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**Final Report of the  
Bowen Basin Communities Residents Survey**

**Department of the Premier and Cabinet  
Community Engagement Division**

**The University of Queensland Social Research Centre**

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## **Executive Summary**

### **Introduction**

The Community Engagement Division of the Department of the Premier and Cabinet maintains offices in eight non-metropolitan regions of Queensland. Two of these regions, Central Queensland and Mackay/Whitsunday, contain all of the 40 coal mines and 15 mining associated communities located within the Bowen Basin.

Recent structural changes in the coal mining industry have contributed to workforce downsizing and a gradual depopulation of many mining dependent towns with workers and their families moving to larger coastal centres to take advantage of better services and facilities and a lower cost of living.

The consequences of these demographic changes are extensive and include:

- an effect on the viability of maintaining core Government services;
- reduced custom for local and regional support businesses;
- a reduced revenue base for local councils;
- increased demand for services and facilities in coastal centres; and
- a demand for additional human services to assist with the personal, family and social consequences of change and dislocation.

Since the November 2000 meeting in Moranbah, the Bowen Basin Communities Partnership Project has been initiated by the Central Queensland and Mackay/Whitsunday offices of the Department of the Premier and Cabinet in conjunction with the Central West Region of the Department of Natural Resources and Mines and the Department of State Development.

This project utilises the development of partnership arrangements between the mining industry, local government, the community sector and State agencies to achieve outcomes in the areas of capacity building, change management and community sustainability.

The project management group identified the need to conduct a random sample telephone survey of the households in Bowen Basin mining communities to guide the development of future project strategies.

### **Scope of the Project**

The purpose of the Bowen Basin Communities Residents Survey was to provide information to the project management group by collecting relevant data from residents (18 years and older) of the

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#### **Executive Summary**

communities within the Bowen Basin coal mining area. This report presents the results from the resident survey conducted by The University of Queensland Social Research Centre (UQSRC) in September 2003. It commences with an outline of the methodology followed by an examination of quality of life as reported by the residents surveyed. It then investigates the level of social capital found in the region, decisions to live in the present community, intentions to stay and perceived quality and access to services.

### **Objectives of Project**

The objectives of the project were to:

- identify issues relevant to the quality of life and well-being of the Bowen Basin communities;
- identify factors and considerations that influence a decision to relocate to another coastal or sub-regional centre;
- establish whether there are significant differences with respect to:
  - demographic factors;
  - size of community;
  - length of residence;
  - access to services.

### **Research Methodology**

The population was sampled via a telephone survey using a survey instrument developed in conjunction with the project management group. Adult household residents aged 18 years and over who reside in the identified Bowen Basin mining dependent communities were chosen to be interviewed. A critical component of the survey was to randomly select households from the cross-section of the communities to obtain accurate estimates of population responses to the items addressed by the survey.

To achieve a representative sample of households from a selection of mining associated communities a stratified sample of the population by communities and/or groups of communities of similar size was selected. A random sample from each group proportionate to the total of 400 was selected. (Refer to Table E1.)

As it was considered likely that the size of a community and the access to services could significantly influence a resident's quality of life perceptions and the reasons to live in a community or relocate, it was important to collect survey data that would capture any effects related to community structure.

Post-weighting of the data was applied to minimize any interviewing bias toward a particular respondent or age group. The analysis and tables in the report refer mainly to the post-weighted data. The raw data for each response is provided in Appendix 2.

**Table E.1 Sample Zones (Towns) and Interview Quotas**

Town/Zone	Target	Completed
Blackwater/Moura	75	75
Emerald	80	81
Clermont/Capella	60	62
Dysart/Middlemount/Tieri	70	73
Glenden/Nebo/Moranbah	85	86
Collinsville	30	53
<b>Total</b>	<b>400</b>	<b>430</b>

## Key Findings

This section summarizes the major findings of the report, with respect to each of the key areas of the project.

### Quality of Life

Just over 60 per cent of respondents were satisfied with the overall quality of life in their community. This figure was slightly lower than the comparable one for the south-east Queensland region. The highest levels of satisfaction were with family relationships (89% satisfied), housing (75%) and health services (75%). Lower levels of satisfaction were reported with respect to employment (71%), available income (51%) and access to leisure activities (46%). Females were more satisfied with quality of life than males.

### Community Participation

Of the activities assessed, helping with children's events and sporting activities was the most common form of community participation (57%), followed by signing a petition (22%) and joining with people to solve a local problem (21%). Community participation levels were higher outside Emerald than within it. Males and middle-aged respondents were more likely to participate in certain activities than other respondents.

### Community Attachment

Three-quarters of respondents felt proud of their local community and about half felt some level of community attachment. Community attachment was greater among older and longer term residents.

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## **Trust and Reciprocity**

Highest levels of trust (90%) were placed in family and close relatives. Levels of trust in friends (82%) and workmates (56%) were lower, although still comparatively high. Exchanging practical help and advice was most common between family and relatives (75%) and among friends (66%). It occurs least between neighbours (26%).

## **Decisions to Move into the Community**

Fifty-two per cent of respondents moved to their present location from within the region. Being close to work was by far the most common reason for moving into the community (76%). The cost of housing as a reason for living in the community was especially important to residents outside Emerald. Reasons for living in the community show other non-specific variations by gender, age and length of residence.

## **Intentions to Stay and Reasons for Relocating**

Less than 30 per cent of respondents stated they would definitely NOT move from the area in the next five years. Forty-five per cent would definitely or probably move. Thirty-five per cent of those who say they would move would prefer to stay in the Central Queensland region.

Coastal destinations were favoured by the majority of respondents for relocation. The preferred destination for relocation was areas within Central Queensland, including the coastal region (43%). The most important reasons for moving from their present communities were better social and recreational opportunities, better services and to be close to family. Younger respondents are more likely to move and older respondents are more likely to stay.

## **Perceived Access to and Quality of Services**

Respondents were least satisfied with access to facilities for post-secondary and vocational training (dissatisfaction 45%), and with access to banks (dissatisfied 29%) and community and youth centres (dissatisfied 23%). Respondents were most satisfied with access to primary school (satisfied 86%) and post office (satisfied 84%). Respondents were least satisfied with the quality of public transport (dissatisfied 70%) and roads (dissatisfied 26%) and most satisfied with the quality of swimming pools (satisfied 80%) and public libraries (satisfied 73%).

Satisfaction with access to and quality of services and facilities is lower outside Emerald, particularly with respect to banks, post-secondary and vocational training opportunities, roads and public transport. Some other minor differences were found by age.

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### **Executive Summary**

## Conclusions

Just over 60 per cent of respondents were satisfied with overall quality of life in the community, a figure which was slightly lower than that recorded for the south-east Queensland region. There were high levels of satisfaction with family relationships, housing and health, and lower levels of satisfaction with income and access to leisure activities. Females were slightly more satisfied with their quality of life than males.

Community participation was higher outside Emerald than within and higher among males and middle-aged respondents. Three quarters of respondents were proud of their local community and community attachment was highest among older residents and long-term residents.

There were high levels of reported trust in families and close relatives, and reasonably high levels of trust in friends. Exchanges of help and advice occur most commonly among family and relatives, and slightly less commonly among friends.

There was a high level of internal migration within the region with 52 per cent of respondents moving to their present location from within the community. Close to work was the most common reason for living in all communities, while outside Emerald, housing was also an important reason for living in the community.

Less than 30 percent of respondents indicated they would definitely NOT move from the region in the next five years, while 45 per cent stated they would probably move. The preferred destinations for relocation were to locations within the Central Queensland region (this includes the coastal areas) with coastal destinations being favoured by a majority of respondents. Reasons for moving were: better social and recreational opportunities, better services and to be close to family members.

Almost half of respondents were dissatisfied with access to facilities for post-secondary education and vocational training. Almost a third of respondents were dissatisfied with access to banks, and about one quarter with access to community and youth centres. Satisfaction with the quality of services and facilities was lower outside Emerald, particularly with respect to post-secondary educational and training opportunities, roads and public transport.

## Further Research Opportunities

The findings from this research indicate some interesting, and often contradictory, elements that require further exploration. Future research in this area could consider a number of issues. First, considerable potential exists to examine further the relationships between the various outcomes of interest, such as how levels of social capital impact upon perceptions of quality of life or decisions to

relocate elsewhere. While tentative conclusions about these relationships have been drawn in this report, more rigorous research using sophisticated statistical analysis is necessary to test the significance of these relationships. Second, there is considerable diversity amongst the various Bowen Basin mining communities with some experiencing faster rates of decline than others.

While it is important to capture this diversity through comparative research at the community level, it is also necessary to retain a regional perspective of analysis, and to explore the interdependencies and interrelationships that exist between individual communities. This is particularly so given that much of the population movement in the Bowen Basin occurs between constituent communities rather than from outside the region. Finally, what have been presented are the views and experiences of those who live in the region and not those who have, for various reasons, already left. The perceptions of current residents will help develop an understanding about future migration patterns in the Bowen Basin, yet there is still need to examine the factors that contribute towards the present decline in the region's population. Until the causes of these demographic changes are fully known, appropriate strategies cannot be established to deal with the consequences of such change for service delivery, local businesses and community viability.



## 1. Introduction

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- a demand for additional human services to assist with the personal, family and social consequences of change and dislocation.

A Forum was held in Moranbah in November 2000 with the support of State and Local Government, the mining industry and the community sector as a first attempt to deal with this problem. The Forum was the first opportunity for a wide range of stakeholders to explore ways to develop a sustainable future for these communities.

Since that meeting the Bowen Basin Communities Partnership Project has been initiated by the Central Queensland and Mackay/Whitsunday offices of the Department of the Premier and Cabinet in conjunction with the Central West Region of the Department of Natural Resources and Mines and the Department of State Development.

This project utilises the development of partnership arrangements between the mining industry, local government, the community sector and State agencies to achieve outcomes in the areas of capacity building, change management and community sustainability.

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## Scope of the Project

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## Research Methodology

**Population:** The population was sampled via a telephone survey using a survey instrument developed in conjunction with the project management group. Adult household residents aged 18 years and over who reside in the identified Bowen Basin mining dependent communities were chosen to be interviewed. A critical component of the survey was to randomly select households from the cross-section of the communities to obtain accurate estimates of population responses to the items addressed by the survey.

**Sample size:** The following formulation was used to estimate the household sample size required to achieve a 95 per cent confidence interval for a survey item response proportion within five per cent of the estimated proportion: Let:

- N denote the total number of households within the Bowen Basin communities;
- P denote the proportion to be estimated;

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- $d=0.05$  be the accuracy associated with the 95 per cent confidence interval i.e. the significance level  $\alpha=0.05$ .

As the number of households within the Bowen Basin is large (based on a total population size of 41,973 in 2001) the minimum sample size required,  $n$ , is only marginally influenced by  $N$ . From large  $N$ ,  $n$  was computed as:  $n > P(1-P)z_{\alpha}^2 / d$ . Since the variation associated with the estimation of a proportion is greatest when  $P=0.5$ , a conservative estimate for the sample size required was 384 (rounded to 400).

**Sample Selection:** To achieve a representative sample of households from a selection of mining associated communities a stratified sample of the population by communities and/or groups of communities of similar size was selected. A random sample from each group proportionate to the total of 400 was selected.

As it was considered likely that the size of a community and the access to services could significantly influence a resident's quality of life perceptions and the reasons to live in a community or relocate, it was important to collect survey data that would capture any effects related to community structure.

Through a process of selection within a household, an adult resident was asked to respond to the survey. To ensure that any bias associated with age and gender was kept to a minimum, a random sampling procedure was implemented to facilitate proportionate selection of adult residents by age group and gender.

Because of the small sample size associated with each community group, it was not possible to produce estimates with the desired accuracy for each group; however, it was possible to explore associations between community characteristics and quality of life perceptions as well as reasons to live in a community or relocate and other factors of interest. Groupings of similar communities for the purpose of sampling and analysis were developed in consultation with the project management group.

**Coping with Bias:** Households in mining communities have a very high rate of telephone connection; therefore it was assumed that any bias associated with ignoring households without a telephone connection would be negligible. However, strategies were put into place during sample selection to minimise other sources of bias. It was evident that the size and diversity of a community was a source of bias. This was controlled through stratification and proportionate sampling of households by communities or groups of communities with similar characteristics. Bias associated with age and gender was controlled through proportionate random selection of adult residents within a household by these factors.

Non-response due to shift-work and transfers was also considered to be a source of possible bias. This was controlled by initiating call-backs to the same telephone number several times, and by making appointments to call back at a suitable specified time if the randomly selected resident was not available. If a call remained unanswered after a reasonable number of attempts then a new household was randomly selected to ensure that the minimum required sample size was achieved.

Post-weighting of the data was applied to minimize any interviewing bias toward a particular respondent or age group. The analysis and tables in the report refer mainly to the post-weighted data. The raw data for each response is provided in Appendix 2.

**Telephone Interviewing:** The UQSRC Computer Assisted Telephone Interviewing (CATI) Laboratory was used to collect the data for this project. All interviewers were briefed about the project and each interviewer received training in ethics, interviewing techniques, data integrity and confidentiality. Interviewers were required to complete test interviews prior to commencing the actual survey to ensure that they were comfortable and familiar with the wording and flow of the questionnaire. Statistics on each interview, response levels, quotas and type of response were recorded for the project and are presented in Tables 1.1 and 1.2 below.

**Table 1.1 Sample Zones (Towns) and Interview Quotas**

Town/Zone	Target	Completed
Blackwater/Moura	75	75
Emerald	80	81
Clermont/Capella	60	62
Dysart/Middlemount/Tieri	70	73
Glenden/Nebo/Moranbah	85	86
Collinsville	30	53
<b>Total</b>	<b>400</b>	<b>430</b>

**Table 1.2 Interviewing Statistics**

Item	Per cent of Total Dials
Non-contacts	46%
Interviews	11%
Refusals	8%
Call-backs	16%
Suspended Calls	1%
Fax Machines/Business	6%
Away Duration	12%
Total number of telephone dials	4033
Contacts per completed interview	5.1
Dials per interview	9.4
Average interview length (minutes)	26.8

### Sample Composition

This project was managed in the same manner as all other projects undertaken within the UQSRC. The sample was drawn from the latest version of Desktop Marketing Systems (DTMS Marketing Pro) and imported into the Sample Management System (SMS) of Surveycraft (the program used in the CATI laboratory). Surveycraft SMS managed the sample ensuring that a random selection of telephone numbers was distributed across the interviewers and the selected mining communities in the Bowen Basin. Surveycraft provided details of the best time to call, appointment call-backs and management of quotas applied to the survey sample.

Tables 1.3 to 1.5 detail the sample composition by gender, age and length of residence within each zone. Additional tables for household composition, occupation and industry are available in Appendix 4.

**Table 1.3 Gender Composition of the Sample**

Gender	n	Per cent						Total
		Emerald	Blackwater /Moura	Clermont /Capella	Collinsville	Dysart/ Middlemount /Tieri	Glenden /Nebo /Moranbah	
Male	430	52.0	55.4	51.4	52.0	58.7	56.7	54.8
Female		48.0	44.6	48.6	48.0	41.3	43.3	45.2

**Table 1.4 Age Composition of the Sample**

Age	n	Per cent						Total
		Emerald	Blackwater /Moura	Clermont /Capella	Collinsville	Dysart/ Middlemount /Tierl	Glenden /Nebo /Moranbah	
	430							
18-24		13.7	9.8	8.8	8.3	14.3	5.6	10.7
25-34		28.2	18.3	23.5	20.8	20.8	21.3	22.8
35-44		34.7	32.9	29.4	16.7	22.1	37.1	31.2
45-54		5.6	20.7	11.8	16.7	24.7	22.5	16.5
55-64		6.5	11.0	14.7	16.7	15.6	12.4	11.4
65 and over		11.3	7.3	11.8	20.8	2.6	1.1	7.4

**Table 1.5 Length of Residence Composition of the Sample**

Length of residence	n	Per cent						Total
		Emerald	Blackwater /Moura	Clermont /Capella	Collinsville	Dysart/ Middlemount /Tierl	Glenden /Nebo /Moranbah	
	429							
Less than 1 year		25.0	4.9	14.7	13.0	6.6	15.6	14.5
1-3 years		25.8	32.9	23.5	21.7	31.6	22.2	27.0
4-10 years		30.6	18.3	32.4	30.4	26.3	26.7	26.8
11 or more years		18.5	43.9	29.4	34.8	35.5	35.6	31.7

## 2. Perceptions of Quality of Life

General perceptions of quality of life were measured from the responses given to a number of standardised questions which have been used in a variety of investigations both in Queensland and elsewhere in Australia. Respondents were asked how satisfied they were with a number of life domains and requested to indicate their answer on a five point scale ranging from 'Very dissatisfied' to 'Very satisfied'. The life domains are listed in Table 2.1 below.

**Table 2.1 Perceived Quality of Life**

Perceived quality of life	n	Per cent					Statistics	
		Very satisfied	Satisfied	Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied	Dis-satisfied	Very dis-satisfied	Mean	Median
"How satisfied are you with the following aspects of your life, where 1 is 'Very dissatisfied' and 5 is 'Very satisfied'?"								
Your relationship with your family	423	65.3	24.0	7.0	2.5	1.2	4.5	5.0
Your employment situation	397	38.0	33.1	15.4	8.9	4.6	3.9	4.0
Your housing	430	37.3	38.1	17.0	5.7	1.8	4.0	4.0
Your health	430	35.4	41.3	14.8	7.3	1.2	4.0	4.0
Your life as a whole	430	34.3	49.0	14.1	2.1	0.5	4.1	4.0
Your overall standard of living	430	29.1	50.7	15.8	3.5	0.8	4.0	4.0
Your access to leisure activities	423	19.8	26.5	26.6	18.6	8.5	3.3	3.0
The way you spend your time	427	19.2	39.7	26.0	11.3	3.8	3.6	4.0
The amount of money you have available to you personally	430	17.1	34.3	28.8	10.4	9.4	3.4	4.0

While there was not overt enthusiasm for the communities in which they lived the majority of those interviewed rated the overall quality of life in their community as good. Around 19 per cent rated the overall quality of life in their community as 'Very good' and a further 43 per cent as 'Good'; only ten per cent described it as 'Poor' or 'Very poor'. The remaining 29 per cent indicated it was 'Neither good nor poor'. Interestingly there were no significant differences between the six zones.

Analysis of the life domains shows that, in the main, levels of satisfaction were high although there were some interesting differences (see Table 2.1). The highest level of satisfaction concerned relationship with family. Eighty-nine per cent of respondents were either 'Satisfied' or 'Very satisfied' with their relationship with family, with almost two thirds (65%) stating that they were 'Very satisfied'.

Levels of 'Very satisfied' declined from that point. Around a third of the respondents were 'Very satisfied' with employment (38%), housing (37%) and health (35%). By including those who were 'Satisfied', around three quarters of the respondents were either 'Satisfied' or 'Very satisfied' with housing and health (75% and 77% respectively). The level for employment was marginally lower, with 71 per cent being either 'Satisfied' or 'Very satisfied'.

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Fifty-one per cent of the respondents were 'Satisfied' or 'Very satisfied' with the money they had available to them personally, with only 17 per cent being 'Very satisfied' in this respect.

Access to leisure activities and the way they spent their time were among the least satisfying life domains. Forty-six per cent of respondents were either 'Satisfied' or 'Very satisfied' with access to leisure activities ('Very satisfied' 20%), while a 59 per cent were either 'Satisfied' or 'Very satisfied' with the way they spent their time ('Very satisfied' 19%).

The results for overall life satisfaction were also interesting. Eighty-three per cent of the sample stated they were 'Satisfied' or 'Very satisfied' with their life as a whole; this included 34 per cent who were 'Very satisfied'.

The team developed an index of quality of life based on the eight separate life domains. Overall life satisfaction was excluded from the measure. It can be used as a criterion variable against which the scale can be assessed. The measure of scale reliability for the index, Cronbach's alpha, was 0.74, an acceptable level of reliability for including the scale in future analyses.

Based on this index, three quarters of the residents in the regions studied were found to be either 'Satisfied' or 'Very satisfied' with their quality of life. Differences with respect to quality of life were not marked. All communities expressed roughly the same levels; there were no age differences or differences based on length of residence.

**Table 2.2 Gender Differences in Quality of Life**

Satisfaction with quality of life	n	Per cent		
		Male	Female	Total
Satisfied or Very satisfied	430	69.4	79.0	73.7
Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied		29.4	18.5	24.4
Dissatisfied or Very dissatisfied		1.3	2.6	1.9

There were however gender differences, as presented in Table 2.2, with females expressing greater satisfaction with the assessed components of their life situation than males. Over three quarters of females (79 per cent reported being 'Satisfied' or 'Very satisfied' with their quality of life, compared to 69 per cent of males.



The question: ‘In general how would you rate the overall quality of life in (your community)’ was also asked of respondents. A five point scale with response categories ranging from ‘Very poor’ to ‘Very good’ was used (see Table 2.3).

**Table 2.3 Perceived Quality of Life within the Community**

Perceived quality of life within the community	Per cent					Statistics		
	n	Very good	Good	Neither good nor poor	Poor	Very poor	Mean	Median
"Using a scale from 1 to 5 where 1 is 'Very poor' and 5 is 'Very good', in general, how would you rate the overall quality of life in (insert name of town from sample)?"	430	18.5	43.1	28.6	7.3	2.4	3.7	4.0

Just over 60 per cent of respondents indicated that their quality of life is “Good” or “Very good”. Only ten per cent considered their quality of life to be “Poor” or “Very poor”.

### 3. Social Capital

Social capital in the region was measured using a set of 14 standard items. All items were presented in structured format and are shown in Tables 3.1 to 3.4 below.

**Table 3.1 Social Capital: Participation in Community Affairs**

Social capital: participation in community affairs	n	Per cent			
		In coal fields	Elsewhere	Both in coal fields/ elsewhere	Not at all
"During the past 12 months, have you:"					
Helped or been involved in childrens events and/or activities such as sport	430	50.0	2.4	4.6	43.0
Signed a petition	424	20.6	0.7	0.8	77.8
Joined with people to resolve a local or neighbourhood problem	430	17.3	2.4	1.1	79.2
Contacted government official regarding a problem	429	13.4	3.5	1.9	81.2
Contacted the media regarding a problem	429	4.2	0.2	1.5	94.1

The five items shown in Table 3.1 concern participation in community affairs. For each item respondents were asked whether they had carried out the activity either 'in the coal fields' or 'elsewhere'.

More than half (57%) of respondents stated they helped or were involved in children's events and/or activities such as sport. This was by far the most common community activity. Signing a petition (overall 22%) and joining with people to resolve a local or neighbourhood problem (overall 21%) were the next highest community activities for respondents. Respondents were less likely to contact a government official regarding a problem (overall 19%) while six per cent had contacted the media regarding a problem.

The remaining nine social capital items related to attachment to the local community, issues of trust and issues of reciprocity. The community attachment items are presented in Table 3.2.

**Table 3.2 Social Capital: Community Attachment**

Social capital: community attachment	n	Per cent					Statistics	
		Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Mean	Median
"How strongly do you agree or disagree with these statements, where 1 is strongly disagree and 5 is strongly agree?" [pertaining to the town/place of interview]								
I am proud to live in the local community	430	34.6	38.6	19.4	5.1	2.4	4.0	4.0
I feel that I belong to the local community	430	24.4	30.6	26.0	14.3	4.7	3.6	4.0
I feel emotionally attached to the local community	430	17.5	29.4	27.4	16.3	9.4	3.3	3.0

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Respondents were asked to indicate the extent of their agreement, on a five point scale ranging from 'Strongly agree' to 'Strongly disagree', with three statements relating to community attachment. The results from weighted frequencies reveal that attachment was moderately strong. Almost three quarters of the respondents (73%) stated that they were proud to live in the local community (those who 'Agree' and 'Strongly agree' with the statement); just over half (55%) of the respondents felt that they belonged to the local community and just under half (47%) felt emotionally attached to their community. Responses to these three questions were closely related.

### Index of Community Attachment

Those who responded positively to any one statement also tended to respond positively to the other two statements, and those who responded negatively to one also tended to respond negatively to the other two. The consistency of this response pattern enabled the construction of an index, 'Community Attachment', from these three items.

A measure of the strength of the index is given by Cronbach's alpha. In this instance it provides a value of 0.89 indicating a highly reliable measure. The index revealed that a high level of attachment to the local community was reported by 57 per cent of all respondents to the survey. A further 26 per cent indicated a moderate level of attachment and the remaining 17 per cent indicated a relatively low level of attachment.

### Trust and Reciprocity

The statements relating to trust and reciprocity are as shown in Tables 3.3 and 3.4.

For each set of items respondents were asked to indicate on a five point scale the extent of their trust in nominated persons or the extent of reciprocation with others in giving advice and practical help.

**Table 3.3 Social Capital: Trust**

Social capital: trust	n	Per cent					Statistics	
		To a great extent	To some extent	Little	Hardly at all	Not at all	Mean	Median
"To what extent would you trust the following people to act in your best interests, where 1 is 'Not at all' and 5 is 'To a great extent'"								
Your close family and other relatives with whom you don't live	424	71.1	19.8	5.8	2.2	1.1	4.6	5.0
Your friends	430	45.5	36.2	13.0	2.6	2.8	4.2	4.0
Your current work mates or associates	376	22.2	34.6	31.2	7.2	4.8	3.6	4.0

Nearly three quarters of the sample (71%) stated that they would 'to a great extent' trust close family and other relatives with whom they did not live. Just under half (46%) the respondents felt the same way about their friends, but only 22 per cent reported similarly about work mates or associates.

Clearly trust is most likely to be shown to members of the family network, and becomes less likely the ‘further’ acquaintances are distanced from the respondents. (Refer to Table 3.3.)

**Table 3.4 Social Capital: Reciprocity**

Social capital: reciprocity	Per cent						Statistics	
	n	Very often	Often	Not often	Not very often	Never	Mean	Median
"Using a scale where 1 is 'Never' and 5 is 'Very often', how often do you and the following people exchange practical help or advice?"								
Your close family and other relatives with whom you don't live	425	39.6	34.1	14.5	8.5	3.2	4.0	4.0
Your friends	429	25.9	39.9	24.6	5.8	3.9	3.8	4.0
Your neighbours (who are not friends or family)	421	9.8	17.2	24.1	21.0	28.0	2.6	3.0

The reciprocal giving of advice and practical help was not as common (refer to Table 3.4). When asked how often they gave and received advice and practical help with respect to family, friends and neighbours much lower proportions reported ‘Very often’. Again the likelihood was greatest for family and relatives, with 40 per cent of respondents reporting reciprocal arrangements ‘Very often’; the proportion dropped to 26 per cent for friends and down to ten per cent for neighbours.

### Index of Trust and Reciprocity

Again the pattern of responses enabled the construction of an index from these six statements and the extent to which the responses to the statements were interrelated was calculated, using Cronbach's alpha, to be 0.73 which indicated that the six statements could be combined in a single index: Trust and Reciprocity.

On the basis of the index, trust and reciprocity is widespread in the region. Two thirds of the respondents surveyed reported trust and reciprocity to some or a great extent, while only a third said not at all or only a little.

### Differences in Community Participation

Moving from this overall perspective, the following section looks at significant differences in social capital based on zone, gender, age and length of residence.

#### Zone

For three of the issues relating to community participation (contacting the media, contacting a government official, helping in children’s activities) there were no differences between the respondents from Emerald and the respondents from other communities. However, for both signing a petition and joining with others to resolve a local or neighbourhood problem, the Emerald respondents were less active than in other communities.

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**Table 3.5 Zonal Differences in Community Participation**

Community participation	n	Per cent		
		Emerald	Other	Total
Signed a petition in coal fields or elsewhere	424	10.5	27.0	22.2
Joined with people to resolve a local neighbourhood problem in coal fields or elsewhere	430	13.0	23.8	20.7

Table 3.5 indicates that 11 per cent of the Emerald respondents reported signing a petition compared with 27 per cent of respondents from the other communities. Similarly 13 per cent of Emerald respondents reported joining with other people to resolve a local or neighbourhood problem, compared with 24 per cent of respondents in other communities.

### Gender and Age

There were few gender and age differences. Males (8%) compared with females (3%) were more likely to contact the media, and also more likely to contact government officials regarding a problem (males 24%; females 13%). With respect to the other issues there were no gender differences. (Refer to Table 3.6.)

**Table 3.6 Gender Difference in Community Participation**

Community participation	n	Per cent		
		Male	Female	Total
Contacted the media regarding a problem in coal fields or elsewhere	429	8.1	3.1	5.8
Contacted a government official regarding a problem in coal fields or elsewhere	428	23.5	12.9	18.7

As might be expected, the age groups 25 to 44 (approximately 70%) were more likely than the younger (18 to 24 years 48%) and the age groups 45 to 65 plus (34% to 48%) to have helped or been involved in children's events or activities such as sport (see Table 3.7).

Respondents in the 18-24 age group (4%) tended not to join with others to resolve neighbourhood problems as frequently as the other age groups (16% to 28%).

**Table 3.7 Age Differences in Community Participation**

Community participation	n	Per cent						Total
		18-24	25-34	35-44	45-54	55-64	65+	
Joined with people to resolve a local neighbourhood problem in coal fields or elsewhere	430	4.3	16.5	28.4	25.4	15.7	25.0	20.9
Helped or been involved in children's events or activities such as sport in coal fields or elsewhere	430	47.8	69.1	70.1	47.9	34.0	37.5	57.2

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## Differences in Attachment to the Community

The following section examines significant differences in community attachment based on age and length of residence. No significant differences were evident with zone or gender for community attachment.

### Age

**Table 3.8 Age Differences in Community Attachment**

Community attachment	n	Per cent						Total
		18-24	25-34	35-44	45-54	55-64	65+	
Strong attachment	430	42.6	54.6	56.0	55.6	70.0	78.1	57.4

Table 3.8 indicates that older residents show much stronger attachment to their community, with over three quarters of respondents 65 plus age group (78%) and the 55 to 64 age group (70%) indicating strong attachment. For respondents in the 25 to 54 age groups community attachment dropped to around 56 per cent. Community attachment among the 18 to 24 age group, was 43 per cent.

### Length of Residence

**Table 3.9 Differences in Length of Residence and Community Attachment**

Community attachment	n	Per cent				Total
		Less than 1 year	1-3 years	4-10 years	11 or more years	
Strong attachment	430	24.6	54.3	61.7	71.3	57.5

Nearly three quarters (71%) of the respondents who had lived in their particular community for 11 or more years reported strong attachment to that community (Table 3.9). The level of attachment dropped to 62 per cent for those who had been in the community four to ten years and further declined to 54 per cent for those who had only been there one to three years. Among the new arrivals, those respondents who have been in the community for less than 12 months, only a quarter indicated strong attachment.

Further research into the relationship between age, length of residence and attachment might lend to the issue of declining population in rural and remote communities.

## Differences in Trust and Reciprocity

There are no zonal differences across the communities in the Bowen Basin; levels of trust and reciprocity are as high in Emerald as they are in the other communities. The length of time residents have lived in their community, age and gender also do not impact on levels of trust and reciprocity.

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#### 4. Decision to Live in Present Community

In exploring the decision to live in the present community, respondents were asked where they had originally moved from and what had influenced their decision to live in their particular community.

**Table 4.1 Where Respondents Have Moved From**

Respondent origins	Lived elsewhere previously		All respondents	
	n	Per cent	n	Per cent
"Where did you live previously?"	340		430	
Emerald and other Bowen Basin towns		27.6		21.9
Brisbane and SE Queensland		19.7		15.6
Mackay and coastal areas		14.1		11.2
Other Australian states		11.5		9.1
Rockhampton and coastal areas		6.8		5.3
Townsville and other NQ centres		6.2		4.9
Other inland Queensland		5.6		4.4
Overseas		4.1		3.3
Gladstone and coastal areas		2.6		2.1
Bowen and Whitsunday areas		1.8		1.4
Always lived in the community				20.9

Table 4.1 indicates that in-migration has been higher from local regions (52%) than from South East Queensland (20%) or interstate origins (12%). The majority of respondents from local regions moved from Emerald and other Bowen Basin towns (28%).

In exploring why respondents had moved a range of factors were provided, including such things as being close to work, close to schools, good value housing, availability of recreational and shopping facilities, size of community, appearance of community and housing, and closeness to family and friends. Respondents were asked to indicate if, and to what extent, these factors had been important on a five point scale ranging from 'Not at all important' to 'Very important'. Table 4.2 presents response distributions over this scale and summary statistics for each question.

**Table 4.2 Reasons for Respondent's Decision to Live in the Community**

Reasons for decision to live in the community	n	Per cent					Statistics	
		Very important	Important	Neither	Not important	Not at all important	Mean	Median
"How important is each of the following in your decision to live in [town] (this particular community)?"								
Close to work	402	49.3	26.2	10.4	7.4	6.7	4.0	4.0
Good schools	379	36.7	22.5	10.3	8.5	21.9	3.4	4.0
Close to family and friends	410	31.4	16.6	11.5	14.0	26.6	3.1	3.0
Openness/spaciousness of area	419	31.0	33.8	13.8	7.7	13.7	3.6	4.0
Familiar with area	417	28.7	26.1	9.5	14.6	21.0	3.3	4.0
Convenient to places such as shopping and schools	418	26.9	25.9	17.2	12.1	18.0	3.3	4.0
Housing costs/good value	408	25.7	23.6	13.5	13.8	23.4	3.1	3.0
Close to natural areas (bush, creeks etc)	419	24.6	25.8	19.0	11.3	19.3	3.2	4.0
Lots of recreational opportunities	417	19.4	23.7	21.3	15.9	19.7	3.1	3.0
Community size	419	18.4	26.0	21.9	14.0	19.7	3.1	3.0
People similar to you	418	15.4	30.1	22.1	13.0	19.3	3.1	3.0
Attractive appearance of neighbourhood	419	15.2	30.5	22.7	14.8	16.8	3.1	3.0
Appearance/layout of dwellings	419	14.4	29.3	25.4	10.2	20.8	3.1	3.0

As a factor in the decision to live in their present community, being close to work had the highest level of importance, with about 76 per cent of respondents rating this reason as being either 'Very important' or 'Important'. Approximately two thirds of respondents (65%) indicated that spaciousness of the area was an important factor in the decision to live in a community ('Very important' 31%), and good schools were important to 59 per cent of respondents ('Very important' 37%).

Familiarity with the area, convenience to places such as shopping and schools, and being close to natural areas rated relatively highly, with between 50 and 55 per cent of respondents indicating that each of these was a 'Very important' or 'Important' reason for living in their community. Housing costs being good value was rated as 'Very important' or 'Important' by 49 per cent of respondents.

Just under half (48%) of the respondents indicated that close to family and friends was a 'Very important' or 'Important' aspect in the decision to live in a community; however 41 per cent indicated it was not of importance and a further 12 per cent indicated it was 'Neither important nor unimportant' in the decision.

Well under half the respondents indicated that recreational opportunities, community size, similarity of people to them, appearance of the neighbourhood and of dwellings were important as reasons for living in their present community.

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**Table 4.3 The Most Important Reason to Live in the Community**

The most important reason for decision to live in the community	n	Per cent												
		Close to work	Close to family and friends	Housing costs/good value	Good schools	Convenient to places such as shopping and schools	Openness/spaciousness of area	People similar to you	Close to natural areas (bush, creeks etc)	Familiar with area	Community size	Appearance/layout of dwellings	Lots of recreational opportunities	Attractive appearance of neighbourhood
"How important is each of the following in your decision to live in [town] (this particular community)?"														
"Which is the most important reason for you?"	415	39.0	22.5	6.3	6.1	5.4	4.8	4.4	2.8	2.8	2.5	1.8	1.3	0.5

Respondents were asked to nominate which of their reasons given in the previous question was the most important for them in deciding to live in their community. Being close to work (39%) and being close to family and friends (23%) clearly stand out as the two most important reasons. The remaining reasons were each nominated by six per cent of respondents or less.

For the individual reasons (as given in Table 4.2) and the most important reason nominated (see Table 4.3), differences by zone, gender, age and length of residence were explored. The section below presents tables where statistically significant differences have been identified.

## Zone

**Table 4.4 The Most Important Reason to Live in the Community by Zone**

Zonal differences in the reason nominated as most important	n	Per cent		
		Emerald	Other	Total
Close to work	415	36.1	40.1	39.0
Close to family and friends		30.0	19.5	22.5
Housing costs/good value		3.4	7.4	6.3
Good schools		4.2	7.1	6.1
Convenient to places such as shopping and schools		3.4	6.1	5.4
Openness or spaciousness of area		7.6	3.7	4.8
People similar to you		5.0	4.0	4.4
Close to natural areas (bush, creeks etc)		3.4	2.7	2.8
Familiar with area		1.7	3.4	2.8
Community size		1.7	2.7	2.5
Appearance/layout of dwellings		2.5	1.3	1.8
Lots of recreational opportunities		0.8	1.3	1.3
Attractive appearance of neighbourhood		..	0.7	0.5

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Table 4.4 shows the most important reason given broken down by zone. Some differences in response were apparent between Emerald respondents and those from other communities. In most areas, the differences were minimal, but a greater proportion of Emerald respondents identified ‘close to family and friends’ (30%) as much more important to them than did respondents living elsewhere in the Bowen Basin (20%).

**Table 4.5 Zonal Differences in Reason to Live in the Community**

Zonal differences in the reasons for decision to live in the community	n	Per cent		
		Emerald	Other	Total
Housing costs/good value Important or Very important	409	26.5	58.6	49.4
Close to natural areas (bush, creeks etc) Important or Very important	418	59.2	47.0	50.5
Close to family and friends Important or Very important	410	54.7	45.1	47.8

The value of housing is a more important attribute for respondents in communities outside of Emerald, with 59 per cent of respondents living in communities outside of Emerald indicating that housing costs were ‘Important’ or ‘Very important’ in shaping their decision to live in that community. Among Emerald respondents, only 27 per cent nominated housing costs as an important factor in their decision.

Overall, half of the respondents (51%) felt that being close to natural areas was an important reason for living in their community. Emerald respondents in particular felt strongly about this with well over half (59%) indicating closeness to natural areas as an ‘Important’ or ‘Very important’ reason, whereas just under half of respondents (47%) from other areas felt this way.

Emerald respondents gave a higher level of importance to being close to family and friends (55%) than respondents from other communities (45%).

## Gender

Good schools were ‘Important’ or ‘Very important’ considerations in shaping the decision to live in the local area for the majority of male and female respondents, with females being likely to rate this attribute as more important than males. Sixty-four per cent of females indicated that schools were ‘Important’ or ‘Very important’ as compared to 55 per cent of males.

Males (54%) were, however, more likely to rate closeness to natural areas as ‘Important’ or ‘Very important’ than were females (46%). (Refer to Table 4.6.)

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**Table 4.6 Gender Differences in Reasons to Live in the Community**

Gender differences in the reasons for decision to live in the community	n	Per cent		
		Male	Female	Total
		Good schools Important or Very important	379	55.4
Close to natural areas (bush, creeks etc) Important or Very important	418	54.3	45.7	50.5

## Age

**Table 4.7 Age Differences in the Most Important Reason to Live in the Community**

Age differences in the reason nominated as most important	n	Per cent						
		415						
		18-24	25-34	35-44	45-54	55-64	65+	Total
Close to work		18.6	35.9	45.0	54.9	37.3	18.2	39.0
Close to family and friends		53.5	28.3	15.5	12.7	15.7	24.2	22.5
Housing costs/good value		2.3	6.5	5.4	2.8	13.7	12.1	6.3
Good schools		2.3	9.8	7.8	2.8	5.9	..	6.1
Convenient to places such as shopping and schools		4.7	4.3	3.9	11.3	5.9	3.0	5.4
Openness or spaciousness of area		7.0	3.3	3.9	2.8	3.9	15.2	4.8
People similar to you		2.3	5.4	3.9	2.8	2.0	12.1	4.4
Close to natural areas (bush, creeks etc)		2.3	1.1	3.9	2.8	3.9	6.1	2.8
Familiar with area		2.3	2.2	2.3	2.8	3.9	6.1	2.8
Community size		..	1.1	6.2	..	2.0	..	2.5
Appearance/Layout of dwellings		2.3	2.2	1.6	..	5.9	..	1.8
Lots of recreational opportunities		2.3	..	0.8	4.2	..	..	1.3
Attractive appearance of neighbourhood		..	..	..	..	..	3.0	0.5

In Table 4.7, the two most important reasons for the decision to live in a community were being close to work (39%) and close to family (23%). Being close to work was less of a concern for respondents in the age groups 18 to 24 and 65 plus than it was for the other age groups. On the other hand being close to family was of particular importance to the 18 to 24 age group (54%).

In Table 4.8, older respondents are more likely than younger respondents to say that the cost of housing was an important factor in deciding to live in the area.

Eighty-four per cent of respondents in the age group 65 plus indicated that housing cost were an important factor in the decision to live in their community. Sixty per cent of respondents in the 55 to 64 age group and 54 per cent of respondents in the 45 to 54 age group indicated that the affordability of housing was an important issue.

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**Table 4.8 Age Differences in Reasons to Live in the Community**

Age differences in the reasons to live in the community	n	Per cent						Total
		18-24	25-34	35-44	45-54	55-64	65+	
Close to work Important or Very important	402	69.8	78.7	78.6	73.2	69.6	68.2	75.1
Housing costs/good value Important or Very important	408	47.5	43.5	41.2	54.3	60.0	84.0	49.5
Convenient to places such as shopping and schools Important or Very important	419	58.1	46.7	44.7	57.1	54.0	87.5	53.0
Lots of recreational opportunities Important or Very important	417	30.2	35.5	43.8	41.4	57.1	62.5	43.2
Attractive appearance of neighbourhood Important or Very important	421	44.2	43.0	37.1	39.4	60.0	84.4	45.8
Community size Important or Very important	420	32.6	37.6	51.1	32.4	50.0	71.9	44.5
Appearance/layout of dwellings Important or Very important	422	36.4	41.9	38.9	40.8	51.0	71.9	43.6
Familiar with area Important or Very important	417	53.5	55.4	50.0	36.6	68.6	93.3	54.7
Close to natural areas (bush, creeks etc) Important or Very important	419	48.8	46.2	42.7	40.0	66.0	93.8	50.4
Openness/spaciousness of area Important or Very important	419	46.5	60.2	62.9	61.4	79.6	96.9	64.9
Close to family and friends Important or Very important	411	74.4	54.3	40.8	30.9	44.0	67.9	47.9

Even though being close to work was an important issue for respondents, there were no significant differences across the age groups.

Eighty-eight per cent of respondents in the 65 plus age group indicated that convenience to places such as shopping and schools was important for living in their community. By comparison, less than half of the 25 to 44 age groups saw convenience to places such as shops and schools as important. Just over half of the 18 to 24 and 45 to 64 age groups saw this attribute as important. (Refer to Table 4.8.)

Recreational opportunities were more important for older respondents than younger ones. Sixty-three per cent of respondents aged 65 or more and 57 per cent of respondents aged 55 to 64 indicated that recreational opportunities were important when deciding to live in a community. By comparison, only 30 per cent of the 18 to 24 age group, 35 per cent of the 25 to 34 age group, and just over 40 per cent of 35 to 54 age groups nominated lots of recreational opportunities as an important attribute. This result does not say recreational opportunities are unimportant per se, but rather that recreational opportunities as they exist in the communities were not influential in the respondents' decisions to live in the community.

While there were few notable variations between respondents in the 18 to 54 age groups, neighbourhood appearance did become much more important for older respondents. Sixty per cent of all respondents in the 55 to 64 age group indicated that the appearance of the community was

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important in their decision to live in a particular community. For those in the 65 plus age group, the proportion increased to 84 per cent.

Age was also found to be a significant factor in determining how important community size was in shaping respondents decisions to live in their particular community. Older respondents were more likely to identify community size as influential, with 50 per cent of the 55 to 64 age group, and 72 per cent of the 65 plus age group, citing community size as an important issue in their decision. For all other age groups, the responses were largely similar (ranging from 32% to 38%) apart from those in the 35 to 44 age group. Here the proportion who indicated that size of community mattered was much higher, accounting for half of all those interviewed in that age group (51%).

Thirty-six per cent of respondents in the 18 to 24 age group cited appearance of dwellings as being important while 72 per cent of those in the 65 plus age group considered the attribute to be important. The proportion of those in the 55 to 64 age group who cited the appearance or layout of housing as influential fell to 51 per cent but was still higher than other age groups.

Over 54 per cent of respondents indicated that being familiar with the area was an important factor in their decision to live in their community. This was consistent across most age groups except for the 45 to 54 age group who were less likely to feel this way (37%) compared with the 65 plus age group who almost indicated that this was an important attribute (93%).

The importance of being close to natural areas was of higher importance to the older age groups: 94 per cent of respondents in the 65 plus age group and 66 per cent of the 55 to 64 age group rated the issue as being important. Less than half (40% to 49%) of the other age groups (18 to 54) considered the attribute to be important.

The openness and spaciousness of the area increased in importance in line with age, and became a key attribute for respondents aged 55 years and older (55 to 64 age group 80%; 65 plus age group 97%). This attribute was of lower importance to the 18 to 24 age group (47%).

Being close to family and friends was 'Very important' for the 18 to 24 age group (74%) and for the 65 plus age group (68%). Respondents in the other age groups, particularly the 45 to 54 age group (30%), were the least likely to feel this was an important reason for living in their community.

### **Length of Residence**

Table 4.9 examines the importance of community attributes in a respondent's decision to live in the community, broken down by length of residence in the community.

**Table 4.9 Differences in Length of Residence with Reasons to Live in the Community**

Length of residence differences with reasons to live in the community	n	Per cent				Total
		Less than 1 year	1-3 years	4-10 years	11 or more years	
Close to work Important or Very important	402	67.8	76.5	78.0	75.6	75.4
Good schools Important or Very important	379	47.1	55.6	63.0	65.0	59.4
Housing costs/good value Important or Very important	407	36.7	50.0	40.9	62.6	49.4
Convenient to places such as shopping and schools Important or Very important	416	45.0	51.3	45.9	64.6	53.1
Lots of recreational opportunities Important or Very important	417	28.3	40.9	47.3	48.5	43.2
Attractive appearance of neighbourhood Important or Very important	419	27.9	45.2	45.9	53.8	45.6
Community size Important or Very important	419	31.7	42.2	44.6	51.1	44.2
Appearance/layout of dwellings Important or Very important	417	30.0	41.7	40.0	54.5	43.6
Familiar with area Important or Very important	417	48.3	44.8	55.0	66.2	54.7
Close to natural areas (bush, creeks etc) Important or Very important	417	43.3	47.8	43.2	61.8	50.4
Openness/spaciousness of area Important or Very important	418	53.3	57.4	64.3	76.3	64.6

Recent arrivals (respondents who have been resident for less than one year) were marginally less likely than other respondents to say that closeness to work was an important factor in their decision to live in their community; they were also marginally more likely than others to say that closeness to work was unimportant. Respondents who have been living in the community for four to ten years were least likely to feel that closeness to work was unimportant. The table thus suggests a basic contrast between very recent arrivals and the other groups.

The importance of good schools in shaping decisions about where to live appears to increase with length of residence. Only 47 per cent of recent arrivals nominated good schools as being important for the decision to live in the community. However, 56 per cent of respondents who have been living in the area for one to three years, 63 per cent of those who have been there for four to ten years and 65 per cent of those who have lived in the area for 11 years or more felt that the quality of schools was an important issue in their decision.

The percentage of respondents who indicated that housing costs mattered increased with length of residence. Thirty-seven per cent of recent arrivals indicated that the value of housing was important, compared to 50 per cent of respondents who had been there from one to three years, 41 per cent of

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those who had been there four to ten years, and 62 per cent of those who been resident for more than 11 years. The value/cost of housing was most important for respondents who were long term residents (11 years plus) and comparatively recent arrivals (respondents who have been resident between one and three years).

Almost two thirds of respondents who were long term residents (65%) and just over half of the residents who had been comparatively recent arrivals (51%) indicated that convenience to shopping and schools shaped their decision to live in the area. By contrast, approximately 45 per cent of recent arrivals or respondents who had been in the area from four to ten years nominated closeness to shopping and schools as an important attribute.

The appearance of the neighbourhood was less likely to be important to new arrivals than it was to those who had lived there for more than a decade. Twenty-eight per cent of respondents who had lived in the community for less than a year said that the attractiveness of the neighbourhood was important. Just over half (52%) of the respondents stated that the neighbourhood's appearance had not been an important consideration. Appearance was clearly more important to other, longer-standing residents although it was still the case that, even for those who had lived in a community for more than 11 years, only 53 per cent said that the appearance of a neighbourhood was important in the decision to live there.

The appearance of the dwellings also was less important to new arrivals than to other respondents with 30 per cent of new arrivals indicating that the appearance of the housing had been important. In contrast, the proportion of respondents who had lived in the town for 11 years or more and who cited appearance of the dwellings as important was 55 per cent. Similar differences exist between the same groups in their perceptions of housing appearance as 'Not important' in the decision to live in the community (new arrivals 22% compared to respondents who were resident for 11 years or more 52%). Of those who had resided in the community either one to three years or four to ten years, the proportions that considered housing appearance as important were 42 per cent and 40 per cent respectively.

Table 4.9 indicates that a relationship also exists between length of residence and the importance of being familiar with an area. The longer the length of residence the more likely respondents were to feel familiarity with the area as being important to living in the community. Forty-five per cent of those present for three years or less rated this attribute as being important compared to 55 to 66 per cent for respondents who were longer term residents.

Proximity to natural areas as a reason for living to a community was particularly important for residents of 11 years and longer (62%); this was different to the groups of respondents who had lived in the area for up to ten years (43% to 48%). Similarly the importance of openness of an area increased

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with length of residence. Respondents who have been resident for four to ten or 11 or more years were more likely to feel this was important (64% and 76% respectively) than respondents who have been resident for less than one year and one to three years (53% and 57%).



## 5. Intentions to Stay and Reasons for Relocating

The question of whether residents have plans to remain in their community should give a good indication of how satisfied they are with life in that place. For this reason, respondents were asked three questions about their short, medium and long-term plans for staying in, or leaving the community. Tables 5.1 to 5.3 provide a broad overview of all responses to these questions. Respondents who indicated that there was at least a chance that they would move in the next five years were then asked an open-ended question about where they might consider moving to. The responses to this question are shown in Table 5.4. The final question in this section asked respondents to give their reasons for moving.

**Table 5.1 Likelihood of Moving Within the Next Five Years**

Likelihood of moving	n	Per cent			
		Definitely move	Probably move	Probably not move	Definitely not move
"Within the next five years do you think you will: (from town)"	430	20.9	23.9	26.1	29.1

When asked about the likelihood of moving within the next five years, 21 per cent of respondents indicated they would definitely move within the next five years, 24 per cent said they would probably move, 26 per cent would probably not move and 29 per cent would definitely not move. Just under one half (45%) of all respondents believed they were likely to relocate from their present community in the next five years, with more than two thirds (71%) believing that there was at least some possibility they would move.

The difference in response to this question between Emerald residents and residents of other communities was not significant. Neither was the difference in response between males and females, although age and length of residence did produce noticeable variations, which are discussed later.

All residents who indicated that there was at least a possibility they would leave (i.e. those who had said they would definitely or probably move and those who said they would probably not move) were then asked to indicate how long they intended to stay.

**Table 5.2 Intentions to Stay**

Intentions to stay (only asked of respondents who may move)	n	Per cent		
		1-2 years	3-5 years	More than 5 years
"Do you intend to stay in (town)/this community:"	299	36.0	32.1	31.9

### Report

Table 5.2 provides an overview of responses to this question, showing a relatively even distribution between one to two years, three to five years and more than five years. What this means, however, is that only one third of all respondents who were asked this question intended to stay in their community for more than five years, with two thirds believing they would leave within five years.

**Table 5.3 Preference for Moving**

Preference for moving (only asked of respondents who may move)	n	Per cent
		Would prefer to move
"If you could do as you pleased would you move from (town) or stay in (town)?"	305	65.1

Respondents who indicated they may move were asked whether, if they could do as they pleased, their preference was to 'move from this town' or 'stay in this town'. The purpose of this question was to determine how much choice people had in making a decision to relocate from, or remain in, a particular community, or whether they felt forced to stay or leave because of lack of opportunity or other circumstances. As shown in Table 5.3, two thirds of the respondents (65%) indicated that they would prefer to leave the community if they could do as they pleased.

**Table 5.4 Destinations for those Wishing to Move**

Respondent destination of preference (only asked of respondents who may move)	Respondents who may move		All respondents	
	n	Per cent	n	Per cent
"Where would you go?"	189		430	
Brisbane and SE Queensland		28.0		12.3
Mackay and coastal areas		27.0		11.9
Rockhampton and coastal areas		9.0		4.0
Other Australian states		8.5		3.7
Gladstone and coastal areas		3.7		1.6
Townsville and other NQ centres		3.7		1.6
Bowen and Whitsunday areas		2.6		1.2
Other Inland Queensland		2.6		1.2
Emerald and other Bowen Basin towns		2.1		0.9
Overseas		2.1		0.9
Coastal - unspecified		4.8		2.1
Don't know / Uncodeable		5.8		2.6
No plans to move				56.0

Respondents were then invited to state where they would move to upon leaving their present community. The results are interesting in that while 70 per cent of those interviewed said there was at least a small possibility that they would leave, most of them indicated that if they did move, it would be to another coastal community within Queensland. As Table 5.4 illustrates, 47 per cent of respondents identified coastal Queensland communities as their preferred destination.

The next most popular destinations were Brisbane and South-east Queensland (28%), and other Australian states (9%). Three per cent of respondents intending to move indicated they would relocate within inland rural Queensland, with two per cent stating communities within the Bowen Basin.

These findings deserve further analysis for they provide important insights into the future relocation patterns of regional Queenslanders and, indeed, could challenge the belief that country Queenslanders are fleeing to the coast en masse (56% not intending to move).

**Table 5.5 Reasons for Relocating**

Reasons for relocating	n	Per cent
	305	Yes
Better social, recreational or sporting opportunities		21.5
Better services available		14.5
Closer to family members		14.3
Environmental reasons such as climate and landscape		10.2
Better employment prospects		9.8
Want to retire at the location		7.7
Children's educational opportunities		6.9
Closer to the ocean/coast		5.8
Do not fit in with town/mining culture or lifestyle		4.1
Cost of living too high/better competitiveness in shopping		3.4
Cheaper housing		2.7
Better quality of life generally		2.4
Economic conditions		2.3
Own educational opportunities		1.9
Children's employment prospects		1.9
Family demands (other than education/employment)		1.3
Own skills/training needs		0.3
Other (please specify)		13.8

Those who had indicated a desire to relocate from their present community were then asked to identify the reasons for this. Respondents indicated their reasons (shown above in Table 5.5) and then were asked to expand on their answers in response to areas related to their children's schooling opportunities, their own schooling opportunities and skills/training needs.

The most important reason for relocating was the desire to have better social, recreational and/or sporting opportunities (22%). Better services was the second most important reason (15%), followed very closely by a desire to live closer to family members (14%), improved environmental features such as climate (10%) and better employment prospects (10%).

The following extracts from the qualitative expansion of why people wanted to move from their town vividly illustrate key issues captured in the survey (see Appendix 2 for a full listing of statements).

- *'Quality of life, other than work there is nothing to do in Dysart. On the only day off I have nothing to do but drink. The only women in the area are taken – [there is] no one to socialise with.'*
- *'I get frustrated with Emerald. I find that the people are narrow-minded. Business owners are not prepared to order things in for you, [they're] not very helpful. More variety of shopping - if you want competitive prices you have to go to Rocky.'*
- *'We have a set plan to stay for a period and then return to Mackay where the quality of life is better. [There is] more variety of things to do [and a] wider range of services, [it's] close to the beach, [it has an] increase in rainfall [and has a] lower cost of living.'*
- *'[I] hate the area. It's a mining town. I work in the Council and earn nothing while miners earn good money and we struggle to survive.'*

Responses to all questions on intentions to stay were cross tabulated according to zone, gender, age and length of residence. Differences that were found to be significant are explored below.

## Age

**Table 5.6 Likelihood of Moving within the Next Five Years by Age**

Likelihood of moving within the next 5 years by Age	n	Per cent						Total
		18-24	25-34	35-44	45-54	55-64	65+	
Definitely move	430	34.8	22.7	16.4	16.7	31.4	9.4	21.1
Probably move		37.0	22.7	24.6	26.4	9.8	21.9	23.8
Probably not move		15.2	26.8	35.1	25.0	17.6	15.6	25.9
Definitely not move		13.0	27.8	23.9	31.9	41.2	53.1	29.2

Almost three quarters (72%) of respondents in the 18-24 age group indicated that they were likely to move from their community within five years: 35 per cent stated they would definitely move while 37 per cent stated they would probably move. At the other end of the scale, more than half the

respondents in the 65 plus age group replied that they would definitely not move (53%) and 16 per cent stated they will probably not move. (Refer to Table 5.6.)

While it might be concluded from this that intention to move decreases with age, the results are rather more complicated. While 41 per cent of all respondents in the 55-64 age group indicated they would definitely not move within the next five years, 31 per cent said they definitely would move (although only ten per cent said they would probably move). For those aged 25-54 years, the results were fairly evenly spread. The implication of these findings is that further research is needed to understand the migration patterns of both young people and those looking to retire from the Bowen Basin.

## Zone

**Table 5.7 Zonal Differences for Intentions to Stay**

Intentions to stay (only asked of respondents who may move) by Zone	n	Per cent		
		Emerald	Other	Total
	299			
1-2 years		44.6	32.4	35.8
3-5 years		21.7	36.1	32.1
More than 5 years		33.7	31.5	32.1

Age, gender and length of residence were not found to produce significant differences in response to the question on intentions to stay. Differences between zones did emerge, however. As shown in Table 5.7, 45 per cent of the Emerald respondents who were asked this question intend to stay for only one to two years, while 22 per cent indicated that they intend to stay another three to five years. In the other mining associated Bowen Basin communities, the percentage of those planning to stay for one to two years (32%) was somewhat lower than Emerald, but significantly higher in the three to five years category (36%). The proportions for those intending to stay for more than five years were similar for Emerald and the other communities (34% and 32% respectively). Overall the population of Emerald might be seen to be a little less stable than the populations of the other communities.

## Gender

**Table 5.8 Gender Differences in Preference for Moving**

Preference for moving (only asked of respondents who may move) by Gender	n	Per cent		
		Male	Female	Total
	297			
Prefer to move from (town)		72.5	59.9	66.7
Prefer to stay in (town)		27.5	40.1	33.3

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When residents were asked if they would prefer to move from, or stay in, their community if they could do as they pleased, no significant differences were found with regards to zone, age or length of residence. However, differences in gender were present. Table 5.8 shows that a greater proportion of males (73%) than females (60%) indicated they would prefer to move.

## Age

**Table 5.9 Age differences for intentions to stay**

Intentions to stay (only asked of respondents who may move) by Age	n	Per cent						Total
		18-24	25-34	35-44	45-54	55-64	65+	
1-2 years	300	62.5	33.8	25.7	22.9	48.3	64.3	36.0
3-5 years		27.5	32.4	32.7	39.6	34.5	7.1	32.0
More than 5 years		10.0	33.8	41.6	37.5	17.2	28.6	32.0

Table 5.9 shows that the 18 to 24 (63%) and 65 plus age groups (64%) are the most likely age groups to move within two years. Respondents in the 25 and 54 age groups (34% to 42%) are the most likely to stay more than five years.

## Length of Residence

**Table 5.10 Length of Residence Differences and Likelihood of Moving in the Next Five Years**

Likelihood of moving within the next 5 years by Length of residence	n	Per cent				Total
		Less than 1 year	1-3 years	4-10 years	11 or more years	
Definitely move	429	27.9	24.1	17.4	18.2	21.0
Probably move		26.2	29.3	28.7	14.6	24.0
Probably not move		27.9	20.7	30.4	25.5	25.9
Definitely not move		18.0	25.9	23.5	41.6	29.1

Consistent with the social capital questions on attachment to the local community, respondents who had lived in the community for the shortest period of time were most likely to consider moving out of the community in the next five years. Twenty-eight per cent of new arrivals said they definitely planned to move within five years, compared with 18 per cent who had lived there for more than 11 years. Conversely, respondents who had resided in their community the longest were most likely to report that they definitely would not move away in the next five years. Respondents who have been resident for 11 or more years were more than twice as likely to expect they would still be living in the community in five years time (42%) as those who had lived there for less than a year (18%). (Refer to Table 5.10.).

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## 6. Perceived Access and Quality of Services

In question 23a respondents were asked how satisfied they were with access to a range of services within the community. Question 23b asked how satisfied they were with the quality of a range of services within the community.

The most outstanding result in regard to accessing a service was that approximately only one third of all respondents indicated that they were satisfied with access to facilities for post-secondary/vocational training and 45 per cent of respondents expressed dissatisfaction with the availability of these facilities.

Overall, respondents appeared to be most satisfied with access to primary schools and post offices followed by hotels/taverns/clubs, religious services, sporting facilities and secondary schools. A lower percentage of respondents were satisfied with access to hospitals, pharmacies, supermarkets and community health centres. Approximately half of the respondents were satisfied with access to general practitioners while slightly more than half were satisfied with access to banks. However, more respondents were dissatisfied with access to banks (second highest level of dissatisfaction of all services) than with access to general practitioners.

In regard to the perceived quality of services in the local community, over two thirds of respondents appeared to be most satisfied with swimming pools, public libraries, police services and water and sewerage services. Just over half of the respondents were satisfied with street lighting and less than half were satisfied with the quality of roads. Overall, respondents were least satisfied with the quality of public transport with 70 per cent of respondents indicating that they were dissatisfied.

**Table 6.1 Perceived Access to Services**

Perceived access to facilities "Thinking about (town) and your local community, how satisfied are you with your access to the following facilities?"	n	Per cent					Statistics	
		Very satisfied	Satisfied	Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied	Dissatisfied	Very dissatisfied	Mean	Median
Primary school	364	48.0	38.1	10.2	1.9	1.8	4.3	4.0
Post office	430	47.3	36.6	10.9	3.9	1.3	4.2	4.0
Hotels/Taverns/Clubs	410	43.1	32.2	15.3	7.7	1.7	4.1	4.0
Religious services	354	39.4	32.4	18.2	7.4	2.5	4.0	4.0
Secondary school	358	38.3	36.0	16.8	6.0	2.9	4.0	4.0
Hospital	427	37.3	29.7	14.4	10.2	8.5	3.8	4.0
Supermarkets	430	36.8	28.3	20.4	10.8	3.6	3.8	4.0
Sporting facilities	411	36.4	33.3	20.2	6.6	3.5	3.9	4.0
Pharmacies	427	34.0	31.6	18.4	6.9	9.0	3.7	4.0
General practitioner	429	30.1	32.4	21.0	9.5	6.9	3.7	4.0
Community health centre	385	27.8	30.4	24.0	12.6	5.2	3.6	4.0
Banks	428	27.3	27.4	16.9	17.8	10.6	3.4	4.0
Community/youth centres	368	22.5	27.0	27.5	16.6	6.4	3.4	3.0
Facilities for post-secondary/ vocational training	387	12.2	21.5	21.2	23.4	21.7	2.8	3.0

Table 6.1 shows that over 80 per cent of respondents were satisfied with access to primary schools and post offices while only five per cent or less indicated that they were dissatisfied. The level of satisfaction with the availability of hotels/taverns/clubs, religious services, secondary schools and sporting facilities was also high with approximately 70 to 75 per cent of respondents giving positive responses and ten per cent or less indicating that they were dissatisfied.

Between 65 and 67 per cent of respondents were satisfied with access to hospitals, pharmacies and supermarkets. Of these three services more respondents (19%) were dissatisfied with the availability of hospitals. Only 58 per cent of respondents indicated that they were satisfied with access to a community health centre, however, 24 per cent of respondents were neither satisfied nor dissatisfied which may reflect the proportion of respondents who did not require access to such a facility.

Similar proportions of respondents were satisfied with access to both banks (55%) and general practitioners (52%). However, there was a difference in the proportions of respondents who were dissatisfied with these services, with 29 per cent of respondents being dissatisfied with access to banks in comparison with 17 per cent who are dissatisfied with the availability of general practitioners. Just under half (49%) of the respondents were satisfied with access to community/youth centres.

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Respondents expressed greatest dissatisfaction with access to post-secondary/vocational training facilities. Compared with responses for access to other facilities, 45 per cent of respondents indicated that they were dissatisfied with post-secondary/vocational training facilities while a third (34%) of respondents indicated that they were satisfied.

### Perceived Quality of Services

Table 6.2 shows that a high percentage of respondents were satisfied with the quality of swimming pools (79%), public libraries (73%), police services (71%) and water and sewerage services (67%). Less than 12 per cent of respondents expressed dissatisfaction with the quality of these services.

**Table 6.2 Perceived Quality of Services**

Perceived quality of services "Thinking about (town) and your local community, how satisfied are you with the quality of the following services?"	n	Per cent					Statistics	
		Very satisfied	Satisfied	Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied	Dissatisfied	Very dissatisfied	Mean	Median
Swimming pools	416	46.1	33.4	15.4	2.9	2.1	4.2	4.0
Public libraries	407	35.8	36.6	19.7	6.6	1.3	4.0	4.0
Police services	424	33.5	36.8	21.8	5.1	2.7	3.9	4.0
Water and sewerage services	424	29.3	38.1	20.9	8.3	3.4	3.8	4.0
Street lighting	424	20.9	34.1	30.4	10.6	4.0	3.6	4.0
Roads	430	10.7	33.5	29.5	16.3	10.1	3.2	3.0
Public transport	379	6.8	9.6	13.6	21.7	48.2	2.1	2.0

In contrast, however, just over half of the respondents (54%) were satisfied with the quality of street lighting. A lower proportion of respondents (45%) were satisfied with the quality of roads in their local community while 26 per cent were dissatisfied in this respect. The service for which respondents were least satisfied was public transport with 70 per cent indicating that they are dissatisfied with the quality of public transport. Only 17 per cent of respondents gave a positive response to the quality of public transport in their local community (in most cases public transport does not exist in these communities).

Cross-tabulations were produced for each item in questions 23a and 23b by zone, gender and age. There were no significant differences in responses to any of the items by gender. Significant results from the cross-tabulations by zone and age are detailed below.

### Summary of Zone and Age Analysis

From the cross-tabulations of each item with zone, significant differences were found to exist between Emerald and other communities for access to banks; access to supermarkets; access to post-

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secondary/vocational training facilities; access to pharmacies; quality of roads; and quality of public transport.

For all of these items, respondents of communities other than Emerald were more likely to be dissatisfied with these services than respondents from Emerald. The largest difference occurred for post-secondary/vocational training facilities where 55 per cent of respondents from communities other than Emerald indicated that they were dissatisfied with these services compared to 19 per cent of respondents from Emerald. Public transport was also an important issue with 76 per cent of respondents from communities other than Emerald reporting that they were dissatisfied with public transport compared to 52 per cent of respondents from Emerald (this highlights the issue of the existence/non-existence of public transport in some communities associated with the Bowen Basin mines).

From the cross-tabulations of each item with age categories, significant differences in satisfaction were found for access to post-secondary/vocational training facilities; access to community/youth centres; quality of roads; quality of street lighting; and quality of water and sewerage services.

Respondents in the 18 to 24 age group were approximately twice as likely to be dissatisfied with access to post-secondary/vocational training facilities as respondents from the remaining age groups.

### **Zone**

From Table 6.3 it appears that respondents from communities other than Emerald were much more likely to be dissatisfied with access to banks than respondents from Emerald. Approximately 85 per cent of respondents within Emerald were satisfied with access to banking facilities while only six per cent were dissatisfied. Across all other communities, only 43 per cent of respondents were satisfied with access to bank while 38 per cent were dissatisfied.

**Table 6.3 Zonal Differences in Perceived Access to and Quality of Services**

Perceived access to and quality of services by Zone	n	Per cent		
		Emerald	Other	Total
Banks				
Satisfied or Very satisfied	428	84.6	42.6	54.7
Supermarkets				
Satisfied or Very satisfied	430	89.4	55.4	65.1
Post-secondary/vocational training facilities				
Satisfied or Very satisfied	386	60.8	23.9	33.7
Pharmacies				
Satisfied or Very satisfied	426	79.7	60.1	65.7
Roads				
Satisfied or Very satisfied	430	56.5	39.1	44.1
Public transport				
Satisfied or Very satisfied	379	30.5	12.0	16.6

There was also a difference in the level of satisfaction with access to supermarkets between respondents of Emerald and respondents of all other communities. Approximately 89 per cent of respondents within Emerald were satisfied with access to supermarkets while only four per cent were dissatisfied. Across all other communities, only 55 per cent of respondents were satisfied with access to supermarkets while 19 per cent were dissatisfied.

Respondents of communities other than Emerald were more likely to be dissatisfied with access to post-secondary/vocational facilities than respondents of Emerald. Only 19 per cent of respondents from Emerald indicated that they were dissatisfied with post-secondary/vocational facilities while 55 per cent of respondents from other communities indicated they were dissatisfied. Conversely, 61 per cent of Emerald respondents indicated that they were satisfied with these facilities while only 24 per cent of respondents in other communities were satisfied.

Respondents were also asked about their satisfaction with access to pharmacies. Respondents of communities other than Emerald were more likely to be dissatisfied with the availability of pharmacies than respondents of Emerald. Only six per cent of Emerald respondents were dissatisfied with access to pharmacies compared with 20 per cent of respondents from other communities. Conversely, 80 per cent of Emerald respondents were satisfied with their access to pharmacies while 60 per cent of respondents from other communities indicated that they were satisfied.

Respondents of communities other than Emerald were more likely to be dissatisfied with the quality of roads than respondents from Emerald. Approximately 57 per cent of Emerald respondents were satisfied with the quality of their roads compared with 39 per cent from other communities.

The quality of public transport appears to be an issue in all communities although there was more dissatisfaction with public transport in communities other than Emerald. Almost a third (31%) of

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Emerald respondents and 12 per cent of respondents in other communities were satisfied with public transport. (It is noted that number of mining associated communities in this study other than Emerald would more than likely not have public transport provided.)

## Age

Table 6.4 shows that resident satisfaction with the provision of post-secondary/vocational training facilities varied with age but was below 36 per cent for all age groups up to 64 years. Younger respondents in the 18 to 24 age group were only half as likely to be satisfied with these facilities compared with respondents in the 25 to 54 age groups. Only 18 per cent of respondents in the 18 to 24 age group were satisfied with post-secondary/vocational training facilities compared with approximately 34 per cent of respondents in the 25 to 54 age groups. Just under half (42% to 49%) of respondents in the age groups 18 to 64 were dissatisfied with these facilities.

**Table 6.4 Age differences in perceived access to and quality of services**

Perceived access to and quality of services by Age	n	Per cent						Total
		18-24	25-34	35-44	45-54	55-64	65+	
<b>Access to services</b>								
Post-secondary/vocational training facilities								
Satisfied or Very satisfied	387	17.5	35.2	34.6	31.7	25.0	72.7	33.6
Community/youth centres								
Satisfied or Very satisfied	368	31.6	48.8	41.1	55.0	67.4	88.9	49.7
<b>Quality of services</b>								
Roads								
Satisfied or Very satisfied	429	23.9	47.4	40.3	42.9	46.0	81.3	44.3
Street lighting								
Satisfied or Very satisfied	424	37.2	58.8	42.4	64.8	64.0	87.1	55.2
Water and sewerage								
Satisfied or Very satisfied	424	66.7	62.9	63.9	69.0	66.0	96.8	67.5

The quality of community/youth centres was perceived to be lower by respondents within the 18 to 24 age group than by respondents in the other age groups. Approximately 40 per cent of respondents within the 18 to 24 age group were dissatisfied with the quality of these facilities compared with 20 per cent of respondents in the 25 to 35 age group. The level of dissatisfaction fell to 15 per cent for the 55 to 64 age group. Conversely, 89 per cent of respondents in the 65 plus age group were satisfied with community/youth centres while only 32 per cent of respondents in the 18 to 24 age group were satisfied.

In regard to the quality of roads within a community, respondents within the 18 to 24 age group were approximately twice as likely to be dissatisfied as respondents in the 25 to 64 age groups. Of the respondents in the 18 to 24 age group, 50 per cent indicated that they were dissatisfied with the quality of roads compared with the other age groups (6% to 27%). Conversely, just under a quarter (24%) of

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respondents in the youngest age group indicated that they were satisfied with roads, while under half of the respondents within the age groups 25 to 64 (40%-47%) indicated that they were satisfied. The 65 plus age group were the most satisfied residents (81%) in the mining associated communities with roads.

The quality of street lighting appears to be of most concern to respondents within the 18 to 24 age group. Approximately 30 per cent of respondents in the 18 to 24 age group were dissatisfied with the quality of street lighting while no respondents in the study area in the 65 plus age group indicated that they are dissatisfied. Dissatisfaction in the 25 to 64 age groups ranged from six per cent to 21 per cent. Eighty-seven per cent of respondents in the 65 plus age group were satisfied with street lighting while only 37 per cent of the 18 to 24 age group were satisfied.

The majority of respondents across all age groups were either satisfied with, or indifferent to, the quality of water and sewerage services in their community. However, a very high proportion (97%) of respondents within the 65 plus age group indicated that they were satisfied with water and sewerage services. The proportion of respondents in the 18 to 64 age groups who were satisfied with these services ranged from 63 per cent to 69 per cent.

## 7. Conclusions

Since the 1960s extensive coal mining development has taken place in the Bowen Basin region inland from Mackay and Rockhampton. Prior to the development of mining, Central Queensland was a thinly populated area with limited infrastructure and an economy based primarily on pastoral and agricultural activity. However, recent structural changes in the coal mining industry have contributed to workforce downsizing and a gradual depopulation of many mining dependent towns with workers and their families moving to larger coastal centres to take advantage of better services and facilities and a lower cost of living.

The present report has focussed on a number of communities in the Bowen Basin and has explored a number of issues relating to community sustainability, specifically: resident views on quality of life; the level of social capital characteristic of the communities in the region; why residents moved to their present community; their intention to stay and the perceived quality of and access to services.

### Quality of Life

Overall quality of life in the region was judged as satisfactory by around 60 per cent of those surveyed. Interestingly, a large scale survey of quality of life in South East Queensland revealed a somewhat higher proportion, with 80 per cent reporting a similar level of satisfaction. However, with respect to a number of specific life domains, the findings from the two studies were remarkably similar. There were only minor differences with respect to levels of satisfaction with family relations and standard of living (around 80 per cent for both groups reporting satisfaction) and health (around 75 percent satisfied in both groups). The South East Queensland residents scored somewhat higher for housing (85 per cent satisfied compared with 75 per cent for those from the Bowen Basin) and leisure (71 per cent compared to 46 per cent). In general these findings would suggest that quality of life is not judged too differently in parts of rural Queensland and in the south east corner.

### Social Capital

It is often asserted that sustainable and viable communities are those characterised by relatively high levels of social capital. In examining social capital in the Bowen Basin the focus was on the level of participation in community affairs, attachment to the community and the norms of trust and reciprocity. Level of participation in community affairs was not high. The most common activity reported was involvement in children's sporting events and activities where half the sample had been active. Participation in other activities was quite low.

The picture in South East Queensland was not too dissimilar although the urban residents indicate a greater willingness to contact government officials to deal with neighbourhood problems where 26 per

cent indicated that they would do so compared to only 13 per cent in the Bowen Basin. However, the Bowen Basin residents revealed a relatively strong attachment to their local community. Over three quarters indicated that they were proud to live in the community and more than half felt that they “belonged”.

Trust was also widespread. Over 90 per cent felt that they could trust family and close relatives and around 80 per cent indicated a similar level of trust in friends. Again comparative data from the South East Queensland region indicates almost identical findings. Mutually supportive activities, exchanging help and advice between friends and relatives were also common. Between two thirds and three quarters of the Bowen Basin residents report engaging in these activities as indeed do similar proportions from South East Queensland.

The findings from the sections of the study dealing with quality of life and social capital suggest that Bowen Basin residents report positively on their life circumstances and live in communities that are characterised by relatively high levels of social capital. With only two or three exceptions, their situation appears remarkably similar to that reported by the inhabitants of the urban region of South East Queensland. These findings would seem to suggest resilience in these rural communities that perhaps might not have been expected.

### **Community Stability**

Higher levels of social capital have also tended to be associated with the existence of a stable population rather than a mobile, transitory one that is most commonly associated with mining regions such as the Bowen Basin. Questions about mobility were raised in this report, with the findings showing a high degree of mobility amongst the resident population, many of whom considered a move out of their community likely over the next five years. What was also found, however, was a certain amount of movement within the Bowen Basin as a whole, and lower than expected migration rates to/from outside the region.

Fifty-two per cent of all those questioned indicated that they had moved to their present community from other communities closely associated around and in the Bowen Basin, while 42 per cent also believed they would move elsewhere within this area upon leaving their current community. Not surprisingly, work was by far the most common reason cited for living in the community, although variations by zone, gender, age and length of residence were found to exist. Residents outside Emerald, for example, were more likely to have considered the value of housing an important factor in deciding to live in their present community, while older people were more likely than younger to consider convenient access to schools, shopping and schools a significant factor.

While residents indicated a relatively high level of attachment to their local community, the socio-economic realities of life in a mining region continue to influence their decisions about staying in the area. When asked about their intentions to stay, less than 30 per cent of all respondents said they would definitely not move from the area within the next five years. For the rest, the desire to access better social and recreational opportunities, to secure better services and to live closer to immediate and extended family meant that a move out of the community within the next five years was possible. In fact, a substantial 45 per cent considered relocation a definite or probable option.

### **Access to and Quality of Services**

Coastal destinations were cited by respondents as a popular destination, although it was interesting, and a little unexpected, that the Central Queensland region as a whole featured in many responses about preferred destinations for relocation. What this suggests is a strong level of attachment to Central Queensland amongst the people who live there, coupled with a desire for better access to services such as post-secondary and vocational training, banks, and community and youth centres. Significantly, 75 per cent of all those interviewed expressed dissatisfaction with the quality of public transport in their community although high levels of satisfaction were recorded for access to post offices and primary schools, and with the quality of local swimming pools.

### **Further Research Opportunities**

The findings from this research indicate some interesting, and often contradictory, elements that require further exploration. Future research in this area could consider a number of issues. First, considerable potential exists to examine further the relationships between the various outcomes of interest, such as how levels of social capital impact upon perceptions of quality of life or decisions to relocate elsewhere. While tentative conclusions about these relationships have been drawn in this report, more rigorous research using sophisticated statistical analysis is necessary to test the significance of these relationships. Second, there is considerable diversity amongst the various Bowen Basin mining communities with some experiencing faster rates of decline than others.

While it is important to capture this diversity through comparative research at the community level, it is also necessary to retain a regional perspective of analysis, and to explore the interdependencies and interrelationships that exist between individual communities. This is particularly so given that much of the population movement in the Bowen Basin occurs between constituent communities rather than from outside the region. Finally, what have been presented are the views and experiences of those who live in the region and not those who have, for various reasons, already left. The perceptions of current residents will help develop an understanding about future migration patterns in the Bowen Basin, yet there is still need to examine the factors that contribute towards the present decline in the region's



population. Until the causes of these demographic changes are fully known, appropriate strategies cannot be established to deal with the consequences of such change for service delivery, local businesses and community viability.

**Appendix 1 - Questionnaire****A Survey Of Community Resident Issues  
In the Queensland Bowen Basin Coal Fields**

Hi. My name is [interviewer's name]. I'm working on a survey being conducted by the University of Queensland Social Research Centre on behalf of the Queensland Government, and I'd like to talk to someone from your household for approximately 15 minutes. Can I speak to the youngest person at home aged 18 or over?

Would that be you?

If not ask to speak to that person and re-introduce yourself.

This voluntary survey is seeking your views on a range of issues that may impact on communities within the Bowen Basin Coal Fields. Individual responses are kept confidential, and the information will provide feedback to planners and policy makers about life in the Bowen Basin Coal Fields. Are you able to participate in this survey?

[If they are willing to participate but cannot talk at time of call, interviewer to arrange a time to call back.]

.....  
[note call back time, date, name of person, phone number and ID No].  
[If not interested, thank them for their time thus far.]

Are you ready to begin?

1. Location <zone> from sample

2. Gender coded automatically

Interviewer to code

Male	1
Female	2

3. Using a scale from 1 to 5 where 1 is 'very poor and 5 is 'very good', in general, how would you rate the overall quality of life in <insert name of town from sample>?

Very poor	1
Poor	2
Neither good nor poor	3
Good	4
Very good	5
Don't know	9

**4. How satisfied are you with the following aspects of your life, where 1 is 'very dissatisfied' and 5 is 'very satisfied'.**

	Very Dissatisfied	Dissatisfied	Neither Satisfied nor Dissatisfied	Satisfied	Very Satisfied	Don't know	Not applicable
<b>A</b> Your employment situation.	1	2	3	4	5	8	9
<b>B</b> The amount of money you have available to you personally.	1	2	3	4	5	8	9
<b>C</b> Your housing.	1	2	3	4	5	8	9
<b>D</b> Your access to leisure activities	1	2	3	4	5	8	9
<b>E</b> The way you spend your time.	1	2	3	4	5	8	9
<b>F</b> Your relationship with your family.	1	2	3	4	5	8	9
<b>G</b> Your health	1	2	3	4	5	8	9
<b>H</b> Your overall standard of living.	1	2	3	4	5	8	9
<b>I</b> Your life as a whole.	1	2	3	4	5	8	9

**5. How strongly do you agree or disagree with each of the following statements, using a scale where 1 is strongly disagree and 5 is strongly agree.**

	Strongly Disagree	Dis-agree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree	Not applicable	Don't Know
<b>A</b> Growth and development in local communities will only be achieved when workers live in the area	1	2	3	4	5	8	9
<b>B</b> A strong economy will depend on developing and expanding the mining industry in my local area	1	2	3	4	5	8	9
<b>C</b> Government is doing a good job in managing growth and development in my area	1	2	3	4	5	8	9
<b>D</b> Local residents are kept informed of issues that are important to the community	1	2	3	4	5	8	9

**[In the next section, we would like you to consider <town>, your local community and home.]**

**6. Are you a permanent resident of <town> (this community)?** *[if No probe if live elsewhere most of the time and record response]*

Yes	1	skip to Q8
No	2	
No - live elsewhere most of the time	3	
Refused	9	skip to Q8

**7. Where else do you live?**

\_\_\_\_\_ *[Note other place(s) of residence. Interviewer record town/suburb name ask state if outside Queensland or Country if "Overseas" is indicated]*

**8. How long have you lived at your current address? (that is <town> [place of residence of interview])**

Less than 1 year	1
1-3 years	2
4-6 years	3
7-10 years	4
11-15 years	5
Greater than 15 years	6
Other (please specify.....)	7
Refused	9

**9. Is the dwelling in which you live ...? (that is <town> [place of residence of interview])**

Fully owned	1
Being purchased	2
Being rented from employer	3
Being rented privately	4
Other (please specify.....)	5
Refused	9

**10. Where did you live previously?**

Always lived in this community 1

\_\_\_\_\_ [Note most recent 'previous' place of residence. Interviewer record town/suburb name ask state if outside Queensland or Country if "Overseas" is indicated]

**11. Within the next five (5) years, do you think you will: (from <town>)**

Definitely move	1	
Probably move	2	
Probably not move	3	
Definitely not move	4	[Skip to Question 17]

**12. Do you intend to stay in <town> (this community) over the next.....? READ OUT**

1-2 years	1
3-4 years	2
5 years	3
6-10 years	4
more than 10 years	5
do not intend to move	6
Refused	7
Not applicable	8

**13. If you could do as you pleased, would you:**

Move from this <town>/community	1	
Stay in this <town>/community	2	[skip to Question 17]

**14. Where would you go?**

Enter City/ Town/ community name and postcode if known

**15. Why would you relocate? DO NOT READ OUT**

## MULTIPLE RESPONSE

Better employment prospects	1
Cheaper housing	2
Better services available	3
Children's employment prospects	4
Children's educational opportunities	5
Want to retire at that location	6
Economic conditions	7
Climate	8
Recreation/sport	9
Closer to family members	10
Family demands (other than education/employment)	11
Own skills/training needs	12
Own educational opportunities	13
Other (please specify)	88
Don't know/not sure	89
Refused	99

**16. And what would that be? [This question is asked for those answering Q15 codes 5, 12, 13 all others skip to Q17] PROBE NEEDS/OPPORTUNITIES FULLY****17. How important is each of the following in your decision to live in <town> (this particular community), where 1 is "not at all important" and 5 is "very important"?**

	Not at all important	Not Importa nt	Neither	Importa nt	Very Importa nt	Not applica ble	Don't Know
A Close to work	1	2	3	4	5	8	9
B Good schools	1	2	3	4	5	8	9
C Housing costs/good value	1	2	3	4	5	8	9
D Convenient to places such as shopping and schools	1	2	3	4	5	8	9
E Lots of recreational opportunities	1	2	3	4	5	8	9
F Attractive appearance of neighbourhood	1	2	3	4	5	8	9
G Community size	1	2	3	4	5	8	9
H People similar to you	1	2	3	4	5	8	9
I Appearance/layout of dwellings	1	2	3	4	5	8	9
J Familiar with area	1	2	3	4	5	8	9
K Close to natural areas (bush, creeks, etc)	1	2	3	4	5	8	9
L Openness/spaciousness of area	1	2	3	4	5	8	9
M Close to family & friends	1	2	3	4	5	8	9

**18. Which reason is the most important for you?****Questionnaire**

**19. During the past 12 months, have you:**

	<b>In Coal Fields</b>	<b>Else where</b>	<b>Both Coal Fields / Elsewhere</b>	<b>Not at all</b>
<b>A</b> Signed a petition	1	2	3	4
<b>B</b> Contacted the media regarding a problem	1	2	3	4
<b>C</b> Contacted government official regarding a problem	1	2	3	4
<b>D</b> Joined with people to resolve a local or neighbourhood problem	1	2	3	4
<b>E</b> Helped or been involved in children's events and/or activities such as sport	1	2	3	4

**20. Again using a five point scale, how strongly do you agree or disagree with these statements, where 1 is Strongly disagree and 5 is Strongly agree: (<town> [the place of interview])**

	<b>Strongly Disagree</b>	<b>Disagree</b>	<b>Neither Agree nor Disagree</b>	<b>Agree</b>	<b>Strongly Agree</b>	<b>Don't Know</b>	<b>Not applicable</b>
<b>A</b> I feel emotionally attached to the local community.	1	2	3	4	5	8	9
<b>B</b> I feel that I belong to the local community.	1	2	3	4	5	8	9
<b>C</b> I am proud to live in the local community.	1	2	3	4	5	8	9

**21. To what extent would you trust the following people to act in your best interests, where 1 is "Not at all" and 5 is "To a great extent".**

	<b>Not at all</b>	<b>Hardly at all</b>	<b>Little</b>	<b>To some extent</b>	<b>To a great extent</b>	<b>Don't Know</b>	<b>Not applicable</b>
<b>A</b> Your close family and other relatives with whom you don't live.	1	2	3	4	5	8	9
<b>B</b> Your friends	1	2	3	4	5	8	9
<b>C</b> Your current work mates or associates	1	2	3	4	5	8	9

**22. Using a scale where 1 is 'never' and 5 is 'very often', how often do you and the following people exchange practical help or advice?**

	<b>Never</b>	<b>Not very often</b>	<b>Not often</b>	<b>Often</b>	<b>Very often</b>	<b>Don't Know</b>	<b>Not applicable</b>
<b>A</b> Your close family and other relatives with whom you don't live.	1	2	3	4	5	8	9
<b>B</b> Your friends	1	2	3	4	5	8	9
<b>C</b> Your neighbours (who are not friends or family).	1	2	3	4	5	8	9

**23.a Thinking about <town> and your local community, how satisfied are you with your access to the following facilities, where 1 is 'very dissatisfied' and 5 is 'very satisfied'. (Note location of interview)**

	Very Dissatisfied	Dissatisfied	Neither Satisfied nor Dissatisfied	Satisfied	Very Satisfied	Not applicable	Don't Know
<b>A</b> Post Office	1	2	3	4	5	8	9
<b>B</b> Banks	1	2	3	4	5	8	9
<b>C</b> Supermarkets	1	2	3	4	5	8	9
<b>D</b> Hospital	1	2	3	4	5	8	9
<b>E</b> Community Health Centre	1	2	3	4	5	8	9
<b>F</b> General Practitioner	1	2	3	4	5	8	9
<b>G</b> Sporting facilities	1	2	3	4	5	8	9
<b>H</b> Primary school	1	2	3	4	5	8	9
<b>I</b> Secondary school	1	2	3	4	5	8	9
<b>J</b> Religious services	1	2	3	4	5	8	9
<b>K</b> Facilities for Post Secondary/Vocational Training	1	2	3	4	5	8	9
<b>L</b> Community/youth centres	1	2	3	4	5	8	9
<b>M</b> Pharmacies	1	2	3	4	5	8	9
<b>N</b> Hotels / Taverns /Clubs	1	2	3	4	5	8	9

**23b Thinking about <town> and your local community, how satisfied are you with the quality of the following services, where 1 is 'very dissatisfied' and 5 is 'very satisfied'. (Note location of interview)**

	Very Dissatisfied	Dissatisfied	Neither Satisfied nor Dissatisfied	Satisfied	Very Satisfied	Not applicable	Don't Know
<b>A</b> Swimming pools	1	2	3	4	5	8	9
<b>B</b> Public libraries	1	2	3	4	5	8	9
<b>C</b> Police services	1	2	3	4	5	8	9
<b>D</b> Roads	1	2	3	4	5	8	9
<b>E</b> Public transport	1	2	3	4	5	8	9
<b>F</b> Street lighting	1	2	3	4	5	8	9
<b>G</b> Water & sewerage services	1	2	3	4	5	8	9

[This section relates to employment]

**24. What is the employment status of your partner (if applicable)? Are they...**

A wage or salary earner (private enterprise)	1
A wage or salary earner (local, federal, state government)	2
Conducting own business	3
Unemployed/looking for work	4
In full-time home duties	5
Full-time school/college/university	6
Retired	7
Not applicable	8
Other (please specify _____)	9

**Questionnaire**

**25. What is your employment status? Are you...**

A wage or salary earner (private enterprise)	1	
A wage or salary earner (local, federal, state government)	2	
Conducting own business	3	
Unemployed/looking for work	4	<i>[skip to Question 32]</i>
In full-time home duties	5	<i>[skip to Question 32]</i>
Full-times school/college/university	6	<i>[skip to Question 32]</i>
Retired	7	<i>[skip to Question 32]</i>
Other (please specify _____)	8	<i>[skip to Question 32]</i>
Not applicable	9	<i>[skip to Question 32]</i>

**[Now I'd like to ask you some questions about your main job.]**

**26. Does your main job involve shift work?**

Yes	1
No	2
Don't know	8
Refused	9

**27. What is the title of your main job?****NOTES FOR INTERVIEWER**

*Record the full title. For example, Accounts Clerk, Primary School Teacher, Excavator/Drill Operator (mining), Screener Operator (mining).*

*For Armed Services personnel, record rank as well as occupation.*

*For Public Servants, record their official designation (eg. ASO3) as well as their occupation.*

*[Record job title]* \_\_\_\_\_

**28. How would you describe what you do at work? In other words, what are your main duties or activities in this job?**

*[Record description fully]* \_\_\_\_\_

*[Code according to Occupation Code]*

**29. How would you describe the type of business or industry that you work in? That is, what does it make or do?**

*[Record description fully]* \_\_\_\_\_

*[Code according to Industry Code]*

**30. Is your main job a permanent, casual or contract position?**

Permanent full-time	1
Permanent part-time	2
Casual	3
Contract Position	4
Don't know	8
Refused	9



**31. Approximately how far would your Work Place be from your Home? READ OUT**

within 5 km (The town I live)	1
6-20 kms	2
21-50 kms	3
51-100 kms	4
101-250 kms	5
251-350 kms	6
greater than 350 kms	7

All respondents asked Q31 skip to Q33

[The following questions apply to people who are either unemployed and seeking work OR who are not currently part of the labour force.]

**32. Have you ever had a paid job?**

Yes	1
No	2
Don't know	8
Refused	9

[To finish off, just a few questions about your background]

**33. What is your age, would it be...? READ OUT**

18-19	1
20-24	2
25-29	3
30-34	4
35-39	5
40-44	6
45-49	7
50-54	8
55-59	9
60-64	10
65-69	11
70 and over	12
Not answered/refused	99

**34. What is your marital status?**

Single	1
Currently married/defacto	2
Divorced/separated	3
Widowed	4
Not answered/refused	9

**35. What is the highest level of education you have completed?**

Primary school	1
Secondary school	2
TAFE/ Trade (Non degree post-school)	3
Tertiary qualifications	4
Other (Please specify)	5
Don't know	6
Refused	9

36. Could you please tell me how many people (including children) live in your household in <town> (this location)

If stated in Q7 that they live elsewhere also then ask

37. Could you please tell me how many people (including children) live in your household. (if applicable) in <stated town etc> (the other location)

\_\_\_\_\_ (number of individuals including children) (interview address)

\_\_\_\_\_ (number of individuals including children) (other location address)

38. What type of household do you live in? READ OUT

Group household	1	
Single person household	2	skip to end
Couple with no children	3	skip to end
Couple with dependent children	4	
Couple with no-dependent children	5	skip to end
One parent family with dependent children	6	
One parent family with no-dependent children	7	skip to end
Other family (e.g. extended family household)	8	skip to end
Don't know	9	skip to end
Refused	10	skip to end

39. Do(es) the child/children in this household attend? READ OUT

Primary school

	1	
Secondary school	2	
A tertiary institution (TAFE, College)	4	
A tertiary institution (University)	5	
Other (specify)	6	
Don't know/not applicable	8	skip to end
Refused	9	skip to end

40. Do(es) the child/children in this household travel to and from school (commute), home school or board at another location?

Commute (include walking)

		1
Board	2	
Home School	3	
Both commute and board (some board or some commute)	4	
Both commute and home school (some home school or commute)	5	
Both board and home school	6	
Commute, board and home school (some board, commute or home school)	7	
None of the above	8	
Refused	9	

*End*

This study adheres to the Guidelines of The University of Queensland.

I need to check that the telephone number I dialled is correct could you give me your number again in case my supervisor needs to call you, also if you require at some stage to have your details removed from this survey this is the only way we can identify you until the survey is completed and we remove any identifiable information.

Thank you for participating in the survey

Questionnaire