Shifting Suburbs: The Changing Social Structure of Greater Western Sydney

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Revisioning the Greater West:
A Social Profile

Part 1: Western Sydney Social Profile - Nov 2002
Overview of demographic and social trends 1981 – 2001 by LGA benchmarked against regional and Sydney trends

Part 2: Shifting Suburbs - May 2003
Advanced analysis of census and other data
Sub-regional differences…

• The analysis confirms growing maturity of Western Sydney as a complex, dynamic and interlinked region – demands a sophisticated urban management response.

• A region of increasing social contrasts – more varied and wider social divisions.

• Growth patterns are highly variable – leading and lagging areas – overall regional trends mask strong local differences.

• Five broad sub-regions?
  ➢ Hawkesbury and Blue Mountains: lifestyle areas?
  ➢ New ‘monocultural’ fringe suburbs: Youthful, home buyers, higher income
  ➢ Maturing suburbs built in the 1970s and 1980s
  ➢ The Baulkham Hills - Parramatta area: end of the Global Arc?
  ➢ Middle suburbs: Ageing, migrants, renewal pressures, income poor

• Emerging higher income and mono-cultural outer ‘new release fringe’
Western Sydney suburbs
Household weekly income by suburb date, 2001

- Pre-1945: Under $400, Over $2000
- Post-1996: Under $400, Over $2000

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Western Sydney suburbs
Housing tenure and flats by suburb age, 2001

Percent

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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Home buyers</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>30%</td>
<td>40%</td>
<td>50%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rent private</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Flats</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>5%</td>
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University of Western Sydney
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Western Sydney: What a difference a suburb makes

<table>
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<tr>
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<th>Post-1996 Suburbs</th>
<th>Pre-1945 Suburbs</th>
<th>Western Sydney</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Over 65 yrs</td>
<td>4%</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Semi/Flats</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>37%</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Buyers</td>
<td>52%</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>29%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rent public</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>8%</td>
<td>8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Single person</td>
<td>9%</td>
<td>21%</td>
<td>17%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Born overseas</td>
<td>29%</td>
<td>42%</td>
<td>33%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No motor vehicle</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>16%</td>
<td>11%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Income &lt; $400</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>21%</td>
<td>17%</td>
</tr>
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Key regional characteristics…

• A youthful population, but now ageing more rapidly than Sydney as a whole.

• Households are getting smaller – single person households increased at over twice the rate than in Sydney as a whole (15%), particularly in established outer areas (Penrith and Campbelltown).

• The region has only marginally higher proportions of poor households compared to Sydney as a whole. But it has notably lower proportions in the highest income ranges.

• Managers, administrators, professional, and advanced clerical workers were under-represented in the region, as were people with a degree.

• W. Sydney’s resident workforce is skewed towards manufacturing, construction, wholesale trades, utilities and retail trades. The region accounts for low proportions of Sydney’s workforce employed in property and business services, and cultural and recreational services.

• The public transport deficit, particularly the use of buses, is exposed in the new release areas. But 59,000 households do not have a car in Western Sydney.
Proportion of households earning over $2000 per week, Sydney suburbs, 2001
Proportion of employed persons who travel to work by bus, Sydney suburbs, 2001

The map shows the proportion of persons who travel to work by bus in Sydney suburbs, with different shades indicating varying percentages:

- Dark red: 20% or more
- Red: 15% to 20%
- Orange: 10% to 15%
- Light orange: 5% to 10%
- Light blue: Less than 5%

The map highlights areas with higher proportions of bus commuters, particularly in central and inner-western districts.
Proportion of employed persons who travel to work by car, Sydney suburbs, 2001

Proportion of Persons Who Travel to Work by Car

- 70% or more
- 60% to 70%
- 50% to 60%
- 40% to 50%
- Less than 40%
Migration trends (1996 – 2001)…

- Migration is funneling people into and through the region – and increasingly out of it.
- W. Sydney is a net exporter of population – 143k came in, but 172k moved out, a net migration loss of 29k.
- Population growth pressure maintained by natural increase (+90k) and immigration (+79k or 1,300 per month).
- Only three areas – Baulkham Hills, Liverpool and Camden – recorded net migration gains – mainly children and 30 to 44 year olds.
- Net migration losses greatest in Fairfield, Auburn, Holroyd, Parramatta and Campbelltown.
- Overseas arrivals greatest in Blacktown, Fairfield and Parramatta. Auburn recorded 14% of population moving in from overseas in 5 years.
Migration trends (1996 – 2001) cont....

- Most net moves at LGA level show a sequential and outward ‘shuffle’ of population with two distinctive ‘corridors’ – one to the west and one to the south west.
- Relatively few in-migrants from the eastern or northern suburbs.
- There are small ‘return’ flows to inner west and central Sydney from the outer suburbs.
- Gosford and Wyong are major destinations from W. Sydney.
- Migration losses from the region beyond Sydney are largely coastal to the Illawarra, Hunter and Mid-North Coast – principally from the outer suburbs.
Baulkham Hills: Net migration gains and losses 1996 - 2001

The Number of Net Gains and Losses of Individuals in Baulkham Hills, 1996-2001

- 2,000 or more
- 1,000 to 2,000
- 0 to 1,000
- -100 to 0
- -200 to -100
- Less than -200
Affordability and housing stress…

Housing affordability is a problem for many, despite relative lower house prices and rents compared to other parts of Sydney.

The region is split into three broad areas in terms of housing affordability:

• Areas with relatively higher cost and less affordable housing in the older middle suburb areas (Auburn, Bankstown, Holroyd and Parramatta);
• Areas associated with new and higher cost fringe suburban development (Baulkham Hills and to a lesser extent Camden);
• Relatively lower cost and more affordable areas in the outer areas (Campbelltown, Blacktown, Blue Mountains, Hawkesbury, Liverpool, Fairfield and Penrith).

An estimated 68,000 households were in housing stress in 2001 across the region – 39,000 renters and 29,000 buyers. Auburn had the highest proportion of households in stress (17 per cent)
Policy Implications…

• Increasing sub-regional variation points to need for locally focused planning policies set within a strong *Regional Growth Management Framework*.

• Policy mix must recognise differences within the region – regional level plans must not produce adverse local impacts.

• At least two waves of urban growth are working their way through the region – new fringe development moving outward with a secondary wave of urban renewal moving in from the east. Planning will need to accommodate these changes and provide for a diverse and mature population in new housing outputs *across* the region.

• The emerging population mix will need greater balance in the types of new housing being developed *across* the region, not just flats around rail stations and detached houses elsewhere.

• Problem of the “*monocultural privatopias*” must be addressed. Need to plan for diversity in the new release areas to deliver more sustainable communities. Its not social engineering, its common sense.
Policy implications cont…

• The current focus on the new release areas must not deflect proper attention from the problems of the rapidly changing older suburbs. Simply requiring urban consolidation is not enough. We need a new *Middle Sydney Urban Renewal Program* integrating planning and social interventions and backed with resources.

• A new *Regional Transport Strategy* is required with a primary aim to actively reduce car dependency in the newer suburbs.

• Planning for more affordable housing is not just a question of more land, but calls for an integrated approach to the supply of both more affordable and subsidised housing *across* the region.

• Deficits in terms of higher end incomes, growth employment sectors and the occupational profile of residents must be addressed – planning to attract new economy jobs and higher income earners without splitting the region further.

• The need to plan for a dynamic region is essential – scenario testing at regular intervals based on latest information is an absolute necessity.
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