MARRY A LOCAL</th>
<th>LOCAL PERSON</th>
<th>START BUSINESS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>145 (33.7%)</td>
<td>85 (19.8%)</td>
<td>82 (19%)</td>
<td>59 (13.7%)</td>
<td>59 (13.7%)</td>
<td>35 (6.1%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RETURN HOME</td>
<td>HEALTH</td>
<td>DOWNSHIFT</td>
<td>RETIREMENT</td>
<td>AFFORD HOUSE</td>
<td>SAFETY</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>29 (6.8%)</td>
<td>25 (5.8%)</td>
<td>22 (5.1%)</td>
<td>18 (4.1%)</td>
<td>18 (4.1%)</td>
<td>17 (4%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ALT LIFESTYLE</td>
<td>SMALL COMMUNITY</td>
<td>CHEAP LIVING</td>
<td>AMPLE AMENITIES</td>
<td>LIKE-MINDED PEOPLE</td>
<td>MISSING</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14 (3.2%)</td>
<td>14 (3.2%)</td>
<td>7 (1.6%)</td>
<td>7 (1.6%)</td>
<td>2 (0.05%)</td>
<td>21 (5%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The number of participants and percentage of participants who scored each category. Percentages total more than 100 due to multiple choices.

**Employment and Financial Reasons for Rural Inmigration**

For 145 people (33%) in my survey employment is the primary life-course factor motivating inmigration. For some participants a rural appointment is a job requirement: *had to do a country posting* (Case 366), while others move to advance their career, gain promotion, or increase their income, as in *job incentive* (Case 364). Such reasons influence people to move but they do not motivate them to remain where they have been posted unless the location meets their needs and the family develops a liking for the area. Job-hunters, labourers and contractors who participated in the survey write that they moved to pick up available work: *ease of finding varied work* (Case 202).
Some of this group may find it economically sensible to live where they have found employment and decide to settle there.

Some of the participants in various professions chose a rural posting to ease work stress and prevent burnout: *low stress work* (Case 356). After the exigencies of some super-charged urban work places they report that it is pleasant to be treated better: *a change from the city ... to where the people are more friendly* (Case 333). Some find that a rural appointment provides increased collegiality: *the differences in work environment i.e. small group of colleagues - closer team* (Case 93). For these cases there is motivation to remain indefinitely and they are likely to stay as long as their experiences remain positive.

These results support Minarick and Allen's (2003), finding that some participants accept a move to the country because it offers more autonomy and broadens their work experience: *range of duties able to do at work...wide range of responsibilities* (Case 286). A rural move can provide opportunities to work indepth or to see a wider range of clients:

*I love the broad scope of work I get to do; a much more generalist caseload than I would work with in a metro area* (Case 549).

Thirty five of the participants (8%) are self-employed and moved for commercial reasons, for example *business partnership* (Case 380). One business person finds value in being an owner: *self-employed: no capricious spiteful bosses > much less stress! Building of...*
business from the ground up is rewarding (Case 90). His situation appears similar to that reported by McKenzie (2006) and much happier than that reported by many business owners in the region (GSDC Report, 2001; Gorton et al, 1998). Interviewee B is more typical of the latter group, moving to the region for a challenge and then finding the customer base too small and exclusive.

Shire Councils are particularly keen to welcome business and tradespeople as they provide much-needed services and may become employers of local people if their business flourishes. They offer incentives according to need and remoteness.

In the Great Southern Report (Patterson Market Research, 1999) 38% of the sample moved to the region for employment related reasons. This is a larger percentage than I find in this sample and, since many of my participants are professionals, I feel it may be a sign of reduced services in the region. Due to falling population numbers many agencies have removed or reduced their services and so there are less professional people working in the more remote areas of the region.

As in previous research (Burnley, 1988; Hugo & Bell, 1998), the cost of housing is a major consideration and 18 of the participants in my survey moved because housing is more affordable in the country: cheaper housing (Case 400). These tend to be retirees, people wanting acreage, or those on low incomes seeking cheaper properties. Several moved because it was all they could afford. Both
here and overseas the high price of urban housing forces pensioners and people on small or fixed incomes to buy further from the city (Lindgren, 2003).

For those on a low income being able to grow their own food, walk to the shops, and generally cut back on expenses is important and seven participants state that they moved because of a *lower cost of living* in the country. One participant reports that there is *less temptation to spend money* in a rural area (Case 133).

Participants who move to the country for employment, cheaper housing, and cheaper living conditions are, in a sense, forced relocators (Burnley, 1988; Cheshire, 2006; Hugo & Bell, 1998). For some of these participants the city and coast are financially beyond their reach and for others speedy advancement in their profession may be achieved by moving to a rural area.

Shire Councils realise that to retain professionals on staff they need to offer incentives, particularly in the form of housing, and Shire Clerks, for instance, are provided with good quality homes. Where a government department is unable to offer suitable accommodation for its rural employees, Shires may pay for the building of appropriate houses which are then rented to the department.
Retirement

In a characteristic pattern (Duncombe et al, 2001; Frey, 1995; Friedrich & Warnes, 2000; Hamilton, 2004; Lindgren, 2003; Longino et al, 2002; Stockdale, 2006) 18 participants (4% of the sample) state that they immigrated as a retirement move. This is a small percentage but the majority of participants are pre-retirement.

Retirement immigration tends to be location-specific (Burnley 1996; Duncombe et al, 2001; Hugo & Bell 1998; Lindgren, 2003; Longino et al, 2002; Walmsley et al, 1998). The retirees in my survey show the same preferences for leisure amenities, small town peacefulness, mild climates, beautiful scenery and a relaxed lifestyle, as found in the research mentioned above. Some realise that their income will be limited and seek an area where they may buy cheaply and invest the surplus and hopefully live at reduced expense.

Material from Shire Councils and interviewees support previous research that retirees are welcome incomers who bring more benefits than problems to the areas they choose to settle (Duncombe et al, 2001). At least one Shire within driving distance of Perth has been able to organise the infrastructure, attract medical staff, and advertise itself as a desirable retirement location. By providing geriatric care this Shire has ensured that retirees will not need to make a shift out of town when they are faced with going into care, while aged-care provides employment for local people.
Lifestyle Reasons for Moving to a Rural Area

Lifestyle and environment are terms that my survey participants use interchangeably. For instance, the retirees who moved to a high-amenity scenic location are choosing a lifestyle and the word applies to a range of categories described below. This study supports previous research findings (Lindgren, 2003) that quality of life is increasingly valued and sought out by immigrators.

In this survey lifestyle is cited as a reason for moving to the country by 82 respondents (19% of the sample), 14 participants (3%) describe themselves as alternative lifestylers, another 14 (3%) say that they want to live in a small community, and two participants want to live among like-minded people. There are 22 participants (5%) who state that they are downshifters, supporting earlier research findings on the growing popularity of this lifestyle movement (Elgin. 1993; Hamilton & Mail, 2003; The Harwood Group, 1995; The Trends Research Institute, 1994). Lifestyle is cited by more participants than the 12% cited by Patterson (1999: 9).

Seven participants (1.6% of the sample) selected their location because it had attractive leisure amenities which would enhance their lives. Participants are prepared to go to some effort to achieve a style or way of life that they value. One respondent writes that after being posted to a regional centre and enjoying the lifestyle for three years they decided to move to a smaller town where they felt sure of being able to retain this preferred way of life (Case 376).
Typical of this group are family-oriented participants who write that they consider *living in a rural community is a priority for family life* (Case 377). Several participants express their pleasure either at being out of *the rat race* or of not wanting to relocate to the city due to city living conditions and *commuting in the rat race each day* (Cases 30, 71 and 416).

For some a rural move is a chance to live the dream. Among participants seeking a different lifestyle one writes of *living in the burbs before and wanted to try a house on acreage* (Case 381). For one woman moving was necessary, due to domestic violence, and was carried out after much thought as to a place where she could find ongoing support. Opting for a country town and self-employment, she is now happily remarried and settled within the community (Case 322).

**Environmental Reasons for Moving to a Rural Area**

The term *environment* is used by 85 respondents (20% of the sample) as their reason for moving to the country. Their statements follow previous research in that they express a love of the outdoors, of natural bush, native plants and wildlife, of respect and reverence for and living in harmony with nature (Ray & Anderson, 2000). Environmental factors are considered an advantage of rural living with participants disliking the pollution, noise and ugliness of cities and opting for space, scenic beauty, and quiet, findings supported by
earlier studies (Boylan, 1991; Halfacree, 1998; Frey & Johnson, 1998; Moon, 1995; Renkow, 2000). One rural to rural mover writes of her pleasure in her life’s vocation:

I was very happy to be travelling, house-sitting, living with others and building community around the South West. I saw it as my communication with so many people who are doing their best to save the environment from further destruction and build real community. My networking is more difficult to keep up when I concentrate on one very vital, small town but the rewards of my 10 years on the road continue to surprise me (Case 759).

Shire Councils capitalise on this love for scenic beauty, nature and the outdoors. Their brochures and websites emphasize the environment as one of their major drawcards and link it with lifestyle and the friendliness of their communities.

**Health and Safety-Related Reasons for Moving to the Country**

Immigrants increasingly prioritise lifestyle (Boylan, 1991; Hamilton, 2004; Lindgren, 2003; Munkgjerd, 2006) and, in this study health-related reasons are specifically mentioned by 25 participants (5% of the sample) as their motive for immigrating. Like the participants avoiding the rat race, stress-reduction is their commonest health-related factor for a rural move e.g. seeking *minimal stress in an unspoilt environment* (Case 21).

Safety is an important issue for 17 participants (almost 3% of the sample), for example *crime-free so far* (Case 46). Several people say
they hope to avoid drug dealers by living in the country, comments that I've not discovered in other research. I hope they realise their ambition but, like Devereux et al (2005), I believe every illicit drug is available in the region and some of my work as a psychologist was with clients trying to break their drug habit. However, previous research finds that the Great Southern is considered the safest region of Western Australia with 96% of participants agreeing with the statement that they feel safer here than in a place like Perth (Patterson Market Research, 1999: 10).

Characteristically (Little, Panelli, & Kraack, 2005) parents are particularly concerned about the welfare of their family and want a safe environment for raising children (Case 38). Rising costs and crime rates, increased traffic, pollution, and noise all contribute to a desire to live somewhere cleaner, quieter, and crime-free as found by Frey and Johnson (1998). Their descriptions of life support research findings that crime rises according to how chaotic and socially disaffected an area is (Jobes, Donnermeyer & Barclay, 2005; Alston, 2005; Champion, 1998; SEU Report, 2001).

**Participants Returning to Their Area of Origin**

Adolescents and young adults are attracted to urban areas for educational and work reasons and tend to return to rural areas as mature-age adults. At this point in the life cycle they are ready to
settle so quality of life issues outweigh financial and employment factors (Burnley & Murphy, 2005; Fosso, 2007). In Fosso’s Norwegian research 45% of the women and 30% of the men emphasize that being close to their family was the decisive factor in returning. This is a higher percentage than I find in this study where 29 participants (6.74% of the sample) state that their reason for moving was to return to their home area.

Relatives in an area act as a mooring and provide a feeling of belonging, as in the participant who writes of returning to her home area because my parents were here (Case 363). Relatives may act as a pull factor (see Lindgren, 2003; Walford, 2004) but they can also be a bonus. One participant is happy because she found some family members – reconnected (Case 27).

Needless to say having relatives in an area makes fitting in easier (Lindgren, 2003; Walford, 2004). The need to belong is intense and no matter why they left or how successful people are elsewhere, they often retain a desire to live among family (Cliggett, 2001; Scott et al, 2001).

Relationship Reasons for Moving to a Rural Area

In this survey 69 participants (16%) give a relationship-related reason for moving to the country, again a lower percentage than Fosso (2007) who finds that 46% of her Norwegian sample immigrated to be
with a partner, or McNerney and Gillmor (2005:53) who give figures of 73% and 50% from two all-female samples. The proportion is also less than the Indian study where Subramaniam (2001) finds the largest migratory group is women immigrating to marry.

In my survey 59 women (13.95% of my sample) specifically mention that they moved to the country in order to marry their partner: *husband is a farmer, would not consider moving to city. Moved down here to be closer to him and marry* (Case 757).

Distance from a partner affects rural people’s ability to maintain and consolidate relationships and it is obvious from the survey results that some participants and their partners have made sacrifices to hold a relationship together. Some couples try weekend commuting. *I had been seeing my boyfriend farmer...for 3 or more years and we were both sick of travelling* (Case 327). Needless to say her present life satisfaction score has risen more than the woman who wrote: *I moved because my partner gave me the choice of continuing the relationship here or severing it...after two years of commuting* (Case 314).

While the above cases seem particularly Australian, there is only one case of a man moving to the country because his wife gained a rural appointment and one woman who writes that she moved originally by herself *then partner moved too* (Case 311). It is not possible to ascertain the real amount of tied migration because the surveys are completed anonymously and individually. In common with other
research, most partners have found independent employment and their surveys are focussed on their own work and lifestyle and few mention that they only came to the region because their partner was transferred to the area.

The Great Southern Report (Patterson, 1999) finds that 25% of its sample moved for family and marriage-related reasons. This is approximately five percent more than my returnees and relationship categories combined. It is possible that more residents are moving out of the area to live near their children who have moved away than there are mature-age children moving back to the region.

Other Reasons for Moving to a Rural Area

A few participants are overseas immigrants who settled in the region and use their farming skills to find employment or buy a farm (Cliggett, 2001). There are several immigrant doctors fulfilling the requirement to work in a country town for a period. One family finds that moving from an outback station to a South Coast farm has the secondary benefit of access to better schooling for their children (Case 762).

Similarly to Walford (2004) there are several people in the survey who moved due to major life events such as a new partner, a death, or a marital break-up. In spite of a very fulfilling life and years of
travel, one correspondent has discovered that settling in a country town fulfils an unsuspected need for stability:

I am delighted now to have a base in a very adequate HomesWest home with beautiful garden. I was burned out after 10 years travel and needed a base (Case 759).

There are a number of steps that precede any act of immigration and one woman describes these well. Firstly she had long held a liking for the bush and a dislike of some aspects of city living: reasons for moving = Don't like big cities – too many people, too much concrete and too much pollution. Always liked country living (Case 758). Initially, a move to the country is delayed at least partly through concerns about employment: didn't think I could get a job here originally. An event occurs that strengthens her desire for change, circumstances arise to make a move more feasible and she sensibly ensures she has employment before shifting: the decision to move here was after my father had a long battle with cancer...I secured a job in my field before I moved here. Her remaining comments show how individual definitions of rural may be: [town] is a large regional centre with all the services of a big city. Good area to live as can still have some anonymity but still feel as though part of a community. Need to be close to the bush for wellbeing as well (Case 758).
Conclusion to Section One

There is considerable overlap among the categories of reasons why people move to the country perhaps because the link between them is personal wellbeing and so many of the categories relate to lifestyle. Although employment is given as the most common motivation for moving, a desire to live in a rural environment and the lifestyle are major attractants. Marriage, business reasons, returning to area of origin, health and safety, downshifting, retirement, affordable housing, community, self-sufficiency, cheaper living, amenities, and like-minded people, act as pull factors (see Table 9.1). These results are similar to those found in other Western countries.

Eighteen participants (4% of this sample) moved to a rural area because land, housing and rentals are more affordable and another seven because they believed the living is cheaper in the country: *low living expenses* (Case 356). Seven chose their area because it has good leisure, school, or other amenities. Twenty nine respondents (6.7%) state that they moved in order to return to their home area and 53 people (12%) write that they are locals who have not moved. These results support similar Australian research (Patterson, 1999).
Section Two: Positive and Negative Factors Related to Living in a Rural Area

This item is included in the survey because of the information it provides on the wellbeing and *habitus* of individuals living in inland Australia. There is a wide range of positive and negative factors affecting anyone living in rural areas and, therefore, influencing whether they decide to remain in the country or move. If they stay they may become a source of useful social capital benefiting themselves and the community, while if they leave, they add to the drain of talent from rural areas.

If people are to remain in rural communities there must be some value attached to living there. An American study finds that attracting incomers with the offer of free land (or other incentives) has led to an increase in residents, several new businesses, new ideas, an improved positive and growing community atmosphere that has inspired long-time residents, and an increase in the diversity of the local population (Lu & Paull, 2007). As Fosso (2007: 3) writes, communities which do not attract people any more will gradually become impoverished socially, culturally and economically. Shire Councils are aware of this and make every effort to draw new people and encourage local people to remain. Only Shires on the south coast state that they don’t need to offer incentives because incomers are arriving as fast as infrastructure can be organised. Those of my interviewees who live inland (Interviewees B, C, D and E) are deeply concerned about the ongoing exodus from their areas. Interviewee A

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is concerned about the turnover rate of immigrants within one particular hamlet of the Shire. A number of survey participants express concern about the population drain from their area and appear well aware that it presages a bleak future.

Positive Aspects of Life in a Rural Area

Participants were asked what they like about living in a rural area and their responses vary from one word to a paragraph with the majority of respondents providing more than one reason (see Table 9.2).

Table 9.2: Positive Factors Related to Living in a Rural Area

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ENVIRONMENT</th>
<th>PEOPLE COMMUNITY</th>
<th>LIFESTYLE</th>
<th>SAFETY</th>
<th>EMPLOYMENT</th>
<th>AMENITIES</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>292 (67.9%)</td>
<td>266 (61.9%)</td>
<td>259 (60%)</td>
<td>100 (23.3%)</td>
<td>45 (10.5%)</td>
<td>38 (8.8%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>HEALTH</th>
<th>FULFILLING LIFE</th>
<th>CHEAPER LIVING</th>
<th>CHEAPER HOUSE</th>
<th>NEGATIVE COMMENT</th>
<th>OTHER</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>32 (7.4%)</td>
<td>26 (6%)</td>
<td>22 (5.1%)</td>
<td>21 (5%)</td>
<td>16 (3.7%)</td>
<td>3 (1%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

This table shows the number of participants and percentage of participants who scored each category. Percentages total more than 100 due to multiple choices.

Positive Factors Related to the Rural Environment

Environmental factors are increasingly evident in the literature on reasons for rural immigration and my correspondents show the same desire for cleaner air and natural features. The environment provides
the setting where they are able to follow their personal interests: very beautiful. Great places to visit, walk, beach, cycle (Case 32). A total of 292 participants (almost 68% of the sample) make a positive comment that is best categorised as referring to nature and the environment as one participant writes:

peace. Tranquility. Fresh air. Space to play. Quiet. No one can see or hear you at home. Cool climate. Trees, birds, kangaroos (Case 31).

Space and freedom are mentioned by 116 participants (27% of the sample). Space can mean privacy or it can mean roomier surroundings: more relaxed lifestyle. More space on block (Case 202).

Participants appreciate the absence of city features: no traffic, no traffic lights, good parking, good people (Case 2) and their statements encompass a range of urban/rural differences. Many of these are allied to space: freedom to move (no closed in feeling)...

Uncrowded town facilities (library sports ground, shops). Cleaner air, less noise (Case 1). Rural life induces an enhanced appreciation of their surroundings: peace, freedom from suburbia...The night sky with no street lights (Case 25).

Three participants dislike the city and approve of the country as being unlike the city: free from hustle of city life, clean fresh air and healthy lifestyle (Case 138). Another writes that:

it's what I'm used to. I have never lived in a large city. I have enjoyed city visits but when I drive out of one I always have a
feeling of relief. There are too many people in the city and a good number of them in your way. As long as you have water and power laid on most of your problems are solved (Case 89).

For 46 participants (10.7% of the sample) increased privacy is a benefit although they appear to be aiming for space rather than avoiding human contact. They appreciate having the freedom to choose activities without upsetting people nearby but still like to surround themselves with livestock and to lead a social lifestyle:

Privacy...no one can see what you are doing as there are no neighbours for several kilometres. Great to have as many horses, chooks, dogs and cats as you like. You can have a party in the shearing shed for 80 people that can go on till the following morning without any complaints from neighbours because they are all at the party anyway (Case 120).

The situation is different for participants who work in high pressure jobs. They seek after-hours privacy to maintain their mental balance:

more space - some peace after work - places to walk where there are no people. Away from Mr & Mrs Public after working with them all day, is wonderful (Case 26).

Space can induce a more peaceful lifestyle and contribute to participant wellbeing:

having space - no neighbours complaining about barking dogs. No dogs attacking our sheep. No one dumping rubbish in our bush or illegally cutting firewood (Case 22).
Lifestyle

In this study 259 participants (60% of the sample) specifically mention that a rural lifestyle provides a major attraction. As in other research it combines a style of living, an environment in which it is lived and the society with whom it is shared (McGregor, Willock, Dent, Deary, Sutherland, Gibson, Morgan & Grieve 1996: 237).

Lifestyle and environment are inextricably linked, particularly reduced pollution and noise as in this typical example: uncluttered pleasant environment. Clean air. Uncomplicated lifestyle (Case 38).

In this sample 32 participants (7.4% of the sample) feel that they have a healthier lifestyle and experience less stress:

quieter, slower, less stressful. Closer to nature and a more 'natural' lifestyle. Love and appreciate the countryside and animals. More peaceful (Case 66).

Participants benefit mentally and physically: no traffic hazards, very little noise, free & healthy lifestyle (Case 62).

Another 38 participants (8.8% of the sample) comment on the ease of access and the convenience of using local amenities, agencies and facilities. There is reduced travelling for participants are able to walk to work (Case 162). One man enjoys

being part of the community and the general lifestyle such as having lunch with my wife most lunch times. This would not be possible in a capital or large city (Case 422).
Participants particularly enjoy not having to struggle through heavy traffic relaxed lifestyle, minimal traffic, close proximity to all amenities, time saved commuting to and from work (Case 5). They approve the sheer convenience: door to door access to basic shopping facilities. No pay parking (Case 38). Participants find life easier and less complex: simplicity of life. Closeness to all activities. Ability to travel quickly to interesting places that are not normally visited by city dwellers. No need to spend time commuting to work (Case 33). Laid-back is a common positive descriptor for lifestyle and a number of factors contribute to it for this respondent: relaxed and more laidback lifestyle. Friendliness of others. Community involvement. Less crime. Scenery and surroundings – room (Case 283).

**Financial Benefits**

Easy access to work and services make living in a rural area cheaper and, for some participants a country move has other economic benefits, for example

> Closer to [relative] who is now an hour away and it was an opportunity to have a change and better our finances. We were able to buy a house reasonably cheap and close to town (Case 167).

Being able to buy property for less money is mentioned, among other positives, as a drawcard for participants: less traffic, slower pace, always seeing people you know, more relaxed lifestyle, cheaper
housing (Case 11). Participant comments can refer to land or to houses: *housing affordable* (Case 322); *cheap land* (Case 67).

Women are among the people for whom the lower prices create an opportunity to purchase a place of their own that they might not otherwise achieve: *everything is easy. I can afford on my own a house* (Case 418, female).

Moving to the country provides an opportunity to save money (Case 67) with other participants reporting that they are experiencing *less financial pressures* (Case 202). Money-saving comes in a variety of ways: *Children can play lots of sport because 1. available very close, 2. Cheap…Shops close at 1.00 on Saturdays so I cannot shop all weekend. I love that* (Case 156). Similar thoughts are expressed by another participant: *No fast food outlets. No pressure to buy* (Case 156).

Overall a rural move has multiple financial benefits for families: *it was an opportunity to have a change and better our finances. We were able to buy a house reasonably cheap and close to town. Job prospects are much better remotely* (Case 167). Positive factors make up for less satisfactory aspects: *enjoy a less expensive lifestyle even though amenities are at a lower standard* (Case 315).

Moving may provide incomers with the opportunity to explore a rural dream: *cheap acreage. Nice place* (Case 153). A number of participants mention that they always wanted to live in the country, or own a farm, or to live on acreage.
Self-sufficiency is an interest for 13 participants (3% of the sample). They express pleasure at being able to grow their own fruit and vegetables:

peacefulness without the noise, bustle, and hustle of people living close to you. Having nature living right at your doorstep. Not having the corporate world in your face and having a vegetable patch. Being self-sufficient to a degree - planning food buying, rubbish disposal etc. services that city folk take for granted (Case 44).

There is also economic value in home-grown produce that applies to more than the cost of raising foodstuffs: can have a huge vegie patch and grow your own meat which makes you feel healthier - and cheaper (Case 120). Several participants appreciate seeing their family enjoying home-grown fruit and vegetables:

We love to grow our own veg n fruit n make our own wine. My greatest joy is to see my grandchildren climbing up a fruit tree and gorging... a space where our extended family can camp enjoy the fruit and veggies fresh from nature. This lifestyle is no longer a part of every child's life. We want to provide these wonderful memories for my grandchildren also for myself (Case 25).

**People and Community**

Some of the most positive factors mentioned by participants relate to people and the community with 266 statements (62% or almost two thirds of the sample) describing the friendliness of the local people, the supportiveness of the community, the wonderful community spirit, and the help provided by community members in times of need.
Feeling accepted is central to wellbeing: there's a warmth and friendliness about country people that we love (Case 28). Such comments are reassuring and suggest a more general acceptance of others since 1988 when loneliness, discrimination, and a lack of support services are included in a lengthy list of social issues negatively affecting rural society at the time (LHNBE Report: 1988). Participants write that it is reassuring to live among people of similar understandings: most neighbours who live in these areas are like-minded (Case 27) and life has increased interest for people living among relaxed but lively neighbours: people are friendly; more laidback easygoing; always doing something (Case 336).

Inclusive social cohesion and its positive effect on newcomers is apparent in the descriptions of some communities: people know each other, talk, help each other out, care and work together. It's awesome (Case 299). None of the social stratification found in rural areas appears in the town described here:

In this community there is a real caring and consideration for everyone. People are genuine and not affected by "keeping up with the Joneses" or too concerned about appearance and who has what. We are all equal; the wealthiest farmer or his worker is treated in the same manner (Case 351).

There are also intimations of good fellowship among the comments:

The camaraderie - especially after a bush fire or other event that has the capacity to bring you closer together with neighbours (Case 120).

Incomers discover or utilise personal strengths:
I like living in a rural community. I am involved with many rural organisations - Rotary, swimming club, P&Cs. I know lots of people in town and have many friends who support me. The services (health and social) are excellent in [town]. Nice people, nice town, good place to live (Case 171).

While one man describes easily made new and good friends another finds himself among friendly people, who after "sizing" you up and prove that you are prepared to contribute and participate, accept you wholeheartedly into their community. Not just a number, a person. If you want you can be a big fish in a little pond ... if you want (Case 147).

This participant has discovered that, in rural areas, it helps to be a joiner, to become known; and to volunteer (Edgar 2001; RWAC, 2001).

The word community is mentioned positively by 116 participants (26% of the sample) in phrases such as cohesiveness of the community (Case 300). Participants regularly use terms such as supportive community; strong community spirit; close-knit community:

The community comes together when faced with adversity (Case 64);

The community is close-knit and everyone who can helps those who need help (Case 48).

Support for each other can take a variety of forms:

I love the fact that we are a close-knit community and we help each other out. We all work together and try to care about each other. There is that sense of one big family. We support each other. We have the ability to be able to talk to
and get on with our kids e.g. teenagers. We make our own entertainment and keep busy with lots of things (Case 352).

Thirteen people (3% of the sample) comment favourably on being known locally, for example you’re not just a number (Case 299). Making a shopping trip becomes a pleasure rather than an endurance test when people show an interest in you: knowing and chatting with people down the street (Case 101).

Among the benefits of a friendly community some participants find other bonuses. One person has found some family members – reconnected (Case 26). The same person finds that the people are less pretentious, more friendly.

An elderly participant is wonderfully comfortable and secure in his environment:

feeling of belonging somewhere. A lot of school mates of 50-60 years are here and we have each other’s respect and friendship and support. A good knowledge of the area we live in and knowing everyone’s family history. Doing business with honourable people who are old residents of this area. This is very important to me as our word is our bond and we trust each other (Case 169).

This is bonding capital at its best although, possibly, such close interdependence may make it difficult for a newcomer to become a member of such a close-knit group.

Ample leisure and other amenities are important and 38 participants (8.8% of the sample) say that they are pleased their town has sufficient amenities. Some of the most heart-felt comments relate to their children’s schooling although it is not always clear from the
statements whether they are describing primary or secondary education or a District High School which educates both levels: excellent school (Case 359). The smaller schools and their supportive atmosphere receive favourable comment: kids love school (Case 107). Teaching tailored to the child's needs is appreciated: our son's education more personal (Case 106). Parents appreciate adequate school and town amenities: great schools for our kids. Good sporting facilities (Case 52). It takes a weight off parental shoulders when children enjoy school and are well taught.

Many of the positive factors associated with living in a rural area are summed up in this participant's comments:

*Life is less hectic and stressful. Peace and quiet of country life is great. Very friendly small community. You are well known and well liked in small towns. Everyone knows you and you know them. Communities are friendly, helpful and very generous. It's like being part of a huge family. Traffic is mild. Small schools are a huge bonus as each child is made to feel special. Sporting clubs and facilities are welcoming and modern* (Case 200).

**Employment**

Employment provides benefits for 45 participants (10.5% of the sample). As mentioned above, it may relate to a wider range of work activities: opportunity of working in a number of areas of health - not being restricted to one area of work (Case 170). One participant sees work opportunities as part of the whole rural package: Lots of friends.
Heaps of community involvement. Opportunities for work and self-improvement. Peace and quiet (Case 357).

Another participant enjoys working as part of a small team in a small town where she has indepth knowledge of clients: The differences in work environment i.e. small group of colleagues - closer team, ability to know more of the community (Case 93). Others again just love their work: Being able to carry on working at what I love (Case 15). Another participant writes; wonderful kids at the private school I now teach at - no real city problems there (Case 31).

Proximity to work is important as well as expanded skill levels: Work is only 5 minutes away. My job allows me a wide and varied mix of clinical care and management that I wouldn't get in the city. I also get to be involved at a much higher level than city therapists would (Case 418).

Some participants have found it easier to gain employment: I have never been unemployed - there is always work if you are after it (Case 322).

**Health and Safety**

While some participants move to the country for health and safety reasons, others have found improved health a bonus to whatever brought them there:

I love the sense of community. And to my surprise [Town] has a great sport and recreation and arts programme happening
which I love. I'm finding the lifestyle is also much better for my health (Case 327).

Coping with stress is easier:

locals are friendly and helpful people generally. Give you space to move so not in your face all the time. Work is stressing but space at home gives you opportunity to unwind where in the city and suburbs the stress is added to stress (Case 381).

For some participants a move to the country has allowed them to leave something unsatisfactory at a distance, and a sense of increased control over their personal lives is implicit in some statements:

No one from family drops in on a regular basis. People visit but we are too far from Perth to make visits just drop-ins - they are always planned (Case 31).

One participant writes that it is easier away from pressure of family & friends. No "keeping up with the Joneses"... Feel relaxed - moving at a slower pace (Case 58). Another participant expresses similar feelings: socially more to do...closer work environment...more personable, caring and helping persons in small town...distance between relatives a bonus (Case 174).

Safety is important to the 100 people (23.25% of the sample) who specifically mention feeling more secure living in a rural area: personal and residential security (Case 147). Participants report experiencing less crime, drugs (Case 362; Case 133) and increased confidence: crime-free so far...freedom to do what you want without
They find country living is safer than city areas: no anxiety about continuous threat of petty crime (Case 315) and no need to lock house or car (Case 355).

Parents comment that the country provides a safer environment for children (Case 5). Supervising children is less stressful and they can be allowed more freedom: children are safer, can ride their bikes for miles (Case 156). Another participant appreciates the freedom for our younger daughter to be able to ride her bike to school or a friend's house (Case 77). These results support previous research where 98% of respondents describe the Great Southern Region as a great place to bring up children (Patterson, 1999: 11).

**Living a Fulfilled Life**

There are 26 statements (6%) made by participants that reflect feelings of fulfilment derived from their life in a rural area. These are often, but not always, associated with their employment: satisfaction of doing very satisfying work (Case 106, female); being able to carry on working at what I love (Case 15, male). Some statements reflect awareness of making personal growth: a feeling of freedom to be me (Case 115, female). Other reports are more general: being able to make a difference (Case 160, female); feeling of being able to make a significant contribution (Case 257, male).
Other Responses

Unlike the majority, 16 participants (3.7% of the sample) find little to like about country living, for example quiet, not much else (Case 124, male); I don't like living in a rural area. Only good thing is friendly town (Case 123, female). It is possible that in time these two participants who value the quiet and the friendliness may find further positives but otherwise they are unlikely to remain in a rural area.

Some statements are forthright pronouncements: I don't (Case 56, female) and another participant writes I live here out of necessity (Case 121, male). These people are highly likely to transfer as soon as possible unless some major positive factor, like a new relationship changes their priorities.

Good relationships with workmates help people who don’t like a rural posting cope:

the only saving grace about living in a rural area is a good social circle with my workmates. It is very difficult to go out socially in [town] as due to my line of work, I am not welcomed by the local community in the likes of licensed premises (Case 161).

This participant prefers the anonymity of urban life where it is possible to socialise without meeting people you would prefer to avoid. All of the above may be working positively and conscientiously at their jobs and providing social capital but it is unlikely to be available long-term.
Conclusion to Section Two

Overall, 414 participants (96.3%) find positive factors associated with living in a rural area arising from the people, the community, the environment, and the lifestyle. Many genuinely enjoy their work and have increased their knowledge and skills. There are 16 participants living in the country under sufferance and further insight into their difficulties will be found in the following sections.

Information is accruing on my four themes with participant reasons for moving providing some insight into migratory decisions. The positive factors described by respondents suggest high levels of social cohesion and inclusivity in many rural areas. Wellbeing is also high for these participants and the *habitus* they have established appears to benefit the participants, their families and their community. The sixteen unhappy participants are out of their comfort zone and they appear isolated and unhappy as neotribes among the locals. While the majority of participants are faced with difficulties the following section shows the resilience of the participants and their matter of fact management of their situation.

Negative Factors Related to Living in a Rural Area

Most participants describe a wealth of positive factors but that didn’t prevent them from writing at length on the problems, difficulties and
shortcomings they encounter daily. These are described in detail below and summarised in Table 9.3. There are, however, 40 participants who state that they have no problems related to living in a rural area, and it is possible that the seven participants who did not respond to this item also feel the same way.

**Distance**

Distance is the most commonly reported difficulty experienced by survey respondents and is associated with the necessity for travel and feelings of being isolated. It affects many areas of life and is cited as a problem by 166 of the 430 participants (38.6% of the sample).

Living in the country may involve separation from family, friends, medical assistance, employment, major shopping centres, education, and cultural activities. Sports active participants write: *too far away from pools, gymnasium, workshops, courses...lots of people leaving* (Case 308) and the lonely find it *too isolated* (Case 261).

Participants are obliged to expend time, money and effort to meet their needs: *long way to shops and services – we’re still learning to plan trips to town properly* (Case 90). There is no doubt that the ability to organise and to overcome the negative effects of distance is empowering for individuals and groups (Young, 2006). Another respondent sums up the costs involved: *everywhere involves travel -*
an hour to get the newspaper on the weekend etc... lots of wear and
tear on vehicles with gravel roads and dust (Case 120).

Table 9.3: Difficulties Encountered in Living in a Rural Area

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>DISTANCE</th>
<th>LACK OF SHOPS TRADES BANKS</th>
<th>LACK OF AMENITIES</th>
<th>MEDICAL &amp; HEALTH</th>
<th>HIGHER PRICES</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>166 (38.65)</td>
<td>149 (34.7%)</td>
<td>147 (34.2%)</td>
<td>146 (34%)</td>
<td>131 (30.5%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SOCIAL PROBLEMS</td>
<td>EDUCATION</td>
<td>EMPLOYMENT</td>
<td>PUBLIC TRANSPORT</td>
<td>UTILITIES PHONE INTERNET</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>102 (24%)</td>
<td>49 (11.4%)</td>
<td>46 (10.7%)</td>
<td>17 (4%)</td>
<td>41 (9.5%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UTILITIES ELECTRICITY</td>
<td>UTILITIES RADIO/TV</td>
<td>WATER</td>
<td>PESTS</td>
<td>BUSHFIRE</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17 (4%)</td>
<td>9 (21%)</td>
<td>19 (4.4%)</td>
<td>9 (2/1%)</td>
<td>7 (1.6%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LAND VALUES</td>
<td>CRIME</td>
<td>SALINITY</td>
<td>NO PROBLEMS</td>
<td>MISSING</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 (0.69%)</td>
<td>2 (0.05%)</td>
<td>2 (0.05%)</td>
<td>40 (9.3%)</td>
<td>7 (1.6%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

This table shows the number of participants and percentage of participants who scored each category. Percentages total more than 100 due to multiple choices.

Distance applies to every age of life if you live in the country:

Children find it hard having to travel 20 km to school by bus and friends living long distances apart, needing parents to transport them all the time (Case 198). Both education and leisure are affected by
distance: *having to travel sometimes over 100 km to play sport against opponents, and having only one sport to choose from* (Case 198). Trying to give children a normal social life requires particular effort until the children grow up and are able to drive themselves: *mileage to town with three teenagers is a huge problem. Constantly travelling in and out for sports, parties, friends etc...but I'm on the last one and see the light at the end of the tunnel* (Case 28). Once the children can drive the parents will develop a new set of worries related to their safety on bush roads.

Feelings of isolation, due to missing family and friends are especially poignant: *long way from family and friends* is a complaint made by 25 participants and another describes it as:

> *not being able to pop in and visit people easily, missing family and friends (with history), missing out on celebrations/birthdays etc. Miss the theatre/films/concerts (as a regular attendee). Distance to travel anywhere. Cost associated with this* (Case 116).

One writer finds the willingness to maintain relationships can be one-sided.

> In general, I don't think many town people visit you on a farm or just drop in. They don't realise the isolation, even friends. They want you to do it to them, though. It's just too hard for them to travel out (Case 325).

Distance affects participant’s ability to support family and friends or receive support: *no family close for help when needed, emergencies and babysitting* (Case 31, Case 300). Care of ageing relatives is a
problem: difficult to support aged parents in city area. Increased travel regularly to city (Case 253).

Rural people lack services and miss out on events: Distance to anywhere (50 kms) schooling, health facilities, all government agencies are lacking (Case 132). Retrenchments in services disadvantage country dwellers:

\[\text{distance to a doctor, dentist, bank. Government trying to close our little hospital down. The bank closed years ago. The High School closed down (Case 295).}\]

Participants regret missing out on cultural events, sports and the beach (for those living inland):

\[\text{Tyranny of distance to family, concerts, conferences, department stores, festivals etc...Isolation from childhood friends & family members (Case 21); distance from major sporting and concert events. Distance from relatives (Case 167).}\]

Not everyone has a five minute walk to work. Commuters in primary or other industry may find it a hassle getting to their place of employment: long way to travel to work (Case 233).

Country areas have a high accident rate and a farmer participant expresses insecurity arising from working alone and lacking access to rapid help in an emergency (Case 110). Others particularly feel the pressure of isolation: Medical help - usually need to travel 40+ kms (Case 300). Another participant writes: having to travel four hours or so to Perth for specialist medical treatment (Case 10).
Distance exacerbates participant fears of ageing and losing their independence and lifestyle because of a lack of support services. Even on the more populated south coast one participant, living alone, although with relatives on neighbouring properties, describes three experiences where distance exacerbates her ability to get help quickly:

*Power failures - pretty rare - but no pumps operating so no rainwater or bore water. Occasional snake at front door. If I become incapacitated or in any was unable to drive (Case 23).*

**Public Transport**

This seems a relevant place to mention how difficult it is to overcome distance problems where there is a lack of public transport (Alford & O'Meara, 2001; Fitzgerald et al, 2001; Young, 2006). Public transport is a problem experienced by 17 participants (4% of participants) most of whom are retirees or pensioners. Six of them specifically criticise the limitations of the Patient Assisted Travel Service (PATS) for example *Public transport minimal. Access to specialist health services must travel to nearest urban centre, poor support for travel costs* (Case 1).

A shortage of public transport raises fears for older people lacking access to a bus service: *I will have a problem if they ever take away my driver's licence. Just when you get too old to walk you are asked to be tested every year to see if they can take your licence. No buses*
here (Case 89). Where is a lack of alternative transport, non-drivers are reliant on relatives and friends: no taxis (Case 83).

If the elderly are to remain in their home area where they are happiest then they need adequate facilities and the means of accessing them. The issue is of particular concern when the elderly need to see a doctor:

*Health problems i.e. no doctors. Elderly people have to move to city and away from their families for treatment. Transport problems. If you do not own or drive a car very difficult to access services and shops (Case 46).*

**A Lack of Shops, Banks and Trades People**

A lack of ready access to shops, banks, and tradesmen is experienced by 149 participants (34.65% or more than a third of participants). Problems relate to a lack of choice, a lack of variety and sometimes a lack of quality in goods for sale: *purchasing simple items such as clothing and fresh food, banking with banks* (Case 299). To buy what you want may require travelling: *occasionally need to shop out of town for some items not available locally.*

There are problems with ordering in desired items: *you have to be prepared to wait for up to four weeks for things to come when they are on order* (Case 197). Not only is service slow, participants feel that their loyalty to local business is not repaid: *try to shop local and it can be 6 months before they respond* (Case 357). One participant sums up rural shopping problems:
Cost is the largest factor followed by service delivery of a variety of things i.e. quality and promptness of tradespeople, quality of shopping and the variety of shops. Businesses and utilities appear to be linked to major centres so that any difficulties with an account and or service you have to deal with someone out of town (Case 4).

People who work long hours experience particular difficulties:

shops not open when you want them to be - especially because I work full time in a separate country town to where I live. When ordering things retailers don’t understand that you/I can’t always just pop in and pick it up or meet the delivery truck when it arrives (due to distance, working full time etc). Generally things are more expensive (Case 101).

Getting into town before the shops close is a problem for workers such as shearers and farm hands: Distance to town. Shops close too early after you knock off work (Case 148). In the city shops may be open seven days a week and some remain open 24 hours a day:

shops not open every day; you have to be organised (Case 233).

Reduced opening times contribute to a lack of leisure pursuits and places to go after work: nothing open at night (Case 261).

Participants miss specialist services: less restaurants, shops, movies and other entertainment (Case 193). The absence of coffee shops, restaurants, hardware, stationery, doctors, department stores, hairdressers, and dentists are particularly regretted:

lack of services close by - half an hour to medical services (which are always busy and difficult to get an appointment). Decent shops (grocery) half an hour away - no decent fruit and veg available locally (Case 214);
Shopaholics and window shoppers feel particularly deprived:

I miss SHOPS. I love looking in all sorts of shops – not necessarily buying anything much. We have 2 shops and a butcher’s shop and I find that very limited and often if the mood takes me that way DEPRESSIVE! I work fulltime so heading to Perth or Albany etc is not always easy. I also miss bread shops, the beach and the lovely feeling of being anonymous in a crowd (Case 323).

Shops may stock only basic supplies: hard to source building supplies, stationery, clothes...the things that city slickers take for granted (Case 147). There are complaints about substandard housing: GEHA standard of housing - small, difficulties, delays getting work done. Very small town: very limited facilities (Case 211). It can be hard to get house repairs attended to: some trades people are difficult to find e.g. plumber, electrician (Case 404). A lack of tradespeople is particularly hard on those unable or too busy to effect repairs: Some services NOT available when really needed e.g. plumbers, electricians etc. (Case 83); limited access to tradespeople e.g. builders, plumbers etc (Case 209). Being in demand, tradespeople can come and go as they please and charge what they like: plumbers, painters, electricians have you over the barrel (Case 386).

In every context and category surveyed participants refer to a lack of choice. There is a lack of medical, leisure, shopping, employment, and educational opportunities, for example having only one sport to choose from (Case 198). Shopping is the area where a lack of choice is most commonly felt: not enough choice for domestic purchases
e.g. clothing, homewares etc (Case 21); lack of variety in shopping (Case 167). Participants are short-changed by the limited availability and high price of merchandise in towns that may have only one store (Burns et al, 2004).

In case after case the limitations of rural living are spelt out:

Less opportunities to meet new people. Restricted access to some services e.g. specialists. Less choice - e.g. shops, hairdressers, mechanics etc. Less choice of leisure facilities such as movies and restaurants ... Fewer job opportunities (Case 176).

Less services - especially medical, education. Less professional development and career opportunities. Less restaurants, shops, movies and other entertainment (Case 193).

No choice with schooling (Case 261).

Lack of doctors, dentists, large shopping centres etc (Case 216).

**Higher Prices**

Participants generally find that goods in the country cost more: generally things are more expensive (Case 101); expensive grocery and lack of variety (Case 209). Higher prices, particularly for fuel, LPG gas, freight, groceries, fruit, and vegetables irk or infuriate 131 participants (30.46% or nearly a third of the sample).

Although many participants write in general terms about living expenses, for example higher cost of living, the cost of fuel is mentioned specifically by 51 participants (11.86% of the sample). Since travel is necessary to anyone living in the country high fuel prices are particularly resented and many participants feel the
charges cannot be justified: being ripped off for fuel...LPG generally 40% more expensive (Case 113). A teacher writes: Cost of fuel since we are doing so much travelling - sport, shopping, visiting family in the city (not tax deductible for me). With travel being so necessary participants are genuinely angry: cost of fuel in W.A. is criminal (Case 156); high (no sorry extremely high) petrol and diesel costs (Case 254). Fuel prices have continued to increase.

In spite of the many factors affecting retail prices, participants feel that business owners overcharge, particularly if they are the only provider in town: lack of population results in most products being more expensive due to the lack of competition for retailers (Case 113). The tendency for retailers to blame high prices on freight costs lacks credibility for participants: The cost of living is high. RT/petrol/fuel costs, food costs and commodities etc blamed on transport costs (Case 26).

She adds that the poor in the country are getting poorer and previous research supports her words. The effect of rural decline is most severe on the poor (Scott et al, 2000). People with a substantial income have more choice of rentals, houses and land. They are less affected by the loss of bus services, post offices and supermarkets because they can make the most of their regular shopping trips to a major centre. They are less likely to be dependent on others and socially they have more chance of being included.
With many people forced to do their own building, renovating and repairs, high costs create a particular problem: transport costs on materials add 15-20% to city prices (Case 12). Higher prices are part of a problem that combines distance, continual travel on poor roads, and a lack of ready access to services:

high cost of fuel and food. Lack of essentials - banks, gym, retail shops, health workers locally. Distance to a doctor, dentist, bank. Gravel roads in poor condition. Wear and tear on vehicles... Cost of sending children away to school, TAFE, uni and work in Perth. No money left for ourselves or luxuries (Case 295, female).

Interviewee E finds that some clients who moved to a rural area to fulfil their dream have found the experience much harder than anticipated. They find essentials such as food and water are much more expensive than in the city.

The subject of costs is well summed up by one writer:

The cost is the biggest thing. Food costs are higher, as are fuel (excessively so) and just about anything you buy, living 15 km out of town and with 4 children growing up, can be an expensive exercise. Transport costs have always been one of our biggest expenses after food, and even now with only one child at home (and getting her licence soon), it still is a very big part of our budget (Case 398).

**A Lack of Amenities**

Participants use the terms amenities and facilities interchangeably in referring to sporting and cultural facilities and to necessary infrastructure such as road surfacing and rubbish collection. A lack of amenities is mentioned by 147 people (34.1% or a third of the
sample) and once again complaints about a lack of things to do in personal free time involve distance, expense, time, effort, travel, and lack of funding.

Cultural activities and sporting events are intensely missed:

I miss seeing ballet, plays and even a good film at a cinema (Case 323);

very little opportunity for cultural pursuits - orchestral music, opera, exhibitions, plays (Case 244);

less things to do. No heated swimming pool or nice golf courses. Can't go to AFL footy or concert etc without lots of planning and travel (Case 181);

I miss being part of a very skilled choir (Case 357, female).

Others acknowledge that there is entertainment in the bush but deplore the lack of variety: lack of diversity in entertainment.

Required to travel to Perth for any significant events & the cost of such travel (Case 33).

For some participants a lack of amenities means a lack of agencies: lack of amenities i.e. 100 km trip to nearest medical facilities (Case 301) and the term is also used to refer to banks and post offices. One participant has found a lower level of domestic amenities, i.e. bottled gas, lower water pressure, more unreliable power source, greater cost for telecommunications and internet (Case 315).

A lack of leisure pursuits for teenagers and young adults is of particular concern and supports research on the cigarette and alcohol consumption of young people in rural areas (Lesjak.

Nothing for young people to do except drink alcohol and take drugs (Case 156);

limited recreational facilities for children. Lack of support services for children (Case 301).

Miss out on many functions as we are 25 kms from nearest town. Children have missed out on sport as this was held either 60 km away or 110 kms away. Trying to work out the priority of what is most important to your family (Case 215).

In some cases there appears to be a lack of understanding and support from local government:

there is a tendency these days for the local shire council to take responsibility for local halls or meeting places in all the smaller towns in the shire. Covering insurance seems to be a driving factor. They then proceed to charge a fairly large fee for use of these places. $25 may not seem much but when the badminton group only has a handful of players a few drop out finding their share of fee plus club contribution too expensive. This makes it even worse for those left and finally no one plays badminton. If they drive to a bigger town there is then a fuel cost. Country people are used to free use of the local hall. Very often they built it (Case 89).

Lack of infrastructure is a problem where inland Shires struggle to raise funds and coastal Shires struggle to keep up with burgeoning residential development:

less resources i.e. footpaths, street lighting, low water pressure, frequent electricity blackouts, poor mobile phone coverage. Lack of funding to build much needed recreation facilities i.e. swimming pool - where the majority of the community would benefit (Case 254).

Services that are taken for granted in urban areas become problems through their absence: roads and lack of rubbish collection are main
disadvantages (Case 79); dusty corrugated gravel roads (Case 286). Heat and dust are deplored: shade in car parks. Dirty red dirt/gravel (Case 153). Pedestrian movement and safety is compromised when basic infrastructure is missing or deteriorating: Less footpaths, street lighting (Case 191).

Utilities

There are 67 participants (15.6% of my sample) who mention experiencing problems with one of the utilities. Perhaps the most troublesome shortcomings are unreliable water and power supplies: low water pressure...frequent electricity blackouts (Case 191). Power failures have proved a problem for 17 participants (almost 4% of the sample): unreliable electricity supply (Case 102). Some participants compare urban and rural power supplies:

Services! If a city person's power is out for 10 minutes there is an uproar. Ours can be out for 24 hours or it goes out for at least four hours every month and we have to put up with it (Case 313).

I can vouch for the electricity problems as a sudden power surge overwhelmed my surge protector and ruined the hard drive in my laptop while I was working in the area. Two people that I interviewed (Interviewees A and B) have had computers wrecked by power surges and in desperation use a satellite service although both add that the latter is not totally trouble-free. Western Power maintains
online updates of power problems, the steps they are taking to repair
the lines, and the estimated time to completion. There is a rebate of
$80 for customers who have been without power for more than 12
hours.

An unreliable power supply is a safety issue and rural people tend to
store food in bulk and there may be spoilage with blackouts and
brownouts. Home appliances don’t function: when power goes there
is no pump for water, e.g. toilet (Case 232) which creates a possible
health hazard. A further complication is the possibility of bushfire
interrupting power supplies just when the pumps are needed for fire-
fighting. Backup power and water systems are suitable although they
need to be easy to start.

Almost 10% of the participants criticise telecommunications with 41
participants citing poor service, high costs, and difficulties in getting
help when it is needed. Mobile phone coverage and poor internet
services are the most criticised aspects: pathetic phone coverage
Lack of services (Case 333). Mobile phones are necessary in the
country which allegedly has a nationwide network of phone towers:
mobile phones unreliable (Case 357). Mobile phone coverage is poor
(Case 191) and poor telephone/internet service (Case 1) are
common complaints made by participants but some areas still do not
have mobile phone coverage: No mobile phone coverage. At our age
this makes for more pressure than we need (Case 13).

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The internet is an essential tool for rural people (Burnley & Murphy, 2005; Webb, 2006) and a relatively high number of country residents own computers or use the local Telecentre. Many are dissatisfied with the service: very frustrated by the poor telecommunications infrastructure. Internet is slow, mobile phones unreliable (Case 357). Telecommunications allow people to keep in contact and purchase goods not available locally and they provide vital education services where distance, drought and financial problems prevent personal attendance (Alston, 2004, 2006; Webb, 2006).

When landline phone, mobile phone and internet prove unreliable participants are justifiably angry:

Regardless of what John Howard says the phone line system in some parts of rural Oz is a long way from scratch; my connection speed leaves a lot to be desired, compared to friends in Bridgetown and Greenbushes. And I suppose it’s good to know that Big Brother can’t watch us everywhere, because my CDMA mobile loses signal in...places around the Southwest (Case 398).

For those with no home phone of any kind the situation is even worse: Not everybody has a landline phone: six kms down the road is the STD for phone calls (Case 48).

Users dislike the price of telecommunications: cost of telecommunications and broadband facilities (Case 2); price of STD phone calls (Case 279). The lack of broadband in some areas and the speed of both dial up and broadband are criticised:

Slow internet connection, often noisy phone lines cause problems (Case 390);
telephone line speed - internet dropouts. Some people can't even get a fax on a bad day (Case 154);

Some participants have experienced difficulties accessing information and assistance from utilities whose accounts are centralised and not always in Australia.

As mentioned above, problems with telecommunications are exacerbated by problems with electricity:

power failures - I work mainly from home and rely on my computer. The power has been out for five hours today. That takes a lot out of a working day and I lose money not being able to work (Case 154).

One participant finds the postal service slow. Another deplores the distance to the mailbox and the frequency of the mail service: five kms to mail box - 3 times a week (Case 215).

Radio and tv programming are criticised by nine participants (2.1% of participants): poor radio/tv services (Case 1). One participant criticises the available radio stations and the presumption of same stations that they know best what we like to listen to (Case 11). Another reports reduced television and radio choices with greater costs in accessing these (Case 315).

Medical Problems

Health-related issues concern 146 of the contributors to the survey (33.95% or a third of participants). As Fitzgerald et al (2001) report,
there is a lack of doctors (mentioned by 58 participants or 13.4% of the sample): *no resident dr or md* (Case 58); *one doctor, one day a week. Better than nothing but frustrating in emergencies or if I want to see about something more personal (don't like the doctor)* (Case 357).

Problems are allied to the need to travel for medical assistance (54 participants or 12.5% of the sample): *distance from doctor - dentist - ambulance - hospital. Too far from big centres* (Case 159). Travel may be to the local hamlet for the doctor's weekly visit, or to the nearest town, or to Perth. For those obliged to travel regularly for treatment it may mean an exhausting bus trip each way: *getting to see a specialist for medical reasons; most of the time they pay you to go to Perth on a bus* (Case 107).

One participant points out that the aged are almost forced to move to the city for treatment, taking them away from their home, family and friends:

> health problems i.e. no doctors. Elderly people have to move to city and away from their families for treatment. Transport problems. If you do not own or drive a car very difficult to access (Case 46).

Distance is a major problem in attending to health matters: *Only one doctor in town and not always available* (Case 404); *if the doctor is not here it is a minimum 300 km round trip to the next doctor* (Case 313).
There is concern over access to Medical and Allied Health services.

A lack of specialists is a problem for 43 respondents (10% of the sample):

*access to specialist medical services - i.e. still forced to travel to Perth which is unfair for people who live in larger rural centres and even more unfair for people who live in more remote rural centres (Case 38).*

Participants feel that the Health funding is spent in the city: *medical facilities are way behind what is offered in the cities (Case 79); limited access to specialized doctors and pathology etc especially in regard to terminal illness (Case 209).*

Arranging appointments to see the local doctor is a problem mentioned by nine people. The doctor's surgery is usually busy and immediate appointments cannot be guaranteed: *very difficult to see a doctor when you're actually sick. It can take three days before you can get an appointment (Case 78).*

There are only one or two complaints about actual medical treatment: *lousy doctors (Case 43).* Lack of ready access to a doctor may mean that *nurses take too much on themselves without the doctors...Doctors should be called in more often (Case 109).*

One participant points out the transience of doctors: *a moving population of doctors who come for a spell then go,* and describes a 100 km trip to the nearest hospital with a sick husband (Case 132). Research has found that professionals who stay invest in a house, become involved in the community, and enjoy the lifestyle (Dunbabin & Levitt, 2003; Hall, Garnett, Barnes & Stevens, 2007). In Western
Australia many doctors are forced relocators, immigrants required to undertake a country posting for a period of time.

One participant is embarrassed at discussing personal issues with a doctor she is likely to meet socially (Case 386) and three participants report problems related to the availability of ambulance services. These include the distances required by voluntary ambulance drivers (Case 189), the requirement to pay for the use of the service (Case 58) and the manning of the service: to maintain community services lot of volunteer time required i.e. St John Ambulance, school council, and other groups. Expectations of one to provide above (Case 310).

No one mentions the drought or the fear of farmers becoming stressed out and committing suicide (Alston & Kent, 2008). It is possible that, because the rural crisis has lasted so long and a number of suicides in the early years shocked the little communities profoundly, rural people have realised suicide creates more problems than it solves. Much work has been done by the rural counselling services on handling stress with local government and departmental support of workshops and seminars. Some of the communities I worked in build group solidarity and other communities are successful in using individual approaches, remaining alert and responding immediately to anyone whose behaviour differs from the usual.
Social Problems in Rural Areas

People problems are an issue for 102 participants (23.7% of the sample), which is a surprisingly high number considering so many respondents find the people and community a positive factor. Closer analysis of their statements explains the discrepancy.

Missing friends and family is a major difficulty for 31 participants (7.2% of the sample): *a long way from friends and family support* (Case 5). It is particularly hard for those whose relatives live abroad: *At times I miss my family who live overseas – at special times, birth of a niece or nephew or when a relative dies I feel so far away* (Case 171). It is understandable that people may be living happily in a rural community but still miss loved ones who are far away.

Family and friends who take the trouble to visit are generally deeply appreciated but some respondents find it is possible to have too much of a good thing:

> although a ‘pleasant’ problem - being inundated with city visitors over long weekends. They actually now have to ‘book in’ as often we just do not have the room (Case 77).

Others have found it difficult to persuade city friends and relatives to travel out to the country: *Can’t see city-based friends as often – it is always much harder for them to come here than for me to go to Perth, for some reason* (Case 176). Not being able to pop in easily for a visit is part of *the tyranny of distance* and *isolation* mentioned by 16 people (3.7% of the sample).
Participants are also aware that they are drawing on a smaller pool of available people for their friends: isolation leads to limited choices of friends and relationships (Case 246). Isolation translates as loneliness for five participants (1% of the sample) and is a serious problem to contend with:


Another participant reports that although it is a fun lifestyle the range of social activities can sometimes be a little limited (Case 393). Lack of social opportunities is deplored by a participant: Less opportunity to meet people (previously through children & school). Small-mindedness of some locals - not part of the world. Country people are generally not the friendly mythological specimens in fiction - they are the same as anywhere else - lots of hang-ups (Case 58). Two participants have found it necessary to travel for social fulfilment.

There is a strongly expressed dislike of gossip, particularly when it is malicious, exaggerated or untruthful: sometimes everyone knows too much about everyone else, and if not sure - make it up. Gossip (Case 175). Interviewee B describes providing ready support for community projects and feeling hurt at the misinterpretations and inaccurate gossip that resulted.

Although an overwhelming majority of this sample find country people welcoming, friendly and helpful, a few participants have met
with unfriendly behaviours in a socially stratified environment: some people make class distinction decisions according to what sometimes is their lack of foresight or judgement (Case 279). Where traditional thinking pervades rural areas, progressive thought may be retarded. Long-established families, farming families, and long-established professionals have prestige while newcomers are regarded as not truly rural: people in town have own groups don’t accept people recently moved here. Only people born here or who have lived here at least 20 years accepted (Case 305).

Some participants find their new lifestyle foreign: adjustment to living here (Case 253) and go through a process of learning to adapt to a new environment and community (Case 19). There are also participants who are just happier in a different setting: incredibly boring (Case 262), preferably an urban one: rather live back home in the metro area (Case 124).

The feelings of participants suffering adjustment problems range from resentful, through resigned, to triumphant when a change of attitude enables them to click into place:

I hated moving here for the first six months. I really questioned if I had made a huge mistake. I hated my job at first and felt I knew nobody my own age. All my friends were in Perth, single and having a ball. I left a great job ... and ... great job satisfaction. I did not get this when I first started ... This caused me a lot of grief... Once I began participating in sporting groups I became better known and I began meeting new young people (Case 312).
A sense of belonging means feeling connected to others in the community but it is likely to require a process of negotiation between groups with differing interests and/or adopting at least some rural social norms in order to be accepted by locals (Harvey, 2007:6). Length of residence, a friendly approach to locals and being of some practical help in the community assist the process (Kenyon & Black, 2001).

The small-mindedness of locals, which I originally quoted from case 58, is mentioned by a total of five participants (1% of the sample) and also by Interviewee B who found local people petty. Several people report finding an expectation they should conform to local ways of thinking and behaving:

> very close knit town. Attitudes of 'long term' residents towards change/new ideas/newcomers/foreign' concepts. I feel that a large proportion of residents of [town] are long term residents who have never lived anywhere else and been exposed to other communities - therefore the resistance to new ideas/changes etc. I am a 'career woman' who married later in life than most residents and we don't yet have children (neither do we plan to in the next couple of years). This is vastly different to most women in the town who appear to have married at 19-20, have 2-3 kids, no education past high school and find interesting topics of conversation to be tv and kids. In this shire, of the couples our age ... I can name only two other women who are in a similar stage of their life to me. This particular point makes living in this particular rural area especially difficult (Case 757).

One person has found that this problem can be surmounted:

> Initially there can be some difficulty in fitting in to some rural areas for some people (especially when one partner has long hair and a long beard and is a bit non-social), but they can be overcome (Case 398).
One participant mentions *a lack of community spirit for women* (Case 35); another reports *a lack of understanding and interest* in newcomers (Case 87), and one person has found the social scene spoilt by *antisocial behaviour* (Case 165).

Participants find that anonymity is a major problem when you live in a country town. It affects personal privacy and may place anyone in authority (employers, professionals such as police, teachers, Health workers, and others) at some level of danger from disgruntled clients:

> the majority of locals know who I am and where I live. Should an offender want revenge for me doing my job, it would not be hard for him to break into my house, or vandalise my property in some way. Socially...I am reluctant to go to local pubs as the regular clientele do not want to socialise with me. Secondly, I would feel unsafe if I was intoxicated and confronted by a disgruntled person (Case 140).

Life in a small town where everyone knows you can mean a fishbowl existence and is a difficulty for 21 people (5% of the participants): *a lack of privacy i.e. everyone knows your business in a small town* (Case 127). Rural people are not only observant they hold opinions on any incomer’s private life and expectations of how the newcomer should live (Dempsey, 1983: 152). Dempsey goes on to write (1983: 186) that, in some cases, relationships only remain tolerable, and individuals retain some sense of personal freedom and privacy, if everyone works hard to minimise the irritations as various social groups interact.

Living in a town where everybody is related or longstanding friends of each other can mean that residents have to be careful of what they
say. Adverse comments are particularly likely to cause local people to close ranks against newcomers who need to realise the necessity of being circumspect: small town. Many people tend to be related, therefore you cannot offend without offending many (Case 397).

Four participants mention that professional people are often seen as their job:

Forming a social network outside of work. Relationships tend not to extend past a professional relationship. Cliquiness of living in a small town. Not really made welcome as a new comer. Have had to find my own way (Case 417).

Professional participants find that life in a small town requires juggling their private and professional roles. They have the benefit of being known and respected but there is increased visibility and a lack of privacy (Lonnie & Cheers, 2004: 163). As one participant writes, [I] run into clients all the time so have to be careful if not wanting to see them (Case 418). Participants find that it is necessary at all times to maintain work and client confidentiality. For locals and incomers job transfers of friends can be painful and may have a discouraging effect on fellow-workers:

It's also hard when the job retention rates at our work place are quite low. It's hard having to say goodbye to a lot of people and doesn't give you the motivation to stay in one place for more than a couple of years (Case 160).

Thirteen participants (3% of the sample) feel they don't have a life and that they have no friends and feeling excluded is extremely
painful for six participants (1% of the sample). One participant has found that, if you do not play sport you don’t seem to have the same connection with the community (Case 338). A professional woman feels the lack of other young professional women to be friends with and with whom she would have more in common. Another participant reports that having to work and play with your colleagues can build friction at times (Case 160). The pool of available friends is smaller in rural areas and a man in a professional position describes his experience:

you don’t have a wide choice of potential friends that you have in the city. Naturally I have left some friends behind and although are able to catch up now and then you need to have friends at a local level. It has been harder because I’m older and perhaps a bit more set in my ways than when I was younger but also you don’t have a very wide range of people to choose from (Case 758).

Twelve people (2.8% of the sample) report that social relationships are particularly difficult for the young. An older participant observes:

I find there is a generalised lack of motivation in the 18-28 year old bracket. The real drivers of the town are the Mums (in their 30s, early 40s) while the younger ones seem to just work all week and then go to the pub. High rates of smoking and drink driving concern me deeply. Lack of social opportunities to meet new people from other towns, especially with insurance etc cutting out B&S [Bachelor & Spinster] meetings etc (Case 299).

Younger participants describe a lack of people to socialise with: not enough people my age and with the same interests (Case 391). Singles find they have to travel to meet compatible people: need to
spread further afield for social fulfilment - but communication technology assists this (Case 114). The number of young people living in rural areas is diminishing so less socializing occurs and there are fewer people to run the local clubs and associations and three participants report that there are not enough people to share around jobs in sporting clubs (Case 114). Their friends have moved to the city and the younger participants feel that they are expected to drink and/or to play sport to fit in:

No young women. Not very much to do other than footy and drink. You’re a bloody long way from anywhere. People don’t really want to come and see you coz there’s nothing to do and it’s “too far” (Case 476).

Six respondents (1%) find that there are less opportunities to meet people: difficult to meet people outside of work (Case 549). Three single men comment on the difficulties in finding a partner:

don’t meet any girls (Case 148); not many single girls around here (Case 329); less opportunities to meet a significant other (Case 270).

This problem is not confined to Australia’s outback as, worldwide, rural men are having difficulty finding partners (Alston, 2005; 305).

The difficulty of living with inlaws on the same farm is mentioned by three participants:

inlaws on the same farm can be really challenging. Being in partnership with family members can encroach on your financial and personal freedom. Houses are a LOW priority on farms and repairs can take years, if ever (so housing quality is very poor) (Case 120).
Interviewee E finds extensive use of drugs and alcohol across the region, with consequent relationship and financial problems. Clients may make a move to the country to try and get away from the city drug scene, not realising that drugs are also available in rural areas. This places a heavy burden on financial counsellors in a number of organisations dedicated to assisting impoverished families. Most have experienced intimidation from demanding and manipulative clients who visit all the agencies in turn and refuse to take responsibility for their budgeting. Their money is wasted on drugs, alcohol and gambling which has become a major problem. Staff burnout in the helping agencies leads to job changes, difficulties in finding replacement staff and reduction of services.

Local dissatisfaction with substance abusing families is high and Interviewee E reports that it has led to an attitude change among their relatives. Members with longstanding drug and alcohol problems are being less well tolerated and are experiencing less family support than previously, the families having realised that unconditional support of an addict allows that person to continue to avoid responsibility. Interviewee E finds there is a reduction in the numbers of grandmothers rearing grandchildren and a turning to siblings for help, possibly from a combination of burnout and personal health problems. These issues warrant further research; particularly exploration of means to help the children in these situations.
Interviewee E finds that the loss of a domestic violence counsellor in the region is intensely felt and tries to fill the gap. Court-referred clients, however, tend to attend only to meet their parole requirements and show a lack of commitment to improving their relationships and a tendency to relapse.

Employment

Problems related to employment are experienced by 46 participants (11% of the sample). Of 23 people who report that actually finding employment is a problem, 19 say that this is because the actual job opportunities are limited (Case 253). This is reminiscent of Jobes' (2000) finding that it pays to organise employment before moving to the country. To find work appears to require a high level of adaptability and to be known locally (RWAC, 2002).

Participant problems include a lack of jobs at an equivalent level: lack of job opportunities at my level if I were to leave this job (Case 253). The participants describe difficulties in finding appropriate work for professionals and newcomers:

I'm having enormous difficulty putting my skills to use. It's been very hard trying to find a job. On the one hand...you always hear of small towns crying out for more qualified and skilled people, but I have found they keep the jobs to themselves (Case 352).

Two participants feel their children will be forced out of their home area due to the lack of available work: children have to leave town to
gain employment (Case 80). Others see a lack of future job opportunities: lack of future employment prospects for children (Case 113).

As Hugo and Bell (1998) find, it is difficult to obtain work if you are a woman: lack of employment especially for females (Case 340). One mother has seen all her daughters experience this difficulty: the limited opportunities [although much improved on 20 years ago] for daughter’s [we had four] work (Case 88). One man describes a lack of good employment opportunities for my wife (Case 38). A single man laments the limited employment opportunities for potential partners (Case 369).

Women are not the only ones to find employment difficult to achieve and men can also find it hard to get a job: less job choices for husband (Case 31). Older people also report that they find it hard to get a job:

- no work for mature people or to give mature aged people a fair go, there is little or no jobs for mature-aged people - especially men (Case 59);

- lack of job opportunities (especially when jobs go to less qualified people because they are younger etc) (Case 279).

Work in the Great Southern is somewhat similar to Smailes’ (2002) findings in South Australia and Alston’s (2004) in New South Wales. Apart from hobby farming, there is some work available in service industries and horticulture but it is likely to be seasonal, temporary or
casual (Deverell et al, 2005). A few will find positions in agriculture, especially if they have experience or training.

In common with previous research the situation particularly disheartens participants who lack supportive social contacts in their town. These participants are as discouraged, anxious, depressed and struggling with self-esteem as those found in previous research (Bartley et al, 2006; Creed & Watson, 2003; Deverell et al, 2005). Unemployment also affects social standing but many businesses and farmers that might employ them are struggling with their own financial problems (Creed & Watson, 2003; Creed & Muller, 2003; Fryer, 1995; Haworth, 1997; Jackson, 1999; Underlid, 1996; Wanberg et al, 1997; Waters & Moore, 2002). As Hugo and Bell (1998) point out, the highest numbers of under-employed and discouraged people are found in rural areas although mainly in regional centres, and they tend to move more often than the employed.

The lack of a second income affects quality of life: managing on one income is very hard even without children at home (Case 279). It is painful watching the effect on a partner who either can't find work or is having problems at work, and the problems undermine relationships:

all problems are related to wife's work. Sick of fighting with the WA Health Dept who want to reduce services in our area i.e. driven by swing and $$$ rather than patient care. These stresses have affected our relationship (Case 284)
Motivated, determined people seem to do better: one has to find/create employment more independently, which is also a benefit in some ways (Case 246). In any case finding work and gaining promotion seems to be harder for women:

Glass ceilings - I have been at the top of this professional level for 4 years and there is no way of progressing so I have to leave the business to go forward (Case 313).

There is also the issue of professional development and another participant writes that her:

main issues are career development. It is much harder to further your career into more administrative or supervisory roles and to access professional development (Case 400).

Nine people (2% of the sample) mention career-advancement problems or lack access to professional development (Case 193) and their problems are likely to precipitate a change of location: advancements in career are limited - have to move to metropolitan area (Case 406). Others find that there is a lack of opportunities to get an education: lack of good education and professional development at university level (Case 406).

Some participants bear the travel and costs associated with attending conferences, professional supervision and further education. Participants describe a lack of access to professional information and expertise: less access to professional libraries and persons in my field (Case 257) and a lack of support while studying
externally. The complaints escalate with increasing distance from the capital city.

Distance remains a problem: having to travel 52 kms to work when work at my level is not available in town (Case 757) and attitudes to travel vary: long distance to travel to work – 110 km round trip but it is a lovely drive (Case 254). Expenses related to work travel eat into salaries and valuable personal time:

I travel 80 kms to get to my work place. This is about one and a half hours a day of travelling. I consider myself lucky however compared to some of our friends who live 'further out'. For one I can pursue my chosen career in the country. And secondly I am close enough to the regional centre to commute there. Otherwise professional jobs for women are more or less limited to teaching and several women I know have obtained a Dip. Ed. because they can not pursue their chosen career in the bush. despite advances in communication - working from home that I know of is rare (Case 231).

Work is often seasonal, temporary or casual so that any forward progression, even making a reasonable living, let alone saving money or paying off a mortgage, becomes difficult: employment opportunities are limited affecting income and forced to work in difficult situations (Case 253). In such an environment, employees lack power:

finding fulltime employment with employers who are adaptable and flexible. Would like to work from home. At present if I wanted a full time job would have to move to Perth. Other jobs in rural areas would have to either travel half to one hour or move again to that area. Not willing to move unless it is a fulltime job (more than 12 month contract), otherwise not viable. Have no stability (Case 411).
This research supports earlier studies that there is more poverty in rural areas (Hugo & Bell, 1998). As seen above half of this sample earns $40,000 p.a. or less although the number holding part-time employment is unknown. Several participants mention that their income is inadequate: wages are VERY low and often work is seasonal (Case 83). Trying to manage on a low salary is hard: the wage is awful. It makes living here very difficult (Case 26). A farmer reports being aware of the safety issues attached to working alone on a property (Case 210). Perhaps this is the greatest difference between working in the country and working in a town or city.

Finally, the self-employed find that, because of the small market, it is not possible to charge an appropriate fee for the goods and services they produce (Case 243). This can apply to psychologists in private practice, to master woodworkers, potters and artists, and to a wide variety of people with skills to market or produce to sell. I suspect that they could earn far more if they marketed their goods and talents in an urban area.

**Education**

A tenth of the participants (43 participants) report problems related to their own or their children's education. Many comments are written in general terms:
no choice in schooling for kids (Case 2);
education opportunities are more restricted (Case 40);
lack of convenience and choice in education (Case 19).

While Primary Schools are generally praised by parents, there are a few people who have experienced problems with their local primary school. One parent writes that his son being a city boy was severely bullied (Case 207). Another is concerned about the lack of a crossing guard at the Primary School to see children safely over a very busy road (Case 255). A parent reports that children with special needs are not well-catered for: eldest son with learning difficulties not much options for schooling (Case 258). There is a growing body of literature finding that growing up in a country area is much more varied and complex than some of the rosier pictures of the rural idyll portray (Alston, 2004; Davis, Boles, James et al, 2008; Jamieson, 2000; Kulig, Hall & Kalischuk, 2008; Matthews, Taylor, Sherwood et al, 2000; Valentine, 1997).

Depopulation of rural areas depletes the numbers of children attending the local schools: primary very small numbers (Case 209). The Major retail chains don’t stock school uniforms: a small thing like school shirts in the right colour very little supplied to country [retail shop] etc. This is an example of how hard it is to get things (Case 109). At either primary or secondary level parents worry about the long travelling on school buses for kids (Case 139).
Secondary schooling is more problematic for parents and children. Country High Schools tend to be smaller than their city counterparts, with fewer teachers and a reduced number of courses. They may specialise, for example pupils may elect to learn to fly an aircraft at several country High Schools or they may attend an agricultural wing of a High School if they are interested in agricultural subjects.

For mainstream students the courses appear to be limited: higher education system (i.e. High School) not as good, not same choices available (Case 83). The situation is summed up by one parent: education for the children. While our primary school is brilliant, the kids will have to travel to the "local" high school, and we are concerned with the quality of secondary education offered locally (Case 187).

Parents do not approve of children making long bus trips to attend High School: family issues - children travelling for education to larger centre for secondary education (Case 253). In rural areas there is limited access to good schooling - have to educate our High school kids away (Case 209).

One teacher expressed a number of concerns related to this drain of children from the local secondary schools:

*SCHOOLING may not be available. Standard of teaching can be dodgy. Small numbers means compromise on course selection. Internet courses (e.g. ATP run from Perth) less than satisfactory (to the point I removed my son from the course). People see that they must send their children away this depriving me (the teacher) of those strong students which would allow me to give competitive, extended, avant garde courses. I did manage it once when the rural sector...*
was in depression in early 90s, and people could not send children away (that was great). Sending children away to school means they are lost from the town (sometimes for good) (Case 156).

The option of sending their children away to boarding school is expensive: secondar and tertiary education for our children very costly – boarding school and university (Case 377). Some parents suffer great privation in order to give their children a start in life: the High School closed down. Cost of sending children away to school, TAFE, uni and work in Perth. No money left for ourselves or luxuries (Case 295).

In any case parents miss the children that are absent: missing my precious daughter who has moved to the city to live. Very difficult when your child has to board away from home for schooling (Case 354). Parents also express concern at having to send their children away for tertiary training: leave home for tertiary education reducing contact, expensive, still require emotional support (Case 253).

Further Education (a general term used by 26 participants) appears to refer to both secondary and tertiary and both university and technical, for example limited further education (Case 12). Participants express a definite need for more courses, more readily available: lack of a TAFE (Case 341) and they don’t always need a building nearby; need more TAFE courses by correspondence (Case 349).

Adults wanting to further their education find a lack of tertiary courses available in the country (Case 113). They write that educational
facilities stop at school, limited TAFE opportunities, almost nil tertiary education therefore lack of opportunity for youth and ongoing growth in rural areas (Case 33).

Distance, expense and the extra effort required discourage would-be students: Travel too far for education courses. Wear and tear on tyres, car, fuel prices (Case 52). A parent with three children completing university courses finds the costs prohibitive: secondary and tertiary education for our children very costly - boarding school; university (Case 377).

Isolation, lack of employment, and a lack of access to cultural events foster an appreciation of educational attainment but they motivate people to leave rural areas. In these days of electronic communications it is fortunate that an increasing number of courses are available online or by correspondence and these may halt the population drain and reduce the expenses of an education (Baker & Brown, 2008).

Water

Two people are distressed that the local river is becoming salty and 17 (4% of the sample) are concerned about water supplies: we rely on rainwater and in drought as now there are no twice daily showers (Case 77). Several participants refer to water non-specifically. One participant writes water problems and six participants use the phrase lack of water, while another states that water is expensive (Case 48).
Two participants report that mains-supplied water pressure is low in their area, and seven say that they have to provide their own water. Dust flying from gravel roads is of concern to participants because it pollutes water storage by coating dams with dust or washing off house roofs into tanks (Case 65). Families who run short of water and have it trucked in find the costs prohibitive: it's $200 for a truckload that lasts two weeks (Case 22). With a drought ravaging Australia and water in short supply one participant is incensed at the wastage in the city: watching idiots in the metro area whinge about the quality and amount of water in [city] dams while they throw huge amounts of it on lawns (Case 138). There is also a complaint about the quality of the water: yucky tasting water (Man we nearly need the military to come here with their water purifying equipment). We now drink bottled water (Case 181).

Other Factors

Concern about bushfire is expressed by seven participants and children playing with matches causing fire (Case 475) is mentioned although a recent big bushfire was caused by power poles catching alight. After one experience of bushfire it remains an ongoing anxiety: living with the threat of bushfires can be unnerving (Case 154). The anxiety is increased by low water pressure in some rural towns, and the lack of water on farms in drought, so that residents lack the means to fight a bushfire: our biggest concern is that the water
pressure here is so low and if there were a fire we would be in a lot of trouble (Case 63).

Only two instances of rural crime are reported by the survey participants: break-ins, firebugs (Case 15). Burglary and theft are serious offences often related to being poor and needy. Another participant describes living alone as a safety issue although without describing whether there have been any particular problems (Case 110).

There is a mention of drug usage: nothing for young people to do but drink alcohol and take drugs (Case 256). There is no doubt that people in rural areas are tolerant of high levels of alcohol consumption although they do appear more concerned about drug use (Franks, 2006; Passey et al, 2007; Valentine et al, 2008). Compared to the crime statistics for urban areas these results suggest that high levels of social cohesion, trust and inclusiveness in rural shires help maintain social order (Woodhouse, 2006).

Seven people comment on the soil or the climate. West Australian sand leads one participant to write: the soil for growing vegies is crap (Case 48) and another’s comments are similar: Soils? Not soil. Sand. Good for growing gum trees to feed koalas not food for people (Case 47). These participants join others in their dislike of pests: snakes, locusts, other garden pests, birds (Case 47); grasshoppers, earwigs, foxes, vegetable beetle, birds, rabbits (Case 48). Altogether nine
people report problems with pests including foxes, locusts, flies, millipedes, snakes and vermin.

One woman describes the climate as harsh (Case 52), another mentions the drought, and a further respondent finds the seasons can be difficult (Case 229). One woman dislikes the dusty conditions (Case 64) and a second describes their area as dirty – red dirt and gravel (Case 153).

A Perceived Lack of Support

All but 47 of the survey respondents are coping with a wide range of difficulties and shortcomings affecting every area of life – environment, economy and society. In this affluent country, if people are to remain in rural areas then they deserve the basic services that are available elsewhere. These include reliable electricity, telephone and water supplies. They express a particular need for high-speed broadband and their safety relies on being able to access mobile-phone coverage. While they may have to accept and adjust to high prices for fuel and gas and commodities, they should at least travel on well-made and preferably sealed roads. The establishment of Community Health Centres and Telecentres has been reassuring for country people and maintenance of a network of these centres set up in conjunction with schools and local libraries is needed. Rural retirees are often forced to move when they become too old or ill to
manage at home but, with the support of Home and Community Care (HACC) and with geriatric wings added to rural and remote hospitals, they are able to remain in their preferred area while the facility provides employment for local people.

The surveys are strong and the people describe some of their problems in terms that show they think of them as minor irritants. It is painful to read of the hurt feelings of those who are, for whatever reason, socially excluded. Rejection, loneliness and isolation are some of the most adverse experiences humans endure.

Other than social exclusion, the most painful thing about the tone of the surveys, are the expressions showing that rural people feel they are going it alone, a feeling that I believe to be general to people who live in the bush (Lockie, 2000).

State, Federal and Local Government are criticised by 12 people for their perceived lack of support for the rural population:

* politics only care about the city (Case 183);

* a feeling of being passed over by governments in favour of cities and large country towns (Case 273);

* country areas are completely ignored by political parties at all levels, infrastructure is allowed to run down.... Effectively you become a second-class citizen if you wish to live outside the metropolitan area (Case 274).

Rural people are sensitive to the language and tone of the people who govern them and loathe condescension.
Don't like the fact that we are called "country residents" by the politicians - sounds like we have a disease, and are immediately put into some sort of 'basket' (Case 83).

Politicians are blamed for the decline in country areas:

- generally disregarded by politicians and as a result poor policy has led to a decrease in services, decreased quality of life and population moving to larger country areas or the city (Case 375);

- local, state & federal government provide 2nd rate service & solutions to rural areas (Case 24).

There is some understanding that low population numbers and a history of voting conservatively militate against politicians of any stamp feeling a need to make changes: lack of a meaningful 'voice' in government - safe government seat so why worry or care (Case 254). In fact the general feeling is that Government does not care:

- Governments seem to want all small communities to fade into obscurity and sadly they are getting their wish. The government gives no thought to the welfare of the people living there (Case 200).

A major issue is a lack of funding for facilities, amenities and projects. Politicians are described as not visiting their electorates and listening to the views of locals: treated like "country bumpkins" simply because we live in the country. Always on waiting list for essential services (Case 194). One participant sums it up: always at the losing end of governments and their decisions to spend money on health, roads and education (Case 768). This includes rural Health services:

- cuts in health budget mean country people are the first ones to lose services (Case 128);
Government department shutting down our much-needed hospitals in small towns (Case 200);

the cost or availability of health care is dreadful with present [Health Minister] placing all the Health funds in the Metro area (Case 26);

our regional hospital is very good but is not being supported by government (Case 187).

The Government Housing Authority is reported by one participant as failing to provide enough housing and, by another, as being dilatory in organising maintenance work on its properties. Living in substandard housing motivates people to shift. It is felt that remoteness from politicians makes lobbying less effective (Case 257). Withdrawal of services is painful for rural people and the lack of support hurts: the poor in the country are getting poorer (Case 26).

The same experience is reported in regards to both the built and natural environment:

*I feel that we in the country are given a huge responsibility in caring for the environment and not proportionately given the community resources to do it adequately (Case 759).*

There is a feeling that city people neither relate to nor understand the country and also some understanding that rural people contribute to the problem:

*convincing people in the city it's a wonderful and real place (home), not some dumpy Hicksville that's only just got electricity...The city vs. country "them and us" attitude...Both sides equally guilty here (Case 299).*
Contrary to the above is the participant who finds that city people have an idealised view of country life:

*the perceived wonderful country life by my city counterparts who lack understanding of the difficulties faced here daily* (Case 85).

This feeling carries over to professionals who label customers because of the area they live in: *Unable to get loan from bank. Reason given is [town] is unstable* (Case 475). There is a feeling that city people do not comprehend the importance of rural areas to the nation as a whole: *lack of recognition by metro based businesses & governments of need to maintain viable communities in rural areas* (Case 33).

Local government is criticised for raising the rates, lack of services, and failure to follow up on problems brought to council attention. There appear to be communication problems between Shire and populace because, a Shire that had given me a copy of its growth plans, is accused by participants of lacking such plans and allowing development to spread out of control. It is possibly the lack of facilities and amenities and the lack of support for country people that motivate two participants to describe a drop in assets: *access to financial management services is limited. Deflated property values* (Case 38): *financially gone backward property and dollar-wise* (Case 153). One thing Shires need to do is make their public aware of the
mountainous costs they are burdened with and to get the people behind them to fight for increased resources from government.

**Conclusion to Negative Factors Related to Rural Areas**

In this survey I have 430 people who are faced with a plethora of problems. Their life satisfaction scores and liking for a rural area are high but they are not getting a fair go and I can picture their satisfaction levels dropping as they become increasingly stretched and exhausted.
Section Three: Participant Resilience

The participants in this survey generally score highly on life satisfaction and describe many positives factors related to living in a rural area so, although they experience many difficulties, they display a high level of resilience in coping with the problems they encounter. There is some inevitable overlap between the categories which are summarised in Table 9.4.

Table 9.4: Participant Coping Strategies

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>MODIFY LIFE-STYLE</th>
<th>COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>240 (55.8%)</td>
<td>168 (39%)</td>
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</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>MODIFY EXPECTATIONS</th>
<th>PROBLEMS NOT OVERCOME</th>
<th>NO PROBLEMS OR DID NOT RESPOND</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>95 (22%)</td>
<td>21 (5%)</td>
<td>84 (19.5%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

This table shows the number of participants and percentage of participants who scored each category. Percentages total more than 100 due to multiple choices.
Modify Lifestyle

The most common strategy for maintaining wellbeing and used by 154 participants (almost 36% of the sample) is taking practical action and modifying their lifestyle to suit available local conditions (Case 1). Characteristic of the hands-on approach is the participant who writes:

*keep local firebreaks up, save for rainwater tanks and pump. Limit trips. Bait foxes...Monitor river, plant trees. Look for employment* (Case 22).

Strategies involve both organisational and social behaviour. One participant writes:

*make more of an effort to drop in and see people; try to entertain more often. Car pool children to sports events. Children’s friends spend the night more often...travel to see movies etc* (Case 83).

Modifying lifestyle means *making long-term plans* (Case 19), learning as they go, as in: *still trying to plan town trips to minimise travel* (Case 5), and persevering: *we keep looking for better contractors* (Case 90). One family try all available options and eventually find that home-schooling proves to be their most effective way of educating the children (Case 307). Taking a mental and physical break provides a restorative for stress and the chosen place may be the outdoors for one family: *enjoy the ability to camp in unique and beautiful spots* (Case 33) and the city for another: *regular breaks away in Perth etc* (Case 211).
Practicality is valued by rural people and participants emphasise the need to be ready for anything: *preparedness to travel for family and medical purposes regardless of time and cost...Always trying to look ahead and plan and communicate* (Case 377). They aim for achieving maximum benefit from any trips to town, keep stores and spares on hand, and plan ahead: *cram as much into a Perth visit as I can, including seeing relatives and friends* (Case 247). Planning ensures trips are financially and socially viable: *basically buying all you need in town every week. This cuts your travel and saves on fuel and general costs* (Case 42). One participant describes a less formal process: *you muddle through problems that arise and count on your own judgement that you make the right decision* (Case 229).

Ten participants (2.3%) say that they grow their own food. *gardening is great, much satisfaction in producing fruit and vegetables* (Case 345). Produce may be pesticide-free: *growing our own fruit and vegetables with no sprays or wax on them* (Case 86). Participants are generally frank about their reasons for doing anything, as in the following: *to overcome the boredom I grow a lot of vegetables to fill in time* (Case 305).

Some participants write in general terms: *became more self-sufficient* (Case 58) but self-sufficiency obviously applies to more than food: *enjoy making our own amusements and products* (Case 114). Individuals find what works for them: *share responsibilities for shopping etc with partner – if we run out of something tough luck*
(and keep UHT milk in pantry). Freeze meals for times when no time to cook (Case 93).

Not that self-sufficiency is easy or simple as one participant goes on to explain: drought, grasshoppers, rabbits, cabbage moth, red leg earth mite and birds seem intent on winning the war and they have this year. She directs her leisure interests to household production both for financial benefit and for her own satisfaction, for example sewing, knitting, cooking, preserves (Case 345).

Self-sufficiency applies to a group endeavour when the hall became too expensive for locals to hire: with a lottery grant and free local labour we turned the old Showgrounds into a Community Centre (Case 89). Problems that would be handed to the town ranger in urban areas are dealt with personally: put up six foot high security fencing around entire property to keep out neighbours and their dogs who eat my chooks (Case 290). Home repairs counteract the lack of tradespeople: my husband fixes things when he has the time (Case 386). Participants appear to enjoy the intellectual exercise involved in overcoming difficulties: makes you look at going about a problem and solving it in a different way, because you have to (Case 199).

Utilities taken for granted by in town require self-sufficiency in outlying areas: water has to be collected in tank (Case 45). Water supply, climate and travel remain ongoing problems:

water is a big problem for us in summer and we recycle all our washing water to the garden. Hot summers have been conquered with the installation of two large airconditioners... We always change our vehicle every two years to have no mechanical problems on the road (Case 169).
In a region notorious for power disruption some participants own generators (Case 102). Electric pumps are useless when the power is down but one participant rises above trivia: *when I have no electricity I use a standby supply of rainwater from a 20 litre container. Have a gas lamp & hurricane lamp & pretend I am camping* (Case 23).

Locals support their own store: *Interesting to note that because our major supermarket is a "cooperative" our grocery prices are generally on par with and in some cases cheaper than city prices. Profit is not the driving motivation for the co-op, but service* (Case 147).

Trying to be self-supportive applies to finding employment: *did training courses to improve job availability* (Case 59). If you can’t find work in your field then train for what’s available or *build own business* (Case 82). People plan ahead and many diversify: *by buying houses for rentals. Started a...business... moved on to 10 acres* (Case 109).

Overall, this group finds self-sufficiency fulfilling and it is delightfully summed up by one respondent: *we grow and make most of our own food and have taught family to do the same, which is a fulltime and very satisfying way of living* (Case 277).

**Telecommunications**

Participants use a range of media to improve their lifestyle: *Telephone, internet, SMS contact with loved ones* (Case 250).
Where communication cannot occur by visiting, *email is good and cheaper...STD is a huge cost (Case 346) while others put up with telephone bills in order to stay in touch (Case 34). Phones are used to contact family, make appointments, order goods, and get help (Case 31). Participants criticise the costs involved and time spent on hold: *A costly problem is ringing to book for shows in Perth and having to listen to music for ages. These are STD calls. No consideration for people working in rural areas (Case 217).*

Only 14 participants (3.2% of the sample) mention that they conduct business online although farmers and business people are generally computer-literate. They find internet access essential: *important to set yourself up with good communication network, phone/fax, Use internet for banking, supplier research, and ordering of some items (Case 219). Two people I interviewed have changed to satellite communication systems to overcome power failures and the resulting damage to electrical equipment.*

One participant finds EBay and DVDs useful adjuncts. Another uses the internet as a dating service *to meet new people - with a view to finding a partner. Not my preferred method but since I don't play sport and the pubs are feral, it really only leaves work (Case 176). Farming families combine internet and phone with ongoing CB radio contact among family members and neighbours (Case 219). One person works as a volunteer at a Telecentre (Case 121) while another helps community groups work towards better internet... and*
mobile phone access. But it is still a hard slog to get these at a standard that city people take for granted (Case 357).

Modify Expectations

One man writes: living in rural areas seems to require physical health and emotional resilience (Case 246) and coping includes modifying one's expectations as 95 participants (22% of the sample) have done. People consider their options and make an adjustment: modify expectations to suit local conditions (Case 1).

Adaptability

Adaptability is valuable: I have learned to compromise in a lot of areas (Case 230). Another participant has learnt to simplify my life. Hold a deep belief that what we have is truly wonderful and we can live without all the stuff others think is important (Case 254).

Adaptability applies to men and women of all ages:

Having the loving support of my husband and his father made this possible - couldn't have done it without it - believe we need to change the attitude of many rural men to make rural areas better places for women to live (Case 307).

Adaptability implies a willingness to change: attitude is everything - being positive - being content with who you are and using all of your talents when possible (Case 307). It includes a desire to help: it was
getting involved in organisations and enjoying making things happen - initially being the only woman on the show committee and engineering change in the format of the show to include women's and children's interests (Case 307)

Acceptance

Acceptance is characteristic of many responses: have got much better at accepting travel as a part of life (Case 33); just adjusted to the different lifestyle (Case 164). Acceptance applies to malfunctioning utility services: modify expectations re phone, internet improvements (Case 1). It is applicable to employment: accepting the issue that the likelihood of husband and wife able to be in equally well-paid employment in a rural centre is rare (Case 35). It applies to education: accept that standard of education can be somewhat limited, but acknowledge that safety in rural high schools is better than most city options (Case 35). Health is included. I had three medical appointments in Perth in 10 days. What do you do? Wear the expense and think you are lucky to have received treatment (Case 362). Useful advice on practising tolerance is proffered: you weigh up the good and bad. Enjoy the good and don't dwell on the bad. There's not much you can do about it (Case 362).

Some of the comments are blunt. Where a situation is considered as unalterable participant advice is get used to it (Case 6) but it is also
acceptable to be human: *every now and then have a good rant and rave and then get on with it* (Case 284). Others enjoy the intellectual effort involved in overcoming problems: *liking a challenge and getting out of one's comfort zone* (Case 19).

While one woman copes with overwork by positive self-talk: *tell myself I'm human after all* (Case 481) another finds herself overwhelmed with anxiety: *I try to realise my own personal needs and seek out help but, unfortunately...find myself waiting for others to rescue me* (Case 44). This participant describes learning to accept responsibility and moving forward even when extremely fearful. Other respondents have overcome their difficulties: *don't have time to feel bored but the times when I was a few years ago gave myself a good talking to, as we have finally achieved what we always wanted and feel very lucky to have what we have here* (Case 52).

Participants find solutions that work for them: *these days if I start to feel isolated I head back out into the garden and in no time I bounce back. Also one day a week spent with shops traffic car parks etc makes you glad you're home* (Case 52). Generally the solution is associated with a more relaxed attitude: *changed my thinking about issues. Stopped putting so much pressure on myself and started to 'just be' and enjoy what I have and what I can do now* (Case 60).

Some of the survey participants find that they achieve a new closeness with others: *you have a much more family-orientated lifestyle. Take away all the shopping and takeaways and you find you*
spend more quality time with the family doing things that matter (Case 157). Another writer translates this to a wider field: living in peace and harmony in the district and knowing they are looking out for you as you would for them (Case 146).

As a professional who travelled an extensive circuit each week I was interested to discover what participants who drive long distances in the course of their work write. I find that distance is generally accepted as a fact of life and the main complaint relates to the costs involved. This takes some effort to accept, as one man writes, clench my teeth together tightly every time I fill up my vehicle (Case 113) and a long-standing resident sums it up by advising patience (Case 197).

Acceptance requires effort in a variety of arenas. An older woman endeavours to remain independent and active (Case 106). A newcomer is adjusting to neighbourliness: I will have to learn to expect people knocking on my door when they see I'm at home (Case 140). A sense of humour helps: have a good laugh a day (Case 159).

Participants recommend newcomers make an effort and learn from the locals: I believe if you come to a new town you must adopt that town as your own. You get out of life what you put into it and it is the same in any country town (Case 158). Another warns against unrealistic expectations: realise that nowhere is perfect and weigh up the pros and cons (Case 215).
Modifying expectations means acceptance of cost as worth it to live where we are (Case 250). The factors they value vary and, where one person reports that the lifestyle is worthwhile (Case 228), another writes: I... accept the shortcomings by realising that I am healthier (Case 238) and a third copes by remembering what it was like to live in a metropolitan area reconciles me to any difficulties we face here (Case 251).

**Personal Development**

Incomers find themselves on a voyage of self-discovery and it may involve a profound learning curve: I have also decided that it is best to either not settle down for ever OR if you do then ensure that you aim to gain skills that are needed in the local area so that employment will come readily (Case 236). They deservedly salute where they've arrived at emotionally: I think I'm more outgoing relaxed about life and any issues that do or may arise (Case 241). Growth includes learning to ignore all gossip and get on with my own life. I like who I am and I love my life (Case 353).

Maintaining balance, they deal with any problems as they arise. No use in stressing about life it only leads to physical and mental illness (Case 249). It involves maintaining perspective as none of the problems are serious. I just take opportunities when they arise and adjust to any difficulty as much as possible (Case 244).
Adjustment requires people being proactive: *I am getting out and bushwalking as much as I can to remind myself of why I came here* (Case 238, male). Country people are supportive and it is a wise person who knows when she needs help as one woman writes: *It can be very lonely so I try to call a friend or go to their house if I am finding it hard to cope* (Case 206). An incomer describes making a sizeable personal adaptation:

*I was shocked at first how everyone thought they knew my business. I came to a point where I had to decide, do I want to stay with my husband or leave? I had to make a change in my attitude, especially to work. I was fortunate that we got a new young [manager] who gave me great challenges and changed [my workplace] for the better* (Case 312).

This acceptance is promoted by those who have experienced being a newcomer and are in a good position to offer advice:

*Get involved...I am accepted because I am a teacher but I am also a transient so why should people bother to get to know me? So make it worthwhile by a. Get into sport. b. Join local church (or drama group or community group... whatever). c. Shop local, socialise local, take care of your house. Show that you value the place that it is “home”... You... meet more people. People meet you. People don’t care what you know, until they know how much you care* (Case 156).

Participants help themselves by utilising the skills of thinking positively, considering all options, and finding interests and distractors. A typical participant response is *making the best of all situations and encouraging others to do the same* (Case 179) and
they are helped immensely if they live among people who are friendly, helpful and inclusive and may have had similar experiences. Most feel that they can rely on local support: face situation as it comes: people in the country care about each other and come to help (Case 183). With someone they can talk to, rural people manage to keep their problems in perspective (Young, 1983) and participants describe establishing a network of people who I trust and can get advice from (Case 758).

One of the features of these respondents' statements is the high level of interpersonal cooperation they describe: knowing your neighbours and being accepted in the district are steps on the road to belonging (Case 145). One man writes that socialising with others and participating in local events (sporting, community) offsets the perception of remoteness. It is important to be involved with others to gain support and...share costs (Case 324). This can be as practical as car pooling:

contacting friends relatives neighbours about who's going to town so kids can get a lift with other people in the area and sharing basketball run, work shifts, so kids knock off at the same time so to lighten the burden of travelling in & out of town as much as possible (Case 28).

Cooperation applies in many ways. At present when you require a tradesman we usually ask around to see if someone else requires the same and share the travel costs (Case 390). Neighbourliness dissolves diffidence and allows people to approach others: our
neighbours are always ready to help as well and we find, unlike in the
city, it is easy to ask for help when we need it (Case 77). Cooperation
also provides a level of safety: network with neighbours in case of
fire, sickness (Case 42).

Personal growth is evident in participant statements: we have learnt
so much more about our environment; how to be self-sufficient;
knowing everyone that lives in your area (Case 232). Another writes:
got a job so I had an outside interest (Case 96). For some growth
has occurred in response to a lack: [I] joined the local CWA choir - it's
better than nothing and a challenge to work on increasing ... skills
and repertoire (Case 357). It involves reciprocity: friends always help
if you run out. At first I felt bad to ask - but everyone relies on each
other out here, you soon learn. Same if water pump breaks, others
will hear and bring containers of water to you. We give back in all
sorts of ways e.g. helping with farm work or dinners etc (Case 232).

Personal growth occurs from being able to make practical decisions
and adapt to changing situations. One woman has found a sensible
and positive solution to her need to make a career change:

I have chosen to commute to work...To obtain work near the
farm...meant turning down better pay offers and career
paths. I will probably not pursue my career once we have
children as...the commute will probably make it unrewarding.
In some ways though I see this as an advantage. It is more
acceptable for women in the country to remain at home with
their children. In Perth I feel that there is the perception that
women who do this are lazy for not accomplishing both
working away from the home and still taking care of the
household...My work also means that working on the farm is
a viable alternative. I see my future role as 'farm business
manager' (like my partner's mother)... establish my career
down here so that if I need to return to work I am locally known (Case 231, female).

Another woman has widened her interests and her range of skills, while she keeps an eye out for possible fulltime employment:

I have settled for casual employment... so that I can commit to more things I like doing, sport, friends, and also access to other services (through proximity to Perth). Learning to manage accounts/books for family farm so that eventually I can start to become part of the business. I am trying to be flexible, have done a lot of volunteer work in places, travelling up to two hours from home to increase network and gain connections that might lead to fulltime employment (Case 411).

Generally, participants can see the value of what they have learnt: it is going great at the moment. I wouldn't change things that have happened in my life. I have learnt so much; no regrets about anything in the past. I wouldn't change a thing (Case 352).

One man considers his situation in lifestyle terms:

it's great. I believe that my standard of living is better than my city friends...The city is a great place to visit for a couple of days, but I am very happy in the country. I think it suits me and my family. Hopefully my boys will grow up in the country and learn to love it like I do (Case 402).

Travel

The most common method of modifying one's lifestyle is to travel to major centres on a regular basis: even now with the high price of fuel the savings are worth it (Case 398). Almost 30% of participants, 121 people, meet their needs by travelling: we schedule our shopping bouts with trips to major centres 40 kms away. Travel to Perth (400
kms) for hard to obtain items (Case 4). A reliable car is necessary as several participants advise: always manage a good standard of transportation (Case 315).

As mentioned above, those who travel make the most of their trips by shopping fortnightly, buying fuel when it is cheap, and making appointments in Perth all together (Case 293). Travel provides a break and the chance to stock up on items not available locally (Case 404) and many participants have enough energy to take in a show as well:

we travel to either a major regional centre or Perth to buy the specialist goods that we cannot readily access in the country. Lack of cultural and artistic events, no movie theatre ... we "stock up" when we go to the city (Case 147).

Participants who find themselves rejected socially in their country location spend their free time elsewhere: spend not much time in town on weekends and...get out when I can to Perth or regional centres (Case 476). Where a hobby is important to personal wellbeing individuals travel for things I like doing i.e. swimming. Causes problems as I live on a family farm (Case 275). It is probably just as important for her to maintain a leisure interest that provides a way to de-stress.

Driving anything from 20 to 600 kms to carry out an activity requires time, planning, expense and effort, and respondents feel the strain: grit teeth and drive (Case 293). Most participants are philosophical
and accept [that] travelling is now a way of life (Case 288) but travel has many benefits: I am always glad to return home after a trip to the city. Cannot imagine returning to live in a city ever (Case 178). Travelling is not always a chore and can be enjoyable: it is sometimes depressing living here. Our shop is not very good. Can't get what you want so it is good to go somewhere for a day out (Case 344). Participants enjoy seeing new parts of the country (Case 212). Travel provides one way for people in the survey to maintain better mental health: I also leave the area at least once a month to keep a perspective on the town (Case 410). They combine a personal restorative with keeping up to date: travel at regular intervals to the city ...to "charge my batteries" and to catch up with... big events (Case 341).

Several people travel, although aware that they are not supporting local business: pay higher prices and accept it or travel and buy in bulk (Case 342). Some are regretful: cost-wise we have always spent the major portion of our income in our home town but with four kids and not as many services in our town our big shops are usually done in [major regional centre] (Case 398).

Participants write that you decide what things you want to do and go ahead and participate in them if you can afford it (Case 40). The effort and distances travelled are awesome:

for me to participate in a choir...required a 115 km drive each week. Wife travelled 300 kms per week for children's sport.
And if they showed promise it was a disaster: 13 weeks of trips of 500 kms to Perth for trials/training. There isn't really a way to overcome the problems, just deciding what you won't do to accommodate what you will (Case 40).

Overall, these resilient people are justifiably pleased at their adaptability: have got much better at accepting travel as part of life (Case 33). As one participant puts it: if you can’t change… factors in your life like distance you prioritise what you do and enjoy these (Case 80).

Active in Community Affairs

Although few participants describe community work as a major leisure interest, 111 participants (almost 26% of the sample) mention their community as one of the ways they adapt to rural life: the best way to overcome any problems is to join a local community group. This immediately puts you into company of people who know the area, and are willing to help or who know somebody who can help (Case 111). Community participation takes a variety of forms and contributes to feelings of belonging: joining sporting clubs, attending church, visiting neighbours (Case 184). One participant recommends: attend functions etc and club activities that are on in the town. This makes you feel part of the community and meet new people (Case 340). They encourage newcomers to join in - be an office bearer – participate (Case 219).
Generally participants recognise that if they want progress in rural areas they need to become activists: *Everything you want to improve you have to get involved. And make it happen yourself. This can be irritating when compared to more populated areas but it brings the organizer out in you* (Case 450). Her words are supported by all the people I interviewed who are agreed that rural communities will stand or fall on the willingness of the locals to fight for their interests.

A wide variety of activities help hold country people together. One participant mentions three activities that benefit the community and draw its members closer.

*People who work together on committees tend not to bitch about each other...We live with the risk of medical emergency and have first aid courses every four years...We take people’s crops off if they have a tragedy and they do the same for us* (Case 416).

A broader view again is expressed by one resident: *I have to think about the community as not just the people/businesses in town but include the neighbouring towns as an accessible extension to our community. Networking and communication is important...to reduce the feeling of isolation* (Case 381). This person provides an example of bridging capital, having realised that areas of limited population may need to take on a regional focus.

Many participants urge that it is necessary to support community efforts (Case 374) and one woman points out that once they have fought to gain a service country people must support it - sometimes...
country people are their own worst enemy and access services and facilities that are...outside their district (Case 423).

Community activism is a way of becoming known, for example my volunteer efforts go into the local craft and quilting groups to get to know and be known as someone who is green and grey-haired (Case 759). Community involvement provides an interim interest that may lead to employment: I'm trying to get involved in a lot of community stuff...So although I'm struggling to get a job at present, hopefully people will recognise that I am here for good and really want to be a part of things (Case 327).

Some participants are striving to improve their own living conditions and to leave a desirable level of accommodation for the next incoming professional: we are trying to negotiate with the local Shire and Government Housing Authority to build a new home (Case 332). Modern houses and cheap rents predispose people to like an area so adequate housing helps retain population (Falomir-Pichastor et al, 2004).

Community participation leads to personal development. There are aspects of my life I wish I could develop, but realise through participating in my community I can achieve this and better what we all have (Case 132). Community activism has many benefits: I will leave here feeling that I have helped other people. It has also given me more confidence in myself (Case 365).
Individuals learn to set their own boundaries and choose their own areas of interest:

I obtained work lecturing... This enabled me to meet a wide range of local residents. I joined the local fire brigade and met a different group of people. Not being a "sports person" I have not joined the [sports] clubs... there is an expectation that socially you are in everything or nothing... residents cannot understand... you may wish to choose just some activities (Case 57).

In many rural areas families take it in turns to act as the information centre for the district fire brigade or ambulance, usually by CB radio and telephone. Such community involvement keeps people in touch: it's very easy to become a recluse when you live in the country. I belong to the fire brigade, we have the radio [at our home] in summer and try to be part of the community (Case 25).

Community activities may provide leisure interests: joined local bushfire volleys (Case 22); developing much greater interests in rural affairs (Case 5). Approaches vary: I try to create a life... which helps bring people together, participate in community groups when time permits (Case 18); Another participant writes that community engagement [is] working to support Hagzara Refugees with like-minded people (Case 16).

Many participants lobby for projects by taking part in surveys. Good communication with town councillors. Represent locals at meetings (Case 1). They are keen to benefit their area by lobbying politicians
to generally look after the country better (Case 375). One participant writes that

there are many ways to overcome problems. One of the better ways was the public meeting in the park in town just last Sunday. Issues were discussed with members of the local shire council. If only [we] could do the same on a state or national level (Case 68).

Participants are generally active at the local level: approach council, write letter, join town groups (Case 71). Country people do not like feeling ignored: get the government to get back to the people in the country. Don't sell off all the government [assets] (Case 38). Activists are prepared to lobby widely: fuel problem not overcome; write newspapers, fuel watch, politicians, political parties, local council (Case 103). Residents put in years of work to foster their community:

member of the Development Group for our town. Member of the Fundraising Committee for our new Community Centre...With both our aim is to attract more professional people to our community to live or visit (i.e. electricians etc) which would alleviate some problems we all face (Case 390).

Although sport is a major interest for rural people only 36 participants (9% of the sample) mention joining sports clubs as a means of overcoming isolation (Case 372). People who are new to town can feel isolated because they are so far from home so clubs and associations enable rural people to widen their social circle. I have become more involved in sports...I spend more time doing outdoor activities and have tried to develop friendships outside of my areas of
interest (Case 757). Joining a club develops new interests: writing and book clubs (Case 359). Taking part in community activities fulfils the human need to belong, enhancing wellbeing and creating feelings of competency in all age groups (Gracia & Herrero, 2004; Stansfeld, 2006).

Although 29 participants (6.74% of the sample) report making regular visits to friends and family in the city, most of them use a variety of strategies to expand their social network and enhance their social life: frequent trips to Perth to visit. Friends and supports developed in the [local] area. Involved in community group (Case 117).

Friendships are only one of many ways of coping: times I wish I wasn't here but when down find a good book, sew or go for a walk. Good friends are invaluable. Working part time is a great lifeline (Case 284). Friendships meet the need to belong (Gracia & Herrero, 2004; Stansfeld, 2006) and in isolated rural areas good friends play a large role in your life (Case 101). Supportive relationships help participants overcome a preference for living elsewhere: a network of good friends, local and out of town to keep me sane (Case 273) and most participants make sure they make an effort to get to know people (Case 374).

Healthy relationships help participants maintain mental balance: I make sure that I spend one day every 2 weeks with women friends. We go to lunch and do girl things (Case 25). Absent family is missed but local support can be sustaining: It can be very lonely so I try to
call a friend or go to their house if I am finding it hard to cope. Sometimes it is hard to live so far away from family (Case 206). A lack of kindred souls undermines other satisfactions and lonely people are highly likely to leave: I do not have any problems. I am my own boss. I live very simply and enjoy it. So why am I going to move back closer to the city - all my extended family and friends live there (Case 29)

One participant has found many benefits when taking up employment brings her into contact with other social circles:

My return to part-time work has actually expanded my circle of friends and made me more financially independent and given me a lot of confidence when dealing with the people in my area. I feel more a person in my own right - not just someone's wife (Case 340).

Whereas several participants feel a lack of family support from the absence of relatives close by, moving has brought some families closer together: I think the move here has helped me to have more and closer contact with family than was possible before. This was important to me to be there to help when and where I could (Case 225). Feeling accepted into a community improves other areas of life including family functioning, competence in old age, care of family members, and adaptability to illness (Gracia & Herrero, 2004).

Neighbours have an importance that is perhaps less felt in an urban situation becoming like family (Case 346). They add a sense of security: good neighbours and friends. Safety - can leave house and cars unlocked (Case 193).
Living in a small town you become well known as you move in the same circle of people for all things, work, social, sport, church (Case 346). Discretion is necessary and one participant gives people enough information to be satisfied and keep important information to ourselves (Case 230) while another talks to confidantes away from this area (Case 359). Professionals in particular have to be more aware of confidentiality (Case 34).

Participants who have suffered bad experiences learn to be careful:

I have become very guarded about who I speak to and discuss very little private/personal or work. Instead of getting defensive, I now have little speeches prepared (for example - No, I don't wish to discuss that! or Sorry, no, I don't know anything about that or perhaps it is private (Case 181).

One woman has found that friendship cannot be unreserved: People are quick to judge you - so tend to keep to small circle of friends socially (Case 282).

One man would like the support of locals but is aware that his family's situation is beyond their experience: We have found ourselves in a unique position that many do not understand (Case 264). Living in a small community under the close observation of others can make a rural area feel quite restricted: used to feel quite claustrophobic when kids were little - now they are both school age can get away a little more (Case 282).
Problems Not Overcome

The energy, resilience and contentment of the majority contrasts with the despair of respondents who are unhappy. A country appointment can produce culture shock (Higgins, 1996) and 21 people (5% of the sample) find themselves unable to overcome their difficulties. Typically, 14 of these participants (3.2% of the respondents) will transfer job to get closer to home (Case 81) and another couple anticipate a retirement shift where they will eventually move to where people have it all provided for them (Case 13).

These are important losses to any rural area and there is also the loss of an adolescent participant who is moving to the city for schooling (Case 189). This is a good move for that young person's development but the youth drain from rural areas is a real threat to community viability due to the loss of young minds and energy and of young people to repopulate the country (Tonts & Black, 2003).

One participant writes that he drinks too much as a reaction to being socially rejected, trapped, and unable to find employment. His social life is limited to his wife, they see far too much of each other, and periodically get on each other's nerves. Like others in a similar situation, their intention is to move.

The anger of the group of unemployed and poverty-stricken rural people of all ages is manifest:

*no way to manage money in West Aus. Cutting off phone...6 km is STD. Rates/water four times the price/watering vegie*
patch 2-3 times a day (not once every three). Fuel what a joke. Trying to figure out how to [move] without bankruptcy. In 3 months $25,000 spent and we are on pension. What we made from sale of our last house...is gone. Should have lasted 2-3 years (Case 47).

Discouragement creates feelings of hopelessness: Life is harder at the moment, lots of things need to be hand done. Don't know how long I can keep it up. Feeling incompetent (Case 48). Poverty forces individuals to lead a restricted lifestyle: don't go anywhere (too expensive to travel). Don't rely on main services [for water] where possible. Try to recycle (Case 194). Water shortages not only make it difficult to grow food but arouse insecurity, one of the most destabilising emotions that humans suffer.

Feelings raised by rejection are extremely painful. One couple, who had settled in a very small country town, describe the notion of rural people being welcoming as a myth and social isolation leads a lonely woman to write: have not overcome problems yet as people not willing to accept me (Case 331).

One participant feels restless:

find casual/fulltime work off farm to keep self busy... can be very boring at times. I love to chat to friends and catch up over a coffee. Have an interest in the community. I feel at times I want to move, as there's not a lot here to do to keep me stimulated mentally. Love going off camping when we get away. Income is quite good, enjoy lots of things that the city people can't (Case 354).

Another wants to move but copes by endeavouring to think about other things (Case 206) and one family is organizing for a future shift:
have a house in Perth, spend some time in the city. Planning to move from area in 5 years time to a more vibrant, coastal, semi-rural location. Feel the future is bleak in this area (Case 297).

Deciding to move is not easy and requires a level of self-confidence. One participant has adjusted to her situation: the troubles I've had I can't overcome. They're a fact of life and I've just learnt to live with it (Case 403). Another appears not to have realised that her skills actually make her highly employable:

since being widowed...I would like to move somewhere I could do more with my life. But I own my house and have a job here and at my age I would not get another job or be able to buy another house somewhere else. I started working with [the disabled] to feel like I was actually being of some benefit to society – it makes me feel an achiever and I love it (Case 289).

Rural people suffering poverty and disadvantage may be able to retain their respectability and be fortunate enough to live in a community where they are accepted. If they become fringe dwellers they create a neotribes that may never feel part of the community without practical support and encouragement. Their immediate need is probably employment as the one sure way out of the poverty trap (Alston, 2005; Townsend, 1996; Vinson, 1999). Individuals in these situations need help from government, community and family to overcome their inability to participate effectively and avoid alienation (Alston, 2005; Cox & Caldwell, 2000; Townsend & Gordon, 2000). This is no time to blame the excluded for their problems but to help them because inclusion benefits the whole community and prevents
the loss of population that leads to retrenchment of services (Burchard, 2000; Levitas, 2000; Martinet al, 2002: 645; Walker, 1997).

No Problems to Overcome

Forty four participants (10 % of those who responded) write that they have no problems related to living in a rural area: none at this stage (Case 11). Needless to say these people remain positive: I am very happy with my life. I have no money problems and life in general is v. good (Case 118). In any case a problem is only a problem if you see it as such: I have not had to overcome any problems...the only one would be we have no store to shop at. It is 20 kms to the nearest one although that is nothing (Case 205). Another participant says in all honesty there isn't much we are left wanting (Case 32). The high life satisfaction scores of the 40 people (9.3% of the sample) who did not respond to this item suggest that they too are managing well.

Participants without problems plan ahead, accept rural/urban differences, and report that relocation has been worth it. Jobes (2000) and Munkejord (2006) find that about 50% of inmigrators remain in their new location. Those who stay develop some pre-move familiarity with the area, prearrange their employment, and arrive with few illusions about the lifestyle. An example of this preparation for a new lifestyle is reported by one participant:
I do not have any problems living in a rural area. Moving from the city we realized that we had to make changes to our life and accept that not everything was going to be available as in the city (Case 14).

Conclusion to Resilience

Immigration is a major move and expensive to change so incomers tend to make the best of it (Dreman, 1997; RWAC, 2001; Walford, 2004) and the people who completed my survey are resourceful and resilient. They display the well-developed problem solving skills, self-reliance, commitment, and active participation in the community that facilitate local acceptance and help them make the most of their situation (Kenyon & Black, 2001:13). A small group of them dislike their rural lifestyle but few appear beaten and most are just making other arrangements.

These participants have found ways of managing distance and isolation and, dare I say it, government neglect. Improving utilities and agencies in regional and remote areas is doubtlessly expensive and there are not enough votes involved to compel improvements so the onus falls back on the residents. This research supports the findings of Kenyon and Black (2001) that rural people are prepared to put in the effort to keep their towns alive and build a worthwhile future for their children. To achieve this and make progress, rural people need to pull together, developing high levels of social cohesion and social capital, and the following section considers this issue.
Section Four: Social Cohesion through Participant Support for Newcomers

I was interested when I read the participants' coping strategies to observe the numerous and varied ways in which the word support was used or described by participants. Every one of the five social relationships was mentioned and they also included self-support and support of local business. It appears that the majority of people in rural areas are open and supportive of others and know how to maintain their personal wellbeing. In this final question participants were asked directly what support they extended to newcomers as a means by which I could gather information on social cohesion and on bridging and bonding capital. Any concerns I had that participants might assume a spurious interest in immgrators and undermine my survey through the bias of socially desirable answers (Messick, 1960) were dissipated by the responses which were, of course, given under the cloak of anonymity. Those who had no interest in newcomers said so decidedly and those who did offer support did not hesitate to spell out the extent or the limitations on what they were prepared to offer.

Table 9.5 shows the micro level support that individual people proffer but, prior to presenting the participant's statements I will provide the information I gathered on macro and meso level support for newcomers.
Table 9.5: Support that Participants Offer Newcomers

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>WELCOME</th>
<th>INVITE CLUBS</th>
<th>INFORMATION</th>
<th>INVITE HOME</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>276 (64.1%)</td>
<td>107 (25%)</td>
<td>102 (23.7%)</td>
<td>55 (13%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOUR AREA</td>
<td>LOBBY GOVT</td>
<td>NO HELP</td>
<td>N.A.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13 (3%)</td>
<td>1 (0.23%)</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>43 (10%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The figures show the number of participants and percentage of participants who scored each category. Percentages total more than 100 due to multiple choices.

Macro-level Support

Participants did not make positive mention of any politicians or government programmes or policies that are actually providing support to rural people. Rather they expressed anger, anxiety and concern over access to services and the tendency for government to withdraw rural services, particularly the closure small rural hospitals. It is possible that some participants have attended government funded programmes for community development, although nobody mentions them, as they are useful for seeing their situation in terms of opportunity for personal development and initiative (Argent, 2008).

A major concern of these rural people is the availability of services when they are needed. I have already cited their concern over Health and many other aspects of rural living. Employment is their way out
of poverty and they need support for further education programmes to enhance their chances. They are gradually becoming aware not only of practical training, for example computer literacy and wool-classing, but also of distance education and online tertiary studies (Heravi & Bertram, 2007; McDonnel Smedts & Lowe, 2007; Somers, Strasser & Jolly, 2007; Van Ast & Larson, 2007). Family and work commitments make it difficult for students to complete courses and a key issue for students is a sufficient stipend to help them survive while they do so (Jones, De Witt & Cross, 2007).

**Meso Level Support: Shire Attitudes to Incomers**

Every Shire has a website and over the four years of this thesis these have been updated and improved. Shires also provide printed material ranging from Facts Sheets listing facilities, organisations and contact details, to handsome folders of material designed to assist incomers find their feet rapidly.

The tone of the material is welcoming, with offers of formal and informal support, particularly directed towards trades and business people. They also make their townships appealing to locals, tourists, and incomers by beautifying the streetscape and providing amenities. The improvements may attract people but the willingness of community leaders to welcome newcomers has a positive effect on
the whole community and benefits everybody (Stansfeld, 2006; TAI, 2000).

When people move into a Shire these days, they are likely to receive both a formal and informal reception. Participants write that their Shire has a welcome function for all new citizens in the district during the past 12 months...usually held at the beginning of March each year (Case 404). The welcome may be personal as one Shire Councillor writes: I meet with people and find out if they have any issues that we as a Shire can resolve (Case 404). The new role of Community Development Officer, sometimes shared between Shires or combined with the role of Youth Support Officer, has been developed to encourage people to settle and to invest in the town:

as Community Development Officer I have compiled a rural assistance book for newcomers to the Shire. This book has all the services, clubs, sporting teams that are available in the Shire. I am also contactable to assist with finding housing and other options (Case 405).

Representatives of local clubs and associations contact newcomers. I am the president of the local tennis club...and do try to encourage new membership (Case 158). Local attitudes are generally inclusive. We as a community have welcome BBQs and afternoon teas. We are all friendly and approachable (Case 152).

Higher levels of resident wellbeing (physical and mental health) are found in communities that provide support in the domains I've previously described. They are healthy, safe and inclusive communities with dynamic and resilient economies. They have 402
sustainable natural and man-made environments. They are culturally rich and vibrant, democratic and engaged (Wiseman, McCloud & Zubrick, 2007, 206)

**Micro Level Support for Newcomers**

In my survey participants are asked what support they themselves offer newcomers and given space to expand their answers. The responses are categorised under the heading of *welcome them*, *provide useful information*, *show them around*, *socialise with them*, *introduce them to local groups*, *lobby government*, *no support provided*, and *not applicable* (See Table 9.2.). There are 340 respondents (79% of the sample) who offer personal support to incomers, 47 participants (11%) who don’t make any overtures, and 43 (10%) who say they are new residents and still finding their own feet so they have not yet contributed.

Some support is comprehensive: *show them the local amenities and facilities*. *Point out local scenic spots/places of interest*. *Offer introduction to clubs and people who may assist them* (Case 1). Many sensitively add if it is asked for, as much as I can without invading their privacy (Case 46). Information may be offered formally or informally: *offer them a drink and advice on schools, medical facilities and make them welcome* (Case 2).
It is apparent from the surveys that assistance to others remains part of the rural ethos and of a determination to keep up a sense of community (Case 416).

almost anything they require from informing them of the best places to shop to hands on help to get set up if they require it. Country people help each other in times of trouble. When a large bushfire went through the area in late 2003 groups of farmers came down from Narrogin 200 kms away to help replace fences (Case 68).

Newcomers may be seen as needing to learn rural solidarity:

try to get them involved in community events and organisations. Loneliness and isolation can turn people off country living. You can get by without contributing to your community in the city, but not in the country. People need to work together if rural communities are to survive (Case 147).

Participants who are town dwellers observe the financial struggle of local farmers and find ways to offer support: this is a poor area as far as incomes are concerned. I help people in farming areas and my wife does netball with the town kids...plus trains one team (Case 762).

Assistance is seen as continuing a rural tradition:

both myself and my husband make a special effort to help newcomers settle in. Especially if they have been transferred here when they didn't really want to come here... We try and show them the same country hospitality that was shown to us when we arrived here (Case 181).

Practical advice arising out of personal experience is offered to incomers:
set yourself up with a good network of colleagues before you move – as...you need specialist support at times. Get into sport and extra activities separate from work. Get out there and push yourself to be outgoing in your first few weeks and don't go "home" to the city or your old town for at least a month to help you get settled...Give anything new a go - I've never played hockey before in my life and it was damn good fun (Case 160).

Participants remember being new themselves: I have an open door to all newcomers and make them feel as at home as possible having been in their position myself many years ago (Case 205). A woman describes her support of newcomers suffering culture shock:

I have had many schoolteachers for meals, drinks, to stay, to chat and discuss problems. I remember what it was like to arrive in this tiny country town 5 hours from Perth and know no-one...Mainly I'm there if needed. I'm "Aunty", "Mum" and "Nanna" (Case 269).

Similarly, a man reports: the same as I was when I arrived here friendship and assistance if needed (Case 145). They encourage newcomers to withhold judgement: when new people are transferred here I always visit them within a couple of days and let them know they have arrived at the best kept secret within the W.A. Police Service (Case 138).

The word welcome is used by 276 participants (64%). One man supports refugees who have settled locally and is involved in supporting local Afghan refugees and pressuring government to grant them residency (Case 12).
One participant has discovered regional variations in style are just different patterns of showing a welcome:

Each town I have been to has a phrase that the whole population seems to use (subconsciously). In [Town A] it is "How are you settling in?"... In [town B] it was "Welcome to town". The whole community ask it for about 6-8 months and in the end you start to think "Well, hell, I've been here for 8 months. Stop asking" but you don't say it because you are meeting new people all the time and they are just being welcoming... the vast majority of country people are happy to have newcomers coming to their town (Case 402).

Support that any individual offers may be general or it may be limited to workmates, helping them settle in and showing them work procedures: offer help to new work colleagues with anything they need (Case 7). As one woman writes: our workplace offers shared accommodation at the staff quarters and we always make an effort to seek out new people and invite them out (Case 549). Limiting their assistance to fellow workers is the only limitation mentioned by these participants.

Participants describe formal and informal mentoring roles. One man supports newcomers on a personal level by offering social interaction e.g. invites to dinner, drinks etc. By being honest & enthusiastic about more than just the tourist attractions and taking the time to show newcomers around. On a professional level by providing services that are accessible & informed (Case 21).

Assistance may arise from the workplace: my job is very social... so I try to keep people in the loop and advise of networking or social opportunities as they come up (Case 120).
Assistance may be tendered face to face, through a visit or by a phone call. Many respondents realise the value of a smile, a wave or a hello but some participants undervalue their small acknowledgements that make newcomers feel welcome: not much, just say hello when I meet them downtown (Case 265). Often I found that useful practical assistance is labelled by the provider as not much.

There are 55 participants (12.79% of the sample) who are happy to socialise with newcomers and so provide the formal and informal networks that research finds help people amalgamate with the local community (Coward & Jackson, 1983; Edgar 2001; Plowman, 2004; Webb, 2006).

I always try to contact any new families that move to the area to let them know what is available in our town for them and invite them to join in. My group of friends have a morning tea once a week...in our homes and we always try to include newcomers...I also give my number to the new mothers in town as a point of friendship in any way they may need (Case 206).

Another respondent describes a regional centre with an informal network that makes a point of welcoming newcomers.

Our group of friends...organise gatherings for younger population involving newcomers to the area. Have numerous foreigners come to area to work and travel, some choose to stay permanently. Provide social networks for these people (Case 411).
These participants have lived in their area long enough to have developed neighbourhood relationships of all kinds and know from personal experience the benefits of support (Prezza et al, 2001). They are creating an atmosphere that encourages incomers to settle and their words display the positivity, openness, assurance, and inclusiveness recommended as successful strategies for maintaining close relationships (Canary et al, 2002; Plowman, 2004). Fortunately supportive behaviour provides benefits for both parties and participants find helping others fulfilling.

Have a beauty relationship with young couple only 1 farm away...2 littlies. I baby sit, take meals and cakes if I think they are unwell or under pressure...It is so special being an adopted Auntie. We travel to sport together sometimes and I watch kids so she can play netball undisturbed. Loan books, drop in for a cuppa, arrange to travel together for a concert or speaker. Just maintain phone or 2 way contact (Case 345).

The survey results suggest a sociability that is possibly less available in urban areas and may be changing in rural areas as people become busier and more work-focused. Incomers are offered invitations to homes, pubs and restaurants. Along with friendly greetings, morning tea, welcome cake, and introductions, participants encourage their children to help new children at school, and invite them over to play with their own offspring (Case 386). Assistance may involve safety issues: look out for their kids on/off bus (Case 22) or it may be in the form of surplus from home vegetable garden (Case 82).
There are 107 participants (34.88%) who write that they make newcomers aware of available clubs and services. They invite them to attend functions, take them along until they find their own feet, and encourage them to get involved in community activities especially sport promote the town as a friendly place to live (Case 434). Thirteen of the participants (3%) enjoy showing newcomers around local scenic spots and venues. One mentions being able to offer employment: *give them work in the orchard* (Case 99).

There are many respondents (102 or 23.7% of the sample) happy to provide *ways to access difficult-to-find information quickly/efficiently* (Case 38). Advice may be offered *about stock on road, fox baiting, blackberry spraying, water testing, applying for fencing grant. Keep an eye on their property – limited cooperation* (Case 22). Advice is tendered *when requested...on building/utilities/shire/sources and costs of tanks, pumps etc* (Case 57).

Forty seven participants (11%) either did not respond to this item or state that they do not offer help to newcomers. Help might not be offered but is available if asked for: *none unless asked for...then whatever is needed* (Case 45). Being new oneself predicates against offering help: *I'm a newcomer so not much* (Case 476). Newcomers will find they are gradually included if they practice the strategies that maintain any relationship (Canary et al, 2002). Other participants report that there are no immigrants in their area: *seldom see newcomers due to remoteness* (Case 54).
There are 202 participants (47%) resident in their area for less than five years who can be thought of as relative newcomers. Of this group 180 offer support to newcomers, seven state that there are no newcomers in their area, 13 that they do not offer any help, with 11 adding that they themselves are very new, and 22 did not respond at all.

There are 228 participants (57%) resident in their area for more than five years who can be considered long-term inhabitants. Of this group 209 respondents offer support to newcomers, 19 did not respond, and 17 state that they do not offer any support. Some of these participants have previously offered help and been taken advantage of:

Not very much. I don't take to strangers very well & prefer to keep to myself until I know more about them. I would always wave or smile but never invite them to my place. I've been hassled by neighbours so tread carefully these days (Case 28).

One participant writes of limiting her assistance to formal work situations: personally none. But as part of my job we welcome newcomers to our area with information packages and "new residents evenings" whereby they can meet locals, businesses, and community and recreation groups (Case 375).

I did not find any tendency to talk about the gentrification of the countryside (Halfacree, 1998) which doubtless means that the majority of incomers are pretty much like the people they live among.
House prices have risen but not to the point where locals can't afford to buy (Champion, 1980). My interviewees see newcomers as a benefit to rural areas and only the business person (Interview B) felt that locals did not want newcomer opinions or input. Farmers understandably resent farmlet owners who borrow too often, constantly need help or advice, fail to manage stock properly, eradicate vermin or keep noxious weeds under control:

_Few newcomers and mostly hobby farmers. Unfortunately, we have found in the past that if you befriend them too readily, they are constantly on the doorstep borrowing, borrowing, borrowing... and have very unrealistic ideas of rural living and the sparseness of our lifestyles (Case 409)._ 

They probably label such incomers derogatively out of frustration but there are none of the active organised resistance movements found in previous research (Allan & Mooney, 1998).

Research finds that incomers who are visibly different, compete for jobs, are over-eager to make improvements, or require ongoing support due to disability, illness, or poverty may be less welcome (Falomi-Pichastor, 2004) as one participant writes:

_Those who do come in and have long beards and long hair and problems, I say, be patient, prove yourself and you will be accepted. But there will always be someone to prove me wrong_ (Case 398).

There are also some heartening examples, in Australian research, of such incomers being accepted over time (Kenyon & Black, 2001).

Another woman writes:
I'm ashamed to say not much anymore. Have tried over the years, only to be hurt in some cases. Easier to keep to one's self. Depending on person have invited them for cuppas or hobby clubs (Case 325).

Exclusion is hurtful: none because the town doesn't make you feel welcome in any area unless you play sport. Even when you try to play sport [they are so non-inclusive] you are not welcome (Case 306). This person's feelings are so lacerated that s/he is unable to empathise with other newcomers and has become unwilling to offer a lead to others.

It is hard to know whether personal dissatisfaction or a dislike of incomers motivates the statement: advice would be to go home (Case 47) or the following respondent: I do not need newcomers (Case 91). The remainder state that they prefer their own company. Most locals realise their community needs newcomers and new cultural norms encourage prosocial behaviour (Falomir-Pichastor et al, 2004).

One participant feels that transient professionals come and go before you can get to know them. Others find it is painful to make new friends and then see them leave and others again now find themselves too busy:

when we first got here I helped to create a patchwork group with young working mums at night. Most have moved on now so the group dissolved. Have cooked muffins, meals for newcomers. No support now - too busy in my fulltime job (Case 31).

Some live too far from town:
as I live on a farm people have often been in the Shire for some time before I know they are here. This is a farming community and I know this doesn't apply to me only. In town those who live there make an effort. Most of our newcomers are young people and they quickly become involved in the activities going on (Case 154).

Notwithstanding the difficulties described above, the majority of this survey's participants display the unity, connection, cooperation, tolerance, and trust of a cohesive society (Vertovec, 1997: 3). They are making the effort to cultivate mutual loyalties and the determination of those who have settled to pass on the support and friendship that they themselves received, testifies to their appreciation. As in other research support comes from both individuals and groups (Vertovec, 1997).

Conclusion to Support for Newcomers

Multi-layered personal, economic, socio-demographic and community attributes affect the level of social cohesion in any place (Gracia & Herrero, 2004) but generally these participants accept anyone who pretty well fits their picture of the average person, with some tolerance of difference. Economically, many have the support of a professional income or a pension, although they may be struggling in the farming or business world, but they know most of their neighbours are in the same boat. There are few communities which seem antagonistic to incomers and most present a friendly
face and a welcome. All the Shires sincerely try to attract new families and business people and this has a good influence on the population. I think these common factors mitigate against bias in my reporting.

These participants fail to mention receiving any macro level support and they are critical of diminishing government services. Shire Councils are making heroic efforts to attract both industry and newcomers and they need increased funding to continue and whole-hearted support from their populations. It is obvious that government needs to set up programmes that help rural people earn a living and encourages people to repopulate rural areas (Stockdale, 2006).

**Conclusion to Chapter Nine**

Chapter Nine presents the responses to four questions designed to elicit information on immigration, neotribalism, social capital and *habitus.*
Section One

The first section of the chapter supports my contention that people immigrate in order to improve their wellbeing and meet various needs. Participants describe moving for a variety of reasons but the predominance of lifestyle motives outweighs other factors. The results outlined in Section One update current information on immigration generally and the Great Southern Region in particular, but also on a search for a better *habitus*. They show that wellbeing is particular to the individual. There are respondents for whom moving to the country is the realisation of a dream and there are respondents who are unlikely to settle well or even to settle for long in a rural area.

Section Two

The second section of this chapter provides the key statements from a wealth of material supporting the actuality of neotribalism, social capital, and *habitus*. A positive view of neotribalism is found in every report of family members going happily about their lives and intermingling with others. A negative view of neotribalism is found where participants report rejecting or being rejected, with all the attendant pain of ostracism and every area of their life consequently circumscribed.

Participant descriptions of the active roles that they and others play in mutual support, community projects, and inclusion of others
support the presence of social cohesion and social capital. The loss and self-defeating behaviours where people isolate themselves or are isolated show how necessary it is for networking to be ongoing.

The desire to set up a satisfactory lifestyle (habitus) is evident in all the statements as is the effort involved because rural people have multiple difficulties to contend with. Some happily report finding no problems, others find ways to overcome theirs, and others again are considering their options.

As much as people enjoy the country, the bush, the clean air, their work, their leisure activities, I think it is their joy in being welcomed, accepted, included, appreciated that comes across most strongly. Truly humans are social animals and, as the song says, no man is an island. Those who are not happily situated experience intense anguish but they intend to act. The country may lose them but hopefully they will fit more happily elsewhere. Those participants who are well-situated are happy to stay indefinitely and those for whom the fit is uncomfortable will do something to alter it.
Section Three

In Section Three the participants describe how they overcome or manage a wide range of problems related to living in a rural area, the material adding to our knowledge of *habitus*, neotribalism, social capital and the jigsaw theory. Once again we see them moving industriously between the various venues of their life, and we see many who are supporting the community in a variety of ways.

High scores on the self-rating scales and the positive descriptors they gave pre-suggested that these participants would be highly resilient and their statements bear out the assumption. In spite of their difficulties, the majority of these participants are happy with their lives, enjoy to various extents the intellectual exercise of wrestling with the problems, and are justifiably proud of their coping strategies. Lower scores and more negative ratings are produced by participants who are less happy but they have either accepted their situation or are planning to change location.

Section Four

In Section Four information is elicited on social cohesion as a major factor in social capital but it also reveals people altruistically helping newcomers settle into the jigsaw. The statements of participants who welcome newcomers are encouraging to anyone considering inmigrating and demonstrate the contributors to social cohesion.
They help people feel that they belong, invite them to be active and have some influence, and reveal the similar needs, goals, beliefs and values that allow emotional bonds to develop over time (Obst & White, 2004). These people are acting in ways that increase social capital, spread the load, and contribute to sustainability (Cocklin & Alston, 2003). Similarly local government welcomes incomers because new business, tradespeople and residents keep rural towns alive (Kenyon & Black 2001: 62).

There are 43 participants who feel that support is not applicable, being new to the country themselves. Depending on how they are treated they may one day swell the ranks of those who remember newness and help others acclimatise. Of the remaining 47 (11%) there are some who have closed their minds and doors to outsiders many of them after adverse experiences. Their words need to be taken onboard by newcomers hoping to be accepted and can be summarized as don’t use other people up and be sensitive to local issues (Mackenzie, 1999). In attractive, high-amenity places residents may have enough interests to be independent of local goodwill, but in any town inclusive attitudes outweigh other disadvantages and encourage people to remain (Squires et al, 1992).
CHAPTER TEN: CONCLUSION

Four Themes and a Jigsaw Theory

Throughout this thesis I compare and examine and integrate material from the literature review, published local government information for incomers, five interviews, and my 430 survey participants. These provide material supporting my four themes and form the framework for a jigsaw theory of immigration.

Objectives of Chapter Ten

This final chapter begins by discussing the evidence related to neotribalism, social capital and habitus. A jigsaw theory of wellbeing is proposed and the thesis concludes with suggestions for future directions in immigration research.
Section One: Four Interdependent Themes

Immigration

There has been considerable discussion in the research literature regarding the changing patterns of rural social geography and possible interpretations of immigration (Smith, 2007). This study investigates rural immigration through a multi-systemic approach that utilises both quantitative and qualitative material and allows for general and indepth understanding of the subject. I believe this approach demonstrates the centrality of wellbeing and *habitus* and allows a more holistic understanding of immigration.

There is a need to explore immigration in the 21st century (Ford, 1999; Sherlaimoff, 2002) and this thesis adds to current knowledge by updating research on immigration in rural Western Australia. The majority of the survey participants (60%) immigrated originally from an urban area, 20% are immigrants from another rural area and the remaining 20% are local people Many of the respondents have lived in a rural area for more than five years, adding weight to their insight into rural life, and the remainder display the vitality of a fresh outlook.
I have assessed the findings in terms of the characteristics of the sample. There are, for instance, only a few indigenous participants and they are professional people with a high level of life satisfaction. There is a small group of immigrants as the majority of participants are Australian, and they produce a slightly lower mean life satisfaction score although the two groups show the same range of responses. There are a few disabled people and aged pensioners and they tend to have lower than average life satisfaction scores. Young adults are outnumbered by middle-aged and older people in a pattern characteristic of the depleted rural population of Australia.

When I examine who responded to this survey I find the sample is composed largely of secondary and tertiary-educated health workers, farmers, professional people and retirees, with female participants outnumbering men two to one. The majority of the respondents are married or in a long-term relationship. Single supporting parents are less happy than the other groups followed by those who have lost a partner, but the single unattached group consists of several lonely people without partners and a group of well-contented people with very satisfying lifestyles and fulfilling work roles.

Three quarters of the sample live on a town block or farmlet in a small country town and the remainder live on a farm. Although the range of income is wide, more than half the sample earn less than $40 000 a year and almost a third earn less than $20 000 per annum. Their employment may be on a part-time, seasonal, casual or short-
contract basis because these are the characteristic employment patterns in the region but the figures place many participants below the poverty line and support similar census and other data.

A wide variety of participant leisure interests revolve around cultural activities, sport, and home. Religion is highly important to only 22% of the respondents and more than half the participants score religion as not important at all.

All participants were asked to rate their current level of life satisfaction and to provide a word that describes their lives, and immigrants were asked to rate their life satisfaction prior to moving. Most participants (72.4%) are highly satisfied with their lives, 16.5% are moderately satisfied and 6% are dissatisfied. There is a slight lift in life satisfaction among immigrants after moving but the figures are very mixed. Forced relocators who have bought into low-cost housing in hamlets lacking amenities and/or who have not been accepted socially, feel trapped. Some professionals and their partners on transfer and promotion are waiting out their stint in the country before moving but many participants praise the laidback lifestyle in rural areas and the environmental positives.

Older people tend to be more settled and satisfied with their lives. Young people in the country tend to have difficulty finding a partner, employment and leisure interests, and they miss their peers who have moved to the coast (Tonts & Black, 2003). Young energy may be dissipated in weekend binge drinking, hooning around, and
experimenting with drugs. The participants who find a rural lifestyle free of drugs, crime, and danger have been fortunate or have chosen their area well.

These are the people who completed a lengthy survey designed to encourage them to express themselves and I thank them for writing so extensively and frankly of their experiences. I wish I could have included every wise word they produced. They provide rich empirical material full of insight into their world and their statements are borne out by other sources. Material forwarded to me from the Shire Councils of the Great Southern and consultation with five dynamic lay and professional people widened my personal understanding of the region and I am grateful to all of them for their time and effort.

Asking why people move to a rural area provided information on the causal processes and contingencies behind immigration. I find that every immigration relates to meeting some basic human need, improving one’s pattern of living or *habitus*, and therefore immigration is part of the search for personal wellbeing.

Although all reasons given by participants for moving to the country contribute to wellbeing, the most commonly cited motivation is employment, a pattern common to many western countries. Other financial reasons for immigration include cheaper land and housing, cheaper house rentals, lower living costs and surplus money to invest.
It is obvious that lifestyle and environmental factors are really important to these participants. People don't want to just exist, they are looking for quality of life and they have many ways of expressing it. Participants describe themselves as alternative lifestylers, back-to-earthers, downshifters, retirees, or as people who want space, nature, the bush, to live in a small community, or to live with like-minded others. They express a marked preference for a relaxed, stress-free, pollution-free lifestyle in a small community with access to a variety of leisure activities. Participants particularly want to maintain optimum physical and mental health and to raise their children in places free of crime, pollution, noise, and traffic. It is delightful to parents when children can be allowed to run around outdoors, and bike for miles. It is a pleasure to feed children home-grown produce and send them to rural primary schools whose staff take a personal interest in and tailor the teaching to the child.

For older participants rural areas provide a desirable lifestyle until they realise they need to make a move into aged-care. If rural communities can provide end of life support they will conquer the hidden fears of their older citizens. Participants worry about losing their driving licence, becoming ill, becoming helpless and dependent, and having to leave a loved place. With an increasing population of the elderly, Shires that can provide support will benefit because aged care is one of the few viable options for stimulating economic growth in small communities (Rowles & Watkins, 1993: 510).
The wellbeing of the survey participants is enhanced by the high levels of bridging capital they encounter daily and they acknowledge the friendly people in their communities, the inclusiveness, and the wonderful community spirit that helped them acclimatise. They are confident of help being there when it is needed and they anticipate passing on the same kindliness and generosity in turn, to newcomers, neighbours, or rural communities suffering a catastrophe. The pain of those who are unaccepted stands out in stark contrast.

High levels of life satisfaction and personal resilience carry these participants through a plethora of difficulties and they use a combination of mental adjustment and practical adaptation to cope. Living in the bush is not easy. The major problems are distance and isolation, the need for regular travel and its related expenses, and a lack of services. Utilities that are readily available in the city are irregularly available in the remote areas and cost more, particularly household commodities, fuel, well-maintained roads, electricity, and hi-speed telecommunications. Country people are likely to experience difficulty finding employment, medical help, and high-academic secondary and tertiary-level schooling, and they may have to cope with natural disasters such as bushfires, drought, water shortages, pests, and accidents. Incomers are likely to go through a period of dislocation and culture-shock and some live in areas where they lack professional
supervision, mentors, colleagues and local support. Fortunately, most immigrators report being made welcome, and Shire Councils, interviewees and many participants iterate their readiness to help newcomers settle in.

The wellbeing of those who are not happy is of concern. Professionals can transfer but the lot of pensioners who don't fit into local society is difficult. They would be less miserable and angry if they received support and it needs to be supplied at macro, meso and micro level. In default of appropriate services their only recourse is to struggle on or cut their losses and shift, and the stress lays them open to overuse of substances and to relationship problems.

Immigration causes a ripple effect in the local pond that affects individuals, social groups, productivity and the wellbeing of everybody. Immigration, therefore, affects neotribalism, social capital and habitus. For maximum social capital to be gained from immigration it requires a two-way process of inclusivity. Research shows that people tend to remain if they are living in their preferred community (Vogt et al, 2003). If they are not, and this is likely to apply to younger people and those who have been in an area a shorter time, then they are likely to move. The effort put in by local government to make the surroundings attractive, to supply necessary services, and to attract industry, are steps in the right direction. At the same time it is essential for people in the community to reach out to
others in a felicitous combination of linking, bridging and bonding
capital (Woodhouse, 2006).

**Neotribalism**

Neotribalism explains society as a set of intermingling social groups
rather than a homogenous tribe. Newcomers to rural areas are
viewed as a little tribe whose ingress affects local community
structures and relationships. In actuality newcomers and locals
cannot simply be classified into two distinct groups but instead form a
kaleidoscopic intermingling of people and situations as people move
back and forward across social strata in the course of their work and
leisure activities (Allan & Mooney, 1998; Dempsey, 1990; 1992;

The complexity arises from two factors of which the first is a
hierarchical dimension. Rural townships were once thought of as
tribal because not much changed there and everyone was related to
everyone else, but, I think the socially stratified nature of country
towns has always created a level of neotribalism (Dempsey, 1990;
Oxley, 1978). The inhabitants are likely to profess a mythical
egalitarianism that allows social groups to co-exist without friction but
the groups are relatively fixed until an issue brings them together in a
common cause.
The second dimension is that of lifestyle with a family forming the basic neotribe. When its members go to their employment or school they become part of another neotribe and every association they belong to creates entry into other neotribes. Within any society there is a constant ebb and flow of members coming together and separating. At their best neotribes provide evidence of humans interacting as people meet, learn, grow and interact. At their worst they provide an impregnable front to other groups. There are great opportunities in lifestyle neotribes to be more inclusive, to work for the common good, and to improve the status of members. Many rural residents now hold an outside job and some survey participants find they benefit both personally and financially from going out to work. Most rural people maintain contact with their relatives, know their neighbours, acquire friends, and are members of organisations that bring them into contact with the neotribes of sports clubs, service clubs, church, and government. It appears that society seethes with *multiple identities and group affiliations* and that these should be the focus of post-modern research into sociological theory (Seidman, 1995:416-417; McQuarie, 1995).

Neotribes may gradually grow to overshadow or to be absorbed by other groups, and rural communities needing to grow and retain their populations benefit if they strive to represent all and maintain balance. For communities to retain population they not only need to offer employment, they need to offer inclusion into local groups, and
they are likely to require funding and training in order to be able to do so. The 2020 Summit makes attraction, recruitment and retention of people, families and businesses a priority theme of its rural agenda and social inclusion is a major theme of its Strengthening Communities programme (Page 104 of the Final Report). The complexities of melding the strong gendered identities of rural individuals with local and regional groups warrant further research into neotribalism (Alston, 2006; Boyd & Parr, 2008; Jones & Tonts, 1995).

In this thesis the saddest examples of neotribalism are participants, both locals and inmigrators, who are isolated or keep to themselves. Particularly poignant are the participants who find themselves socially excluded in spite of their best efforts to fit in, unlike others who may have started similarly but cracked the code. With their needs for belonging and recognition unsatisfied, isolated participants are understandably angry and lonely and unlikely to remain.

Neotribalism can take more positive forms. The majority of participants work and so have a home and employment neotribe and several participants describe how they have developed new skills and broadened their view by mixing with other groups. Most of the participants who are retirees have joined local community groups and these make a point of inviting newcomers to their functions. In fact the level of general cooperation and friendliness is so high that it appears some communities may weld into a tribe. If these
communities can meet their member’s ongoing needs they are likely to retain population. There is less inducement to move when you live in a deeply caring community and there are some excellent manuals on increasing community viability (Kenyon & Black; Allen, Cordes, Covey et al, 2002).

Social Capital

Social capital includes positive personal characteristics, social skills and other assets and this study informs on three of them; wellbeing, resilience and social cohesion. The results support previous findings (Pretty, Chipuer & Bramston, 2003: 282) of a link between belonging, sense of community and commitment to the community. Social capital and social cohesion benefit communities, with the most common positive comments on a community being that the people are friendly, help each other out whenever it is needed, have wonderful community spirit, and rally when there is a crisis. Residents’ attachment to their communities is the primary force sustaining many rural communities (Tigges, 2006: 139).

The survey finds a few people who are not contributing but finds few examples of the more organised forms of negative social capital. The worst appears to be that some residents state that they have experienced truly hurtful rejection. There is too great an acceptance of alcohol use and drugs are obviously available but there are no comments on organised crime in rural areas or even on religious
sects. Most newcomers are inspired by the warmth of the ongoing support they receive and intend to continue the tradition and this is one, and possibly the best, rural idyll. When intelligent, analytical respondents write that the social cohesion they find is awesome their words have the ring of truth and are really heartening in such dark and difficult times. Those people who make a decision to withhold their support to newcomers are robbing themselves and their community, often because someone previously took advantage of their kindness. Their actions show the importance of trust and the powerful aftermath to losing it.

Reciprocity, inclusiveness, community identity, and trust are expressed by many participants and are significantly associated with their descriptions of improved health and quality of life. They describe in lay terms a sense of self efficacy and control over their lives as valued members working proactively for their family and community.

There is a small group of survey participants for whom community participation is a leisure interest and a large group for whom it is a natural and self-evident corollary to membership of a rural community. Community involvement is described by participants as necessary and as a tradition and they expect incomers to join in, spread the load, and participate. Not only do over-worked over-stretched community activists need the support, they see it as one sure way for newcomers to belong. Community means a great deal
to rural people and it is not unusual for people to leave money, a
building or a collection to their shire.

Rural areas need to attract professional people to provide services
that otherwise require travel and there is evidence of beginning
clinicians from various disciplines developing a liking for a rural
lifestyle after early positive exposure (Schoo, McNamara & Stagnitt,
2008; Sivamalai, 2008; Wilks, Brown & Jenner, 2008). Where it is not
possible to retain professional staff it is possible to train local people
to fill the gap. Good results are reported where programmes are
designed to meet local requirements, run by a local organisation,
utilise a flexible community development model, and build in
strategies for sustainability (Beattie, Shaw & Larson, 2008; Margolis
& Ypinazar, 2008). Where there are elements of risk, programmes
are needed to train participants, telecommunications support to
ensure the new training is actually used, and emergency procedures
set in place to allow practitioners to feel more in control and less
threatened (Chapman, Oultram & Jovanovic, 2008; Kornelsen &
Grzybowski, 2008; Sounness, Hughes & Winzenberg, 2008).

Country people have learnt that in order for small rural towns to
survive residents need to be activists and some of the input is born
out of a sense of desperation by overworked overstretched people.
There will be a local fire brigade or volunteer ambulance service just
so long as someone can be found to man the service. Retirees are
providing valuable support for tourism, craft shops and historic homes.

People can bring to their communities a range of social and other capital and use it to promote common welfare. High social capital has been found to contribute to higher productivity, lower crime rates, and increased wellbeing and economic strategies are less successful when developers fail to utilise available social capital (McKenzie, 1999:81; Woodhouse, 2004; Woolcock, 1998). Social capital is worth cultivating and inclusive societies operating through bridging capital create greater opportunities for advancement at meso and micro level and create greater wellbeing (McKenzie & Stehlik, 2005; Woodward, 2006). Surveys returned by participants who are members of inclusive communities are markedly more positive than those returned by people who are ostracised or those who close ranks against outsiders. The results are supported by the interviews where one town eventually lost a civic-minded business person due largely to a lack of inclusiveness. Two others interviewees remain respected members of their communities, one working through various Australia-wide farmer's organisation and the other through local community organisations, and both able to engender local support for community projects. The remaining two interviewees perform linking roles that help people survive and progress; one between local government and the community and the other between welfare organisations and the community. This is important as the
most interesting point to come out of Luloff and Krannich's (2002) return to six communities they had previously studied was that community survival depends on local input. This needs, of course, to be adequately funded by State and Federal government to allow local government to meet increasing demand for infrastructure (Dolbery et al 2007).

The communities whose members completed my survey are generally inclusive and the wisdom of this behaviour is seen in the positive reactions of incomer participants. With the majority of residents satisfied with their situation, it is unfortunate that there are such a plethora of difficulties for rural people to contend with. High levels of resilience strengthen them and they manage well but support from government in the form of medical services, power supplies, telecommunication services, roads and amenities could make a big difference (Alston, 2007). Country areas lose social and other capital every time a family has to move to educate its adolescent children, get medical treatment, or find work.

There is a future for rural towns but this is dependent on the support of governments, on attention to rural people and their communities, on careful regional planning and development, on the provision of advanced infrastructure support and on the skills, energy and enthusiasm of rural people (Alston, 2007: 13).

The manifest unhappiness of locals and incomers in less accepting communities is of concern at both a personal and community level. Such towns expose themselves to ongoing depopulation, rapid staff
turnover of government employees, and then the likely withdrawal of services. Further research is warranted into rural communities that are less inclusive and into the flow-on effects affecting their wellbeing and to the local economy.

My research examines the countryside at a time of transition where neotribalism allows people to meet with others and discover new points of view. I view inmigrators and locals as sources of positive input essential to the sustainability of country towns in a reciprocal process of bringing real benefit to their community and experiencing enhanced wellbeing in return. I consider sustainability and globalisation as counterintuitive because the first relies on a holistic approach and combined effort, and the latter on individual decision making all too often at the expense of others (Le Heron & Roche, 1996). I can only reiterate my earlier statement that the wellbeing of humans depends on a mix of economic, social, environmental and other factors, not on financial aspects alone. This study examines rural wellbeing, resilience and social cohesion as factors contributing to an increase of social capital in a reciprocal process.

_habitus_

_Habitus_ is Latin for ‘habit’ and people generally behave in heavily acculturated ways and there may be people who go through life without an original thought in their head, earnestly carrying out the
role they believe is expected of them. Bourdieu saw class as a major contributor to habitus but I feel that this does not allow for the fact that there are many upwardly mobile people in the world who break free of their origins. However, people in the mass have long been categorised (aristocracy, worker, bourgeoisie, etc) and certain agencies (governments, religions) appear to have become experts on maintaining ingroup/outgroup solidarity. It is then a surprise when people break the bonds of habit and they do this when they find personal reasons for standing out against custom. Environment, society and economy contribute to habitus but the learning is filtered through individual temperament, intelligence, and experience, and is then weighed in terms of what the individual needs for self or family. In the surveys and interviews time and again individual interpretations of a situation influence participant decision making.

At a superficial level Bourdieu’s choice of the word habitus to describe the patterns of behaviour arising from conscious and subconscious human rationalisation, appears an inaccurate term. Habitus is, after all based on an individual’s outlook on life but Bourdieu’s wisdom becomes apparent when relating the behaviour of people to their efforts to establish wellbeing. One may set up a habitus that creates a worthwhile life; for example, the habit of thinking positively, working proactively for one’s own and other’s welfare and so on. Conversely, one may set up a habitus that is a spiral of negativity and self-defeat.
In this survey, particularly in describing their coping methods, participants present a view of their personal *habitus*. There are 430 participants and 430 patterns, providing a demonstration of how idiosyncratic personal satisfaction and dissatisfaction can be. For a professional family substandard housing may be a major reason for leaving a country town, while for the unemployed the motivation may be readier access to welfare services. Migrating depends on whether conscious and subconscious personal needs are being met but some generalisations can and have been made about life in a rural area. Those participants with a moderate to high level of life satisfaction are currently content with their lifestyle. Others are finding the difficulties insurmountable and naturally there are decreasing levels of life satisfaction with increasing numbers or intensity of problems.

Previous research theorises that economy, society, environment, or a combination of them, force any decision to migrate (Fielding, 1998; Hugo & Boyle, 1992; Lacey, 1986; Ni Laoire, 1997). My feeling is that all decisions to move are particular to the individual, as both a conscious and subconscious response to myriad factors, and are related to maintaining or raising feelings of wellbeing.

This gives humans their uniqueness although it defeats theorists in their efforts to find one general theory of immigration. Geographers, sociologists and ethnographers have yet to settle on a concept that encompasses every reason for immigration. People remain in unpleasant locations one would expect them to leave, move from
attractive places one would expect them to stay, plan conscientiously before moving at all, or shift on a whim (Moon, 1995). Only by asking each person for the underlying reason can the multiplicity of motivations be discovered and some may remain unknown if they are based on subconscious reactions.

Section Two: Jigsaw Theory, Wellbeing and *habitus*

I previously examined global and local theories of immigration and the difficulties attendant on finding an overarching theory to explain population mobility within a country. In examining global theories of immigration I find Structural, Social and Institutional theories of immigration focus on large-scale population movements and economic factors, and are typically used for analysis of large-scale population flows. They have been described as positivist, behaviourist, as excluding multiple outcomes, reductionist, as failing to explain the idiosyncrasies of human behaviour, and as prone to ecological fallacy (Moon, 1995; Smith, 2001; Wilson, 1993). These studies have value for government and others wishing to understand population dynamics at the macro level.

The Personal Factor Theories are more open and allow for the multiplicity of locations in which immigration occurs but, while I agree people relocate when lifestyle changes alter their needs, this is only part of the story. People move for many reasons which vary from
person to person and family to family and are often not a set of neat sequential stages (Bell, 1996; Boyle & Halfacree, 1998; Harre et al, 1985; Hassan, Zang & McDonnell-Baum, 1996; Moon, 1995; Murdoch, 2006; Thrift, 1996). Similarly, Cognitive Theories of immigration with their emphasis on analysis and rational decision-making may be correct in some instances but many people move under duress motivated by emotional factors (Moon, 1995). Theories of Motivation with their inclusion of subconscious drives, rational argument and pragmatic response to changing situations are more inclusive but fail to allow for impulse, socialisation, and the multitude of options influencing human behaviour.

Anthropological theories envisage immigration in terms of racial/national behaviours, Cultural theories focus on the influence of local culture towards migration, and Biographical theories conceptualise immigration in terms of individual life stories (Boyle & Halfacree, 1998; Brody, 1973; Chapman, 1996; Fielding, 1992; Lacey, 1985; Lowenthal, 1985; Halfacree, 2004; McLaughlin, 1994; Ni Laoire, 1997). All of these have value, provide useful and even fascinating material, but they tend to emphasise outside influence on migratory decisions.

Integrative studies acknowledge the multilayered nature of immigration and endeavour to overcome the problems by drawing together salient features of different theoretical perspectives, so they are a step on the way to discovering an overarching theory of
inmigration but tend to emphasise the dominance of field (Ni Laoire, 2000:232; Boyle, 1998; McKendrick, 1996). However, any migration represents ambiguity and no single theory can explain human action that may result from rational thought but might just as possibly be based on some momentary attraction to a desirable location (Chambers, 1994; Moon, 1995).

In contrast to the global theories mentioned above, local theories of immigration focus on personal issues and micro-level movement. People are said to move for employment or lifestyle reasons, to return to a place of origin or buy a place of their own, or to marry. Local theories by their very nature cannot supply an overarching theory of immigration. It seems to me that people remain in a locality while it fits their conscious and subconscious needs and when their situation alters they make an adjustment which may require that they move to another locality. Whatever the motivation the idea of moving arises in the mind of an individual from a need to set up a new and hopefully better habitus. Basic human needs may be common to us all but our reactions vary widely, are mediated by our level of intelligence and personality, and are subject to subconscious influence, consequently, humans will ignore culture, training and socialisation when it suits them.

When I read the surveys several things stand out. One is that the people who are happy in their current location sound utterly contented. They have the home and lifestyle they want, they are
managing their money well enough not to be fraught with anxiety, and their days are meaningfully occupied in whatever interests them. Their ability to overcome a host of nigling problems and issues each day develops their confidence and demonstrates their competence. They feel like they belong, they feel accepted, they appreciate the local people, and they are very much a part of their community. They have slotted into place like a well-shaped piece into a jigsaw puzzle. If I liken a person who feels satisfied with his lot to a well-fitting piece in a jigsaw puzzle (See Figure 10.1) it creates a useful model but in reality it is a three-dimensional one. Each individual fits into a global jigsaw made up of environment, society and economy. There would be a wealth of factors impinging on the individual and vice versa, more than an artist could ever depict. Each piece consists of a person motivated by his physical, emotional and spiritual needs which he copes with according to his intelligence and temperament. These set up his pattern of living, or habitus, which may be proactive for his own good or self-destructive. To meet his needs the individual reaches out to society, environment and economy and offers them personal assets in return. The knobs on each jigsaw piece can be viewed as the assets the individual brings to his society, environment and economy, that is, the social and other capital that make him a worthy member of his community. The indentations on the jigsaw piece can be seen as
receptors for input from his society, economy or environment; the various types of capital he requires in return (Figures 10.1 and 10.2).

**Figure 10.1: Understanding the Jigsaw Model**
An unhappy individual is like a misplaced jigsaw piece (See Figure 10.3). Just as the piece needs to be moved or reshaped, people who feel uncomfortable where they live make an adaptive change. Perhaps they move and find a place with a better fit, but not everybody shifts house when they are unhappy in a particular place. Intelligence and temperament, even daily custom, filter the incoming
information and, although the jigsaw piece may not fit seamlessly, they rationalise the situation and find reasons to avoid the upheaval of moving. The reasoning and strategies adopted may be proactive for the individual's good or self-defeating (e.g. substance abuse) but balance is restored until some new event causes them to reconsider.

**Figure 10.3: An Example of Poor Adaptation**

**Understanding Immigration**

When the individual no longer slots comfortably into his world, habitus changes and he may decide to move.

In this example, the individual has social capital to offer but the economy can't meet his needs. There is no work.

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The individual relates to every facet of his world so there are more connections than can be shown. Each facet relates to all other facets of his world.
Happily settled people slot in easily and it can be seen that about 80% of the survey participants are coping well. Their generally high life satisfaction scores mean that they are dealing with an astonishing range of irritations and shortcomings with confidence and resilience and some of them comment on the personal growth they are gaining from overcoming the problems.

Conversely, the people who are not happy have good reason for feeling miserable. They lack employment or a partner, congenial friends, a decent house, enough money to live on, interesting things to do, or places to go. They may feel isolated, lonely and socially outcast. They are like jigsaw pieces that to a greater or lesser degree don’t fit into the overall scenario. Their wellbeing has been negatively affected and the *habitus* they have set up is likely to become increasingly self-defeating unless they can make an adaptation.

Some will achieve it by effort and some will decide that they belong in another locality. As one woman wrote in her survey there is nothing she can do about her problems and she has resigned herself to the situation. So although the fit may not be ideal she has accepted the status quo.

People are not always logical in their choices and may opt to stay or go on a whim, to act or to react. It seems that the difficulty related to finding a global theory of immigration is human individuality.
... a special concern is the profound difference between what many people say they want to do and what they actually do. ... Such confusion, ambiguity and change can be understood through contrasting their wishes and their beliefs with their behaviour. Even so, such an understanding is eternally incomplete. Their illusions about deciding where to live and why they want to live there are central to understanding what, for some, is a hope to find paradise (Jobes, 2000: 1).

Establishing a satisfactory habitus, operating at both a superficial and a deep psychological level, appears to best explain why people remain in situ or go. Some inner feeling of satisfaction or rationalisation explains why people stay in situations when logic suggests they should move or why they move from attractive places and situations where one would expect them to remain (Moon, 1996). It appears to me that the desire of sociologists to place individual behaviour within the fields of society, environment or economy leads them to ignore the fact that the decision to emigrate comes from within the individual. Habitus describes the underlying mental schemata (cognitive structures) which filter input from the field (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992). Both of Bourdieu’s key concepts, habitus and field, designate bundles of relations but whereas a field represents a set of objective relationships between forms of capital, habitus consists of mental and corporeal schemata whose output will be demonstrated physically, emotionally or cognitively (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992: 16). Most theories state that the field determines the habitus. Not so; habitus is that personally satisfactory life pattern determined by feelings of well or ill-being. Migration may be influenced by society, environment or economy, and it may add a
page to a human biography, but the decisions are part of the effort to maintain wellbeing.

Social life is regular and predictable not because of the constraints emanating from the field but because *habitus* acts as a structuring mechanism allowing people to cope with *unforeseen and ever-changing situations* (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992: 18). *Habitus* and *field* are interlinked, in that each functions more fully with input from the other, and socialisation is an incredibly powerful mechanism so that most humans follow society’s dictates (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992). *Habitus*, however, has the benefit of *prerecognition of possibilities and opportunities* which can motivate individual action through a factor that Bourdieu calls *fuzzy logic* (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992: 22). While fuzzy logic seems to me to admirably encapsulate all the traits arising from intelligence and personality, socialisation and experience that influence an individual and mediate his actions I find it a dehumanising term. Humans make choices according to what seems best at that time. This includes immigration. The way the individual views and uses places will lead him to migrate when spatial and cultural features affect how he feels about his current location or when some other location provides a more preferable *habitus* (Wolpert, 1966; Moon 1995).

The jigsaw may be viewed as close and connected and static or it can be visualised as kaleidoscopic and vibrant with life. It is also a jigsaw with a changing picture due to the ongoing processes of life.
and development within the community. Pieces may come and go as their needs alter, new pieces enter, other pieces alter to fill a gap, and there may be gaping holes where a loss is irretrievable.

I find both global and local theories of immigration fail to accord the drive to establish wellbeing and to set up a satisfactory *habitus* their innate force in decision-making. Yet these surveys show us a people managing change in a complex multi-layered environment which would be otherwise destabilising, because they are at ease among parties who willingly cooperate. Such wellbeing takes time to develop because of the complexities of modern life and it relies on trust which may one day prove to be the heart of *habitus* – but that’s a subject for future research.

**Conclusion to Chapter Ten**

The situation in the Great Southern Region continues to change. The possibility that high house prices in coastal areas may force would-be home-owners into inland areas is being counterbalanced by rising interest rates that may put owning a house out of reach altogether. High grain prices and a passable season in 2007 do not appear to have halted the population drain from inland areas and farm sizes appear to be increasing. These may provide a better means of coping with a more variable climate presaged by the fluctuating conditions of recent years. There has been a change of government.
but will it make any difference if there are less and less votes to be won in the country?

In this exploratory study rural people speak for themselves, providing information based on personal knowledge and experience. This is done as a means of minimising my own and my reader's personal expectations and allowing us to be open to new ideas. I hope this research benefits them by bringing attention to their increasingly adverse situation. Finland is able to provide rapid support for community projects based in scattered settlements experiencing an adverse climate (Lehto & Oksa, 2002; Varttinen, 1989). Rural Australia could also benefit from these types of multi-level systems but government structures need to be highly adaptable and set up to facilitate a speedy response to problems. Rural people are prepared to work proactively, to be inclusive, and to adapt to change and government needs to meet them halfway.

If there is one thing I would urge it is that State and Federal government endow rural areas with the best possible internet services. Through these, people may find they feel less isolated while being able to achieve many things they lack such as shopping, education, training, business and social contact. At the moment the telecommunications network is an expensive unreliable tool.

In examining competing theories of immigration it is evident that adherence to any one theory at the expense of alternative approaches risks misleading policy-makers when it is essential that
they should achieve a balanced outlook (Massey, Arango, Hugo, Kouaouci, Pellegrino & Taylor, 1993). It is evident, however, that human wellbeing depends on a balance of social, economic and environmental factors and that people will strive to achieve them, altering the habits of a lifetime and moving if it seems good to them. To paraphrase Bondi (2005) wellbeing acts as a relational connective medium among all the factors that motivate making a change of location.

The results of this survey support earlier research that acknowledges the human element in decisions to immigrate, and increases our understanding of human behaviour (Bauman, 1992; Giddens, 1992: 362). It reveals the power of community and community spirit to influence individual wellbeing and the determination and energy of the people who responded. It provides new information on immigration, neotribalism, social capital and habitus and it reveals the common humanity and altruism still available in rural areas better known for physical and financial hardship.
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APPENDIX A

Consent Form for Interviewees

Research Project: Urban Migration to Rural Areas: Issues in Rural Wellbeing, Resilience and Social Cohesion

CONSENT FORM

The purpose of the research has been explained to me and I have been given the opportunity to ask questions about the research and have received satisfactory answers. I therefore freely consent to be interviewed for the purposes of this piece of research.

I am aware that all personal details, including my name and location will remain confidential.

I am aware that the information I give will be tape recorded, transcribed and will contribute to a major dissertation. It may later be used in conference presentations, journal articles, or a book. A copy of the transcription and/or the research results will be made available if I wish it.

I understand that I am free to withdraw my participation in the research at any time, and that if I do I will not be subjected to any penalty or discriminatory treatment.

I understand that if I have any complaints or concerns about this research I can contact:

Executive Officer
Ethics in Human Research committee
Academic Secretariat, Charles Sturt University
Private Mail Bag 29, BATHURST, N.S.W. 2795.

Signed by: __________________________________________

Date: ____________________________

Principal Investigator: Ph. D. candidate, Helen Byles-Drage, Centre for Rural Social Research, Charles Sturt University, Locked Bag No. 678, Wagga Wagga, N. S.W. 2678. Phone: 02 69334330 or 0417984577.

Supervisor: Professor Margaret Alston, Centre for Rural Social Research, Charles Sturt University, Locked Bag No. 678, Wagga Wagga, N. S.W. 2678. Phone: 02 69332783.

Supervisor: Dr. Wendy Bowles, Centre for Rural Social Research, Charles Sturt University, Locked Bag No. 678, Wagga Wagga, N. S.W. 2678. Phone: 02 69332695.
APPENDIX B

Rural Resilience Survey – Cover Letter

This research investigates rural wellbeing and resilience in a number of ways.
It asks who is moving from urban to rural areas and why.
It asks people what they like about living in a rural area.
It asks people what problems or difficulties they have had with living in a rural area.
It asks how they are working to overcome these problems or difficulties.
It asks them to rate how satisfied they are with their lifestyle.
It asks what support they offer anyone new to the area.

You are asked to complete an anonymous survey about your experiences of life in a rural area. The information will become part of a data pool adding to our knowledge of this subject. Please write as much as you like and tell it how it is. You are free to participate or not but I hope you enjoy taking part and completing all the questions. If you do feel distressed please call me on 0417984577.

Principal Investigator: Ph.D. candidate, Helen Byles-Drage, Centre for Rural Social Research, Charles Sturt University, Locked Bag No. 678, Wagga Wagga, N.S.W. 2678. Phone: 0269332460.

Supervisor: Professor Margaret Alston, Centre for Rural Social Research, Charles Sturt University, Locked Bag, 678, Wagga Wagga, N.S.W. 2678. Phone 0269332783.

Supervisor: Dr Wendy Bowles, Centre for Rural Social Research, Charles Sturt University, Locked Bag 678, Wagga Wagga, N.S.W. 2678. Phone: 02 69332695.
APPENDIX B

Rural Resilience Survey Items

Your input is anonymous and confidential: no person, place or organisation will be identified. The information may be used in a thesis, journal articles, at conference, and in a book. Completing and returning this survey is your choice and I thank you for taking part. If you would like to know the results of this research please forward me your email or postal address separately. A summary of the results will be returned to you when the research is complete.

Demographic Details

Your postcode

Your gender: Male Female

Your age: under 20 years
20 - 29 years
30 - 39 years
40 - 49 years
50 - 59 years
60 - 69 years
80 - 79 years
80 years and over

Marital status:

Your employment: (Please be specific)

Your level of education Primary Secondary Tertiary

Income level:

Nationality:

Your leisure interests:

The importance of religion in your life:

0......1......2......3......4......5......6......7......8......9......10
Not important moderately important very important

Please describe what type of building you live in:

Who lives there with you?

Do you have relatives living in your area?
Rural Resilience Survey

1. I have always lived in this area. Yes (Go to Question 2).
   No
   I moved to live here (From where and when, at what age and with whom?)

1.1. How satisfied with your life were you where you previously lived?
   0........1........2........3........4........5........6........7........8........9........10
   Not at all satisfied  moderately satisfied  extremely satisfied

1.2. Tell me about your reasons for moving here.

2. How satisfied are you with your life now?
   0........1........2........3........4........5........6........7........8........9........10
   Not at all satisfied  moderately satisfied  extremely satisfied

3. Tell me what you like about living in a rural area.

4. Tell me about any difficulties or problems with living in a rural area.

5. Tell me about your efforts to overcome any problems related to living in a rural area.
   (There are no right or wrong answers here. Please describe the good and less good ways you cope and the ways you think about yourself and your life).

6. What support do you yourself offer newcomers to this area?

7. So, overall, what word would describe how you feel about your life in general?

Optional
If you would like a copy of the results of this research please write your email address (in the box below) or else forward it separately to hdraje@csu.edu.au

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n.b. Appropriate space was supplied for each question to be answered as fully as the participant wanted.

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## APPENDIX C

### Positive Descriptors Used by Participants

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>alive</th>
<th>fairly contented</th>
<th>opportunities</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>a lot more relaxed</td>
<td>fairly happy</td>
<td>optimistic</td>
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<tr>
<td>a work of art in progress</td>
<td>fantastic</td>
<td>over the moon with happiness</td>
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<tr>
<td>above average</td>
<td>fine</td>
<td>paradise</td>
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<tr>
<td>acceptable</td>
<td>fortunate</td>
<td>passionate</td>
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<tr>
<td>adequate</td>
<td>free</td>
<td>peaceful</td>
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<tr>
<td>all right</td>
<td>fulfilling</td>
<td>pleased</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>always getting better</td>
<td>full</td>
<td>positive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>average</td>
<td>glad</td>
<td>pretty bloody good</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>awesome</td>
<td>good</td>
<td>pretty damn good</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>beautiful</td>
<td>great</td>
<td>pretty good</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>best</td>
<td>growing</td>
<td>pretty happy thanks</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>better</td>
<td>happy</td>
<td>privileged</td>
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<tr>
<td>blessed</td>
<td>healthy</td>
<td>productively satisfied</td>
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<tr>
<td>blissful</td>
<td>holistic</td>
<td>pure</td>
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<td>bloody sight better than</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>many others</td>
<td>idyllic</td>
<td>purposeful</td>
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<tr>
<td>bonza</td>
<td>improving</td>
<td>quiet</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>brilliant</td>
<td>in control</td>
<td>quite content with my lot</td>
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<tr>
<td>busy</td>
<td>integers</td>
<td>quite satisfied</td>
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<tr>
<td>can't complain</td>
<td>interesting</td>
<td>real</td>
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<td>capable</td>
<td>it doesn't get any better</td>
<td>reasonable</td>
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<tr>
<td>casual</td>
<td>it's as good as I make it</td>
<td>relaxed</td>
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<tr>
<td>challenging and fulfilling</td>
<td>less stressed</td>
<td>rewarding</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>chosen</td>
<td>life is pleasant and challenging</td>
<td>safe</td>
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<td>cloud nine</td>
<td>like being here</td>
<td>satisfactory</td>
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<td>colourful</td>
<td>living in paradise</td>
<td>satisfied</td>
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<tr>
<td>comfortable</td>
<td>living the dream</td>
<td>satisfying</td>
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<td>committed</td>
<td>looking forward</td>
<td>secure</td>
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<td>complacent</td>
<td>loved</td>
<td>self-reliant</td>
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<tr>
<td>content</td>
<td>lovely</td>
<td>settled</td>
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<tr>
<td>contentment</td>
<td>loving it</td>
<td>sociable</td>
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<tr>
<td>couldn't be better</td>
<td>lucky</td>
<td>stable</td>
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<tr>
<td>damn fine</td>
<td>magical</td>
<td>strength</td>
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<td>deep happiness</td>
<td>marvellous</td>
<td>superb</td>
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<td>enjoy</td>
<td>meaningful</td>
<td>worthwhile</td>
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<td>----------------</td>
<td>------------------</td>
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<tr>
<td>enjoyable</td>
<td>mix of rural and city works</td>
<td>surviving</td>
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<tr>
<td>enjoying life</td>
<td>moderately satisfied</td>
<td>unstressed</td>
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<td>enjoyment</td>
<td>more relaxed</td>
<td>varied</td>
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<td>enriching</td>
<td>mostly content</td>
<td>very comfortable</td>
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<tr>
<td>excellent</td>
<td>mostly satisfied</td>
<td>very fortunate</td>
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<td>excited</td>
<td>much better</td>
<td>very good</td>
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<td>exciting</td>
<td>non-suicidal (joke)</td>
<td>very happy</td>
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<td>extremely happy</td>
<td>not too bad</td>
<td>very thankful</td>
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<td>fabulous</td>
<td>ok</td>
<td>wonderful</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
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<td>worthwhile</td>
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