During the post-World War II era, a house in the suburbs became a focus of the Australian dream. The attractions of suburban living are numerous: a single, spacious home on a quarter acre block, a garden in front and back, a two-car garage, a pet or two, a backyard BBQ, separation and privacy and perhaps a pool. These enticed an ever-increasing number of residents away from the crowded inner city towards the expanding suburban frontier. In the decaying inner cities, push factors abounded: congestion, pollution, deteriorating infrastructure, declining services, an ageing stock of housing and increasing crime.

The 1990s witnessed a partial reversal of this trend. Inner-city living is again popular, especially with young professionals who see advantages in living close to work and their preferred entertainment venues. Processes of gentrification, urban renewal and urban consolidation are now important urban dynamics transforming the once blighted inner city into fashionable residential precincts.

When investigating the spatial organisation of large cities, geographers seek out and investigate the processes responsible for any changes taking place. These processes are often referred to as urban dynamics. In this unit we investigate some of the dynamics shaping the morphology of large cities in the developed world. Particular attention is given to the processes of suburbanisation, exurbanisation, counterurbanisation and decentralisation, urban consolidation, urban decay and renewal, urban villages and spatial exclusion.

"The test of the quality of life in an advanced economic society is now largely in the quality of urban life. Romance must still belong to the countryside—but the present reality of life abides in the city."

John Kenneth Galbraith, economist

Urban Dynamics

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Kimmy, look at moiye! look at moiye!

Australian comedians have, for many years, poked fun at our suburban way of life. *Kath & Kim* and Dame Edna Everage are perhaps the most famous examples.

*Kath & Kim* satirises the habits and values of the Australian suburban lifestyle. Particular attention is given to the kitsch and superficial elements of contemporary suburban living and the foibles of the traditional working class, which has achieved a level of affluence previous generations had been unable to imagine.

The show was created and written by Jane Turner (Kath) and Gina Riley (Kim), who play the title roles. The TV series has been a huge hit in Australia, New Zealand, the United Kingdom, Ireland, Canada and the United States.

Dame Edna Everage, the once dowdy Moonee Ponds housewife, was created by Barry Humphries as a caricature of Australian suburban complacency and insularity. Dame Edna has been transformed over the course of four decades into the queen of bling, a satire of stardom, an international megastar. The *Sydney Morning Herald* once described Dame Edna as ‘a perfect parody of a modern, vainglorious celebrity with a rampant ego and a strong aversion to the audience (whom celebrities pretend to love but actually, as Edna so boldly makes transparent, they actually loathe for their cheap shoes and suburban values).’
alternative lifestyle a conscious attempt to create a new way of life free of the constraints and stresses of mainstream urban living; often a back-to-nature perspective.

counterurbanisation a reversal of the rural–large city movement associated with urbanisation.

decentralisation the dispersal of activities and people from large urban centres to smaller urban centres and rural communities.

exclusionary zoning landuse regulations or controls that are designed to exclude ‘undesirable elements’ from a particular urban space.

exurbanisation a process whereby people, usually those who are quite affluent, move from the city to rural areas but continue to maintain an urban way of life either through long-distance commuting or technology.

genreification the renewal of inner-city residential precincts. Dilapidated homes are purchased, refurbished and occupied by middle-income and high-income earners. The process is a product of the preference of people for access to employment and entertainment in and around the central business district.

morphology the functional form and character of an urban environment.

perimetropolitan region the area bounded by the furthest extent of commuting to metropolitan jobs.

spatial exclusion the protection of luxury lifestyles, which has resulted in restrictions in spatial access and the freedom of movement of other urban dwellers. Examples include high-security suburbs, walled estates and security conscious shopping malls and business centres.

urban morphology both the functional form and character of the urban environment. The factors that contribute to a city’s morphology include its landuse and street patterns; its architectural styles, building types and materials, streetscapes and density of development; the nature of the biophysical environment, such as topography; and a wide range of socioeconomic and cultural influences.

suburb an urban area surrounding and connected to the central city. Many are exclusively residential; others have their own commercial centres.

suburbanisation the movement of people, employment and facilities away from the inner city towards outer urban areas.

urban consolidation policies that encourage higher population densities in established suburban areas, usually through planning regulations allowing more dwelling units on a given area of land through subdivision or strata title.

urban decay the deterioration of the built environment. Urban infrastructure falls into a state of disrepair and buildings are left empty for long periods of time.

urban periphery the outer edge of an urban area.

urban renewal the redevelopment of an urban area.

urban sprawl the continuous, and often unplanned, outward growth of an urban area.

urban village distinctive residential districts comprising a clustering of people with a common culture and forming an identifiable community.

Suburbanisation

With the introduction of streetcars (trams) and suburban rail networks in the latter part of the nineteenth century, suburban living became possible for an increasing number of people. Mass car ownership from the mid-twentieth century onwards accelerated the trend. (See the Geofocus box ‘The impact of changing transport technologies on urban morphology’, p. 160.) These trends, together with the development of the commercial trucking industry, attracted employment to suburbia. As a result, the inner city and suburbia became increasingly distant from each other.

Until the 1970s, people worked in the central city but lived in the suburbs. The suburbanisation of commerce and industry, already underway in the early twentieth century; intensified during the 1960s and 1970s, resulting in a complete restructuring of the metropolitan economy. This process was led by retailing, especially development of the large regional shopping centre. It was closely followed by an upsurge in the suburbanisation of employment: first manufacturing employment...
Our cities have sprawled interminably until they have either run into water, mountains or national parks. Nothing else, it seems, is capable of stopping them.

P.J. Keating, former prime minister of Australia (1993–96)

Mass car ownership accelerated the trend towards suburban living.

but more recently office-based activities. Today, multifunctional urban cores, known as minicities or edge cities, have become a distinctive feature of the urban landscape. (See figure 2.3.1.) Many are now self-sufficient urban entities containing their own economic and cultural activities. Most compete with the central business district (CBD) for economic activities, such as telecommunications, high-tech industries and corporate headquarters. Some rival the CBD itself. Examples of Sydney’s edge cities include Parramatta, Chatswood, North Sydney, Campbelltown, Liverpool and Bondi Junction.

In an era dominated by globalisation and economic restructuring, suburban areas are showing that they have the power to attract activities characteristic of both the ‘new’ and ‘old’ economy. (See page 193.) This will sustain the suburbanisation process well into the twenty-first century.

The flight to the suburbs is most apparent in ‘New World’ countries, such as the United States, Canada, Australia and New Zealand. However, it was not a universal phenomenon. In Europe, with its much older tradition of urban living, suburbanisation has been less pronounced. New social and community institutions were created to deal with emerging urban ills, such as poor-quality nineteenth-century industrial housing and deteriorating social environments in the inner city.
One such institution was the New Cities or New Towns movement. This was a significant response to the ills of the nineteenth-century industrial city. Independent satellite cities were planned in Britain and North America to provide for population growth in self-contained, new communities. The British New Town was a separate physical entity where people would spend most of their daily lives, living and working. (See figure 2.3.3A, p. 159.) By contrast, the US equivalent was simply a different way of organising private residential development at the urban fringe. (See figure 2.3.3B, p. 159.)

The impact of changing transport technologies on urban morphology

Until the introduction of the railways, cities remained very compact. Because most people walked to work they tended to live close to their place of employment, in rows of terraces and semi-detached housing. The increased mobility offered by the railways led to the development of small, nucleated, suburban areas adjacent to railway stations; urban areas subsequently developed a star-shaped pattern. (See figures 2.3.4 and 2.3.5.) The introduction of tram systems, and later buses, led to some infilling of areas between railway lines. Ultimately, however, it was the introduction of the automobile that transformed the urban landscape. Road systems led to further infilling and the extension of urban areas. The infrastructure required by cars now impacts on both the functional form and environmental qualities of urban areas. The car dominates the urban landscape. (See figure 2.3.6.)
In the United States, 50% of people now live in the suburbs: up from 23% in 1950 and 37% in 1970. The remaining 50% are divided between the inner city (30%) and non-metropolitan or rural areas (20%). Of those living in metropolitan areas, only 40% live in the central city. This is a sharp decline from 1948 when the inner city’s share of the metropolitan population exceeded 65%.

In fact, the process of suburbanisation started well before 1948. Modern suburbanisation developed in the mid-nineteenth century, encouraged by new forms of transport. Another feature was the beginnings of residential differentiation by socioeconomic class in an increasingly urban, industrialised society.

The impact of transportation technology on suburbanisation in the United States can be divided into several distinct stages:

- **The walking–horsecar–suburban railway era (pre-1850 to late 1880s).** Horsecar suburbs commonly allowed suburban development up to 5 km from the CBD. Early rail suburbs took the form of narrow radial corridors. There was a linear pattern of development with distinct nuclei developing around railway stations.

- **The electric streetcar era (late 1880s to 1920).** These became the dominant mode of intra-urban transport. Higher speeds—up to three times that of horsecars—allowed outwards expansion, commonly up to 15 km from the CBD. Middle-class suburbanisation was now well under way.

- **The recreational automobile era (1920 to 1945).** Widespread adoption of the private automobile helped launch the age of mass automobile ownership and mass suburbanisation, which persists to this day. This was accompanied by the development of the spatially flexible trucking industry for non-residential activities.

- **The mass automobile use and freeway era (1945 to present).** Suburban growth since 1945 swamped both the rate and scale of everything that came before it. This was the period of **urban sprawl**, of a housing boom driven by the accommodation needs of the baby boomers of the 1950s and early 1960s (see figure 2.3.7), and of accelerated suburbanisation of people and economic activities. It is also an era marked by the growth of minicities or edge cities and of the emergence of network cities, or cities within cities. All the advantages of accessibility to non-residential activities (once offered by CBD locations) became available in suburbia. Also available was abundant and relatively cheap land for expansion, free of traffic congestion and with ready access to both labour and customers. Major suburban shopping centres were developed. A growing number of manufacturing enterprises and office activities chose decentralisation.

By the 1970s a widely dispersed metropolitan network had emerged, as non-residential activities in suburban locations came to perform many of those functions previously closely linked in the central city. Suburbia continues to sprawl across the US landscape. (See figure 2.3.8, p. 162.)

Accompanying the process of suburbanisation has been the decay of the inner cities. As the middle class moved to the suburbs, inner-city areas became dominated by lower-income groups and minorities. The result was a decline in the tax base of municipal authorities. Falling revenues meant that the money available to support city schools, hospitals and law and order agencies declined. This resulted in a loss of services and a downward spiral in the amenity of the inner city. This deterioration encouraged others to leave, thereby accelerating the drift to the suburbs. (See figure 2.3.9, p. 162.)

**FIGURE 2.6**

Post-World War II suburban growth in the United States was driven by the need to accommodate the baby boomers of the 1950s and early 1960s.
The move to the suburbs contributed to the downward spiral in the amenity of the inner city.

US suburban sprawl Las Vegas style.

Suburbanisation in Australia

Suburbanisation in Australian cities largely commenced with the introduction of the electric streetcar (trams) (see figure 2.3.10) and the development of the rail network–suburban railway era. The railways were the dominant influence on the form of cities from the 1860s to about 1920. It led to the development of residential corridors along railway lines.

The advent of the automobile era released households from the constraint of having to locate near railway lines. Its effect on the form of cities was twofold: to produce infilling between the major transport corridors; and to permit further outwards growth, often referred to as ‘urban sprawl’. As transport became more readily available and cheaper, more and more Australians were able to purchase their own detached house on its own block of land, along with privacy, seclusion and security. Up to the early 1970s and the first oil shock, the idea of the owner-occupied family home on a quarter acre block was considered by many Australians (and New Zealanders) to be the basic right of every family. (See figure 2.3.11.) Any other form of housing was seen as temporary rather than a permanent substitute.

Other factors that ‘drove’ the process of suburbanisation include the following:

- High birth rates and immigration generated a demand for housing. New migrants, predominantly from non Anglo-Celtic European countries, took up residence in the inner-city locations vacated by suburbanising households. Immigrants from the United Kingdom, Ireland, the Netherlands and Germany tended to settle in suburban locations with Australian households. The outcome was a distinct pattern of ethnic residential segregation.

- There was an expansion in home ownership. Some consider this to be a politically motivated program designed (by conservatives) to dampen the radial political ambitions of the working class. This view is taken by those who see home ownership as a way to build a vested interest in the maintenance of the capitalist, free market economy. As far back as the 1920s, government policies favoured lower-density suburban development. Such policies including the War Service Homes Scheme, which financed the building of separate houses on individually owned blocks.
Rising standards of living enabled working class and middle class families to move from the crowded, inner localities to the low-density, detached housing of the new middle and outer ring suburbs.

Today’s Australians continue to live in the broad sweep of post-World War II suburbs that ring our cities. Many young married couples still migrate to the urban fringe, where house and land packages provide them with their first home more cheaply than anywhere else in the urban area. (See figure 2.3.12.) However, change and the recession associated with the restructuring of the global economy have had major impacts, first on the social and economic life of suburbia and, second, on investment in suburban development itself.

Manufacturing jobs are the mainstay of middle-class and lower-class suburbia. Under the impact of recession, mechanisation, financial deregulation and tariff cuts, the number of manufacturing jobs declined sharply. By 1991 only 14% of Sydney’s jobs were in manufacturing; less than half the proportion that four decades earlier had helped promote the suburban dream for so many families. Unemployment rates tripled by the late 1970s, and then doubled again by the early 1980s. There have been significant increases in inequalities among suburbs. The income gap between the least and most well off 5% of urban Australians more than doubled between 1976 and the mid-1990s. During the late 1990s and early 2000s relatively strong economic growth led to a decline in unemployment, but inequalities continued to grow. The shift to the new economy resulted in rapidly rising incomes for some (especially those employed in the information-based industries) but not all. For many, getting a job meant working in the relatively low-paid segment of the expanding service sector, such as retailing and hospitality.

The Australian dream of a house and land in suburbia is receding. Since the 1960s, housing appears to have become less affordable relative to income. Households have fewer members. The population is ageing. There are more single-parent families. A smaller (and declining) proportion of the urban population now live in large, detached suburban dwellings.

Gentrification, urban consolidation (processes encouraging a surge in inner-city residential development) and a flat-building boom dating as far back as the 1960s, all point in the direction of an end to the long post-war boom in suburban (residential) development. Tony Dingle, a prominent British geographer, refers to this era as a time of ‘fading dreams’.

The 1996 Census showed that, for the first time since Federation, the population of Sydney’s inner city had grown in the previous five-year period.
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understanding the text

1 Explain what is meant by the term urban dynamics.
2 Define the term urban morphology.
3 List the developments that made suburban living possible.
4 Outline, in brief, the process that led to the complete restructuring of the metropolitan economy and the development of minicities or edge cities.
5 Explain why suburbanisation is likely to persist well into the twenty-first century.
6 Explain why the process of suburbanisation is less pronounced in European cities. How has Europe responded to the problems of the inner city?
7 Explain what New Cities or New Towns are. How did the New Towns of North America differ from the New Towns of Britain?
8 Explain why there is less emphasis on public housing in Australian and New Zealand cities compared with those of Europe.
9 Describe the extent of suburbanisation in the United States.
10 Explain, in your own words, the process of residential differentiation by socioeconomic class.
11 Outline the developments in intra-urban transport that helped to shape the various stages of the suburbanisation process. Describe the impact of each development on the morphology (functional form and character) of US cities.
12 Explain why the process of suburbanisation accelerated in the United States in the post-World War II period. What has been the outcome of this process?
13 Outline the process of suburbanisation in Australia.
14 Explain why young married couples are still attracted to the urban fringe.
15 Outline the impact of recession and economic restructuring on Australian suburban life.
16 Identify the factors that point to the end of the post-war boom in suburban (residential) development.

working geographically

1 Writing task Study the Geofocus box ‘The impact of changing transport technologies on urban morphology’. With the aid of a sketch diagram, explain how the shape of cities responded to advances in transport technologies.
2 Internet research Using Google Earth compare the urban environment surrounding Quakers Hill, Stanhope Gardens, Kellyville and the Norwest business park at Baulkham Hills with that of Leichhardt, Petersham, Annandale, Camperdown and Newtown. Write a paragraph or two describing the difference between these urban areas in Sydney.
3 Interpreting maps Study figure 2.4.2 (pp. 196–7). Describe the relationship between Sydney’s major suburban centres and its radiating railway network. Which parts of Sydney are poorly served by its railway network?
4 Group work Working in groups, compile a list of the advantages and disadvantages of life in the suburbs. Share your group’s list with the rest of the class. Use this information to conduct a class debate. Topic: Suburban living is better than life in the inner city. Having participated in the debate, write an extended response (a discussion) outlining the advantages and disadvantages of suburban living.
5 Interpreting graphs Study figures 2.3.13 and 2.3.14. Write a paragraph describing the trends in car ownership in Australia.
Exurbanisation

Exurbanisation is the growth of low-density, semi-rural settlements beyond the built-up urban periphery (outer edge) of cities. For the most part the people who live in these settlements remain functionally linked to the city. Many commute to the city for work. Exurbia usually excludes urban townships lying beyond the urban fringe.

Exurbanisation in Australia

The perimetropolitan region around Sydney, within which exurbia is located, is defined as the region bounded by the furthest extent of commuting to metropolitan jobs. Closer to the outer suburban edge are exurban areas, such as Dural, Galston (see figure 2.3.19, p. 167) and Kenthurst. Further out are Windsor and Richmond to the north-west and Picton and Camden to the south-west. Even further out lie the

M5 and beyond: in search of a lifestyle

Straddling a spur of the Great Dividing Range to the south-west of Sydney, the southern highlands region is noted for its lush, rolling fields and quaint villages famous for their cool-climate gardens. Over the last decade there has been a marked increase in the number of Sydneysiders moving there to lead a semi-rural lifestyle. The region is an easy 90-minute drive via the M5 motorway. Some residents commute, while others stay in the city a few nights a week and spend the rest of their time in the highlands. Others just visit for the weekend. Technology allows an increasing number of people to work from home, at least for part of the week.

Interest in the region as a retreat from city living dates back to the colonial era. People went there to escape Sydney’s summer humidity, and enjoy a climate marked by four distinct seasons. In the late 1880s, affluent city folk purchased land around Bowral and built grand mansions surrounded by extensive English-style gardens.

The area is popular with retirees and young families wanting to raise their children in a rural setting. It is particularly popular with those interested in equestrian sports.
The US experience of exurbanisation

Exurbia provides semi-rural or very low density residential living for some 60 million Americans who daily travel 100 km (and often much further) to work, just to maintain a rural lifestyle. Obvious examples include the Cape Cod area outside Boston, the Front Range of the Rockies near Denver and the central California coast near San Francisco. Exurban growth has commonly occurred in areas endowed with superior natural amenity.

Exurbanisation is a form of counterurbanisation, comprising people who are ‘of the city but not in it’. This desire for a rural lifestyle has long been a feature of US culture, even though in practice it is available only to the better off. However, there are differences between ruralites and exurbanites. Today’s exurbanites do not have to forego modern conveniences and urban opportunities. Exurban households may share more rural than urban or suburban values. However, they may not appreciate essentially rural attributes, such as church or club participation or the degree of face-to-face socialising that is characteristic of rural households.

Much of exurbia in the United States comprises prestige residential developments, often hobby farms or ‘country estates’. In these the settlement pattern is characterised by widely spaced housing, quaint villages and semi-rural landscapes dedicated to the recreational pursuits of the affluent. (See figure 2.3.17.)

Counterurbanisation and decentralisation

The relocation of people and employment from large to smaller urban centres or rural areas is known as counterurbanisation. This decentralisation process was first detected in the early 1970s in the United States. There, for a short time, it replaced urbanisation as the dominant force shaping the country’s settlement pattern. Counterurbanisation, therefore, was a reversal of the drift to the cities.
In some developed countries, including Australia, decentralisation became official government policy. Incentives (including transport subsidies, low-interest loans and cheap land) were given to companies willing to relocate their activities to smaller, often regional, centres. The trend towards counterurbanisation was also noted in Canada, western Europe and Japan.

So, while urban population growth was accelerating rapidly across the developing world, urbanisation appeared to be going into reverse in the developed world. This change is consistent with a shift from an industrial to a post-industrial society: a transition characterised by a fundamental change in economic and social structures.

In the 1960s, non-metropolitan areas of the United States lost almost 3 million people through net out-migration (urbanisation). In the first three years of the 1970s alone, it gained more than 1.1 million through net in-migration (counterurbanisation). Moreover, the most marked population growth occurred in entirely rural counties (not in areas adjacent to metropolitan regions) and in those non-metropolitan counties with a tradition of strong retirement in-migration.

These trends were not confined to the United States. In western Europe and the United Kingdom, the growth of medium-sized and smaller urban areas was at the expense of the largest cities. Metropolitan growth rates slowed in Japan, Sweden, Norway, Italy, Denmark, New Zealand, Belgium, France, Germany and the Netherlands.

The end of counterurbanisation?
The rate of counterurbanisation has diminished since the 1970s, and in many countries the process has been reversed. For example, by 1982 metropolitan populations in the United States were again growing faster than non-metropolitan populations; a return to the pattern of the 1960s.

While the proportion of Americans living in urban centres barely changed during the 1970s, it increased sharply during the 1980s: from 73.7% to 75.2%. This rate of growth was sustained during the 1990s and early 2000s. Rural areas have continued their relative, and in many cases absolute, decline. The population of North Dakota’s Logan County, for example, has declined from a population peak of 8100 in 1930 to fewer than 2099 in 2004. Between 2000 and 2004 the county’s population decreased by 9%.

Counterurbanisation in the United Kingdom reached a high point during 1970–73, and then slowed. Population change in the Greater London area stabilised by the mid-1980s and then started to increase as the popularity of inner-city living gathered pace. Between 1994 and 2004 the City of London recorded the fastest population growth rate in the United Kingdom (51%). Adjacent Westminster grew by 26%.

The same overall trend is apparent in Australia. By the late 1990s the growth rate of the large metropolitan centres had increased significantly. Sydney, for example, was growing at a rate not achieved since the mid-1980s. In 1998–99 the city’s population grew by 1.5% (adding almost 60 000 people), compared with a growth rate of 1.2% for New South Wales as a whole. By 2004–05 Sydney’s rate of growth had again slowed: down to just 570 new residents a week. This represented an annual growth rate of 0.7% or 29 800 people.

Remember that when we talk about the growth of cities we focus on net movements. There are always people moving to and from cities. In the case of Sydney, some leave for employment-related reasons or to make a ‘sea change’ or ‘tree change’; that is, lifestyle-related motives. For the most part, the inflow of new residents (immigrants and those arriving from non-metropolitan areas) exceeds the number leaving.

Urbanisation in Australia and Canada appears to have entered a new period... Internal migration streams have shifted away from the two dominant metropolitan areas in each country towards medium-sized cities, and to small centres just outside the metropolitan regions.

Urbanisation in Australia

There are several significant features of post-World War II urbanisation in Australia.

In the 25 years following World War II, Australia’s population grew rapidly, due to both relatively high rates of natural increase and immigration. A growing proportion of the expanding population chose to live in urban areas. As in most developed countries, this pattern of urbanisation was reversed in the early 1970s. The trend away from major metropolitan centres was maintained throughout the 1970s and (unlike many other developed countries) into the 1980s but much more slowly. During this period the proportion of the population living in rural areas continued to decline, but was more than offset by the growth of regional centres. For example, between 1970 and 2006 Dubbo’s population doubled. Much of this growth was at the expense of smaller surrounding centres; for example, Narromine, Parkes and Gilgandra. (See the Geofocus box ‘Dubbo’, p. 129.)

These trends were regionally concentrated. In the non-metropolitan sector, growth focused on the built-up parts of coastal Queensland, New South Wales and south-west Western Australia. (See the extract ‘Once more unto the beach’.) The slowdown in counterurbanisation was also uneven. Among the eastern states the non-metropolitan populations grew substantially faster than did those of Brisbane, Sydney and Melbourne. On the other hand, population growth rates in Perth and Adelaide exceeded those in non-metropolitan areas of South Australia and Western Australia generally.

Once more unto the beach

By BERNARD SALT

This generation of Australians has gravitated towards the beach like no previous generation. In the last half of the 20th century, this shift created new towns up north that quickly usurped old towns down south. The Gold Coast has been the premier single destination for Australians on the move for more than 25 years. The Gold Coast did not exist per se in 1945. Yet by ... June 2002 this number is likely to reach 433 000. Other new beach cities include the Sunshine Coast, Hervey Bay, Ballina, Coffs Harbour, Port Macquarie and Byron Bay. Indeed, virtually any point at which a large river flowing east of the Great Dividing Range meets the Pacific Ocean has been a focus of quite extraordinary population growth over the past two decades...

In 1974 two academic demographers produced a forecast of Australian city populations for the year 2000. This outlook considered all capital cities as well as Newcastle, Wollongong and Geelong. The Gold Coast did not even rate consideration, and yet it is this city that has developed like no other over the past 25 years. The reason why the Gold Coast slipped through the net of the demographer’s study of future cities was the fact that the thing that most drives Australians to a particular location is the values that are held by the community. And of course, in the later decades of the 20th century, Australian values changed to embrace the beach as a lifestyle. Indeed most Australians, regardless of where they live, understand what is meant by the concept of ‘the Gold Coast lifestyle’, and yet neither this concept nor the city existed at the mid-point of the 20th century. And unless there is a fundamental shift in Australian values—for instance, ‘we don’t like the beach anymore’—then the Gold Coast, and other cities like it, will continue to attract Australians at a greater rate than inland cities... It’s almost as if the Australian nation is establishing a new colony along the edges of the continent. Just as both Melbourne and Sydney were viewed in some London quarters during the 19th century as ‘provincial’, the same relationship now applies between these cities and the new colony’s flash focal point, the Gold Coast. I say give the Gold Coast and its Coasters a break, too many Australians have made relocation decisions in favour of the Coast for too long for this shift to be trivialised...

The Big Shift: Welcome to the Third Australian Culture, Hardy Grant Books, Melbourne, 2005

FIGURE 2.3.20

Some argue that the emergence of the Gold Coast lifestyle is indicative of a fundamental shift in the way Australians think about Australian culture.
### Surf, sand and rust

... Australia is a utopia for sceptical times, a ... paradise where sea glimpses not visions provide inspiration, and where all is built on sand. Bernard Salt has announced a 'Third Australian Culture', a newly ascendant 'Culture of the Beach' that has ended the tiresome old city–bush contest by establishing itself as the real Australian Idyll.

According to commentary, the new national penchant for surf, sand and rust has been made possible, not to say compulsory, by rising prosperity, technological change (telecommuting) and the discovery that ocean views are vital to happiness.

Dream catchers (media) and dream weavers (advertisers) have joined in misty-eyed unison to praise the great national trek from the billabong to the beach... Expert observers and advocates doubtless rejoice in the (well remunerated) part they are playing in the great restyling of national life that is producing the Seachange Lifestyle in TV dramas, weekend colour supplements and real estate glossies. Their seachange anthem extols a Commonwealth of coastlines, ringed now with superannuated surf communities and their legions of buffed, tanned beachwalkers in earnest observance of the new laws of freedom.

The reality of coastal urban change across Australia is much more complex and a good deal more socially and environmentally problematical, than the choristers would have us believe... It needs to be pointed out, however, that the so-called Big Shift to the coast has been overplayed... Today, nearly two out of every three Australians reside in one of the large urban regions that ring our state capitals, and there is no sign that this ratio is diminishing... B. Gleeson, Australian Heartlands: Making Space for Hope in the Suburbs, Allen & Unwin, Sydney, 2006

Since the late 1980s there has been something of a return to more traditional urbanisation patterns of metropolitan rather than non-metropolitan growth. Sydney, for example, grew by 60 000 people in 1999 and is still, in 2007, growing by about 30 000 a year. Overall, non-metropolitan growth rates have noticeably fallen since the late 1970s, while those of large metropolitan areas have increased.

The pattern of population change in non-metropolitan areas is characterised by a depopulation of the rural (wheat-belt) regions and population growth in coastal areas and the more accessible parts of non-metropolitan Australia. The greatest population declines have occurred in Australia’s wheat belt. Western Australia’s Perenjori Shire (350 km to the north-east of Perth), for example, has lost almost half its population over the past 25 years (from 1210 to 618). Fifty-seven local government areas, strung out across the Australian wheat belt, from outback New South Wales down into the Wimmera in Victoria, northern South Australia and the midlands wheat belt in Western Australia have all experienced population decline.

Urbanisation in Australia has also been affected by international migration. Today one in five Australians was born overseas, and they have settled disproportionately in the largest urban centres: Sydney and Melbourne in particular, but also Adelaide. In the case of Sydney, the net gain from international migration has more than offset the loss from internal migration. In Melbourne, net gains from overseas migration were only half those of Sydney but internal population loss was much the same. So in Melbourne an overall net population loss was experienced. By the mid-2000s, however, Melbourne’s annual population growth rate exceeded that of Sydney.

The major factors affecting the balance of growth between metropolitan and non-metropolitan areas in Australia include the following:

- **An expanding perimetropolitan area**
  - The perimetropolitan area is an extension of the metropolitan commuter hinterland; that is, the distance people are willing to travel from home to work. Large urban centres continue to influence the location of new employment opportunities. They do this via improved rail access (for example, the electrification of the rail link between Sydney and Wollongong and between Sydney and Newcastle); new motorway access (for example, Sydney’s M4, M5 and M2 motorways and a markedly improved motorway between Sydney and Newcastle—see figure 2.3.21, p. 170); real increases in personal incomes leading to expanded options in terms of where to live; along with real reductions in the unit cost of travel. The construction of high-speed rail links would further expand the city’s commuter hinterland.

- **Employment**
  - About half those moving to metropolitan areas do so for work-related reasons. This compares with about 40% moving from metropolitan to non-metropolitan regions for the same reason. About 10% of those leaving metropolitan regions do so for retirement or health reasons. In the late 1990s and early 2000s, Sydney’s population growth was being driven by the city’s relatively high rate of economic growth. This was brought about, in part, by the burgeoning information economy and the construction boom associated with the Sydney Olympics, the development of the city’s transport infrastructure, and the city’s status as a world city. The city’s unemployment rate was up to a full 2% below the national average. Also adding to the city’s growth rate was a decline in the number of people leaving the city for other states, especially Queensland.

- **Residential preference**
  - Lifestyle factors play an important role in the migration from metropolitan to non-metropolitan areas, and the retention of
residents in the latter. Groups involved in such movements include retirees, hobby farmers, long-distance commuters and people seeking alternative lifestyles. (See the Geofocus box ‘The alternative lifestyle movement’.)

**Welfare dependency**

A significant number of those involved in migrations from metropolitan to non-metropolitan areas rely on welfare benefits. Among this group there is a tendency to concentrate in areas that are scenically and climatically attractive, where seasonal work is often available to supplement pension-based incomes and where housing is often cheaper than in the large metropolitan areas. The latter is an important consideration for those on fixed incomes or among those who may wish to capitalise on the higher prices in the major cities.

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**The alternative lifestyle movement**

The ultimate form of counterurbanisation is to be found among those seeking alternative lifestyles. (See figure 2.3.22.) While the alternative lifestyle movement is primarily a response to unemployment and concern about environmental quality, it also finds strength from the Utopian tradition within Western society: the attempt to create a new social order free from social problems. In New South Wales, most alternative lifestyle communities are located in the coastal belt north of Newcastle, with the largest clusters on the far north coast (around Lismore, Kyogle, Nimbin, Byron Bay and Mullumbimby), and smaller clusters near Coffs Harbour and Taree. (See figure 2.3.23.) While most communities are of the secular (non-religious) and self-sufficiency type, a small number operate as rural cooperatives and some are based on various religious affiliations.
Urban consolidation

Urban consolidation is defined as policies and programs designed to increase population densities in urban areas in order to make more efficient use of existing infrastructure, and to limit urban spread into surrounding rural areas. It involves construction of medium-density to high-density housing in already built-up areas in inner and middle suburbia. It also widens the range of housing types available to urban residents.

Policies promoting urban consolidation are now at the centre of an ongoing political debate. Those in favour of urban consolidation see it as a means of slowing the growth of urban sprawl (see figure 2.3.24, p. 172) and of making greater use of existing urban infrastructure. Those opposed to urban consolidation see it as a threat to the character of existing urban precincts.

Advocates of urban consolidation, including Peter Newman, highlight the impacts of urbanisation and car dependence in cities. Others, including Pat Troy, refer to urban consolidation as the ‘new feudalism’. He argues that the so-called benefits of higher living densities are a myth completely at odds with contemporary urban social life, and incapable of meeting the stated objectives of its advocates.

A case in favour of urban consolidation: the Newman perspective

Newman’s arguments mainly focus on the impact of car dependence in cities. They are as follows:

• Oil consumption. Globally, motor vehicles use one-third of the world’s oil. As a consequence, there is increasing dependence on the Middle East, which is the world’s most politically unstable region.
• Greenhouse gas emissions. Cars are the single largest source of urban atmospheric emissions. In Sydney one in four children in the outer western suburbs (where the photochemical smog goes) suffers from asthma, and children raised in the smog of Los Angeles have 20% impaired lung function. The burning of fossil fuels (in this case oil) is a major contributor to global climate change.
• Urban sprawl. In Australia the average loss of land per capita is about 1200 m² for each additional urban dweller.
• Noise, accidents and local traffic impacts. Worldwide, a quarter of a million people are killed on the roads and 10 million are injured each year.
• Excessive urban infrastructure costs. Low-density sprawl is very expensive to service in terms of both physical and social infrastructure.
• Social isolation and locational inequality. The excessive dependence on the car in the low-density outer suburbs has created new ghettos of poverty. There are limited local services and few transport alternatives to the car. The elderly, women and young teenagers are particularly disadvantaged.
• Loss of the public realm. The priority given to private transport and private low-density housing means that public transport and public spaces, particularly in the inner city, become neglected.

A case against urban consolidation: the Troy perspective

Troy’s arguments focus on attacking what he calls the ‘myths’ put forward by those in favour of urban consolidation. They are:
Myth 1. Urban consolidation results in the more efficient use of land. In other words, if we abandon the cult-of-the-quarter-acre block we would achieve considerable economies in the use of land. This, in turn, would produce economies in infrastructure. But, in fact, the quarter-acre block has long since been abandoned; contemporary block sizes being about two-thirds of that size. Therefore, any potential savings are greatly inflated.

Myth 2. Urban consolidation would result in savings in the provision of social capital; that is, community services and infrastructure. There is no large-scale underutilisation of social capital (such as schools, hospitals, parks and playing fields) in the inner parts of Australian cities. Therefore, the argument about investment in new social capital in fringe suburbs is difficult to sustain.

Myth 3. Urban consolidation would increase residential densities. Urban consolidation is unlikely to have any great or lasting effect on inner-city populations; only something like 10% of current urban growth in Sydney under current planning regulations, for example, might be housed within already built-up areas under consolidation. Only a small proportion of urban land is actually used for residential purposes. It requires a massive increase in residential densities to achieve even modest savings in city size.

Myth 4. Urban consolidation would make housing more affordable. Any notion that a new supply of medium-density housing in already built-up areas would lower the per unit cost of land is wrong. In fact, the unit cost of medium-density housing construction is some 30% higher than for conventional (low-density) housing. Any savings in infrastructure costs are likely to be exceeded for dwellings of comparable size and standard by the higher construction costs.

Myth 5. Urban consolidation would help reduce petrol consumption and associated environmental consequences. This is only one of a number of environmental issues. How is urban runoff affected by higher residential densities? How is garden and tree planting affected? Do higher densities produce higher noise levels? Are people living in higher densities subject to more stress? Can local roads cope with the increase in traffic? What is the impact on people’s privacy? And how do higher densities affect the harnessing of solar and aeolian (wind) energy?

Urban consolidation in Sydney

Signs of urban consolidation are evident throughout metropolitan Sydney. It is especially apparent in areas around the city’s suburban railway stations and more desirable residential precincts. The process usually involves the demolition of a row of three to four detached dwellings and their replacement with townhouses, villas and duplexes (see figures 2.3.25A and B) or three-storey ‘walk-up’ apartment blocks. (See figure 2.3.25C.) In more sought after locations, where land is often much more expensive, multistorey apartment buildings are constructed. In inner-city locations, old industrial sites and land occupied by obsolete port facilities are being redeveloped into high-density residential and commercial precincts. (See figure 2.3.25D.)

To be effective, urban consolidation depends on a balance being struck between the demand generated by the kinds of household that would prefer medium-density dwellings (the demand side) and the availability of medium-density housing (the supply side).

Household type is especially important. The social and demographic changes apparent in Australian society have led to a diversification in the types of accommodation required. In many instances these
changes favoured the construction of higher-density housing types, which reinforced the process of urban consolidation. Some of the most important of these demographic and social changes include those described below.

The ageing of the population

The proportion of the population aged 65 years and over increased to 12.7% in 2001 and is projected to exceed 27.1% by 2051. Retirees are opting for a greater range of housing options, including townhouses, villas and apartments.

Changes in the types of family units in Australia

The number of lone-person households increased from 19.8% in 1991 to 24.5% in 2001. Lone-person households are projected to grow at the fastest rate of all types and make up to 34% of all households by 2026.

While couples with children (the nuclear family) remains the most common family type, they have declined from 53.7% in 1991 to 47% of family units in 2001. By 2026 they are projected to make up just 42% of families; and possibly as low as 30% if the trend of the last 20 years continues.

In 2001, 70% of households had no children under the age of 15 years. Twelve per cent had only one child. Only 6% had three or more children under the age of 15 years.

The number of couples without children (the young who have not yet had children and the older ‘empty nesters’) increased from 32.5% of family units in 1991 to 36.7% in 2001. By 2006, the proportion of family units without children is projected to increase to at least 41% and may be as high as 49% of all family units. This growth is principally related to the ageing of the population, with the baby boomers becoming empty nesters. To a lesser extent, the growth can be attributed to delayed family formation and the declining fertility of younger couples.

One-parent families increased from 12.8% of family units in 1991 to 15.7% in 2001. One-parent families are projected to increase to as many as 20% of all households. (See figure 2.3.28, p. 174.)

There has been growing acceptance of same-sex couple family units. Between the 1991 and 2001 Censuses there was a doubling in the number of same-sex family units: from 10 000 to 20 000. Nationally, same-sex couple families represented 0.1% of couples with children and 1.0% of couples without children, or 0.5% of all couple families.

Overall, people living alone and couples without children are more likely to opt for higher-density housing.
Later age of marriage
There is a trend towards older ages at marriage. In 2001, the median age at marriage (the age at which there are as many people marrying above the age as there are below it) for men was 31.2 years, an increase from 28.8 years in 1993. For women the median age at marriage rose to 29.1 years, up from 26.4 years in 1993.

Decreasing size of households
The average size of Australian households has declined from 3.2 persons in late 1979 to 2.6 persons in 2001. It is projected to decrease to between 2.2 and 2.3 persons per household by 2026. (See figure 2.3.29.)

The mix of Australian household types is also undergoing change. People living alone now represent the largest category: 24.5% of all Australian households.

Changing lifestyle expectations
Older Australians are experiencing an increase in life expectancy. For these people, the growth in retirement incomes and the wealth accumulated (at least by some) during the property and share market booms of the 1990s and early 2000s has had an impact on their lifestyle expectations and aspirations. The desire to travel and a renewed interest in the purchase of holiday accommodation has, for example, encouraged some empty nesters to downsize their housing needs. They are selling the family home in the suburbs and moving to medium-density or high-density developments, often featuring shared resort-style facilities.

For the young, later marriage and childrearing, changed lifestyle aspirations and an increase in the number of couples choosing not to have children have helped fuel demand for medium-density or high-density housing close to the city centre.
Immigration
The source of Australia’s immigrants shifted from Europe to Asia and the Middle East during the 1980s and 1990s. Many Asians, in particular, are accustomed to high-density living. A larger proportion of new migrants to Sydney now rent high-density accommodation in inner and middle suburbs. To a significant degree, therefore, migration is the major sustainer of new medium-density to high-density housing in Sydney’s inner and middle suburbs. To that extent, urban consolidation is a creature of the immigration program, not just local demand. It follows, then, that urban consolidation (especially when viewed as a city-wide context) will gain or lose ground according to whether Australian governments increase or reduce the intake of migrants.

The changing geography of consumer choice
The geography of consumer demand is equally important. Until the 1990s, Sydney experienced growth on the fringes and population loss in the city centre. This is the so-called ‘doughnut effect’. The pattern of growth is now quite different. Some of the fastest-growing areas are now found in the inner city. Generally, the rapid growth on the city’s fringe, which once dominated the city’s pattern of growth, has given way to more consistent growth across the city.

Urban Australians use 30,000 MJ of petrol per city dweller, compared with 58,000 MJ in the United States and 13,300 MJ in Europe.

Only 8% of total travel by urban Australians is by public transport, compared with 4% by those in the United States and 25% by Europeans.

Australian cities have 8.7 m of urban road per city dweller, compared with 6.6 m in the United States and 2.1 m in Europe.

Only 5% of urban Australians and Americans cycle or walk to work, compared with 21% of Europeans.

Australian cities have a density of 14 people per ha, compared with 54 per ha in European cities.

As suggested above, demographic changes—and the social trends that underpin them—have contributed to a shift in people’s housing preferences. These, in turn, have resulted in a change in the mix of accommodation built by developers. Many of these are medium-density and high-density developments on land that has been rezoned. Former industrial sites and the areas occupied by obsolete port facilities have often been subject to large-scale urban renewal incorporating a mix of residential and commercial activities. This trend has amplified the process of urban consolidation: one reinforcing and accommodating the other.

Between 1991 and 2001, while the number of separate houses increased by 18%, the increase in the number of higher-density dwellings was twice as high (37%). This reflects the demographic and social changes outlined above. There was a 43% increase in the number of lone-person households between 1991 and 2001 and a 37% increase in the number of lone-parent households. There was also a 29% increase in the number of couple households without children. In contrast, the number of couple households with children increased by less than 1%. The data in table 2.3.1 show the impact of these trends on Australia’s stock of housing.

| TABLE 2.3.1 |
| Australia’s housing stock, 1961–2001 |

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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Separate house</td>
<td>87.5</td>
<td>83.9</td>
<td>79.6</td>
<td>77.9</td>
<td>75.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Higher-density housing</td>
<td>12.5</td>
<td>16.1</td>
<td>20.4</td>
<td>22.1</td>
<td>24.1</td>
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Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics
Urban dynamics and Sydney’s future

By MATT WADE

By 2020, most of the baby boomers will have finally retired, leaving the impatient Xers in charge of the city. The dot.com generation, those now between 10 and 24, will have changed the way we work and a whole new generation, now in nappies, will be making its mark on Sydney.

This is the picture painted by the leading demographer Bernard Salt...

According to Salt, Sydney is on the cusp of a major generational shift as the population hurtles towards the 5 million mark.

So what will Sydney be like 20 years from now? …

[It] accommodate 25% more people by 2020 Sydney is going to have to ‘thicken’.

‘All the bits and pieces of the city that were left unfilled in Sydney’s great suburban expansion in the second half of the twentieth century will be filled in,’ Salt said.

This process is already well under way in the city’s ‘inner ring’, with Willoughby, Kogarah, Randwick and Parramatta among the city’s fastest-growing areas...

The north-west corridor of Sydney, around Baulkham Hills and Rouse Hill, will continue its exponential growth...

As the city’s population consolidates, new urban nodes similar to Chatswood and Parramatta will emerge. Salt predicts Blacktown, Bankstown and Liverpool will be among these ‘intervening centres’ that will provide significant new employment, retail, entertainment and cultural opportunities.

‘Sydney will need another wave of these sub-centres as its sheer scale increases. These places will provide office space and a cultural focus for those in Sydney’s extensive north-western and south-western corridors…’ Salt says.

A 25% growth in population will demand an enormous amount of new infrastructure, especially transport routes similar to the M2 and the Eastern Distributor.

Wollongong and Newcastle will be swept along with Sydney’s frenetic growth… Salt says the three cities are fundamentally linked socially and economically and the movement between them will increase significantly. He predicts they will create Australia’s answer to the great European urban conurbations over the next two decades.

While the physical form of the Sydney region will alter dramatically by 2020 … the changing life circumstances of the city’s three major generational groups, the boomers, the Xers and the dot.coms, will have a significant impact on the way Sydney works.

From 2006 the city will begin to grapple with a significant new phenomenon: an avalanche of baby boomers reaching retirement age.

This group, born between 1946 and 1961, make up the largest single demographic group in the country and their departure from the workforce will change the city.

While some boomer sub-tribes (like those who renovated Paddington) may stay put, many will locate in lifestyle towns within striking distance of the CBD.

According to Salt, the move to lifestyle towns will [also] boom after 2010, creating a series of well-serviced satellites three hours’ drive from the city.

Places such as Pearl Beach, Kangaroo Valley, the Southern Highlands and Mollymook will be targeted by the boomers as they blend semi-retirement and the good life.

Salt doubts that the boomers will be satisfied to simply stop work at 65 like their parents. Instead, they will scale back work commitments, getting to the office one or two days a week.

Telecommuting, facilitated by Internet technology, will make this lifestyle option increasingly easy and efficient.

‘Boomers won’t get old and retire; they will become time rich and asset comfortable…’

As the boomers fade, generation X (those born between 1961 and 1976) will become time poor and asset rich. Telecommuting will become increasingly acceptable. But it is not yet clear where they will settle.

These baby boomer babies are now in nappies, will be making its mark on Sydney.

Salt says many Xers will have children and locate in the suburbs, but a great proportion will stay near the CBD.

This generational preference will change the configuration of inner-city life as Xers enter the ‘family formation stage’.

Generation X will need things in the city to change a little so that they can retain their hip, happening café lifestyle and cater for their single child, Salt says.

‘They will only have one child, by and large, because they are running out of time for more and they are hooked on a lifestyle that precludes large families.’

One consequence of this process may be that new inner-city high-density residential developments will have to become more child friendly…”

That leaves the emerging dot.comers. What have they got in store for the city?

Salt believes this group has created the first distinct mass youth culture since the baby boomers made denim fashionable in the late 1960s.

‘They have created a clear separation between the generations just as the boomers did.’

There are more than 4 million people aged between 10 and 24 in Australia and they have taken to technology with astonishing speed.

Raised with GameBoys and PlayStations, they are set to remain at the forefront of technology…

By 2020, the dot.comers will become Australia’s largest single demographic group as the boomers begin to die out.

According to Salt, this generation will fundamentally change work patterns because of their technological literacy. Telecommuting will become increasingly acceptable… But it is not yet clear where they will settle.

This article originally appeared as ‘Sub-urban’ in the Sydney Morning Herald, 6 May 2000
Community based opposition to urban consolidation

Urban-consolidation projects often meet with strong local opposition. Many people object to:

- the impact that such developments may have on the character of the neighbourhood, especially the loss of amenity
- the increased traffic generated by higher population densities
- the loss of privacy that occurs when once-private yards are overlooked by multistorey apartment buildings.

Local activists often use the electoral processes of local government to fight policies facilitating urban consolidation.

Forecasts show that Sydney’s population will grow by around 1.1 million by 2031 and will require a range of housing options that differ significantly from today’s housing stock.

- In 2006 Sydney had approximately 1.6 million dwellings. By 2031 the city will need to have 2.2 million dwellings.
- To cater for the anticipated population growth an additional 190 000 dwelling units will need to be built by 2013 and 640 000 dwellings before 2031. Most of these will be built within existing suburbs.
- The NSW Government’s Housing Strategy concentrates on developments that strengthen existing urban centres and neighbourhoods focused around public transport. New housing will focus on better-designed medium-density developments, incorporating areas of open space.

The duplexes that ate Willoughby’s castles

By ALI GRIPPER

Like most of the people who live in Bellevue Street, Chatswood, Barrie and Lynette Breeze are the kind of people who regard their home as their castle. They love the quiet, and the hundreds of scribbly gums that hang over the street.

But during the past three years, developers have taken over more than 10 properties in the surrounding streets—including the one next door.

Willoughby municipality was one of the fastest-growing local government areas last year, fuelled by its increasing density of housing.

Many residents believe their quality of life is being eroded by overdevelopment, dubbing the new developments ‘the duplexes that ate Willoughby’.

Up the road at number 14, a freestanding cottage has just been bulldozed and replaced with a two-storey house and two brick duplexes. The neighbours, who used to enjoy a ‘common garden’ atmosphere, now have a view of a two-storey brick wall.

The nearby conglomerations of residential towers at the Chatswood CBD is known to locals as ‘a mini-Hong Kong’.

The locals say the council’s excuse that urban consolidation curbs urban sprawl is a myth. Instead, they say it has inflated housing prices in their area. The house next door to the Breezes, for instance, sold for $362 000. The developer knocked it down and built two duplexes, which sold recently for $569 000 and $599 000.

“We don’t mind it if a family needs to put an extra room on for extra space, but when it’s a developer doing it just for profit—well, that’s another matter altogether,” Mr Breeze said.

“When people are buying here these days, they are doing it with an eye to knocking down the existing homes.”

When the Breezes attended the auction next door, they said the two couples with children bidding for the property didn’t stand a chance against the developer. ‘He looked completely unfazed,’ Mrs Breeze said, adding that he seemed supremely confident the council would approve his plans.

*Sydney Morning Herald*, 3 May 2000
Working in groups of four, discuss what is meant by each of these statements. Is urban consolidation the best way to achieve these aims? Are there any alternatives?

1. Define urban consolidation.
2. Explain why urban consolidation is at the centre of an ongoing political debate.
3. Summarise the arguments used by those promoting policies of urban consolidation.
4. Outline the arguments used by those who oppose policies promoting urban consolidation.
5. Outline the balance that must be achieved if urban consolidation is to work.

Class debate Study the arguments for and against urban consolidation. Debate the proposal that policies that encourage urban consolidation are essential to the future well-being of Australian cities.

Group work Urban consolidation aims to: a. increase population in middle to outer suburbia b. increase housing choice and opportunities c. widen the range of housing types available in established suburbia. Working in groups of four, discuss what is meant by each of these statements. Is urban consolidation the best way to achieve these aims? Are there any alternatives?

Mindmapping Construct a mindmap outlining the demographic and social factors influencing the housing market in Australia.

Media study Using the real estate section of a newspaper, collect examples of medium-density and high-density housing types. Categorise the housing types you have selected.

Media study Gather media reports dealing with the debate about the issue of urban consolidation. Outline the arguments used to oppose medium-density and high-density residential developments. Local newspapers are often an excellent source of such material.

Research task Contact your local council and ask for information relating to urban consolidation in the local area. What limits are there on such developments? What areas are zoned for this type of landuse? What rights do local residents have to oppose such developments?

Fieldwork Use photography to record examples of urban consolidation in your local area. Organise these by type: villa, townhouse, duplex, dual occupancy, three-storey ‘walk-up’ apartment and multi-unit high-rise.

Interpreting diagrams Study figure 2.3.30. Explain, in your own words, the point made by Leunig in his cartoon. Do you agree with such a view?

Writing task Write a discussion outlining the arguments for and against urban consolidation OR write an exposition arguing either in favour of or against policies promoting urban consolidation.

Interpreting text Study the article ‘The duplexes that ate Willoughby’s castles’ (p. 177). Outline the concerns of the Willoughby residents who oppose urban consolidation.

Fieldwork Undertake the research activity outlined in the Fieldwork Activity box at the end of this unit.

Interpreting text Study the article ‘Urban dynamics and Sydney’s future’ (p. 176). Find evidence of the following urban dynamics: urban growth, suburbanisation, edge cities or regional cities, urban consolidation and exurbanisation. Write a report using these dynamics as organisers for the information drawn from the article.

ICT task The data used to illustrate the demographic and social changes occurring in Australia are primarily for the period between the 1991 and 2001 Censuses. Update this information using the data from the 2006 Census. Do the new data confirm the trends apparent in 1999–2001? What are the differences? What trends have been confirmed?

Urban decay and renewal

The deterioration of the urban environment is known as urban decay. It occurs when urban infrastructure falls into disrepair and buildings are left empty for long periods of time. The redevelopment of such areas so that they better meet the needs of people is referred to as urban renewal.

Until the mid-1960s, Sydney’s inner city (like the inner-city precincts of many developed world cities) experienced urban decay. This involved:

- the deterioration of residential areas, especially those dominated by nineteenth-century working-class housing
- the decline in inner-city investment associated with the suburbanisation of manufacturing in particular, but also of warehousing, retail and office-based activities. (See the Geofocus box ‘The suburbanisation of manufacturing and warehousing’, p. 182.)
Since the 1960s, residential deterioration has been reversed in some areas by the process of gentrification: the renovation and occupation of old terrace housing by younger, higher-income earners in professional and managerial occupations. (See figure 2.3.31.) During the 1980s and especially the 1990s and early 2000s, global economic restructuring has acted to promote reinvestment in the inner city, focusing on medium-density and high-density housing on sites once occupied by manufacturing and warehousing. (See figures 2.3.33 to 2.3.35, p. 180.)

Some urban-renewal initiatives have been large scale and involve considerable public (government) investment. In the case of Sydney’s Darling Harbour–Pymont–Ultimo area, a whole suburban precinct has been subject to one of the world’s largest urban-renewal projects. This area was once blighted by urban decay. (See G. Kleeman, R. Lane, H. Rhodes and P. Elliott, Australian Explorations, Heinemann, Melbourne, 2004, pp. 169–177 for a more detailed study of this important urban-renewal project.)

Rhodes: an urban precinct transformed

Suburban Rhodes has been associated with Sydney’s industrial history since the early 1900s. In 1928, Timbrol, one of the first chemical factories to locate in the Rhodes peninsula, commenced the manufacture of timber preservatives from coal tar oil. In 1955, Union Carbide purchased the Timbrol factory and commenced the production of pesticides, including DDT and the defoliant Agent Orange, which was manufactured there during the Vietnam War. Dioxins were produced as an unwanted by-product. Nearby, the Orca (ICI) facility commenced making paint, pigment, resins and phthalates in the 1940s. By the late 1980s most industrial activity on the peninsula had ceased, but the land was too contaminated to be used for residential or commercial development.

In the late 1990s, the Walker Corporation, recognising the commercial potential of the site, commenced the redevelopment of the southern end of the peninsula. Because the 23 ha Rhodes Waterside site was contaminated with toxic substances it had to be fully rehabilitated before construction could begin. This process was supervised by the Environment Protection Agency (EPA).

When completed, the Rhodes Waterside development will include a large shopping mall and cinema complex, commercial office space and residential apartments.

Other developers have taken responsibility for the redevelopment of the former Allied Feeds site (Meriton’s Sienna project), Australand’s Corporate Park project on the eastern side of the railway and the former Lednez/Union Carbide site (see figure 2.3.33, p. 180), which was owned by the NSW Maritime Authority.

Once completed, the Rhodes peninsula will be home to more than 7300 Sydneysiders. Firms now operating out of Rhodes include Nestlé, National Australia Bank and Australand.
Urban decay is much more apparent in US cities (see figure 2.3.36) compared to those in Australia, Japan and Europe. The reasons for this lie in the way US cities fund the provision of urban infrastructure. The following sample study, ‘Los Angeles: a divided city’, illustrates this point.

**Los Angeles: a divided city**

Los Angeles provides a fascinating insight into the processes that influence both urban form and character. It illustrates how the contemporary social divisions that are apparent within US society are reflected in a city’s morphology and how important the role of government is in influencing that morphology.

Since the 1970s, LA’s rich have been retreating to walled estates and high-security apartment blocks while the mass of the population live in a spreading suburbia. Meanwhile, the homeless and dispossessed make do in the deserted back lots of the inner city.

The underlying demographic, economic and structural changes taking place in US cities are much the same as those occurring in most modern cities: a population drain away from inner suburbs, the relocation of employment and industry in outer areas, and degradation of the social and physical infrastructure in the inner city. However, the outcomes are quite different, especially when compared with Australian cities. In Australia, these processes have not led to the urban wastelands that now dominate the centres of the largest cities in the United States.

In Los Angeles, the communities hit hardest by economic restructuring have been those in the centre of the city. As jobs and investment have relocated to the outer counties there has been almost total abandonment of inner residential areas. This has left the unemployed and low-income residents locked into a cycle of poverty. In Australia, these areas have often been gentrified by the young, affluent middle class. Why the difference in outcome?

The answer lies largely in the role of government as a provider of urban infrastructure and services. US city authorities have traditionally been responsible for a wide range of urban services. Throughout the 1960s and most of the 1970s, the Federal Government assumed a greater role with the introduction of a range of well-funded programs designed to assist urban areas.

During the 1980s, however, under successive Republican administrations there was a dramatic reduction in the level of federal support for cities. The policy of ‘fiscal federalism’ shifted responsibility for housing, urban infrastructure, education, law and order and most social services (except welfare and health) to cities and municipalities. Federal housing assistance, for example, was cut by as much as 80%.

City authorities funded their responsibilities largely through the imposition of property taxes. As the process of suburbanisation gathered pace, the tax base of inner-city areas declined sharply. Increasing property taxes to make up for federal cutbacks simply encouraged more people to leave. The only response available was to cut the level of services provided at a community level. This led to a downward spiral in the quality of the inner-urban environment. The urban infrastructure has been left to crumble and the range of social problems has escalated. Urban gangs, the devastating effects of ‘crack’, ‘coke’ and alcohol, and the sense of isolation and rejection that come with poverty have had a debilitating effect. Those who are able to leave do so, turning their backs on those who are caught in the downward spiral of decline.
Throughout the twentieth century, centrifugal forces combined with centripetal forces to produce decentralisation of manufacturing and warehousing activities. Centrifugal forces are those directed away from the centre while centripetal forces are those directed towards the centre. The centrifugal forces included downtown congestion, lack of space and rising land values. The centripetal forces consisted of cheap and abundant land in the suburbs, low land taxes, and good railroad and highway access. However, most smaller manufacturing operations (such as textiles, footwear and clothing), which required frequent contact with local buyers and other firms, remained in the inner city well into the 1960s.

Major technological advances were required to break the association between the inner city and manufacturing and warehousing. These included:

- changes in factory production technology
- the development of major urban freeway networks
- cost reductions in short-distance trucking operations.

The last two are closely related. Wholesalers also benefited from improved overall accessibility. Smaller warehouses scattered throughout the metropolitan area could be combined into a single, large, freeway-orientated facility. (See figure 2.3.40.) Product distribution was transformed from a centre-outward to a suburbia-inwards operation. These changes date from the mid-1960s. After this time, inner-city industrial and storage land became vacant or derelict.

The other major factor was economic restructuring and deregulation of economic activity from the mid-1970s. Highly protected industries (such as footwear, textiles and clothing) were most affected. Many were forced to close down, with the greatest impacts on inner-city manufacturing landuses. In Sydney, this adversely affected inner-city areas, such as Ultimo, Chippendale and Surry Hills.

As a general rule, the economics of landuse change are governed by three factors. These are:

- annual operating costs, or the fixed costs of maintaining a building or existing landuse
- the value of the locality and fittings
- the annual return on the fixed asset—buildings, plant and equipment. This is important, because land has no value except in terms of what it can be used for.

The third factor (the idea of value in use) is what governs, for instance, the tearing down of a several-storey office building perhaps only a decade old and its replacement with a much higher intensity landuse, say a multistorey building on the same site. This principle is the same for all landuses, residential and non-residential. That is why in some areas it is profitable to buy an older house on a large block of land, tear down the dwelling and erect several townhouses on the same site: the sale value or rental from the new use exceeds the sale value or rental of the former use, in spite of the value destroyed in changing the use.

The key to the economics of landuse change, including urban decay and renewal, hinges on investment opportunities associated with a particular site. If a greater economic return can be gained from an alternative landuse, the landuse may indeed change. As the financial return of a site declines it may be abandoned or given over to another activity. If the potential exists for a higher return, the existing buildings may be demolished or upgraded and given over to an activity that provides a greater return on the money invested.
Urban decay and renewal in Sydney

Since the late 1980s there has been evidence of fundamental changes in the balance of investment and population growth between the inner city and the suburbs. Prior to this, most residential and non-residential development occurred in suburbia. Since then the balance has changed towards the inner city.

The 1996 Census revealed that, for the first time since 1911, there was a dramatic change from negative to substantial positive growth in Sydney’s inner-city population. In the five years to 2003 inner-Sydney’s population grew by an average 3.8% per annum. The number of workers based in the CBD has grown 12.6% since 1996 to 348,000 in 2004.

There has been a surge in investment, and property values in inner-city areas have increased significantly. Much of this takes the form of new apartment buildings. (See figure 2.3.42.) By the late 1990s and early 2000s, the number of multi-unit dwellings constructed in inner-city areas exceeded total dwellings built in outer suburbia. Much of this new inner-city residential construction is on land previously occupied by non-residential landuses. This has occurred through land clearance or conversion; for example, of former warehouses. (See figure 2.3.43.) Some of it takes the traditional form of gentrification: the refurbishment of nineteenth-century terraces by middle-income to higher-income earners. Paddington, Surry Hills and Glebe are good examples of gentrified suburbs; although Glebe also includes lower-income redevelopment subsidised by the government.

An outline of central Sydney’s major urban renewal projects can be accessed on the City of Sydney’s website under ‘Urban renewal projects’ and ‘City improvements’. Examples include the Carlton United Breweries site, Green Square and the Redfern Precinct. Information about urban renewal projects throughout the metropolitan area can be accessed in the NSW Department of Planning website. Non-Sydney examples of large-scale urban renewal projects include Newcastle’s Honeysuckle redevelopment and the plans to redevelop the city’s Royal Newcastle Hospital site overlooking Newcastle Beach. (See figure 2.3.41.) Information relating to these can be found on the Department of Planning’s website.
Urban villages

An urban village is a distinctive residential (and/or commercial) district whose functional form and character are widely seen as being influenced by a particular community.

The notion of a distinctive residential district made up of groups of people with a common culture and an identifiable local focus begs the question of ‘what is community?’ Basically, ‘community’ is made up of two main elements. These are community as place versus community as society.

One, community as place, is based on shared space; the other, community as society, is based on shared social organisation and interest. Thus, community as place deals with people who, through their local involvement and participation, share a local community space.
Cities within cities

There is another level of community that is best described as the regional city. There is an increasing tendency for a particular part of the city to be seen as a focus of employment as well as of social activity. This is brought about by the suburbanisation of employment; recent advances in telecommunications; technological innovations in transportation, distribution and information processing; and the growth of edge cities with their major retail, office and manufacturing agglomerations. Such economic regionalisation acts to reinforce the social regionalisation of cities and residential segregation on the basis of socioeconomic status. These characteristics have long been a feature of economically advanced Western societies.

As journey-to-work times have been reduced, so too have journey-to-leisure times. This has reinforced the regional city concept. Fewer people are attracted to the central city. As more facilities become available in Sydney’s west—such as cinema complexes and the vast Westfield shopping centres—the trip to the city becomes less necessary.

This whole process is leading to the emergence of the ‘diversified-integrated’ city, or cities within cities. Sydney examples include:

- Parramatta, Liverpool and Penrith—defined as regional centres by the Sydney Metropolitan Strategy
- Bankstown, Blacktown, Bondi Junction, Brookvale/Dee Why, Burwood, Campbelltown, Castle Hill, Chatswood (see figure 2.3.1, p. 158), Hornsby, Hurstville and Kogarah—defined as major centres
- Rouse Hill, Leppington and Green Square—planned centres
- Sutherland, Cabramatta, Mt Druitt, Fairfield and Prairiewood—potential centres.

A considerable share of the commuting undertaken by people living in the Sydney urban area, as in other Australian metropolitan centres, is now suburb to suburb. Fewer than 20% of today’s work-related trips are to the city centre. The journey to shop follows the same pattern. Today, only about 8% of Sydney’s shopping dollar is spent in the CBD, well below the peaks of 15% during the 1970s. CBD retailing has become a niche market, a regional shopping centre in its own right.

Increasing regionalisation of Sydney’s journey to work is important because of established relationships between patterns of work, leisure and everyday activities. So long as work is far from home, often involving hours of travel on public transport, there is little time left for leisure or domestic pursuits during the week. Regionalisation of the city, bringing place of work and place of residence closer together (combined with the development of a leisure infrastructure), contributes to the development of regional cultures and identification. People living to the south of Sydney’s Georges River have developed a regional identity focusing on ‘the Shire’ (that is, the Sutherland Shire), which stretches from the beaches of Cronulla in the east to Menai in the west.
Community as society focuses on groups of people, such as business people, the gay community, university students, ethnic communities, and people who follow a particular football team. These people may come from a broad region or even the city as a whole. Sometimes these intersect, creating distinctive urban spaces or ‘urban villages’.

Examples of urban villages in Sydney include:
- Double Bay and Mosman—significant shopping and social precincts for higher socioeconomic status groups (see figure 2.3.44A, p. 185)
- Norton Street, Leichhardt—a focus of local café society, with a strong Italian presence (see figure 2.3.44B, p. 185)
- King Street, Newtown—a mix of students and young professionals
- Chinatown in the CBD—partly as a tourist attraction, but more importantly as a focus for Chinese–Australian interests
- Brighton-Le-Sands—a strong Greek community focus
- Darlinghurst—the centre of Sydney’s gay and lesbian community.

Some other cases are less readily identifiable as villages. For example, Cabramatta in Sydney’s Fairfield is often associated with Vietnamese immigrants. However, that only highlights the high concentration of Vietnamese living in this area. In itself, it overlooks the large numbers of other community groups living in the same area. Going further afield, local concentrations of, say, Korean immigrants in the Eastwood area in Sydney’s north-west highlight a ‘community within a community’, not an urban village as such.

**Explain** how a community within a community differs from an urban village. As a class, brainstorm examples.

1. **Brainstorming** If you live in Sydney, compile a list of urban precincts that you think qualify for the title ‘urban village’.
2. **Fieldwork** Visit an urban village and observe the types of commercial activities that occur there. How do these activities reflect the needs of the community with which it is identified? How do the streetscape and ambience of the area reflect the interests of the community it serves?
3. **Fieldwork** Visit an urban village with which you are unfamiliar. Based on your observations, construct a profile of the type of community with which you think the precinct is associated.
4. **Interpreting text** Study the Geofocus box ‘Cities within cities’ (p. 185).
   a. Define the term regional city when it used to describe a city within a city.
   b. What developments have led to the emergence of such centres?
   c. What tendencies do the development of such centres reinforce?
   d. How has this affected the central city?
   e. Use information from the text to describe the relative importance of Sydney’s CBD.
5. **Fieldwork** Visit a regional city located within a large metropolitan centre. Observe (and record) the types of commercial and cultural/recreational activities available there. How have these changed over time? (This may require some library based research or interviews with older residents.) Describe the nature of the built environment. Investigate its transport links to the surrounding area.
6. **Research task** If you live in a large urban centre, survey a group of students to determine their family’s pattern of movement within the urban area. For example, ask them about their family’s journey-to-work, journey-to-shop and journey-to-leisure movements. These can be mapped. How often do they travel to the city centre for work, leisure and shopping? Select the most appropriate graphical forms to display the findings of your survey. Mount a wall display.
7. **Using Google Earth** Using Google Earth, explore at least two of the cities within a city or ‘edge cities’ listed in this section of the text.
Spatial exclusion and the development of fortified suburbs

In the cities of both the developed and developing worlds, the desire of the urban elite to protect their luxury lifestyles has resulted in practices that limit spatial access and the freedom of movement of other urban dwellers. Examples include high-security suburbs, walled estates, and security conscious shopping malls and business centres. This process is known as spatial exclusion. The control and regulation of land use is the usual means by which ‘undesirable elements’ are excluded from a particular urban space. This practice is often referred to as exclusionary zoning.

In Australia, the gated urban community and ‘exclusionary zoning’ are primarily products of developments in the United States. Exclusionary zoning is an offshoot of the economic or class segregation in the United States (and elsewhere) and dates from the 1920s. The

Gated communities are residential areas with restricted access in which normally public spaces are privatised. They are security developments with designated perimeters, usually walls or fences, and controlled entrances that are intended to prevent penetration by nonresidents. They include new developments and older areas retrofitted with gates and fences, and they are found from the inner cities to the exurbs and from the richest neighbourhoods to the poorest.


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In the United States they now talk of ‘Fortress America’: the mainly white, suburban fortresses referred to by some as ‘privatopias’. They include gated estates, home-owner associations and apartment buildings with surveillance cameras and doormen. For the most part they house people who wish to isolate themselves from the wider community. Perceptions of increasing suburban crime is often cited as the main reason for moving to such developments. These fears are often a result of a ‘moral panic’ whipped up by the shock jocks of talkback radio.

The number of people in the United States living in these security communities increased from 4 million in 1996 to approximately 16 million in 2004. (See figure 2.3.45.)

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Stone Creek Ranch, Delray Beach, Florida
Nestled amid 187 acres of rolling green vistas, stunning treescapes and expansive sparkling lakes, Stone Creek Ranch in Delray Beach ... south Florida’s grandest estate home community. Beyond its stately entryway, distinguished by a breathtaking waterfall and majestic stone gatehouse, only 37 luxurious estates, each on 2+1/2-acre and larger lakefront homesites, will grace this serenely private enclave... Stone Creek Ranch ... For many a dream. For you a reality.

Kenco Communities website
The desire of the emerging suburbanising middle class was to maintain a social distance from the immigrant underclass of the inner city. This was later extended to include the lower social status groups generally. Its purpose was to guard against a widespread fear of crime: the threat to property and person.

The municipality of Mt Laurel in New Jersey provides a good example of exclusionary zoning in practice. Local authorities banned apartments and single-family homes on blocks smaller than a quarter of an acre. This made them very expensive. Although this zoning restriction was later declared illegal, it was typical of exclusionary practices exercised by many suburban municipalities. Even today, an extreme form of spatial exclusion can be found in parts of Los Angeles, where walled suburban communities are policed by armed guards who turn away ‘undesirable elements’.

Exclusionary zoning is not usually a feature of urban societies in other developed countries. In Australia, the division between the rich and poor is not as great as that found in the United States. The gap between the insiders and outcasts seems less pressing. Despite this, ‘moral panics’ associated with the presence of undesirable elements have led in recent years to the development of some ‘enclosed’ housing estates. Quite often, these take the form of elite residential developments, such as the ones shown in figures 2.3.46 (p. 187) and 2.3.47. Some inner-city gated communities are located near or adjacent to lower-class to middle-class residential precincts. Here the social divisions are often more stark. The number of Australians now living in gated communities is thought to number 100,000.

A more typical example of spatial exclusion is the emergence of the exclusive lifestyle estate as the principal form of ‘greenfield’ residential development. Such masterplanned estates are rarely walled. Exclusiveness is maintained by the expense involved in buying into such developments. The use of landscaped embankments and the posting of signs to remind outsiders that the facilities are for the exclusive use of residents are examples of strategies that ‘design out’ non-residents.

Some masterplanned estates actively practise exclusion to gain a market advantage. They promise safety and isolation from perceived cultural and socioeconomic difference. What is being sold is social conformity and homogeneity.
Behind the urban curtains

By MATT O’SULLIVAN

To insiders the suburb is a sanctuary from perceptions of rampant crime. But to outsiders the guardhouse, gates and security patrols invoke feelings of exclusion and evidence of growing disparities between rich and poor.

Welcome to Macquarie Links. Sandwiched between the Hume Highway and a railway line in Campbelltown… The justification of residents for the high security is a need for shelter from dangers lurking beyond their gates. To back their claims, they need only look across the rolling fairways of the golf course estate to neighbouring Macquarie Fields, where police [once] battled [rioting] residents…

But paradise is an illusion in Fortress Australia. Almost 20 years after Australia’s first gated community opened at Sanctuary Cove on the Gold Coast, research here and abroad is challenging the rationale for homeowners to hide behind high walls.

Research shows the walls do not prevent serious crime. ‘What it does say is that you can put yourself in a secure estate but at the end of the day most serious crime is not between strangers,’ says Dr Murray Lee, a criminologist at the University of Western Sydney.

That’s not stopping homeowners in estates across the country following the lead of Americans and erecting buffers between themselves and outsiders… Already, there are an estimated 100 000 people in Australia living in gated communities ranging from resort-style golf course estates to townhouse complexes with streets accessible only to people carrying swipe cards and where surveillance cameras scan for criminals.

In the United States up to 12 per cent of the population lives in gated communities, despite researchers painting a bleak picture of the consequences for those inside. A study in California in 2000 predicted that residents would suffer an ‘erosion of the social fabric of their community’ because of a lower reported sense of community behind walls.

In Britain, a study in 2003 for the Centre for Neighbourhood Research concluded that crime in gated communities is at similar levels to that in suburbs outside.

A 2002 British study… concluded that gated communities’ walls have little impact on keeping criminals out. ‘What changes is perception: people feel safer behind gates, although at the same time their fear of the outside world increases,’ said the study’s author, Anna Minton…

Academics here also criticise gated communities. ‘This is a phenomenon largely driven by anxiety and a fear of crime rather than the experience of crime,’ says Brendan Gleeson… [of] Griffith University in Queensland…

Security was one of the main reasons Brian, 36… moved in the middle of last year with his wife and eight-month-old child from Hornsby to Pacific Lakes Estate on the Central Coast.

‘It’s safe because it’s a community,’ he says. ‘We know all the people, they all look out for each other. It is very secure for kids. It is not so much a worry-about-crime thing, just a good feeling of community…

Security is also one of the main reasons Ian Davis bought at Macquarie Links. ‘You look at Sydney today and it is a dog fight,’ says Davis, a former Australian Test cricketer. ‘We are very happy there [at Macquarie Links].’

Davis believes high-security developments such as Macquarie Links are ‘the way of the future’. He moved there in late 2003 after seeing similar communities in the US. Police say the high security at Macquarie Links dramatically reduces the number of break-ins and vehicle thefts. But crimes such as domestic violence are on a par with non-gated communities of a similar socio-economic make-up.

The fears of residents at Macquarie Links—and other gated communities—defy statistics showing crime rates falling…

Opposition to gated communities is easy to find, especially from councils, academics and the wider community.

‘But amid the bad press, one aspect impossible to ignore is residents’ upbeat assessment of their communities. ‘People definitely felt safer on their streets at night. And if people feel safer they accrue benefits,’ Griffith University’s Burke says.

In the developing world, in cities like Jakarta, they ‘may be the only way forward’. They bring wealthy people into parts of cities where they would otherwise not live. ‘It’s a form of social bridging—if not a form of social bonding,’ Burke says.

Here it’s harder to determine whether gated estates are doing the same because the disparities in wealth are not as great…

What is clear is that gated communities are here to stay despite doubts over their effectiveness in reducing crime. ‘It’s going to take a body corporate to take [the walls] down and I don’t think there will be the momentum to bring them down,’ Burke says. ‘The mistakes we make now will play out for 50 to 100 years. Not every gated community is a mistake but we are going to be stuck with them for some time’…

Residec’s property analyst, John Edwards, says more gated communities are likely to be built as developers seek to differentiate themselves. ‘But I’m not sure in Australia that the population is looking for it.’

Sydney Morning Herald, 4 March 2005
Fieldwork activity

Investigating an urban dynamic operating in a country town or suburb: a fieldwork-based approach

Task
Develop and implement a research action plan investigating an urban dynamic operating in a suburb or country town.

Urban dynamics
- Suburbanisation
- Exurbanisation
- Counterurbanisation
- Decentralisation
- Urban decay and renewal
- Urban villages
- Spatial exclusion

Targeted syllabus outcomes

H3 analyses contemporary urban dynamics and applies them in specific contexts
H8 plans geographical inquiries to analyse and synthesise information from a variety of sources
H9 evaluates geographical information and sources for usefulness, validity and reliability
H10 applies maps, graphs and statistics, photographs and fieldwork to analyse and integrate data in geographical contexts
H12 explains geographical patterns, processes and future trends through appropriate case studies and illustrative examples
H13 communicates complex geographical information, ideas and issues using appropriate written and/or oral, cartographic and graphic forms

Stage 1: developing the research action plan

The first stage of this task involves the development of a research action plan. This is the means by which a selected urban dynamic can be investigated within a specific spatial context; that is, a suburb or country town.

In preparing your research framework you will develop a range of geographical skills and make progress towards the mastery of a number of important syllabus outcomes. The research action plan you develop should include:

- a title that includes the name of the selected urban dynamic and the suburb or country town being investigated
- a statement (and map, if appropriate) giving the location of the suburb or country town selected for the fieldwork investigation (100 words maximum) (H8, H13)
- a definition and brief explanation of the selected urban dynamic (300 words maximum) (H3, H13)
- a list of secondary sources relevant to the selected urban dynamic and an evaluation of their usefulness, validity and reliability (200 words maximum) (H8, H9)
- two or three geographical inquiry questions relevant to the selected urban dynamic (H8)
- a hypothesis derived from one of the geographical inquiry questions considered relevant to the selected urban dynamic (H8)
- an explanation of two inquiry based methodologies that could be used to investigate the questions identified as being relevant to the selected urban dynamic and to test your stated hypothesis (H8)
- an outline of how the anticipated research findings could be presented (200 words maximum) (H10, H12, H13)
- an outline of how the effectiveness of the research framework might be evaluated (100 words maximum) (H8).
Stage 2: implementing the research action plan
This second stage of the task provides you with an opportunity to implement the research action plan you have developed. Fieldwork involves the application of geography’s inquiry based methodology. By engaging in fieldwork you will develop a number of geographical skills and make progress towards the mastery of a number of important syllabus outcomes.

When implementing the research action plan you should:
- name the urban dynamic and locate the suburb or country town being investigated
- develop and trial the methods you intend to use to gather and record data in the field (H8)
- gather and process the relevant primary and secondary data (H8)
- communicate the findings of your research in the most appropriate written and/or graphic form (300 words maximum) (H13)
- evaluate, analyse and synthesise the data presented (H8, H9)
- use the data collected to answer your geographical inquiry questions and to prove or disprove the hypothesis that is under investigation (500 words maximum) (H3, H12, H13)
- evaluate the effectiveness of the research framework (200 words maximum) (H8).

Note: Ensure your research is conducted in an ethical manner.

Your fieldwork report
When writing up your fieldwork you should include:
- a title that includes the name of the selected urban dynamic and the suburb or country town being investigated
- a statement (and map, if appropriate) giving the location of the suburb or country town selected for the fieldwork investigation
- a definition and brief explanation of the selected urban dynamic being investigated
- a list of secondary sources relevant to the selected urban dynamic
- the geographical inquiry questions being considered
- the hypothesis being tested
- an outline of the inquiry based methodologies used to test your hypothesis
- the presentation of the data collected in a written and/or graphic form
- a discussion of the research findings
- an evaluation of the research framework.

Investigating urban consolidation
Pre-fieldwork activities
1. Review the section of the text dealing with urban consolidation (see pp. 171–8) to ensure that you have a sound understanding of the relevant concepts and the arguments for and against urban consolidation.
2. Gather additional secondary data from the Internet, the NSW Department of Urban and Regional Planning, the relevant local government authority and any community based interest groups with an interest in the issue.

Synthesise the main issues raised in the material gathered. Evaluate these sources for their usefulness, validity and reliability.

3. Using small-area data collected by the Australian Bureau of Statistics, construct a profile of the suburb or country town being investigated. Include both demographic and socioeconomic data. Compare the profile developed with that of Australia as a whole. How ‘typical’ is the area under investigation?

Fieldwork-based activities
1. Select a suburban area or a country town.
2. Prepare a base map of the area selected.
3. Develop a classification system covering the main types of residential development in the area being studied. For example, classify residential landuses by density (low, medium or high) or by type (townhouse and villa developments, duplexes, three-storey ‘walk-up’ apartment/flat developments, multitorey housing units, shared-facility cluster-type housing). Use photography to illustrate each category of housing.
4. Contact the relevant local government authority and do the following:
   a. Request information relating to the council’s policy on urban consolidation. Does the council actively promote urban consolidation or does it use its planning powers to limit such developments?
   b. Find out whether there are any State Government regulations that restrict the council’s autonomy in matters dealing with urban consolidation.
   c. Obtain a copy of the council’s zoning regulations relating to the construction of medium-density and high-density housing in the area studied.
5. Interview a local real estate agent. Ask the agent about:
   a. the demand for medium-density and high-density housing in the area being studied
   b. the price range for this type of residential development compared with low-density, detached dwellings
   c. which demographic groups are attracted to this type of housing
   d. the attitude of the local council and residents to this type of residential development.
6. Using your system of classification, map the types of residential development in the area studied. Compare your map with the council’s map of areas zoned for low-density, medium-density and high-density housing. Note any pattern evident. For example, are the areas zoned for medium-density and high-density housing adjacent to railway stations?
7. Develop and undertake a survey to ascertain the level of community support for medium-density and high-density residential developments in established residential areas.
8. Undertake qualitative research to ascertain why local residents support or oppose such developments. Then complete the following tasks:
   a. Present the data in the most appropriate graphic form.
   b. Comment on the views of local residents.