

**Boarding Houses, Owners and Tenants:
The demise of an old form of working-class housing**

Submitted by

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Declaration

I, Daniel William Carmody, declare that the work presented in this thesis is, to the best of my knowledge and belief, original, except as acknowledged in the text, and that this material has not been submitted, either in whole or part, for any award at this or any other educational institution.

Signed:.....*Daniel W. Carmody*.....

On this *23* day, of December, Two Thousand and Eight (2008).

Abstract

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This research investigates an often forgotten area of affordable housing, the boarding house and as such the thesis fits into the broader frame work on affordable housing, which is an issue of growing magnitude. Internationally as well as nationally this form of housing has helped many people over the last 160 years, and in Australia the main group to be housed has been the working class. Currently, the majority of boarding house occupants are people on pensions and assorted benefits. Boarding house tenants include aged pensioners, a few workers and many people from various institutions, tending to make many boarding houses appear as a pseudo respite facility. Currently, the general population of boarding houses is about 75 percent male and 25 percent female with most people on very limited incomes. These features often make the boarding house, the housing of last resort.

This thesis explores the loss of boarding houses in Brisbane. It covers many structural aspects which have affected the continuance of this old form of housing. Included in the exploration are factors like the influence of globalisation which has brought about many changes to the city, including urban renewal, and an intensified housing market activity. The thesis also investigates the social consequences of these changes to the tenants of boarding houses.

From a position of Structuration the methods used here were a combination of secondary data (ABS) analysis and primary data analysis in the form of interviews with owners' and tenants' of boarding houses. Due to the small number of responses, secondary data was included.

Australia wide there has been a loss of 30 percent of boarding house stock between 2001 and 2006. Structural changes such as the deinstitutionalisation and the construction of Aged Pensioner units have contributed to changing the client base to a more problematic one which does not entice owners of boarding houses stay in business. Further, the growing costs for

many boarding house owners, as well as their advancing age works against many of them staying in the boarding house industry. The tenants have suggested that some boarding houses remain in poor condition like those some of those boarding houses of the past. The size and condition of the rooms and conditions of the boarding house are at best rudimentary at best in many boarding houses.

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CHAPTER 1:

INTRODUCTION

This work focuses on a small section of the rental housing market, namely boarding houses. This once popular form of housing is rapidly disappearing, which is of great concern, given that for many Australians, boarding houses are a 'last option' form of accommodation. By focusing upon boarding houses, this research enters into the debate over affordable housing. This is at a time when housing is slipping out of the reach of many Australians (Wulff, Yates, & Burke, 2001:12). It is a time when the growing lack of affordable housing seems to be impacting on some of the middle class as well as lower paid workers, let alone those on welfare. While there is some evidence that a minority of people are using land and housing for wealth creation, perhaps as a form of superannuation (Badcock & Beer, 2000:2), for the vast majority this is not the case.

For most people, housing is more than just a house or a commodity, it is a home. A home, or more importantly, home ownership has been almost mythologised; seen as a sacrosanct space; as demonstrated in some of the adages that Paris (1993:5) collected for his work on housing in Australia. In his work, Paris laid out some sentimental and very powerful (although very patriarchal) thoughts on the home, like: "A home is man's castle", "A man is a king in his own house", "Home is best, though it be small" and "Home is where the heart is". From these sayings, it appears as if the home is a happy place. But not everyone saw the home as a joyous retreat or a fortress for men. The famous writer, George Bernard Shaw insightfully highlighted the dark side of the home, when he described it as "a girl's prison and a woman's workshop" (Shaw in Paris, 1993:5).

These thoughts remind us of the important role that housing plays in our lives. Housing is of special interest to social researchers as it is often the arena for the playing out of many of our social relations. But, at a root level, it can be argued that housing is a basic human need (Habitat International Coalition, 2006; 1). Beyond the basic need, other benefits of owning a house may explain why there are such high rates of home ownership in Australia.

Approximately 65 percent of Australians are homeowners, either outright owners or in the process of ownership (ABS, 2008). It has been documented that a home offers the owner benefits that are not shared by renters. For instance, these include: higher levels of well-being from secure, affordable housing and this flows on to better overall physical health and psychic utility (mental wellness) (Badcock & Beer, 2000: 4). However, for a proportion of home owners, the Australian dream can become a nightmare of rising interest rates and inflated house prices (Grieg, 2006: 321).

For over 30 percent of households, rental accommodation is their “home”. Many renters and new home buyers experience “housing stress” when they pay more than 30 percent of their income on housing. Unlike homeowners, most renters remain in housing stress for as long as they are in rental accommodation (Badcock & Beer, 2000: 4) because renters carry the costs of price increases, interest rate rises and other increases, through increased rents (Disney, 2004: 1). The majority of renters tend to remain in housing stress without the associated benefits shared by homeowners (Badcock & Beer, 2000: 4).

With regards to income within Australian households, the configuration of the household; the ages, educational and health levels of the members of the household, can limit peoples’ incomes. Wulff et al. (2001: 12) point out that there are increasing numbers of single-person headed households. As well as this, approximately one quarter of all households are one-person households (Wulff, 2001:467). These demographic trends may come from people deferring marriage or never marrying at all (Birrell, Rapson & Hourigan, 2004: 11). Undoubtedly, there are some in one-person households who are there because of divorce and other family break-downs. What these trends amount to, is a greater number of people needing affordable housing; very often rental accommodation. For those individuals on a low income and with limited bargaining power, housing becomes a more problematic issue.

Housing, or rather a lack of housing becomes a greater issue and more problematic the further down the economic scale one goes. The poorer one is, the greater the struggle it is to be housed and to remain so (Stilwell, 1993:48). In a market-driven economy, affordable housing is

a high priority for most people, but availability and affordability do not necessarily go hand in hand. There is the problem of 'the market' failing to provide adequate affordable housing for those on low incomes (Horn, 2002: 26). With a limited supply of affordable housing available, those in charge of rental properties, like property managers, can use more stringent 'screening' techniques (Short, Minnery, Mead, O'Flaherty & Peake, 2006: 933). For those that find themselves caught between a lack of housing and being excluded by the screening process may in turn, retreat to their 'best' option. For some, that might mean sleeping on a series of friends' couches, or sleeping rough in parks or derelict buildings. For others their best housing option is the boarding house (Burke 1998: 293).

As the title of this thesis indicates, this study is concerned with boarding houses, or more precisely the loss of boarding houses. Significantly, Australia-wide, some 440 boarding houses and private hotels have been lost between the last two Census dates (2001 and 2006) (Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2007). This amounts to a loss of about one third of boarding houses in a very short period of time. The causes of these losses are many, ranging from an increase in more problematic tenants, increased governmental regulation, and city reshaping, to name a few. Boarding houses are businesses and people invest in businesses for profit, whether this is for immediate cash returns or for long term capital gains, or both. However, whilst for some boarding houses are just a business; for many others they represent a critical source of affordable housing.

If boarding houses are seen in minimal terms, they are a shelter or a roof over peoples' heads. Yet to some, boarding houses may represent a "home". Whether just a shelter or a home, boarding houses still house a surprisingly large number of people each year. At the last Census (2006), there were over 16,200 people in boarding houses in Australia (ABS, 2007). The boarding house tenants are predominantly male: a little over 75 percent of the tenants are male (ABS, 2007). The high rates of male tenants in boarding houses are not surprising, as this has historically been the norm in Australia.

Boarding houses have a long, chequered history in European Australia. There were always boarding houses of varying quality, housing various socio-economic groups for a variety of fees. Boarding houses now, as was often the case then, are a relatively cheap housing option. They housed some of the early low-paid, mainly male, workers in colonial Australia (Garton, 1990). Many of the new migrants to Queensland often stayed in Brisbane boarding houses until they 'settled in' to other forms of housing (Lawson, 1973: 93). In the 1920s, as domestic staff became hard to find, a small section of the upper middle and middle classes began using boarding houses (though a more refined version of them) (O'Hanlon, 2002). By mid-twentieth century, a number of modern industrial era workers joined the throng of boarding house tenants (Hovarth & Engels 1985: 147).

Boarding houses were and are, for some people, a 'short term' form of housing, whilst for others they tend to be longer term. In the contemporary context, boarding houses are apt to accommodate people who often have one or two things in common, namely, poor health and very low incomes. Many people who use boarding houses are vulnerable people who suffer disabilities such as mental illness and are receiving limited incomes in the form of disability pensions (Jope, 2000). With the boarding house industry in decline, what other housing options are there for many of these people when boarding houses no longer exist? What action can these disempowered people take, apart from chasing fewer affordable boarding house places? The only other foreseeable option available to many of them is to be homeless.

Significantly, about 100,000 people in Australia are homeless (Mercer, 2007: 1) and lack any form of safe and secure housing in a time of continued high economic prosperity. Many more people are struggling to keep themselves housed, due to the escalating costs associated with housing. Interestingly, one quarter of all households are one-person households, which may suggest, that many of this group may neither be able to afford nor want larger types of housing, like a three bedroom detached house. They may prefer a single bedroom flat or shared accommodation. One type of shared accommodation is the boarding house, yet boarding houses are closing down.

It is this odd paradox of the juxtaposition of increasing needs with diminishing supplies which partly encouraged this work, along with a curiosity about boarding houses. This paradoxical position raised the following research questions: "What are the factors associated with the loss of boarding houses, and what influences these losses?" Further, what are the social consequences of declining boarding house stock for the current and prospective tenants?" These seemingly simple, yet pertinent questions direct us to the present research objectives. Overall, there are three broad areas of investigation. The first is the need to identify key structural factors (including urban renewal, urban consolidation, and government policy initiatives) which may be linked to the loss of affordable boarding house stock. The second is to investigate the ways in which the changing operational demands affect the owners of boarding houses decisions to either retain ownership of their boarding house or divest themselves, of what they may see as an increasingly problematic business. And three, investigate the ways in which the ongoing loss of boarding house accommodation impacts upon the everyday lives of the boarding house tenants. Having outlined the nucleus of this research, the structure of this thesis is outlined below.

In seeking to answer the questions raised above, the thesis first focuses on the background literature in the area under review. Chapter 2, the literature review, focuses on the changing nature of cities, which includes information on urban renewal, urban consolidation, gentrification, and social displacement, all of which have a flow-on effect on boarding houses. From the brief sketch of modern cities in Chapter 2, the thesis moves on to a consideration of the research procedures in Chapter 3.

In Chapter 3, the focus is on methodology and the methods used to gain insights into the questions posed. Because of the twin nature of the questions, an ontological position of structuration was taken. This position allows for a parallel exploration of the macro and micro factors of this research. Therefore, there are two types of research methods used in this thesis: quantitative and qualitative. Firstly, a time series of Australian house prices, quantities of boarding house stock and the boarding house tenant population are explored and explained.

Although the data is often a little dated due to its periodical collection and publication, this method does however, offer a 'snapshot' or a 'bird's eye' view of the trends of boarding house stocks which enhances our understanding about boarding house losses. A qualitative approach was also used to ascertain the experience of both those who own boarding houses and those who reside in boarding houses.

The qualitative method (Interview) was chosen because it allowed for both tenants and owners "understanding" to come forward and explain their situation, as they see it. This approach offers a bridge between the snapshot and what is happening now, thus helping us to better understand the social world around us through the informants' understanding. The intention of the research design is to explain the loss of boarding houses and to gain a further understanding what this loss means to those most affected. The next chapter aims at broadening our understanding of boarding houses in Australian history.

In Chapter 4, the history chapter, a glimpse of the many people who used boarding houses with varying levels of comfort and cost: and of life inside a boarding house is provided. These houses had strong class divisions between the middle classes and the poorer working classes. For the more well-to-do, it was a lifestyle relieved of the burdens of staffing shortages and the drudgery of running a home. For other people, the boarding houses were used as a temporary shelter before moving on or re-establishing themselves elsewhere. However, for the low-income people they were more reliant on this form for accommodation, and this reliance continues today.

There has remained a constant demand for boarding house accommodation, even though the client base may have altered in a post-industrial Australia. Chapter 5 outlines the re-organisation of Brisbane. In the past, many of the suburbs of Brisbane were once heavily working-class suburbs with some boasting many public service initiatives that supported many of the local residents' needs. For some of the working class home-owners, urban renewal, urban consolidation and gentrification has come as a tremendous boon. Other working-class residents have suffered and are 'doing it tough' due to increasing property rates. For the local poor,

however, this translates into greater insecurity and expense, especially for those in the remaining boarding houses and those in other rental properties. This chapter explores material relating to urban renewal and structural processes. From here the focus turns to the boarding house owners and boarding house tenants in Chapter 6.

Chapter 6 is a composite chapter which deals with the interview material of both the owners and the tenants of boarding houses. The first part of the chapter outlines the findings from a number of interviews with boarding house owners, as well as information garnered from various other sources. This integrated information clearly shows the everyday workings of an old form of housing in a modern setting as well as some of the structural changes and the actions of boarding house owners. The second part of Chapter 6 also outlines the findings from interviews with boarding house tenants. Here, the changing situation for the tenants is laid out. This part of the chapter is based on a few very open and frank interviews, combined with information collected from other sources. The tenants explain their position in relation to boarding houses; but at the same time provide glimpses of life inside the boarding house. Placed in context, all this information broadens our understanding of life in a form of housing that is diminishing. Overall, the chapter highlights a different world to the ordinary day to day one that many of us may experience.

Chapter 7, the last chapter links together the issues that were raised in the previous chapters and draws them together in a comprehensive analysis in an effort to explain the demise of boarding houses in Australia and the impact that this will have on boarding house owners and tenants. Based on the research findings, predictions are made about the future of the boarding house industry as a whole, which leads to a discussion and recommendations about affordable housing, especially for people with mental illness. The discussion also covers the apparent mutually exclusive situation of an economy that is thriving on consumption - especially the consumption of housing - and the urgent need for affordable housing. To put all this in context, it becomes necessary to explore in more detail the background of the changing city. The next

chapter (Chapter 2) explores the changes to the structural elements, which bring about dramatic transformations to city space and impact on the boarding house industry.

CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW:
FROM GLOBAL CHANGE TO LOCAL OUTCOMES

Boarding houses once formed an important part of affordable low-income housing in Australia (Anderson, et al., 2003: 1). However, since World War II, the boarding house, as an acceptable form of housing, has steadily declined (Badcock & Cloher, 1980:151). Elsewhere in the Western world this phenomenon is also occurring (Stone, 2001: 24). The changes to boarding house numbers are attributable to broader structural phenomena in the economic and social areas; and therefore it is necessary to consider the subject from a broader perspective. Some of the changes to boarding house stock stem from global forces and the actions designed to regenerate the fading facade of “the city”, thus giving it a re-birth and a return to a position of economic viability. That is, globally, governments are attempting to re-vitalise their major cities in an effort to attract business and tourists. This revitalisation has led to an increased demand for housing by the new city workers. This increased demand in turn has helped inflate housing market prices, thereby creating a very expensive housing market. While the supply of high cost housing is more than meeting this demand, the housing supply for low and middle income earners has fallen short of the demand (Disney, 2004).

Inequality and the city

It has been noted that “[C]ities are one physical expression of a set of broader forces governing the organisation of society” (Maher, 1982: 2). Cities are the power relations in spatial form where basic social inequalities are perceived in physical layout. To this end, those who have the power through money, class, and other means can monopolise valued social resources, including urban space and housing resources (Maher, 1982: 2). According to Butler, the city encompasses great wealth and poverty and many conditions in between (Butler, 2003:7). New wealth is brought about through the re-development of the cities which make them into a global city (Butler, 2003:7). These cities contain booming financial sectors (Hamnett, 2003:5). Many cities have a range of people who cannot afford to live in them and there are

often large divisions in wealth between those who are housed and those who are not. People at the bottom of the socio-economic hierarchy are often the homeless. These people may live in derelict buildings, in cars, and in parks, for instance. For some, this strict interpretation of homelessness masks the greater problem of homelessness. To overcome this limitation, Chamberlain (1996: 43) broadened the definition to include those who do not have secure tenure over their housing. This approach includes many more people; and encompasses those who are living in temporary accommodation, and who have few legal rights over that accommodation. Boarding house tenants fit into Chamberlain's (1996:43) revised category. It is these people who do not benefit from a globalising world, and are often pushed out of the re-born city (Smith, 1996: 5).

Globalisation

Boarding house tenants in Australia have in some way been affected by the activities in other parts of the world, both historically and currently. In the past, Australia's economy was interwoven with Britain's, whereas now, Australia is participating in the global market. Generally, globalisation has seen an intensification of transnational, international and multinational linkages affecting all parts of human activity (Galligan, Roberts and Trifiletti, 2001:1). For the most part, globalisation has meant that national industrial production is declining in advanced countries (Butler, 2003:7). This has occurred through the expansion of global business and the adoption of electronic technology which has aided this expansion. For instance, the use of computers and the Internet has enabled almost instant access to the world (Castells, 2000: 693).

Marx & Engels (1888/1977) maintained that the capitalist system was often transformed by technology and that this transforms the working relationship between the capitalist and the employee. This can be seen nowadays as many workers have employment agreements which leave them insecurely employed (Butler, 2003:7) whilst many other workers are struggling on low incomes and find themselves to be the new working poor (Bauman, 1998).

As part of the process of globalisation, Australia's manufacturing sector has been

encouraged to go “off-shore” which has meant job losses for those working-class people who were employed in this sector. These changes (to business and work) have a strong impact on cities and the people who live in them. The inner cities now, not only have new and refurbished businesses, but they are also hubs of living, leisure and consumption (Butler, 2003:7). In turn, these influences alter cultural expectations and lifestyle choices of the city's inhabitants. What emerges is a more refined middle-class with a cosmopolitan attitude. The combinations of these aspects come with many of the features of modernity, of which progress, cleanliness and control are significant imperatives. The ‘imperatives’ of the new middle class are reflected in the city and demonstrated through housing and other consumption choices. Collectively, the urban renaissance and the cultural changes have indirectly taken their toll on boarding house stock.

Re-vitalisation and “Sanitising Space”

Economically speaking, a large problem within cities is the movement from a Fordist production-based economy to a Post-Fordist (consumption-based) economy. This action in effect sees the dismantling and/or emigration of nationally-based industry and the growth of transnational businesses (Hamnett, 1991:173). This expatriation of industries has created internal changes to the cities of Western countries. The changes have left major gaps in economic productivity and employment which sees many of the governing bodies scrambling to attract ‘footloose’ capital so as to keep their cities profitable in the post-industrial phase. These demands have led to many changes in spatial use.

In many Western countries today, much of the old and disused parts of industrial areas are renovated, and re-vitalised to return them to profitable sites (Hamnett, 2003:4). The city space is redeveloped, which sees many modern office blocks, museums, eateries, theatres and cultural edifices rising up from the old and disused parts of the city. Other parts of the inner cities are given over to tower apartments that loom large over prime sites. Particularly, the inner city redevelopment sees all reminders of the past being systematically removed from the landscape, or kept for a cleansed view of history. Amster (2003: 200) calls this process “sanitising space”.

The sanitising of space is a process which creates pleasant and non-threatening surroundings, yet takes firm control over the territory (Amster, 2003: 200). For instance, the rise in the number of 'natural', aesthetically pleasing sites like parks that offer green space and respite for the city dwellers and workers would fit into this process. Such a process is aimed at excluding people, like the homeless, from a particular area (Amster, 2003: 195). Other parts of city centres are turned over to malls and shopping complexes; the "modern cathedrals of consumption" where middle class people worship (Kowinski, in Ritzer, 2004: 7). The purpose of this is to present an appearance that is conducive to consumption, which is free from any outside disturbance, where the consumer "moves" from reality into a space that is a shopper's treasure trove. Many of the older suburbs too, have undergone large scale redevelopment and gentrification. In the suburban areas, the old buildings are often revitalised, giving new life to the old.

Urban Renewal

Large-scale redevelopment can mean changing the land usage, which may require a two step process. The first step is the introduction of a cultural event, which legitimises the reclaiming of the land. Often the cultural event is a large scale event, called a 'Mega-event' (Olds, 1998: 3) or smaller events called 'Hallmark' events (Engels, 1999: 88). 'Mega-events' are one-off large scale events, like 'Expo '88 (World Exposition) or The Olympics Games. The "Hallmark" event is a smaller, recurring event like, the Grand Prix and the Indy car races. These actions turn 'old' land into quite profitable sites (Olds, 1998: 3). The rationale behind these events (mega and hallmark) is to raise the tourism profile of the city for further economic gain, which is a form of 'boosterism' (Harvey, 1989: 10). However, these events have very little positive benefits for the poor. In some cases the poor are systematically "excluded" from the redeveloped area (Smith, 1996). Whether in the inner city or in the suburban areas, the 'outsiders' (the poor) are not welcome and may be actively removed (Smith, 1996). Often, their housing is reclaimed for the event's facilities (Olds, 1998:3). For instance, Brisbane lost thirteen

boarding houses to Expo '88; three went for car parking space (Allen, Butler & Skeltys, nd.: 15). Other rental accommodation was quickly refurbished and offered for a much higher rent in an attempt to exploit the Exposition visitors (Allen, Butler & Skeltys, nd.: 16). The second possible step in the process is post event. At this time, cultural and consumption outlets are provided for public use. Often there are a number of apartments built into this complex. For instance, South Bank in Brisbane has a number of student flats, and apartments within the complex (South Bank Development Corporation, 1991), but no affordable housing was provided in this area. South Bank in Brisbane and similar sites across Australia are consumption sites, and in part offer something for the tourism industry.

The Housing Market

Overall, the only groups to be able to conduct legitimate control over large parcels of land and housing are the various levels of government (Brisbane Housing Company, 2008: 1). The most prominent level of government involved in these projects is the state government, with the assistance of local municipal governments. The mega and hallmark events can be viewed as value adding, in the business sense, for the tourist appeal. However, the large scale activities of governments are less common events than the everyday activity of the housing market. It is the increasing activity within the housing market that affects people's housing options.

Homeownership is "The Australian Dream", and it is believed to be the superior form of tenure (Western, 1983: 69). Nearly 65 percent of Australian households are in their own home (ABS, 2008: 2). The superiority of homeownership is demonstrated by the positive benefits for the owners. The homeowners often have better physical health, are in a better economic position, and they demonstrate a positive psychic utility (Badcock and Beer, 2000: 4). However, access to homeownership is not available to all.

The housing booms and the booming housing prices have undeniably kept many people out of the housing market, while a number of people are forced out of their homes through a number of factors. In recent years in Queensland the number of property repossessions has increased

some 88 percent in two years – 484 in 2004, 869 in 2005 and 910 in 2007 (Jensen, 2007: 1).

These figures are for combined residential and commercial property data and no separation of the figures were available. Undoubtedly, some of these repossessions are caused by repayment increases due to rises in interest rates. Another factor may be divorce which sees the financial pressures, like high housing costs, become a pressure with which the couple/family may not be able to cope. With repossession of the house, both partners are viewed as defaulters and both may be excluded from home ownership for an indefinite period (Badcock & Beer, 2000: 25). This situation forces many people into a very limited rental market for accommodation.

Rental housing was once seen as temporary, a "housing of transition" if you like, where people moved to between the parents' home and a couple's own home. Beer (1999: 225) has noted that people are remaining in rental accommodation much longer than ever before. People can now find themselves renting for ten years or longer. Placed in this situation, people find it hard to leave rental accommodation due to the rising house prices and the increasing rental charges. While there have been many new apartments, units and houses built in Brisbane and elsewhere, much of this accommodation is priced far too high (Yates, 2001: 491). Housing affordability becomes an issue for many when there is this mismatch between peoples' incomes and the 'asking price' for housing (rentals and purchasing). Profitability and affordability is also a concern for owners and tenants of boarding houses.

Boarding house owners and tenants face many challenges. The profitability of the business for the owners and affordability for the tenants are important issues. The decline of boarding house stock in an area can be attributed to more than one factor. The movement of tenants could be due to either new employment opportunities or new housing. This can be seen in the work of Badcock and Cloher (1980) where they found that the numbers of boarding houses declined in Adelaide between 1947 and 1977. This decline occurred when many other businesses moved from the city centre to the suburbs. The only areas where the decline of boarding houses did not occur were in the inner suburbs where they were situated near

hospitals and other similar organisations. These boarding houses were often used by low-paid staff and some migrants amongst others. However, in some areas of cities there are demographic changes occurring in which there appears to be an in-movement of people from a higher socio-economic group and the out-movement of people from a lower socio-economic group. This phenomenon is referred to as gentrification.

Gentrification

Ever since Glass first coined the term in 1964 (Logan, 1985: 8), gentrification has never been far from academic research. Gentrification, simply put, is the migration of middle-class people into working-class areas. These areas are then converted for their usage (Zukin, 1987: 129). Neil Smith (1996) sees these actions as acts of reclamation, or as he puts it, a revanchist act, which is a taking back of lost territory by the new middle class and a reassertion of class dominance. For Smith (1996) this is a battle for space with winners and losers, the winners stay and the losers leave. Gentrification is not the same in all locations. In some cases it may be a matter of reclaiming the 'lost' territory – those areas where previous generations of middle-class people had lived and progressively moved elsewhere. While in other areas it is possibly a case of assertion of the elite class dominance as suggested by David Harvey (2006). Either way, this in-movement can bring about many changes to the area. Some of the changes include an increase in rates and service charges. Also, there are increases in the number of boutique shopping facilities, restaurants and cultural centres within the area.

There are some changes that occur that alter the socio-economic composition of an area, resulting in flow-on consequences. Like those mentioned above, gentrification has been noted as changing the socio-economic profile of an area. Also, as Butler argues, the impact of the new middle class on an area is often disproportionate to the proportion of the new middle class within the area (2003: 12). Butler (2003) maintains that suburbs may have only 20 percent of new middle class in the demographic, yet the whole area will be gentrified and priced accordingly. This leads to one of the consequences of gentrification, namely social displacement.

Social Displacement

Social displacement is a process where there is an out-movement of people which often occurs in conjunction with gentrification and is attributed to the associated rising housing costs in that area. Some researchers contest the existence of such a process. Researchers like Freeman & Braconi (2004: 52) have not been able to find occurrences of social displacement happening, and maintain that any change is only the normal movement within cities. Other commentators like Duany (2001) acknowledge social displacement as a factor, but are firm believers in the benefits of gentrification (p.36). Some researchers have noted the large demographic changes within areas where gentrification has occurred. These changes include lower housing density (fewer people per house); more people with higher incomes and higher education levels; increases in the number of people with managerial and professional occupations (Atkinson, 2000a: 287), and a reduction in the number of people at the lower end of the socio-economic scale.

Often there is an out-movement of people from an area undergoing regeneration. The displaced tend to be people on limited incomes, the aged, the unemployed, the disabled, and a growing number of young people (Atkinson, 2000b: 149). Because of their low economic position, they are sometimes repeatedly displaced (Hartman, 1979: 23). In general, these groups are not only geographically dislocated, they are also socially dislocated, too (Johnston, 2001: 5).

Displaced people are severely constrained in their housing choices, and this phenomenon has been documented in a wide range of countries including Europe, America, England and Australia (see, for instance, Atkinson, 2000b; Badcock, 1991; Smith, 1996; Van Kempen & Van Weesep, 1994). Atkinson, (2000b) has also noted that there are some people who try to remain in an area. Some stay because of their family and friends, or for other reasons of connectedness to the area. Some may stay because they need to attend some special service in the area (Atkinson, 2000b: 149), whilst others may be caught in a financial bind and stay

because they do not have the money to leave. For these people, staying may become a time of sleeping rough, or sleeping on a friend's couch. Atkinson has written of the overcrowding in some households and the rise in the numbers of homeless persons in some of the gentrifying areas of London (2000a). However, for those who have to move, life becomes a juggling act of trying to find money to pay for relocation and re-establishment costs, travelling expenses and time, all of which must be done on meagre incomes (Johnston, 2001: 5). On top of that, for those individuals who are forced to move, their networks of relatives and friends are usually cleaved from them, all of which creates further distress.

Multiple-person dwellings

Boarding houses are many things to the people involved with them: businesses and investments for the owners, basic housing for some tenants, and for some other long term tenants they may be a home. Boarding houses now share many characteristics with other multiple-person housing such as the Single Room Occupancy Hotels (SRO's) of America, (Singlakis, 1990: 658) and Rooming or Lodging houses that once proliferated in American, English and Australian cities. The original difference between boarding houses and other forms of multiple-person housing was that of the provision of meals (board = table). The boarding house would supply meals – at least one per day - and some would open their dining rooms to the public (Echeverria, 1999). Nowadays, the boarding house tenants have access to cooking facilities, but meals are rarely provided. The other establishments (rooming/lodging houses and SROs) never had dining or cooking facilities. The main feature of the multiple-person dwelling is that of shelter with varying rental periods. The rental periods can be by the day/night (as in the case of a rooming/lodging house), whereas the rental period for boarding houses are by the week, fortnight or month. Beyond that, the differences between these housing forms rapidly fade. As can be imagined, the rooming house is the most transient of all of these housing forms.

With the major redevelopment of cities in Western countries, the lower end of the housing market, especially multiple-person dwellings, have come under increasing pressure for

redevelopment. These dwellings – like the boarding houses, rooming houses and SRO's – occupy land parcels that are prized due to their location and size. When the processes of urban redevelopment and gentrification occur, these dwellings are lost and tenants are displaced. This loss can equal the displacement of a whole suburban street of single-householders.

North America, England and Australia have seen major shifts in economic rationale; this is a move away from a government interventionist model and towards a laissez faire one (Harvey, 1989: 3). As such, any of the older notions of social redistribution have been abandoned and much of the social support for those unable to cope in the free market systems has been jettisoned or wound back (Harvey, 1992: 589). This leaves many vulnerable people open to the power of the market system that operates on affordability.

Deinstitutionalisation and housing

Some of the tenants that live in boarding houses are people who have been released from institutions such as prisons and mental health facilities, and placed into boarding houses through a process called “deinstitutionalisation” (The Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission aka The Burdekin Report, 1993: 387). The Burdekin Report (1993) found that not only were boarding houses a ‘national disgrace’ but that there were many a misdealing between some boarding house proprietors and administrators over placement procedures, as well as falsification of medical service provision for those sent from mental health facilities. Apart from the rotting of the system by some administrators and medical practitioners, many deinstitutionalised people apparently still end up in boarding houses. Until relatively recently, no one had really considered the affects of boarding house life on people with mental illness.

Browne (2005) conducted a study on people with a mental illness (particularly Schizophrenia) living in boarding houses. Browne's (2005) research found strong correlations between the housing form in which the research subjects lived (boarding house or own flat/house), personal safety levels, use of social support system and readmissions to hospital (Browne, 2005). These individuals were more likely to be safer if they were in their own home

as opposed to living in a boarding house. The research findings also revealed that these individuals had less access to social support mechanisms if they lived in a boarding house. The research also found that people with Schizophrenia are more likely to be readmitted to hospital if they were released to a boarding house. Clearly, boarding house living is not an appropriate form of accommodation for people with serious mental health issues.

Homelessness

The Australian economy has had high economic growth and a massive housing boom in the past ten to fifteen years, yet there are still many homeless people. In 1996 the homeless in Australia numbered 105,300, yet after five years of economic growth there were still 99,000 homeless people in 2001 (Mercer, 2007). However, in the Census of 2006 homelessness in Australia was once again 105,000 persons (ABS, 2008). For these people their housing options range from sleeping on friends' couches, sleeping in cars, parks and derelict buildings, and in temporary shelters, and in boarding houses. All of these places are seen as unsatisfactory due to the lack of security in tenure (easily evicted; displaced through sale; or lack any tenancy rights), lack of personal safety, and health issues (Chamberlain, 1996). The health concerns of many homeless people range from mental health conditions to exposure to the elements. Housing can be thought of as a basic human need if the person is to survive and thrive. The slogan from a local housing group reminds us that "Housing is a right not a privilege".

The changing nature of homeownership

With so many people moving to and from areas in search of accommodation, why are boarding houses not a booming business? Boarding house accommodation was used in Australia during its mercantile and transition phase into the industrial era. Many people with low and irregular incomes often used boarding houses (Garton, 1990:25). At other times the boarding houses housed many of the new factory workers as the industrial production moved out from the city centres and into the nearby and outer suburbs (Hovarth & Engels, 1985: 143-

159). These boarding houses were some of the large mansions that had become fading relics of a past era. Contrasted to the working class' experiences of boarding houses, some wealthier people chose to live in boarding houses. Some of Melbourne's middle class residents relied on boarding houses during the 1920s. At this time, there were shortages of domestic staff and some of the middle class found their houses were too hard to manage without staff (O'Hanlon, 2002). These types of boarding houses were often run by middle-class women, who had fallen on hard times (O'Hanlon, 2003). Yet, many of the working population seemed to prefer the separateness of their own house. Whether this house was rental accommodation or as for many people it was their own home. For a long time now, Australians have had a long and passionate love affair with homeownership.

Before the economic depression of the 1890s it was estimated that homeownership in Australia may have been about 70 percent or more (Castles, 1985: 85). This figure tumbled as the effects of the depression took hold on the country. In the early part of the twentieth century, homeownership was 50 percent of all households (Castles, 1985: 85). It took approximately another 50 years for the high rate of homeownership of 70 percent to be reached again in Australia.

In Post World War II Australia, the government of the day actively encouraged people into private housing (Berry, 2000: 661). This was the beginning of the "long boom" a time that saw great demand for Australian products from European markets. It was the period of massive projects like the "Snowy Mountains Hydroelectricity Scheme". Also Australian immigration policy changed. Instead of recruiting people from Britain, they began recruiting many people from central parts of Europe. Along with this action, the federal government increased the numbers of migrants to resettle in Australia (Clark, 1995: 641). Not surprisingly, this phase of growth and prosperity saw many workers moving into a home of their own, encouraged by political parties machinations. These actions saw an increase in accessibility of purchasing the "private home" and people moving out of some of the rental sectors like boarding houses. Australian homeownership peaked at 70%. During the 1960's, Australians were world leaders in

homeownership rates (Badcock & Beer, 2000: 3). However, as the industrial era recedes, at least in the Western experience, the land has come under new demands and housing may be changing its meaning. Housing may no longer be just the result of working regularly or the site for raising the future workforce but may be coming to symbolise private wealth and status; as homeownership is slipping out of the reach of many low-income people. Similarly, boarding houses are coming to be seen as valuable sites for their potential redevelopment.

“Flawed Consumers”

Within the modern city, there are those poor people who, metaphorically speaking, live, exist or survive in the spaces or the gaps within cities. They are the homeless people, they are either insecurely housed or sleeping rough. These people are not the empowered workers or professional persons of the modern city. They are often the old, ill, unemployed or unemployable, mentally ill and other low-income people. These people have come to the end of the housing line, the boarding house. In truth, they may be young or old, single, married, separated or widowed. The market does not acknowledge any difference except they are poor. They are neither high-end consumers nor do they consume as much as other households. The poor individual in the modern city is viewed as a "flawed consumer" (Bauman, 1998): one who does not measure up to the standards of the modern ethos of consumption.

It is not hard to see that there is a link between Bauman's (1998) "flawed consumer" and Goffman's "defiled self". Goffman's (1963:18) focus on the "self" tends to examine the physically disabled. The impact of poverty and homelessness can affect the self-image of poor people, especially if it is experienced over a long period of time. To this end, these individuals face the possibility of viewing themselves as defiled people that have an imperfection. This then sets up a position where the poor may experience shame of themselves. "Shame becomes a central possibility, arising from the individual's perception of one of his [or her] own attributes as being a defiling thing to possess, and one he [or she] can readily see himself [or herself] as not possessing" (Goffman, 1963: 18). This is a downward spiral of poverty and shame, in a

glittering world of change and consumption.

These poor people of the city are people who do not have their basic needs met, and do not benefit from the changes to cities, unlike many other people. These people inhabit boarding houses, which are under threat from redevelopment and gentrification, and they are likely to experience further social displacement from the ongoing changes in the cities in which they live.

Chapter 2 has demonstrated the broad background of this thesis, of which globalisation has fostered a fundamental movement away from the old Fordist economy to a new Post-Fordist economy, based on consumption. This 'new world' of consumption has driven demand for urban renewal and revitalisation, which has contributed to the removal of many of the older more affordable parts of the cities. Thus erasing areas that were more affordable, and remaking them into highly prized cultural spaces or higher priced housing. However, often the pressure on boarding house owners comes from three sides, the regulating bodies (governments) and from the market, the increased return for their properties, and the third, the 'flawed consumer' which is their mainstay client.

The next chapter, Chapter 3, outlines the methodology and the methods used to explore the relevant issues to boarding houses, owners and tenants.

CHAPTER 3

METHODOLOGY AND METHODS

This thesis explores the loss of boarding houses, and in doing so, explores not only the experiences of boarding house owners and tenants but also the lack of affordable housing options for many people. In this study, the boarding houses in question are taken to be private businesses, and not boarding houses run by “not for profit” organisations. Boarding houses of the latter type tend to more hostel type accommodation. In order to answer the first part of the research question/s (What are the factors associated with the loss of boarding houses, and what influences these losses?), there was a need to investigate the structural factors influencing the closures of boarding houses. In order to answer the second part of the research question/s (What are the social consequences of declining boarding house stock for the current and prospective tenants?), there was a need to interview the people at the “coal face”, the tenants, so as to understand what these closures mean to them. To answer the research questions, it was necessary to explore not just the macro (structure) but the micro (agency) as well.

Structure, Agency and Structuration

Howarth (2007) rightly and succinctly explains the structure and agency debate in the following way:

The structure-agency debate stems from a concern with the way in which society is both produced and maintained. Structure focuses on the social context of action and the objective framework within which society is ordered and individuals constrained. Agency, or action, on the other hand, emphasizes the role of individuals in creating the social world around them. It privileges social interaction and meaning rather than organizations and institutions that form the bedrock of social structures (Howarth 2007: 4)

Whilst these theories have “framed our understanding of society” (Howarth, 2007: 3) there are those theorists who Stones refers to as the “great synthesisers of contemporary social theory”, who offer a third perspective within this debate (1996: 40). These theorists argue that in order “to understand social phenomena fully it is necessary to bring structure and agency together

without privileging either one” (Howarth 2007, p.5). One of the main advocates of this integrated approach is Giddens (Pred, 1984: 280).

Giddens’ theory/ontology of structuration was published in 1984 in *The Constitution of Society*. Giddens himself admitted that his book ‘might be accurately described as an extended reflection upon a celebrated and oft-quoted phrase to be found in Marx’ (Giddens, 1984: xxi). It is:

Men [sic] make history, but they do not make it as they please; they do not make it under self-selected circumstances, but under circumstances encountered, given and transmitted from the past. The tradition of all dead generations weighs like a nightmare on the brains of the living (Marx, 1885/2001: 7)

Karl Marx is often described as a determinist or more precisely an economic determinist (Haralambos, Van Krieken, Smith, & Holborn, 1993: 687). The term determinist tends to override the idea that humans have any control over their lives, and they appear as mere slaves to the overbearing structures (Stones, 1996: 43). Structures can mediate the actions of people to either entice or hinder them (Wallace & Wolf, 1998:181) which suggests a reality or a life to structures beyond human beings. “Realism ... refers to the fact that there is a reality independent of our ideas and conceptions” (Howarth, 1995: 127) beliefs and values” (Devine, 1995: 140). While the structures may not be directly observed, (for example, class and gender), their effects can be measured. Ontologically speaking, these structures (class and gender) exist, but to prove this requires an epistemology on how to find the answers. One way of doing this is by “listening to interviewees, talking [so as] to gain some insight into their world views and see things as they do” (Devine, 1995: 140-1).

According to Hay (1995), every structured situation defines its own range of potential choices. The actor/agent in a situation has an intention, which is informed by knowledge about the structure, and then the actor/agent chooses a strategy for the accomplishment of that achievement. The consequences of this activity may result in either intended or unintended consequences. If the objective is achieved, all is fine. If the objective is not achieved, then the

actor/agent selects another strategy, and tries again (p.190). These two elements, structure and agency, in dynamic relationship, lead into the overall ontological position of structuration.

At a conceptual level, this research explores the interplay between the levels of structure and agency. Here, structure is taken to be the oft-repeated actions of agents (Stones, 1996: 44). Or more precisely "...structure has always to be conceived of as a property of social systems, 'carried' in reproduced practices embedded in time and space" (Giddens, 1984: 170). As well as this, "society only has form, and that form only has effects on people, in so far as structure is produced and reproduced in what people do" (Giddens & Pierson, 1998:77). Therefore, for Giddens (1984), structure and agency are two sides of the same coin, and neither exists independently of the other.

Giddens' structuration allows for an integrative approach between the macro (structure) and micro (agency) in sociological exploration. It is believed that an ontological approach like this is the most appropriate framework for this study because through the lens of structuration, it will be argued that structure affects people's agency in their housing options, which can be seen in the relationship between boarding house owners and tenants and the socio-economic structure. People on a higher level within the socio-economic structure have more housing choices available to them, while those at the bottom, like boarding house tenants, are extremely limited in their choice.

Choice is a term that is highly associated with individual freedom. In contemporary Western society, individual choice refers not only to consumption, it has become an important part of the public discourse as well as social science language used to analyse many fields of people's lives. The freedom to choose is the marker of the free, autonomous individual, and it is an important ingredient in the notion of agency (Brannen & Nilsen, 2005: 412).

Given that people do have the ability to act (agency), the question to be asked is: How much agency do boarding house owners and boarding house tenants have? In the case of boarding house owners, one has to wonder how much agency they have to effect change. In the case of the boarding house tenants, one has to wonder how they could use their agency to bring about

desired outcomes for themselves, especially when you consider the low incomes of these people when trying to acquire scarce resources, like housing.

This study is concerned with the loss of boarding house stock primarily brought about by the post-Fordist restructuring processes and the effect that this restructuring has on the agency of those members of our society most affected by the loss of boarding house stock. As mentioned earlier, the impact of moving from a Fordist structure of production to a post-Fordist one required city restructuring in order to create a new city for capital to operate in, which led to programs like Urban Renewal and Urban Consolidation. These programs alter the shape of the city, demolishing many of the areas that contained affordable housing for people on low incomes. In the process this is replaced with more expensive, higher density housing (Yates, 2001: 491), and within social arenas such as new museums, for example Queensland's new museum at South Bank.

Along with these programs, the emergence of gentrification has also altered the socio-economic demographics in many of the inner-city areas (Stimson, Mullins, Baum, Davis, Gleeson & Shaw, 2000: 7). Gentrification is the in-movement of new middle class people into working-class neighbourhoods (Forster, 1995: 29, 95). Other factors include petty landlord involvement such as a change in the motive for owning a house, changing of land use to consumption opportunities, and the limitation of available land for housing. Each of these factors plays a substantial role in inflating land and housing prices, and has the flow-on effect of increasing rental charges. All of these actions have had a deleterious effect on the affordability of housing.

To determine the impact of city restructuring which may lead to the reduction of boarding houses requires the analysis of the above factors. Apart from the macro structural factors, there are the micro factors that need to be considered. To examine the micro factors, such as understanding the operational demands placed on boarding house owners and their responses to them and the consequences for the tenants, micro technique (the Interview) were used.

Finally, the primary research area that has been chosen is the general location of Brisbane. Its selection was based on three factors. Due to the dispersal of boarding houses throughout Brisbane, and the rapid nature of the decline in boarding houses in any single location, there was no fixed location chosen as a study area. Any boarding house owner or tenant from anywhere in the general area of Brisbane was acceptable. Having outlined the methodological issues, we now move on to the methods or the 'how' of the research.

Method

The methods used in this thesis were specifically chosen to explore the duality of structure and agency (Giddens' structuration). This dynamic relationship is part and parcel of the two questions posed for this thesis: Firstly, what are the factors associated with the loss of boarding houses, and what influences these losses? Secondly, what are the social consequences of the declining boarding house stock on the tenants? The first part of the first question focuses on the owners of boarding houses, while the second part is in line with the broader societal structure. The second part will be dealt with first. In this study, the key structural factors such as urban renewal, urban consolidation, and other initiatives conducted by government and non-government bodies, are explored. The methods exploring these factors are outlined in detail below. The first part of question one relating to the owners of boarding houses is covered in the Interview Section, which is in the latter part of "methods". The second question is covered also in the Interview section in the latter part of the methods section. Land and house prices and Housing status sections were seen as important, considering the influx of about 1200 people to Queensland each week. This increase in population puts stress on, not only the overall infrastructure but also on the housing market. As for the sections on boarding house stock and boarding house populations, these were used to highlight the impact of change to not only the city, but also change for the poor of the city.

Land and house prices

A basic tenet of economics is that price is set by demand, which shows the importance of investigating land and house prices. As Badcock and Beer (2000: 4-5) point out, accelerated demand on housing inflates the price of housing. As a consequence of rising house prices, more people are excluded from home ownership, thus placing greater demand on limited stocks of rental accommodation. However, beyond that, the relation of this indicator to boarding houses is twofold. First, as a consequence of rising housing costs, the local government charges and other operational charges often increase, which may be absorbed by the owner of a boarding house, or be passed on to the tenants. Second, this is the structural background of the boarding house business, therefore high demand and high prices may be a consideration in the evaluation of their ongoing business enterprise.

A number of secondary sources were used to determine the variation in land and property values. Data from Australian Property Monitors and ABS Census data show the median house repayments between 2001 and 2006. "Wherever I lay my debt that's my home" a report by Tanton et al., on housing affordability. A number of newspaper articles from: The Courier Mail, The Northside Chronicle, The Northern Suburbs and Bayside Star were also used.

Housing Status

Forster (1995) has identified a number of indices that suggest gentrification is occurring in an area. For instance, the Census data categories on home ownership and the changes to the categories "fully-owned" and "being purchased" demonstrate housing turnover. This stands to reason, considering that not many people could afford to purchase a house outright due to the high house prices.

The limitation with using Census data stems from a time lag between conducting the Census and release of the data. In this case, the Census data is approximately twenty-four months behind the current situation. Independently each section may not provide evidence but, when taken collectively, these sections provide strong supportive evidence that the processes are happening.

Boarding Houses

Determining the phenomenon of gentrification in a particular location is a complex process, but it seems to be easier to identify than unravelling the some of the empirical information on boarding houses. The available Census data on boarding house stock is problematic. The available information about boarding houses is at best meagre, incomplete and conflated. The Census data does not provide much more than the number of tenants, and the number of boarding houses. This information does not include unregistered boarding houses. Also in the census category Non-private Domestic Dwelling (NPDD), boarding houses and guest houses are counted together, and there is no way of separating this information. Whilst the data is somewhat problematic, it is still valuable, due to scarcity of any other existing data. The limitation of this data is acknowledged and further levels of supportive data were required. It was decided that this data limitation would, at least partly, be offset with information from well-placed informants, such as boarding house owners and tenants. A dual approach was used: 1) interviews with informants as the primary source, and 2) ABS Census data of relevant areas was used. The Census data and information supplied by the owners of the boarding houses would offer some degree of convergent validity, while the information supplied by the tenants would enrich the study.

Boarding House Stock

To establish the quantity of boarding house stock, a series of information was collected from various Census data. This was taken from Non-Private Domestic Dwelling (NPDD) in Australian Bureau of Statistics Clib91 (1994), Clib01 (2003) and Census online data (2007). This data covers the years 1991 to 2006, covering a fifteen-year period that allows for a demonstration of trends in the boarding house stock over time. With the above limitations in mind, this data highlights any deviation in the boarding house stock. This data primarily covers Queensland and Brisbane; and offers an overview of boarding houses Australia wide.

Boarding House population

As with the boarding house stock, the resident population of boarding houses is demonstrated in census data as well. This data is collected from the Non-Private Domestic Dwelling (NPDD) category. The figures are drawn from Clib91 (1994), Clib01 (2003) and Census online data (2007). This data has a limitation in that it is conflated with guest house data. Apart from the limitation, this data provides a series of snapshots of the tenant population. As a time series, they collectively reveal boarding house demand over a fifteen-year time span, covering the years 1991 to 2006. In an attempt to enrich our understanding of boarding house life, a series of interviews were conducted with owners and tenants of boarding houses.

The Interview

A period of participant observation was initially considered, however, this was dismissed on a number of grounds. First issue was of safety for the researcher, while no one would expect anything to happen, there could be no assurance of this. Second issue was a pre-existing health concern that may have been exacerbated for the researcher by this option and third was the cost of moving into a boarding house. This left interviewing as a more relevant option.

The 'interview' was considered as the "best" method for gaining direct and current information concerning both the Owners and Tenants' of boarding houses. The intention behind the interviews was to assess the position of boarding house owners and their continued operation in the industry. This included their thoughts about the boarding house industry, the influence of the structural factors like urban consolidation and gentrification, and its impact on the future of the boarding house industry, and their thoughts on the loss of affordable housing. The interviews with the tenants' of boarding houses would focus on what life was like in boarding houses and what their closure would mean for them as tenants of boarding houses.

It was believed that interviews, even in small numbers would support and enrich the other secondary data. In this way the ABS and other secondary data on changing tenure status, that is changing rental tenures, would offer some indication of the magnitude of the phenomenon. A limitation would be relying solely on this information and generalising from a small number of

cases. However, the two sources of information tend to modify this limitation, and offer some insights into the phenomenon being studied, namely the loss of boarding houses.

Informants – Boarding house owners (BHOs)

Owners of various boarding houses were sent an invitation letter (see Appendix A for a copy of the letter). This was followed by a telephone call approximately one to two weeks later to see if they were interested in participating in the interviews and to arrange times for the meeting. The interviews were conducted in locations of their choosing and at times convenient to them and the participants were informed of their rights, that is their right to withdraw at any time, before, after or during the interview, without any reason being given. The informants were requested to sign two consent forms, which the researcher co-signed, leaving one copy for their records and the other for the researcher's records (see Appendix B for a copy of the Consent Form).

Due to the small numbers of boarding houses remaining in the Brisbane area, a target of ten boarding house owners was chosen. The small number of BHOs may not appear rigorous; however, when viewed in the context of a shrinking boarding house stock then, it is more acceptable. Initially ten 'owner' informants were targeted. However, of the first mail-out of ten letters only one boarding house owner was interested when contacted. The small response rate appears to be related to, in part, a number of boarding houses having recently converted from boarding houses to backpacker accommodations, as discovered from the 'call back' telephone conversation. Other rejections of participating in the research were simply that "they were not interested". It was then decided to include past owners of boarding houses due to the limited number of remaining boarding house owners. A second mail-out of ten letters (including past owners of boarding houses) was sent out. The responses to this mail-out were two past owners of a boarding house agreed to interviews. In sum, four interviews were conducted with boarding house owners. The interviews lasted from one hour to three and a half hours. These were recorded and transcribed.

These four interviewees had an abundance of knowledge and experience of the boarding house industry. Collectively, they had over sixty years of experience in operating boarding houses, thus offering insight into the changing nature of the boarding house and its place as a housing form in Brisbane.

Informants – Boarding house tenants

It was decided, because of the vulnerability of this group, to use a sample of twenty tenants. Aware of the vulnerable nature of this housing group, a slow, relaxed approach was considered best. One particular boarding house, which was home to about thirty tenants, was a key site for the recruitment of the tenants. If enough tenant participants could not be drawn from this particular boarding house, approaches were to be made to other boarding houses in other locations. Also, there was the possibility of 'snowballing' (other contacts through some informants). Permission was granted by the boarding house manager to conduct an introduction and familiarisation meeting. An informal information meeting was advertised and conducted at the above boarding house, which was attended by ten boarding house residents. At this meeting the aims of the research were explained and an information letter (see appendix C for a copy of the Information Letter), along with a response form and a stamp addressed envelope (see appendix D for a copy of the Response Form) was given to them. At this stage, there were two focus group meetings offered and a 'one on one' in-depth interview. It was thought that the focus group meetings might have afforded the tenants some security and confidence, which would enable them to speak about their experiences and issues concerning boarding houses; as well as gaining their confidences.

The result of the introduction evening was one tenant was very willing to participate. However, on returning to the boarding house, the researcher found that the tenant had left, and had relocated nearer to the Royal Brisbane Hospital for health reasons; his new address was not known. Other tenants who seemed to be considering participating at the first meeting had changed their minds on a following visit. Approaches were made to other tenants of this

boarding house who were not at the initial meeting. However, they refused to participate in the research. Their refusals varied from a polite “No thanks” to a confrontational “We don’t want to be part of this!” Most of the refusals seemed to stem from the formal and legal nature of the research procedure. Despite the best efforts to keep the approaches as informal and relaxed as possible, some of this group were not responsive to the formality of research processes and displayed a high level of suspicion towards the researcher. Others who initially seemed interested in the research became fearful when presented with the Consent form, which required their signature (see appendix B for a copy of the Consent Form). For nearly all of the tenants this is where the conversations ended. However, one interview was gained from this boarding house. Due to the small numbers of women in boarding houses, it was very fortunate to interview the only female in the house. This person’s experience of boarding house life helps to broaden the information about life in male-dominated boarding houses. Another approach using an informant to assist in gaining access to another group of participants seemed promising. However, this avenue closed when the informant repeatedly failed to turn up at pre-arranged meetings.

Finally, access to another participant was arranged through a local housing group but by this time, the tenant was a “past” tenant of the boarding house. This person agreed to be interviewed. This interview lasted approximately two hours. The wealth of knowledge and experience that this person had about boarding houses from the perspective of a tenant was not only impressive, but also very useful. This particular interviewee had experienced living in boarding houses most of his life, and apart from the depth of past experience, this person was visually impaired, which offered further insights into life in a boarding house for the disabled. Both interviews were recorded and transcribed.

The combined experience and knowledge of these two tenant informants about boarding houses tends to mitigate the fact of having only two tenant interviewees. This may appear a little limited. To offset the dearth of informants additional material from other publications was drawn on in support. This has been used to flesh out the tenant experience of boarding houses. ‘It’s

No Palace' (Anderson, Hume, Rogers and Stephenson, 2003) 'Landlords and Lodgers' (Centre of Urban Research and Action, 1979), 'On the Threshold: The future of private rooming house in South Yarra', (Jope, 2000), 'A Voice for the Silent Strugglers' (CCJDPCSS) and 'Life in a Boarding House: 'Voices, stories, snapshots' (Boarding House Action Group, 2006) were also used. Taken together this offers a multi-layered view of boarding houses, tenants, and affordable housing issues.

Interview style

All the interviews (Owners and Tenants) were semi-structured in nature, with the core of the interview focusing on twelve questions (see Appendix E (Boarding house owners) and Appendix F (Boarding house tenants) for copies of the Schedule of the Questions). The questions were open-ended and were intended to promote a response from the informants. The style of question, it was hoped, would be informal enough to allow the informants to focus on what they "saw" happening in the area. Of the twelve questions, eleven were of this nature. The twelfth question allowed the informants to express their thoughts on areas that may have been untouched by the other eleven questions. In this way, question twelve allowed the informants to identify concerns with boarding house life and the general state of affordable housing.

A semi-structured interview style was chosen for three reasons. They are: (a) to allow the interview to be guided, like a questionnaire, yet not to restrict the answers as in a formal questionnaire; (b) to allow the researcher some autonomy to follow other leads that may arise during the interview; and (c) to allow greater "freedom" to the informants to express themselves in a more relaxed and natural flowing manner (May, 1997).

Finally, the primary focus of this research is on the factors affecting boarding houses, and by extension, the factors that contribute to the loss of boarding houses and affordable housing in general. The variety of methods chosen has been selected to offer a twofold insight into the continuation of boarding houses in a post-industrial country. These methods also have the capability of demonstrating the structure and agency interplay, through the levels of knowledge

about the structures, held by the actors. It is proposed these two aims are revealed through the combined use of empirical data and the interviews from the Owners of boarding houses. The empirical data reveals the structural factors that affect the business decisions of these owners. Here, the two parts of the first question are answered.

The empirical data also broadens our understanding of the housing options for tenants' of boarding houses. It also highlights the serious position that tenants are in within an inflating housing market. The empirical data combined with the interviews, draws out many of the facets of people who have very few affordable housing options. This goes toward answering the question regarding the social consequences of declining boarding house stock on the tenants. The interviews with the tenants also offer a glimpse of life inside boarding houses from the tenants' perspective.

Ethics

This research "Boarding houses, Owners and Tenants: the demise of an old form of working class housing" received ethical clearance from the Human Research Ethics Committee through the Office of Research, Australian Catholic University, on the 20th of August 2005.

In the end, the current situation that faces the people on both sides of the boarding house, the Owners of the business and the Tenants who depend on this type of affordable housing, are perhaps on the 'tail end' of the boarding house tradition. It is in history that we find the 'hey day' or the height of popularity of the boarding house, and it is to that time that we now turn. The next chapter, Chapter 4, provides a brief history of boarding houses.

Chapter 4

BOARDING HOUSES: A BRIEF HISTORY

Exploring the loss of boarding houses in the present day requires the history chapter to form a basis, a springboard (to use an overused metaphor), to understand what existed and what has changed in regards to the structural factors that may contribute to these losses. What come forward from Australian history are the concomitant features in Australia's development. These features that helped to create an abundance of boarding houses were the type of capitalism that was in Australia, the working experience of Australians and the particularly unique demographic distribution that took approximately 150 years to change. But first, what is a boarding house, which is a reasonable question? There are two similar but distinct types of accommodation in this area, the boarding house and the lodging house. The boarding and lodging houses vary from the small scale of only four or five people to the larger forms with up to 50 people or more. Of course, there are private forms of these types of accommodation and many households had boarders and lodgers, especially during the mid to late nineteenth century (Gilding, 1991: 34). The term boarding seems to stem from the term board which meant "table" (the provision of food) according to Samuel Johnson's dictionary (1755/1979). In this sense, to board means a person lives with another family and shares their table, whereas lodgers are provided with a room and no other services. A boarding house in the strict sense means medium to longer-term residency with meals, but at different times, and for different social classes, it has included other services. O'Hanlon (2002) points out that during the early part of the twentieth century, boarding houses were often advertised as 'all found', implying that there was nothing for the tenant/guest to do, except to settle back and enjoy life. However, that type of hospitality appeared to be for the wealthier middle-class clients. Now, there is rarely any provision of services, including meals; but the tenants/residents do have access to cooking and laundry facilities. The changes to boarding house amenities have occurred simultaneously with changes in the type of capitalism.

Capitalism: a background

In straightforward terms, industrial capitalism is the greatest contributor to urbanisation (Burgess, 2005: 20). The rationality of capitalism and more so, industrial capitalism permeates our ways of thinking and how we do things and indirectly orders land usage, social class, the living space and the types of housing we can live in (Mullins, 1988: 517-541). It dictates our lives and survival strategies, it affects the quality of our lives and our ability to consume and what we can afford to consume. It is not surprising that boarding houses were and are influenced by the specific phase of capitalism (Mercantile, Industrial or Post-industrial) that enables particular types of businesses to spring forth, and dominate a particular place at a particular time. Boarding houses now - in the post-industrial era - could be viewed as an outdated 'declining relic of the past' that houses the mentally ill and the poor. The boarding house industry in Australia reached its peak of popularity in another time and under an earlier form of capitalism, that is, mercantile capitalism. Some researchers have suggested that increased incidences of lodging and boarding within areas are associated with urban decay (Davidoff, 1979:65). This is too much of an over-generalisation, as both private boarding and lodging and the business forms of boarding and lodging houses appear to have been used for nearly two centuries and have housed both the working class and middle class people.

This chapter touches briefly on the history of the usage of boarding houses. The patterns of usage suggest that the quantity and quality of boarding houses are affected by the prevailing economic forms, like mercantile and industrial eras. The post-industrial phase has all but seen the demise of boarding houses, which were once a small business enterprise and affordable housing. The boarding house industry once thrived in Australia and America, and to a lesser extent in Britain. Britain was well industrialised by the mid-nineteenth century and America was on the path of industrialisation, while Australia was, until post WWII predominantly mercantile (Mullins, 1993: 531). After World War II, Australia followed the path of other core countries, Britain and America, and joined them in the corporate industrial era. This industrial form

dominated until the 1970s when it began to fade and be gradually replaced by a more specialised era of the global economy and service industries.

In the Australian context, this history will mainly focus on the economic factors in a country that was vast, with extreme seasonal variations, which was under-populated, and heavily reliant on rural exports; all of which demanded a highly itinerant labour force. Thus, the nomadic lifestyle of these workers, working under extremely hard conditions helped form the tough, resilient 'bushman' who displayed a manly independence which has become an immortalised image of the Australian male (Dale, 1991: 1). Many of these men certainly would have lived in boarding houses. What follows is an overall picture of Australia, its economic development, and some sketches of the people who used boarding houses.

Australia: a background

From its British annexation, Australia was to serve a purpose for the empire, first as a penal colony and then, as a resource provider for England's industrial need. Much of this was in the form of wool (Frost, 1994:24). From the start, Australian cities had no 'British' urban pre-history, growing from villages into major centres (Hay, 1994:19). As penal settlements they were "instant cities" (Frost, 1994:24). And as such, they were closer to England's pre-industrial cities than the industrial (Hay, 1994:8). All Australian capital cities (except for Canberra) are port cities, located at the mouths of rivers (Marsden, 2000:14). This factor is an important historical reminder of the significance of shipping in Australian development. Convicts and commodities, and later "Free" migrants passed through these ports. Many of the convicts and other 'settlers' came from urbanised parts of Europe. Their preference for city life is not surprising and contributed to Australia being a highly urbanised country (Frost, 1994: 24). Indeed, this leads Frost (1990) to call Australia a suburb of Britain (p3). Being based on a rural economy and reliant on exports and imports, cost effectiveness demanded a centralisation of the labour intensive industries like transport and processing of the resources to be established in the cities (Frost, 1994:24). But for all the centralisation and urbanisation, many of the major cities had

some problems associated with urban organisation including sewage, water, roads, transport and housing. Housing was such a problem that by mid-nineteenth century all the capital cities had a large portion of tents and shanties in them (Frost, 1994:29-30). Butlin (1964 in Frost, 1994:30) calculated that in 1861, one third of the total population (about 384,000 people) were living in tents and shanties.

The general orientation of the Australian city can be viewed using Burgess' Zone model (Lawson, 1973:24). The city is mapped by using five or more concentric rings representing zones. The first zone is the Central Business District; zone two is the zone of transition. This zone rings the city core and contains some businesses, and factories and also working class housing. Zone two is often the area with most boarding houses. Zones three and four are residential areas with higher skilled persons in zone three and middle-class people in the outer of three and all of zone four. Zone five is the periphery and contains the remoter villas of the upper middle class. For the most part, public transport systems were at best rudimentary or non-existent. When public transport did exist, it was often too expensive for the working classes, which meant that workers needed walking access to their employment (Hay, 1994: 9)

The Australian economy was driven by mercantile operations and relied heavily on the export of rural commodities. In a sense, colonial Australia was an extension of British business interests, supplying the raw materials and taking in many finished products. By the early eighteen hundreds, Australian wool production began to challenge and soon overtook the other major wool suppliers like Spain, especially in Merino wool. This position demanded and guaranteed sales for its wool products and at the same time maintained a strong demand for many workers in the related industries. This meant more men on the move and in need of boarding house accommodation.

To attempt to discover the number of boarding houses is problematic now, but it is especially challenging to find historical data on boarding houses. However, the information available is a blend of boarding houses and common lodging/rooming houses (O'Hanlon, 2002: 15). It is assumed that the boarding house form accompanied the Europeans and has had varying

degrees of popularity (Central Boarding House Group, 1991:15). The peak use of the boarding house was, for the most part, due to the nature of the workforce in Australia. Most of the work on offer was seasonal, combined with periods of no or low income for many workers. Also, there were not many women in Australia and so the demand for a house for the family may not have been as great at this time. The quality of the boarding house may have varied depending on the market sector that was being accommodated. Undoubtedly, some individuals may have had little choice in their surroundings.

From the existing research, boarding house tenants in Australia appear to be the same groups of people as in America and Britain, but with one major exception - women. As will be shown later when explaining 'demography', women were not numerous in the Australian population as elsewhere. Here boarding houses were mainly used by males, often itinerant worker and migrants new to Australia.

Many new arrivals to Australia stayed in boarding houses. They came from many countries and many of them, including the Chinese stayed in boarding houses prior to their departure and return from the gold fields in the mid-eighteen hundreds (Garton, 1990: 39). Many newly arrived migrants and white Australians lived in boarding and lodging houses. Europeans tended to use the boarding houses on arrival, but once they had established themselves, they promptly left them (Lawson, 1973). It must be remembered that passage to Australia was an expensive journey and many of the arrivals had to have a good deal of money to sustain them during the voyage and afterwards. Many immigrants were skilled trades' people (Alpin, 1985:30) whilst others were 'assisted passage' immigrants who came to Australia in the early 1800s. For these 'assisted passage' immigrants, their passage was conditional and their final destination was determined by the authorities (Alford, 1984). There appears to be no study or specific information on the migrants and the particular boarding houses that they used. We do not know, for instance, if the migrants were offered the same assistance by the boarding house operators and other tenants. We do not know if there were preferred ethnic groups in some boarding houses. Here, as elsewhere, migrants were not the exclusive tenant group, as some of the

native-born Australians also lived in boarding houses. There appear to be no records of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders (ATSI) as tenants of boarding houses. It may be fair to assume that until recently, the late 1960s, the ATSI were excluded from boarding houses based on race.

As for the native-born tenants, many of them stayed in boarding houses much longer or used many boarding houses for shorter stays. It is possible to imagine that itinerant workers would stay at various boarding houses as they moved around the countryside, providing they could afford it. This was due to the types of employment they were able to get, and irregular incomes due to the seasonal variation like harvesting crops, and shearing sheep, all of which could be affected by unseasonable weather patterns, like droughts and floods. Also, innovation took a toll on the numbers of people employed in some industries. For instance, when many sheep graziers began to fence their paddocks, the shepherd became redundant (Cannon, 1978a:178). Also, when mechanised shears were introduced into the sheds, this increased the numbers of sheep shorn in a day, thereby reducing the numbers of men needed to harvest the fleece. This was offset by the massive increase in the numbers of sheep in the country (Clark, 1995:430). Additionally, there was the flow-on effect from the economic sector. Australia was a major trading country and an international supplier of commodities, so when recessions and depressions hit England or other markets, this hurt the Australian economy and workers.

Many waterside workers in Sydney in the 1800s were 'on-call' workers, meaning they only worked intermittently. Considering the number of boarding houses in the poorer parts of Sydney, such as the Rocks area, it is easy to assume that many of these waterside workers would have been amongst the tenants there, although there is no empirical data to support this claim. Again, with the transportation of rural commodities to the cities, many transport people, like Bullock drivers and Stockman would surely have stayed in the boarding houses on their visits to these cities. However, due to the lack of data in this area, this is also an assumption based on the deductive process. If many transient people of this time stayed in the boarding houses, then this changes somewhat when we get into the twentieth century.

As shown by O'Hanlon (2002), in order to relieve themselves of the tedium of keeping a house, many of the middle class in Melbourne used boarding houses when they were experiencing staffing shortages. In these boarding houses, during the 1920s, there was an assortment of people including single ladies and married couples, even a future Prime Minister while studying at university. In the late 1920s and early 1930s in Brisbane, we have more detail about the clientele of a boarding house.

In her memoir, *Muma's Boarding House* (1978), Shirley Ball who was the daughter of the owners of the Parham Boarding House in Herbert Street, Spring Hill in Brisbane during the late 1920s and early 1930s, has detailed what life was like growing up in a boarding house at this time. This area was reputedly a 'bad part of town' even though Shirley Ball's family never found it to be so (Ball, 1978:15). In this boarding house, there were a variety of tenants, single and married, male and female. The house appears to be divided by cost, where the upstairs rooms were 2 shillings dearer per week. These rooms were often used by shearers or cane cutters who would come to Brisbane after the harvest. The other tenants were regular city dwellers, who ranged from chimney sweeps, a hotel driver and tout, dance instructors, a woman who lived off remittances from her husband in New Guinea, a professional thief, an Englishman who lived off remittances from England, a prostitute, and a person who had a mental disorder. Along with the rich assortment of tenants, there are glimpses of what the boarding houses were like from a business perspective. Boarding houses appear to be labour intensive business, which required all of the family plus an employee to run it.

As well as Spring Hill in Brisbane, the area of Sandgate and Shorncliffe had a number of boarding houses. For instance, from 1911 until 1932 the Blume sisters were operating a boarding/guest house at Shorncliffe (which overlooks Moreton Bay). Some of the other boarding houses in the Shorncliffe and Sandgate areas included Villa Marina, which still operates as a boarding house today. The grand looking "Meridian", with its own lawn bowls green for guests, was a little more fashionable. "Saltwater" which still sits high atop a cliff at Shorncliffe, operated as a boarding house too, but neither of these (Meridian and Saltwater) is still operating as

boarding houses. Unfortunately, there is no information about the tenants of these boarding houses. However, we do know that in Sydney there resided factory workers who were housed in boarding houses in Glebe (Hovarth & Engels, 1985).

These sketchy details provide only a brief glimpse of people who lived in boarding houses in Australia. What is reflected in this brief history of boarding houses is the class system, which appears to be present in different boarding houses and in different cities. The cities in Australia were different and this difference was in their economic function. It would be fair to say, that Australia appeared to start its colonial life as a divided country. The division is not only in the obvious Aboriginal and Colonialist confrontation, but also a division based on the 'imported' function of the particular parts of the colony. There was a divide between the various regional (and then later capital) cities and their economic functions. Frost (1994:22) clearly presented the differences that separate the Australian cities. For him it was primarily based on free settler versus the penal settlement. Therefore, the origins of Melbourne, Adelaide and Perth –free settler- were different to Sydney, Brisbane and Hobart – penal colonies. Melbourne was the financial centre, Adelaide was a skilled free settler city, and so too Perth. Sydney, Brisbane and Hobart were much more working class, this is not to say they did not have elites, but the function of the cities relied more on processing the rural products. Sydney excelled by becoming the major maritime city in the nation (Marsden, 2000:14). All this indicates that for many people, and particularly in these working-class cities, life revolved around unskilled labouring work.

The Australian working experience

Australia was promoted as a "workingman's Paradise", an egalitarian society where prosperity seemed to exist for all white Australians. To some people, Australia was such a place, a place of good wages; a place where some trades attained an eight-hour working day. It was a place where the worker could purchase (with the help of a building society), a 'small freehold ...and become his own landlord' (Twopenny, 1973:37). However, this may be a more accurate description of the skilled workers and the middle classes. Many workers in nineteenth

century Australia did not benefit from constant high wages, or get to own a small freehold, or enjoy the accompanying benefits - only 30 % of Sydney residents owned a home in 1890s (Grieg, Lewins & White, 2003: 173). Life for many was unrelentingly hard. Nineteenth century Australia had a laissez faire economy. This left the workers open to the wild fluctuations of supply and demand and many experienced wage reductions. Some workers even paid kickbacks to employers to keep their jobs during the depression of 1890s (Cannon, 1978b:277). The good times offered the workers some gains but, these did not last.

The economy was based primarily on pastoral production and exports, which meant that work was subject to the same seasonal rhythms. Many of the workers – men – had to travel frequently and endure spells of unemployment. For men in the cities, the docks offered work but this, too, was seasonal. Many people took on two or more low-paying jobs to try and make ends meet. Even many tradesmen had difficulty in feeding their families. Dobeson (Davison & Constantine, 1990), a carpenter, struggled to find work, often walking all over the city and competing with long lines of others seeking the same job. When he managed to find work, sometimes he (like many others) was not paid, requiring him to take legal action to get the money owed. The irregular incomes meant many people had to live in areas that sometimes were quite foul and subject to disease such as the lower parts of the Rocks, and Balmain in New South Wales and the South Brisbane docks in Queensland. These areas were polluted, and stank from sewage and refuse often coming from the businesses which lined the river banks. Often the boarding house offered the only affordable housing for these workers.

During the nineteenth century, many workers took action and formed unions in attempts to gain better pay and working conditions. By the 1860s a number of unions had been formed, and many had some success in attaining better rates of pay and working conditions. These 'wins' translated into better housing for themselves and their families. However, the gains won by the early 1890s were eroded by the depression in the later part of that decade (Clark, 1995:471). As Clark (1995) writes, the 1890s were turbulent times in Australian history. There were many strikes that often resulted in bitter and bloody outcomes (Clark, 1995:430). Often the strikes

failed and the workers were forced to accept the terms set by the employers. This intensified animosity and led to more dissatisfaction, thus creating major challenges to the ruling status quo. Many people were increasingly unhappy, and this contributed to the emergence of socialist and communist groups which made some people begin to worry about a revolution. In 1892 many of the financial institutions went bust over-night, leaving many people in dire straights (Clark, 437-8).

At the turn of the century, the mode of production began to change. The Federal Government began a policy of "New Protection" through the introduction of tariffs (Clark, 1995: 477). The protection policy offered the manufacturing industries some protection from cheaper imports by imposing import tariffs. Initially the manufactures were charged an excise levy, but would receive this back if they paid their workers "a fair and reasonable wage". The fair and reasonable wage would be determined by the Court of Conciliation and Arbitration. In the Harvester judgement of 1907, Mr. Justice Higgins deemed "a fair and reasonable wage" to be "...sufficient to ensure a workman and his family 'food, shelter, clothing, frugal comfort, provision for evil days, etc., as well as reward for special skill of an artisan if he is one'" (Clark, 1995: 478). This initiative saw improvements in the standard of living for many Australians. Having more workers with regular employment and higher wages, combined with the protectionist tariffs aided the expansion of the manufacturing industries. This new mode of production ushered in many changes to the old forms of rural commodity production. As the types of employment changed, many workers became less transient and the cities began to stabilise and then grow. By 1911 about 50 percent of the population was homeowners. However, this was followed by The Great War (WWI) and a massive financial collapse and depression in 1929, which lasted for ten years. This was again followed by another world war. As Australia settled back into post war recovery, the economy had moved into a more controlled, regulated, and planned type. The laissez faire model of wild fluctuations had passed for the time being. These actions saw some workers receiving better wages, better working conditions, and a better standard of living. This was the beginning of the long boom, period of great international demand for Australian goods and large

scale infrastructure projects, like the “Snowy Mountains Scheme”. During this time, Australia renewed its demand for immigration. The Post-WW II migration saw many people coming from central Europe, and not solely the British Isles. Many of these initial groups were males (Caldwell, 1987: 28). This migration again contributed to an imbalance between the sexes in Australia.

Demography

From 1788 until the early 1970s, Australia continued to be a male dominated country. During this period there were more males than females in Australia. This situation was the reverse of England and Wales. Colonial Australia started with an uneven sex ratio of seven men for every woman and by 1801 it was 4 to 1. This imbalance was undoubtedly a significant factor contributing to the popularity of the boarding house. When consideration is given to household and residential organisation and the lack of women (for the most part wives) to do the household work, cooking, entertaining, and cleaning, or as Lady Alfred Stephen wrote of her step-son “...a wife to look after his comfort...” (Gilding, 1991: 32), it becomes easy to see why some men would seek out boarding houses that provided such services.

Contributions to the sex imbalance were from convict transportation and successive waves of male immigration due to the gold rushes and later post-WW II labour shortages. Convict transportation was severely skewed with the male to female ratio being in the order of 7 to 1 (Caldwell, 1987:23). Another contributing factor was the immigration due to the gold rushes in the 1850s. During that decade, the Australian population went from 400,000 people to 1,000,000 (Caldwell, 1987:23). The Census of 1861 shows the Australian population at 1,151,947; of these some 668,698 were male and only 483,249 were female (138 males to 100 females) (Caldwell, 1987:30). Males made up nearly 60 percent of the population. It took approximately another 110 years (1970s) for the sex ratio to achieve parity. After World War II, Australia began a new course of immigration, which again contributed to the male/female disparity, though not as unequal as in previous years. The unequal distribution of males to

females was to last until mid 1970s and finally began to reverse for the first time in 1981 (Caldwell, 1987:23). In recent times, the ratio of male to female has continued to diminish with males dropping below 1 for every woman (in 1981, 99 males to 100 females and in 2001, 97 males to 100 females) (Caldwell, 1987:26). According to Caldwell (1987), parity between the sexes was reached in the towns as early as 1871, but rurally this has never been achieved (p.24).

Marriage

Interestingly, with the small proportion of women in the Australian population during the early years, many women remained unmarried. For instance, women born in the years 1861 to 1866, 14 percent of them never married and 21 percent of them remained childless (McDonald, 1984:5). However, the group of women born between 1871 and 1876 were the highest proportions in these categories with 17 percent never marrying and 25 percent remaining childless (McDonald, 1984:5). In fact, the category of women never marrying only began to drop below double figures for women born in 1908 to 1913 (McDonald, 1984:5). This group remained under double digits until the group of women born 1951 to 1956, when this figure once again returned to double digits (McDonald, 1984:5). Not surprisingly, the marriage rates fell during the 1890s and 1930s depressions. In the 1950s and 1960s over 90 percent of marriageable women were married (Gilding, 1997:162). These trends flow on to the housing market and home ownership.

Housing

Alpin (1985) notes that in Sydney as early as 1855, significant sections of the workforce were living in boarding houses, hotels and tenements, or in private houses as lodgers (p. 29). By 1890 there were 300 listed boarding houses in Sydney as well as many households taking in lodgers (Gilding, 1991: 34). As late as the 1890s only 30 percent owned their own house in Sydney. But, by 1911, home ownership for all of Australia was up to 50 percent, and, according

to Castles (1982), would have been much higher if it had not been for the depression of the 1890s. However, the figure of 50 percent home ownership still leaves half of the population in other forms of housing. Apart from the aforementioned tents and shanties, the boarding house would have, at times, been the preferred housing. As twentieth century Australia progressively industrialised, the inner city areas struggled to house the increasing number of people seeking accommodation, which meant that many businesses changed locations.

After World War I, industrial business moved out from the city centre to the outer suburban areas. The migration of industry changed the class composition in many suburbs. Areas such as Glebe in Sydney became higher density, working-class areas. The demographic change saw an exodus by the wealthier residents, and their mansions were converted into boarding houses (Hovarth & Engels, 1985: 149). The housing stock especially that of the middle-class had noticeably deteriorated before it was changed. However, during the interwar years the 'flat' was introduced on to the housing market (O'Hanlon, 2003: 5). The flat is a smaller version of a house, which is often part of a larger building. For example, many larger houses like 'Queenslanders' are divided into about four flats, thus they contain four households instead of one. They are a self-contained form of housing with many of the amenities of a house. This form of housing soon became popular as a cheaper form of rental accommodation (O'Hanlon, 2003: 5). With the increase in industrialisation, wages and living standards improved, and so did housing options.

As the effects of high wages and higher living standards became more common, much of Australia's private wealth was transferred into bricks and mortar. Housing became the premium form of investment. Australia's population had the highest home-ownership in the world by the late 1960s which was: 72 percent (Badcock & Beer, 2000: 3). Housing ownership has remained around this figure with only a slight drop in recent years.

Over the last 200 hundred years, Australia's sex ratio altered with a major growth in female numbers. Interestingly, with such high disparity between male and female numbers in the Australian population, many women were breadwinners in their own right. For instance, Shirley

Ball's mother "Muma Ryan" and the Blume Sisters operated boarding houses and guest houses. This type of business is not only highly gendered but it is also very labour intensive. However, these women, like so many others, employed the skills that they possessed and ran profitable businesses.

During the early part of the eighteenth century, women were involved with boarding and lodging houses, and they also owned inns and hotels (Alford, 1984:195). The tradition of boarding house keepers seems to continue on until well into the twentieth century. James (1978), writing between the 1860s and 1880s notes women as boarding house operators. Gamber (2005:289) in the United States also noted the numbers of women in the Census of 1861. In three eastern states New York, Massachusetts, and Pennsylvania had some 5288 women listed as boarding house keepers. There are no figures for Australia as the 'Musters' and later the Censuses did not keep this type of information. It is interesting that the women who went into business went into socially prescribed roles such as domestic service providers. Not much attention was given to the boarding house apparently, unless it was the centre of controversy.

Interestingly, when boarding houses have achieved public attention, it was generally for being either a "model" of the form, or 'notorious' for their "riotous" activities or their levels of overcrowding. One news article in the 1870s claimed that over 70 people resided in one tenement (Garton, 1990: 39). James (1878) wrote about the differences in lodging houses in Sydney and Melbourne. The Melbourne lodging house was a large building that housed over 300 men per night. The men were packed in; if a man lashed out during the night, his neighbour would be hit. The men were prohibited from drinking alcohol and had to go outside to smoke cigarettes. A smaller lodging house in Sydney received a more critical review, and the owners of this business were seen as exploiters. But, not all boarding houses were as they appeared. Garton notes that some boarding houses were brothels and others were referred to as "dens of thieves" where the unwary may be sometimes bashed and robbed (1990:39-40). These conditions also relied on the general economy as well. Space was a premium for which you had to pay, therefore affordability is and was an issue.

Garton highlights that sometimes the choice a person had to make was between paying to use a bed or the floor (1990:40). It was sixpence for the floor and a shilling for the bed. These rooms suffered from poor ventilation, making them hot and stuffy in summer, and extremely cold in winter due to the lack of heating. Other writers have outlined the type of spartan conditions offered in some boarding houses around WW I. Lindsay wrote about a boarding house in "Blood Vote" which was set in South Brisbane in 1917. "It was a rickety wooden two-story building with an attic. ...on the ground floor the rooms were divided with partitions of sackcloth. Some men where [sic] playing cards on a tin truck". These descriptions do tend to fit in with the notion of the rugged bushman who was able to cope with extremely tough conditions. However, this opposition of "urbane and austere" imagery may have blurred much of the middle ground of this type of housing. For the ordinary boarding houses, the types of tenants may have varied from the well-to-do student studying in Melbourne (O'Hanlon, 2003), to chimney sweeps, or to those with a mild mental disorder. But most of all, the mainstay of boarding houses was the itinerant worker, who was in need of a place to sleep and eat.

As the twentieth century progressed, fewer and fewer people took on boarders and boarding houses as a source of immediate income. Instead, an investment mentality seems to have emerged leaving boarding houses as a space warmer. By this it is meant that while the owners are waiting for the price of the land to rise, the investment is either cost negative or offers some return. Most owners of boarding houses are remote owners and only visit their houses, sometimes infrequently (Centre for Urban Research and Action, 1979: 5). As for the many people who once would have been using boarding houses, their world of work has changed too.

Since the early 1970s, there has been a process of deinstitutionalisation taking place. This process has seen a movement of returning the mentally ill to general society. This process has seen the population of boarding houses swell with people with mental health issues. The Burdekin Report (1993: 916) identified the proliferation of mentally ill people in boarding houses as an issue, and noted that some boarding houses were paying "spotters fees" to some welfare workers to place their clients in these particular boarding houses. Also, the influences of

gentrification have affected housing affordability in many areas; this too has reduced the housing choices of the mentally ill and poor and limited them to places like boarding houses (Commission of Inquiry into Poverty, 1975: 151). The ability to pay for the premium of housing, combined with their illness, sees many individuals struggling to find decent and safe housing.

Presently, boarding houses are disappearing from the suburbs and inner-city areas. In the city, the boarding houses are being replaced by office blocks, and up-market apartments. In the suburbs they are being returned to one-family houses, or they are torn down and replaced by housing for only a couple or a small family, or some boarding houses burn down (as in the case of the 'Seabreeze' in Sandgate). This reduction in boarding houses sees more people struggling with fewer vacancies. However, often the low-income people who are searching for housing are not as noticeable in the overall housing market, as much more focus is on other sectors of the housing market. Boarding houses are a form of affordable housing, which house many needy people. Historically, boarding houses have always provided housing for people on low-incomes.

Concluding Remarks

What comes from this brief history is that the current documents relate to a white or 'new' Australian history, even on matters relating to housing and boarding houses. There is no evidence of Aboriginals or Torres Strait Islanders having used boarding houses. Neither is there any information about the housing for others such as the Pacific Islanders ("Kanakas") who were brought here as Indentured workers to work in the cane fields of Queensland. Their housing situations are a mystery. The main stream of information, as scant as that is, is about white or migrant usage of boarding houses.

The boarding house in Australia originated in a time of need for the low-paid workers who were constantly on the move. They, the workers, were driven to travel great distances and suffer under the prevailing economic structure. It was a laissez faire economy, where the workers for much of the nineteenth century were lowly-paid and powerless people. They had no bargaining power, and their strikes often failed to improve their working conditions. The people,

who started boarding houses as businesses, found a need in the market place and took advantage of it. This arrangement worked until the workers utilised their agency and formed unions.

After this, the workers gained political representation and from there the working conditions were improved. Through government legislation, the structure of work began to change. With protection and fairer wages the Australian workplace offered more stability for the worker. A concomitant factor during this time was the rise in marriage rates. These two factors combined to create a growth in home ownership. These features spelt the beginning of the end for the boarding house industry. As the years passed, these features, i.e. stable work and marriage, strengthened and changed forever the past patterns of Australian life. It became a country of high marriage rates and high home ownership.

During the depression years of the 1920's and 1930s, boarding houses were still being used. Here again, people had the need to move in search of work and again the boarding houses were a popular form of affordable housing. This is of course, other than those middle-class people who retreated to boarding houses for ease of life. After this time, the boarding houses continued to decline. Decades after the depression, government policy changes of the mental health system meant that many vulnerable people were placed into boarding houses, leaving them with less stability in their lives.

Finally, in the past the existence of boarding houses seemed to rely heavily on demand, which in itself was caused by the demands placed on employees and employers. With this in mind, there again is a need for affordable housing and a client base in need of housing, yet boarding houses are continuing to disappear from the market place. The following chapter explores Brisbane's housing market, including the number of boarding houses, house prices and rental availability and affordability.

CHAPTER 5
BOARDING HOUSES AND STRUCTURAL FACTORS

“The city is not an end in itself, but the result of societal processes at work”

(Ley, 1983: 45).

This chapter is about boarding house stock, rental accommodation, the housing market, and affordability. It is an empirical examination of a number of housing segments, but most of all it is about the vitality of the boarding house industry. Boarding houses are a part of the accommodation industry. These businesses are shelter for people on low incomes and those on the move. However, as affordable housing and businesses, the tenants and the owners of boarding houses are all subject to the changing tide of ideas on spatial uses and demands. These include city management and regulation, along with demands brought about by an increasing population and a new corporate orientation.

What will be explored here apart from the housing market and boarding houses, are factors such as government policy initiatives, which include modern government entrepreneurialism, city-wide remodelling and gentrification. Some writers suggest that all inner-city revitalisation programs are gentrification (Ley, 1983: 45). Here, gentrification is taken to mean, an influx of middle-class people into a current or recent working-class area. When this occurs in the inner city, it is some-times heralded as “a back to the city” movement (Smith, 1996: 5). This movement tends to have a negative effect on cheap affordable housing.

Home Ownership

There is a major trend in Australia that sees home ownership elevated to the “Great Australian Dream” (Kemeny, 1977:48). Australians have had a long history of buying a home of their own, which is seen as the most preferable form of housing (Western, 1983:69). The home offers the owners a gathering place for family and friends; it also offers security and privacy; and it is often the most valuable asset held by the home owners (ABS, 2007:1). Until relatively recently the home ownership figures remained a little under 70 percent (ABS, 2007:2). This can

be seen as a testament to housing affordability of the Australian housing market. Since then, housing affordability has slipped out of the reach of many, including first home buyers. In 2004, Disney was writing of the impact of the rising house prices and interest rates, which had been making housing unaffordable. This situation has been 'creeping in' for some time, according to Disney (2004). He also identified the flow on impact for those in rental housing. As the 2006 Census data relays home ownership has slipped below 65 percent. The housing market, in Queensland at least, has been driven by a constant influx of people.

According to the REIQ in 2006, there are approximately 1200 people coming into Queensland every week, this has continued into 2008 (REIQ, 2008). Such growth places great demands on housing, both rental and purchasing, as well as on the city infrastructure. The housing market may be thought of as a housing escalator in which the value of the house increases while the house is being paid for (Badcock & Beer, 2000:4). This is a two way gain for the homeowner. Often the cost of housing for the purchaser/s goes down in real terms, due to their income going up over time. Also, the value of the house and land increase over time, thus reducing their costs. The housing market has climbed for the past eighty years (Tanton, Harding & Nepal, 2008:13). While it was common for the indebtedness of older home owners to go down as they aged, this trend is changing too. Now, many older people are continuing to have large housing debts well into old age (Tanton, et, al., 2008:13).

Housing affordability

"Aussie housing market one of the world's least affordable," exclaimed the Courier-Mail on the morning of the 18th March 2008. This headline followed on from the release of the AMP-NATSEM (National Centre for Social and Economic Modelling) report of the previous day. The AMP-NATSEM report "Wherever I Lay My Debt, That's My Home" (2008) compares the 1995/6 housing situation with 2005/6. What is stated quite clearly, is that between 1986 and 2007 wages have doubled but house prices has increased five fold (Tanton, et, al., 2008:7). In 2006, Australian households needed 7.5 times their annual income to buy a 'typical' home, compared with only five times their annual income in 1995/6 (Brinsden, 2008: 1). In Queensland in 1995/6,

4.9 times the annual income was needed to own a house, this rose to 7.2 in 2005/6. Queensland figures are the third highest in Australia. To put the expense into context, the median monthly loan repayments reported in the Census of 2006, show that in 2001, the repayment was \$867.00 and in 2006, the repayment was over \$400.00 higher at \$1300.00. The combination of high housing prices combined with high interest rates places many people in housing stress.

Housing stress

One is considered to be in housing stress when one has to pay 30 percent or more of disposable income for that housing (Falson, 2007:1). Tanton, et al., (2008: 11) have identified that approximately one quarter of all households in New South Wales, Victoria and Queensland were in housing stress during the 2005/6 period. The key findings of the NATSEM report (Tanton, Nepal & Harding, 2008) relay the depth of the housing situation. The Australian housing market is one of the least affordable in the world, with 90 percent of areas considered severely unaffordable (Tanton, et al. 2008: 2). Homeownership has dropped across all age groups, with a dramatic drop in the 45-59 age group for owning their homes outright. This group has fallen by over 14 percentage points between 1995/6 to 2005/6 (54.4% in 1995/6, 34.8% in 2005/6). Most tellingly, 62 percent of first home buyers are in severe housing stress paying more than 30 percent of their income on housing. These features may go some way in explaining the rise in repossessions. The affordability crisis has seen residential and commercial property repossessions in Queensland almost double in three years (Jensen, 2007). From 2004 until 2006 the repossession of residential and commercial property increased by a little over 88 percent in this three year period. During May 2007, the average home loan increased again, placing more pressure on stressed homeowners. There were at least 12 interest rate rises between 2002 and March 2007, by the Federal Reserve. The interest rate rises were attempts to slow an over-heating consumer market. Jensen (2007) goes on to say, "Applications for loan assistance have skyrocketed". This general outline regarding the housing

market highlights the housing situation in which many people including house owners and tenants find themselves. These are some of the structural changes that are occurring and may be having a negative affect on the boarding house industry, which provides homes to many low-income people.

Boarding houses comprise a large segment of housing in Australia, with a considerable number of people being house in them. Boarding houses are certainly the “last resort” housing for many impoverished people. For many, boarding houses represent a critical affordable housing option. Australia-wide, there is some variation as to what constitutes a boarding house. Mostly, the variation is related to the number of tenants that reside on the premises. For instance, in Victoria, four (4) or more unrelated people in a house constitute a registrable boarding house, whilst in Queensland the minimum number is five (5). Below these numbers, they are not necessarily registered. It is also quite possible that there are large houses with more than four/five non-related people sharing the accommodation that are not registered boarding houses, without them being an illegal boarding house. Students for instance, sharing accommodation, may fit the criteria for a boarding house without it being a boarding house. Therefore, definitions tend to be inconsistent and blur our understanding of boarding houses. Australian Bureau of Statistics’ (ABS) categorisation of boarding houses also blurs any possible clarity of this category of housing. In ABS Census data, the category of Non-Private Domestic Dwellings is where boarding houses and the tenants are counted, but so too are Private Hotels and their clients. Therefore, in dealing with boarding houses these two issues must be kept in mind. Data from groups like Shelter may offer a more direct count of boarding houses; however, this data collection is not conducted on a regular basis. This makes it hard to get a workable picture of the “flow” of boarding house numbers over time. As other earlier works (See CURA, 1979; Badcock & Cloher, 1980) have demonstrated, the boarding house industry has been in decline for some time.

The loss of boarding houses has been a gradual phenomenon. It was noted that boarding houses were disappearing from the heart of Adelaide between 1947 and 1977 by Badcock and

Cloher (1979). Over this time, various businesses were moving out from the city centre to the burgeoning suburbs. At the same time, the Centre for Urban Research and Action (CURA) (1979) found that there was a loss of boarding houses in Melbourne. One of the causes put forward for this loss at that time was the advancing ages of the owners of many of the boarding houses, whose children were not interested in continuing with the business.

However, the loss to the remaining supply of boarding houses may have been exacerbated by other factors coming into play. These include the rise of the budget tourist, and mega and hallmark events like the Sydney Olympic Games, Indy and Grand Prix, and Brisbane Expo '88, all of which have had some impact of the boarding house industry and the availability of affordable housing. For instance, 13 out of 33 boarding houses in close proximity to the Brisbane Expo '88 site were lost (Lye, 2000: 1). Three of these boarding houses were turned into car parks (Allen, et al. nd, 13) and many more were transformed into short term tourist accommodation, such as backpacker hostels, while other boarding houses became unaffordable when they were converted into (more expensive) 'private hotels'. State wide it is possible to see the decline taking place, as shown in table 5.1.

Table 5.1 Number of Boarding Houses[#] by state 2001 to 2006 Census

STATES	1991	2001	2006	1991-2006 Losses	1991-2006% Change
Queensland	300	298	211	89	29.66%
N.S.W.	661	593	465	196	29.65%
Victoria	346	306	205	141	40.75%
Sth Australia	77	70	75	2	2.6%
W. A.	161	138	64	97	60.2%
Tasmania	42	43	12	30	71.4%
Nth Territory	30	40	19	11	36.6%
Australia	1625	1491	1051	574	35.3%

#ABS category for boarding houses includes private hotels. N.B. State data does not add up to total. Data for 1991 Census CLib91 Cat. Number 2720. Data for 2001 & 2006 comes from ABS Census Online.

From table 5.1, the loss of boarding houses between the two Censuses of 1991 and 2006 is 35 percent Australia wide, some 574 boarding houses and private hotels have disappeared in

the period between these two Censuses. Queensland and New South Wales approximate the average at 30 percent. Victoria was well above the Australian average at nearly 41 percent. However, NSW and Victoria both sustained losses in triple figures; NSW with the largest loss of 196 boarding houses and Victoria with 141 boarding houses. South Australia was the only state (between 2001 and 2006) to counter the trend and actually increase the numbers of boarding houses, with a gain of five. But, this is still down two, on the 1991 figures. It is not known whether these five are boarding houses or private hotels, which are counted in the same category. Proportionally, Tasmania sustained the largest loss, with a 71 percent fall in the number of boarding houses in that State. Tasmania fell from 43 to 12 in just 5 years (2001 to 2006). Tasmania was not alone in large percentage falls of boarding house stock. The boarding house stock in Western Australia fell by over 60 percent between the 1991 and 2006 Censuses. The stock of boarding houses in Northern Territory fell by nearly 37 percent. This is after a gain of ten boarding houses in that state between 1991 and 2001. As mentioned earlier, the loss of boarding house stock from Queensland and NSW was a little below the Australian average. Victoria lost over one hundred and forty one boarding houses, thus reducing that State's stock by 40 percent. This sees Victoria with 205 boarding houses as opposed to the earlier figure of 346. Queensland also lost about one third of its boarding house and private hotels in this period. In Queensland, there were 300 boarding houses and private hotels in 1991. This number fell to 211 by the 2006 Census.

Another feature of Table 5.1 is that the largest loss of boarding house stock occurs between 2001 and 2006 Censuses. About 440 boarding houses ceased being counted as boarding houses during this time. Moving from the state-wide data to the capital city level, the data shows an interesting pattern of expansion and contraction unlike the data at a state level. However, the losses overall look quite stark.

Table 5.2, boarding house stock in Australian capital cities: 1991 to 2006 Censuses, shows of all boarding house losses between the 1991 and 2006 Censuses, 38% came from the capital cities. This is surprising considering the concentration of demand for affordable housing in the

city areas. Hobart city lost 18 boarding houses in the fifteen-year period, and now appears to be devoid of any boarding house.

Table 5.2 Boarding House Stock in Australian Capital Cities: 1991 to 2006 Censuses

Capital Cities	1991	2001	2006	Change	% Change
Brisbane	133	149	109	24	18.00
Sydney	460	464	384	76	16.50
Melbourne	206	227	183	23	11.16
Adelaide	70	62	65	5	7.14
Perth	91	50	25	66	72.52
Darwin	N.D.	24	16	8	*33.34
Hobart	18	16	0	18	100.00
Total	978#	992	782	220	

Data for 1991 Census CLib91 Cat. Number 2720. The data is from ABS Census data 2001 and 2006 Online. *data for 2001 to 2006 Censuses. #Darwin data 1991 not available.

This may not be so surprising considering the small numbers of boarding houses to start with. Perth city also appears to have lost approximately three quarters (66) of that city's boarding house stock. However, in just sheer numbers, the losses from Sydney (76), Melbourne (23) and Brisbane (24) account for almost 56 percent of all boarding houses lost in the capital cities listed here between the two censuses. These three cities also account for one fifth of all boarding house losses. These boarding houses are for want of a better description, a "home" for many of the vulnerable people in our society. As table 5.3 shows, there is a human element to the closures of the boarding houses.

Table 5.3 Boarding House Tenants State Data: 2001 and 2006 Censuses#

State	2001	2006	Change persons	Change %
Queensland	5,321	4,761	560 (L)	10.53 (L)
N.S.W.	8,311	6,093	2,218 (L)	27.00 (L)
Victoria	4,848	2,867	1,981 (L)	41.00 (L)
Sth Australia	868	901	33 (G)	3.80 (G)
W.A.	1,631	800	831 (L)	51.00 (L)
Nth Territory	1,986	652	1,334 (L)	67.20 (L)
Tasmania	286	163	123 (L)	43.00 (L)
Australia	23,598	16,268	7,330 (L)	31.06 (L)

(G)= Gain, (L) = Loss. N.B. State data does not add up to Australian figures, it does not contain data for ACT and Other territories. # no 1991 Census data available.

As can be clearly seen in table 5.3, apart from the increase of 33 extra tenants in South Australia, all other States show reductions in boarding house tenants. The Australian average as stated before is 31 percent, but as can be seen in the numbers from many of the States there are devastating losses of boarding house stock and accommodation for those in the market for this type of housing. As is clear from Table 5.3 there is a loss of 7,330 people registered in the Non Private Domestic Dwelling category in the two Censuses. In NSW and Victoria, there is a reduction of over 4000 boarding house tenants in this five-year period. If the Northern Territory is included, this shows a loss of over 5300 tenants'. The loss of boarding house tenants between the two Census dates show falls in the Northern Territory over 67 percent. This figure is closely followed by other dramatic falls such as 51 percent in Western Australia, 43 percent in Tasmania and 41 percent in Victoria boarding house tenants. The massive reductions in these States tend to dwarf the losses in Queensland boarding house tenants (10.5 %). In Queensland, the situation is not as dire as in some other states, with the loss of 560 tenants.

Table 5.4: Boarding House Tenants by City 2001 and 2006 Censuses#

City	2001	2006	Number Changed	% Changed
Brisbane	2,421	1,819	602	24.80 (L)
Sydney	7,064	5,168	1096	15.50 (L)
Melbourne	3,854	2,692	1162	30.15 (L)
Adelaide	769	821	52 (G)	0.06 (G)
Darwin	1,321	516	805	60.90 (L)
Perth	1,009	468	541	53.61 (L)
Hobart	125	70	55	44.00 (L)
Totals	16,563	11,554	5009	30.24 (L)

N.B. Canberra not included. # no 1991 Census data available. Data is drawn from ABS 2001 and 2006 Census data Online.

It is noted that the data for Table 5.4 shows what appears to be a discrepancy in the data. The tenant counts for Brisbane (602) and Queensland (506) do conflict. So do the figures for Hobart, as here there are 70 tenants registered in the 2006 Census, but there are no corresponding boarding houses in that city. There are no explanations for these inconsistencies.

In the capital cities there are over 5000 fewer people registered in boarding houses in the 2006 Census as opposed to the 2001 Census. This is over 68 percent of tenant losses in

Australia. The majority of the losses come from Sydney and Melbourne, with over 2200. Relatively speaking, Brisbane saw a reduction of just under a quarter fewer tenants registered in boarding houses in the 2006 Census, than was the case in 2001. Figures for both Perth and Darwin show large losses in these cities with nearly 71 percent and nearly 54 percent (respectively) fewer boarding house tenants. Adelaide was the only city to show an increase in tenant numbers during the 2001 and 2006 Censuses. This table reflects the position of the reduction in tenant numbers of a little over 30 percent. The overall data from the four tables reflect large losses of boarding houses offering accommodation and the concomitant loss in tenants in boarding houses. Next is an exploration of some of the larger factors that may be affecting boarding house operation and the tenants housing.

There are a number of factors that may have effected changes within the boarding house industry. State Government initiatives and rising insurance costs to name just two. The State government initiatives were introduced to offer some degree of housing security to the tenants of boarding houses, along with better safety and quality regulations. Beyond these initiatives, there are the conditions placed on businesses like boarding houses by insurance companies.

Government Initiatives

In recent years, a number of state governments, like Queensland, Victoria and South Australia, have made legislative changes to their respective tenancy acts, and tightened up building regulations. In Queensland, the State government included boarding house tenants in the Residential Tenancy Act of 2002 (RTA), and also strengthened the enforcement of the new Building and Other Legislation (2002) both of which may have had an unintended negative impact on the boarding house industry. Other state governments, like Victoria and New South Wales have also introduced similar legislation, which affects the boarding house industry. The New South Wales government introduced the new amendments to the existing legislation “State Environmental Planning Policy No 10 – Retention of Low Cost Rental Accommodation” (SEPP) prior to the Sydney Olympic Games. However, this only requires local governments to consider

the quantity of existing boarding house stock in an area before approving applications for boarding house conversions (Lye, 2000:2). In effect, this action has done little to prevent the loss of boarding house stock in that state (Lye, 2000:3).

The inclusion of boarding house tenants' coverage in the various policies like the RTA by the state governments was to give them some measure of housing security. Prior to this, the tenants could be evicted with little notice (Lye, 2000:2). Now the tenants must be formally warned at least in the RTA – that is written warnings stating the nature of the misconduct - three times prior to being evicted. No longer can tenants' possessions be held by the landlords or their agents for past rent owing. However, since the introduction of the RTA and the Building and Other Legislation (BOLA), which was also introduced in 2002, there have been many closures of boarding houses. While the RTA protects the tenant as to housing security, the BOLA covers building codes and housing standards, by covering illegal building work, exits, stair access, fire-fighting equipment, smoke hazard management and access to fire hydrants (Sandy, 2005:4).

Since these newly legislated processes have been introduced, the numbers of boarding houses in Brisbane have fallen dramatically. There were 51 boarding house closures between 2002 to early 2005; and a further 24 were still to comply with the new regulations and were likely to close (Sandy, 2005: 4). In February 2005, there were only 80 inner-city boarding houses left. There were 130 inner-city boarding houses prior to 2002. With the 51 closures and the expected closure of a further 24, the number of operational inner-city boarding houses is reduced to 55. This is about 42 percent of the boarding house stock that existed in 2001. The premise underlying the changes to the BOLA regulations for boarding houses was ostensibly to prevent another "Childers Backpacker" fire. Undoubtedly, the motive justifies the action. However, it does raise questions about the seriousness of keeping affordable inner-city housing as an option, considering the minimal alternative housing on offer.

In 2002, the state government in Queensland began a partnership program with Brisbane City Council and a private group and formed the Brisbane Boarding House Group. The state

government put forward \$50 million dollars and the city council committed \$10 million, mainly in the form of property, over a four year period for the construction of 600 units (Schwarten, 1 August 2002:2481). The units came under the care of a new group called the Brisbane Housing Group or the Brisbane Boarding House Group. While this project should be commended, the few units built and to be built, comparatively speaking, still leave many boarding house tenants “out in the cold” literally and figuratively.

Apart from the construction of the 600 units and the changes to the RTA and BOLA, there are the overall fire safety inspections which can mean the difference to gaining insurance and registration. As Greenhalgh et al. (2004) has pointed out, many boarding house owners have difficulty in obtaining insurance coverage due to the age and condition of their boarding houses. Insurance is an important part of protection for the conducting of a normal business and without it; continued operation is risky, if not impossible. For instance, there have been a number of fires in boarding houses since the Seabreeze Boarding house fire in 2002. In that case, the age and condition of the neglected building contributed to the destruction of the building and the loss of life (Fens, 2005: 13). Shortly after this fire, there was a further series of fires in boarding houses. However, in all of these further cases there was no loss of life.

Other factors that are contributing to the loss of boarding houses are the Heritage listing or a Local Character listing. In Brisbane two of the most prominent heritage listed buildings are the Treasury building and the Customs House. Both of these buildings are now used for other purposes than that for which they were built. The Treasury is now a casino, and the Customs House is used by the University of Queensland. Both of these listings tend to restrict what can be done to the building unless it is in line with the character of the building, i.e. of the period. Both of these listings make repairs and alterations very expensive for the owners. There are two houses with these listings in Shorncliffe. One is currently operating as a boarding house, whilst the other was a boarding house that has since been sold and returned to a single household.

Rentals in Queensland

All boarding houses are rental accommodation. This form of accommodation offers a meagre form of housing to those who can only afford to live on the bottom rung of the housing market. As with other types of rental accommodation, rentals come in a range of prices. For instance, a boarding house in New Farm in Brisbane charged (in 2006) \$137.50 per week, while a boarding house in Shorncliffe charged \$107.00 per week (in 2006). The rents that tenants pay to boarding house owners are only one side of the coin. For the owners of boarding houses, these rents are returns on investment. The amount of these returns may help the boarding house owner to decide whether the income generated from rents is sufficient to stay in business.

Some boarding house owners have ceased to operate as a boarding house and ventured into backpacker accommodation. During this research, about half (6/13) of the Brisbane boarding house owners contacted by telephone claimed to be now a backpacker hostel. Often the “backpacker” hostels have a variety of rooms for rent varying from a single to six or more persons per room per night, with little costs in the way of reconfiguring the house. The change in consumer orientation from, basically, low-income housing to “budget” tourist accommodation sees the boarding house stock diminishing. These reductions in the quantity of boarding house stock may force people on to the street or make them pay much more for other types of accommodation. However, there are shortages in other types of housing too.

Nationally, rental vacancies are at an all time low (Tanton, et al., 2008:3). This demand tends to heighten the prices of a scarce resource such as rental housing. The national median rent per week in the 2006 Census (ABS, 2008) was \$190.00. This figure is a little misleading as to the growing cost of rental accommodation in the capital cities across Australia. Table 5.5 shows the growth of median rental house prices from the March Quarter 2006 to the June Quarter 2008.

The cost of rental accommodation has risen over the last two years, with some capital cities “out performing” others. While this is hardly surprising, rents in Sydney, Melbourne, Brisbane, Canberra and Perth have over the last twenty-four months risen twenty percent or more.

Table 5.5: Capital Cities Median Rental House Prices March 2006 to June 2008

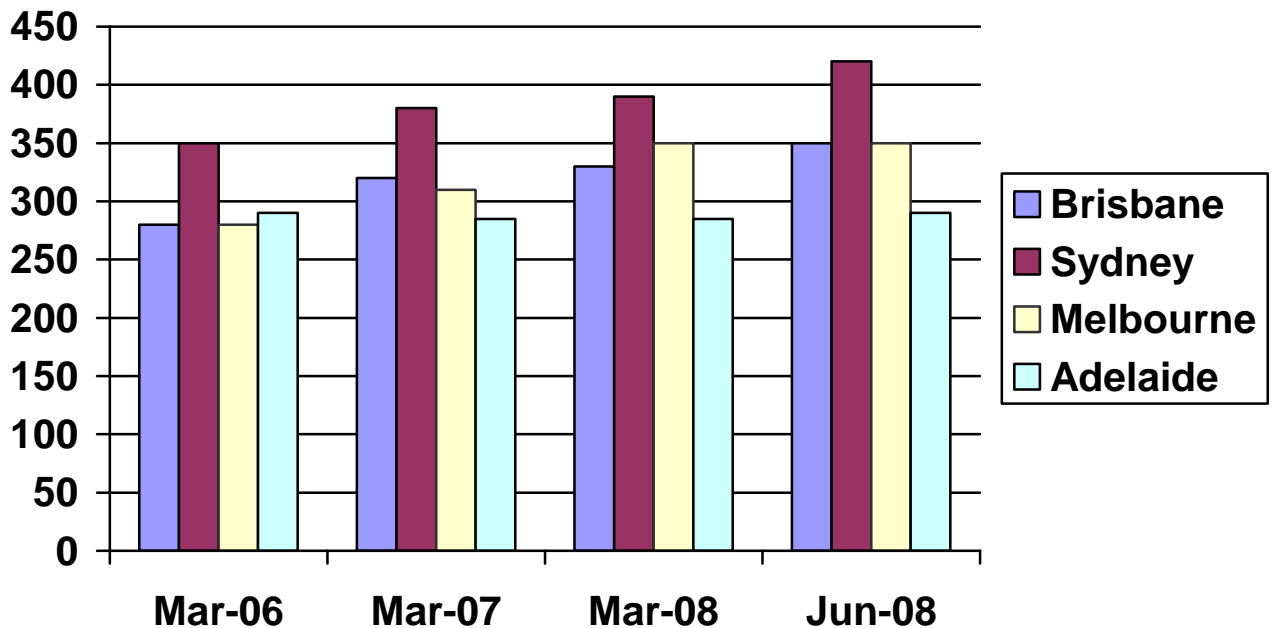
	Mar 06	Mar 07	Mar 08	June 08	\$ change	% change
Brisbane	280.00	320.00	330.00	350.00	70.00	25% Inc
Sydney	350.00	380.00	390.00	420.00	70.00	20% Inc
Melbourne	280.00	310.00	350.00	350.00	70.00	25% Inc
Adelaide	260.00	285.00	285.00	290.00	30.00	11.53% Inc
Perth	270.00	300.00	330.00	350.00	80.00	29.6% Inc
Darwin	385.00	380.00	420.00	450.00	65.00	16.89 Inc
Hobart	270.00	280.00	280.00	285.00	15.00	5.56% Inc
Canberra	330.00	385.00	410.00	410.00	80.00	24.24% Inc

Data drawn from Australian Property Monitor Rental Reports: Friday 1 June 2007 and 23rd July 2008

As Table 5.5 of median rental prices for houses shows, Brisbane, Melbourne and Canberra demonstrated growth in median rental prices of about 25 percent. Perth climbed dramatically with nearly a thirty percent increase in median rental price. Only in Hobart did rental prices not move into double digits, showing a five and a half percent increase. Rental prices in Adelaide grew at moderate 11.5 percent. The proportions tend to hide the cost to the end user. Rents in Brisbane, Sydney and Melbourne all rose by \$70.00 per week. Perth and Canberra increased by \$80.00. Darwin increased by \$65.00, while rental market in Adelaide and Hobart showed some constraint by increasing only \$30.00 and \$15.00 respectively. The smaller rises in these two cities demonstrate the small level of demand in those markets.

Figures 5.1 and 5.2 visually show the movement of median rental house prices over the two and a quarter years, from March 2006 to June 2008. As both of these charts (Figures 5.1 & 5.2) show, there are no capital city median rents below \$285.00, which is well above affordable levels for low-income people like boarding house tenants. To make this point clearer, many people in boarding houses are in receipt of government transfers - pensions and other benefits. The income from a Disability Support Pension, for instance, for a single person is about \$510.00 per fortnight. Rental assistance is a pro rata payment that is available, but the maximum is \$90.00 per fortnight. Combined the "Single Pensioner" has about \$300.00 per week (\$600.00 per fortnight) to live on including paying for housing. Unemployment benefits are lower than this.

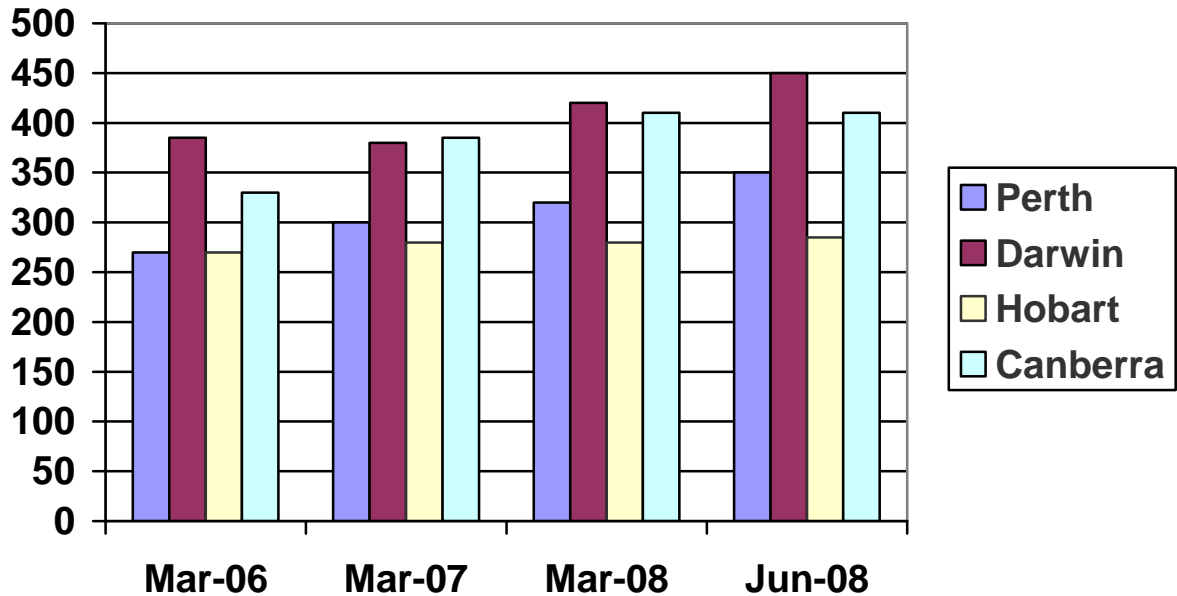
Figure 5.1: Brisbane, Sydney, Melbourne and Adelaide Median Rental Prices for Houses March 2006 to June 2008



No information to date has specifically identified boarding house tenants as experiencing housing stress. Therefore, a simple calculation would determine this. Based on the two weekly rents mentioned earlier (\$107.00 and \$137.00) and the earlier example of income from a Disability Support Pension including the maximum rental assistance, it is possible to see whether the tenants are in housing stress, or not. The rent at \$107.00 per week is a little over 35 percent of the example income, and at \$137.00 per week is nearly 46 percent.

While the rent does include electricity and/or gas, and making an allowance of \$7.00 per week for use of this utility; the example still leaves the boarding house tenant paying nearly 33 percent and 43 percent (respectively) of their disposable income on housing. Therefore, many boarding house tenants are in severe housing stress. However, housing is a scarce and valued resource to which different social groups have varied access to (Western, 1983:69).

**Figure 5.2: Perth, Darwin, Hobart and Canberra Median Rental Prices for Houses
March 2006 to June 2008**



Conclusion

There are many people migrating to Queensland each week, approximately 1200. These people must be accommodated, and this migration must contribute in some way to the shortage of housing. With the increase in demand, a scarce and valuable resource like housing becomes more expensive. Demand creates a growth in cost of housing (primarily land) which flows to the purchaser and, if rented, to the tenant. Housing is unaffordable for many people, but it is desperate when most housing is out of reach and the barely affordable housing is disappearing. This is the situation for many boarding house tenants, who appear to be sharing housing stress with many others.

The demands placed on the owners of boarding houses to keep the house operating are many. These may be in the form of BOLA regulations and the RTA agreements. The costs of insurance as well as the meeting of demands by government's Heritage and Local Character listings complicate matters for boarding house owners. Is it any wonder why so many boarding

house operators have left the industry? Perhaps this is the way the Owners of boarding houses see it, but what of the tenants? How boarding house owners and tenants feel about their accommodation is discussed in the next chapter.

CHAPTER 6 OWNERS AND TENANTS: TWO SIDES OF THE COIN

Presented in this chapter are the responses to the interview questions from the owners and the tenants of the boarding houses. In this chapter, the pressures faced by these two groups of people are outlined. The two groups shall be dealt with separately and successively, starting with the boarding house owners. It stands to reason to deal with the owners first, considering the decisions taken by them may have very serious outcomes for the tenants of boarding houses. Beyond this, the structure of the chapter is laid out thematically. The boarding house owners interviewed were owners of a 'for profit rating one boarding house'. They are not operators of any higher-level care facility. All the tenants are mobile and able to care for themselves in aspects of life including personal hygiene, medications, cooking and shopping.

As stated previously the boarding house industry is experiencing a serious decline. As such, many of the proprietors involved in the boarding house industry are leaving. Further, there are not many young people who are prepared to take on the role as boarding house owner. In this first part of Chapter 6, the thoughts of owners of boarding houses are explored, whilst the second part of the chapter are the thoughts and experiences of the tenants. In this way, it is possible to "hear" what the owners and tenants have to say about their experiences within the boarding house industry. For example, from the owners perspective, the old form of multiple-person dwelling is not what it once was. Further, the structural changes, which have taken place and altered the business landscape for boarding house owners, leaving many of them unable or unwilling to continue with the boarding house industry are discussed further. From the tenant's perspective, insights into what daily life is like for people who live in boarding houses are explored. Please note, that where a name is used it is a pseudonym and not an actual name of a person.

One side of the Coin: The Owners

Most boarding houses are privately owned and operated as 'for profit' accommodation (Anderson, et al. 2003: 56). In this, most proprietors own only one boarding house. As has been suggested by other research, this industry is declining and in some parts of Australia it has been doing so since about 1954 (CURA, 1979:12; see also Anderson, et al, 2003). Over the years, there has been much criticism levelled at the boarding house industry (see Maher, Wulff, Yates, Beer, Earl, Karmel, Stimson & Woods, 1997). The main areas of criticism are the actual condition of the boarding house stock and the tenants' lack of security of tenure (tenants' legal rights). In the report by Maher, et al., (1997: 68) they point out that there is increasing demand for any affordable accommodation, and often this is the boarding house. "In theory, I'm in a growth industry. I offer a flexible service to a wide variety of people..." said a New Farm boarding house operator/owner.

The high level of demand for boarding houses is keeping the tenancy rates high, and owners may find this a very positive indicator. High levels of demand allow many boarding house owners to be very selective about to whom they rent a room. This allows the owners biases to influence the selection process. The selection process varies from those boarding house owners who take in the first person who applies for the room, to those who "decide after we have had a chat with them, over a cup of tea" (CURA, 1979: 25).

Some owners are noted as having very prejudiced views towards tenants. It has been documented that some of the owners interviewed by the CURA (1979) highlights that some boarding house owners hold very patriarchal and racially biased views and exclude people from their boarding houses on these grounds. These exclusions were supported by ideological positions, which justify them. For instance, many people seemed quite willing to expand on their views of women tenants, but not about some immigrant and Aboriginal groups. "Women are big trouble in a boarding house. They have too many visitors". "They create trouble amongst the men," said a 60 year old Brisbane manageress (2006). Some owners are concerned that the women may be prostitutes. As mentioned in the history chapter, a tenant in the Ryan's boarding

house in Spring Hill was a prostitute. She did not appear to be problematic or detrimental to the boarding house. However, a New Farm owner/manager was very concerned with “keeping them out”. His reasoning was “they want to bring their clients back, and then there are the Pimps. And they cause all sorts of trouble”. He went on to relay a tale about one prostitute who “left her pimp” and he came to the boarding house and began harassing him for her bags. However, women in general suffer from discrimination, as may be attested by the proportion of women in boarding houses.

Also, the Burdekin Report (1993) found that mentally ill women as boarding houses tenants did not fair very well. The report found that these women experienced a great deal of sexual advances and sexual abuse from managers and other tenants (p.395). In 2001, women made up only 30 percent of the boarding house tenant population. However, by the 2006 Census, this proportion had dropped to 25 percent. Interestingly, women made up 44 percent of the total tenant losses. Given women’s smaller proportion of the overall tenant population (30%), it seems curious that they make up such a large proportion of the tenant losses (44%). These figures beg the questions, “Where did these women go?” And, “Are these women gaining access to another form of housing that the men are not?” Such questions are beyond the scope of this research, however, and require further investigation to determine where they have gone. Beyond biases and discrimination, many owners are faced with many levels of change in regulations concerning boarding house accommodation.

Some of the owners have had difficulties with the regulations and local and legislative bodies. As highlighted in the previous chapter, the introduction and amendments made in various state legislation acts with regards to boarding house tenants gaining tenancy rights (RTA, 2002 in Queensland), and other legislation concerning new building and fire safety standards, both have had a serious impact on a number of boarding houses and operators. In Queensland, the new building standards were introduced in 2002 in the Building and Other Legislation Act (BOLA). Since the introduction of the legislation, many boarding houses have ceased operating (Sandy, 2005: 4).

Some owners are faced with really tough choices as can be seen from the example below.

In an article from an inner-city newspaper (Sandy, 2005: 4), the reporter interviewed an older woman, who had run a boarding house for five decades. Her plight stemmed from the changes to the building regulations. The regulation changes would involve large-scale renovations and incur large costs, to come into line with the new regulations. A spokesperson said the internal staircase was impossible to renovate to comply with the new building standards (Sandy, 2005: 5). These changes affected her operations so dramatically that she was considering selling her boarding house. The Queensland government offered low interest loans to boarding house operators to cover much of the costs of the renovations. This elderly woman obviously could not see the sense in taking up such a loan, as she was a woman in her seventies. Overall, there was a low up-take rate for the funds offered to the boarding house owners and others (Sandy, 2005: 5). As with many boarding houses, they are generally older buildings (CURA, 1979: 15), and many are now heritage listed which again increases the expense and difficulties for bringing the buildings into line with the new codes.

This is not the only factor influencing change on the boarding house industry. Other factors are increasing insurance costs, registration, land, and water rates. Another factor is the changing tenant base, as clearly articulated by all boarding house owner/operators interviewed for this research. Some boarding house operators see many possibilities for their business, but they feel restricted by regulations and the governing bodies, as this owner did:

“I’d like to advertise on the Internet world wide...and get people doing PhD’s and stay here for a couple of years...I’d like to develop that but I’m being forced to take in the worst types of people rather than the best types of people” (An Inner-city Boarding house Owner, 2006).

Interestingly, this owner claimed to have been prevented from changing to another type of accommodation, yet about six out of the twenty boarding house owners contacted by telephone claimed that they were no longer boarding houses, but backpacker accommodation. Their contact details were drawn from a phone book not more than twelve months old where they were listed as boarding houses.

The tenant base is an area of great issue for boarding house owners. The above comments "...the worst types of people" seem to be views generally held by the boarding house owners about the current tenant base. That tenants are more problematic now than they were in the past, were opinions expressed by an inner-city boarding house owner and a retired boarding house owner from a bayside suburb. "You know, in the past many of our tenants were retired bushies. They came from up the country to retire by the sea," stated the retired bayside boarding house owner. "They were mainly older men, and they weren't much trouble". He also stated, "That changed when the government began building the pensioner units". For this ex-owner it was the introduction of the Housing Commission Pensioner Units, which reduced the number of older people from the private rental market. For most of the time, this boarding house had full occupancy, with twenty-five tenants. When they closed the boarding house, there were only six tenants in the house.

This building program also coincided with the beginning of the deinstitutionalisation process, which began in the 1970s. While all the interviewees acknowledged the impact and cost of the new and past government regulations to the boarding house operations, they are factors that the owners have to adapt to or leave the industry. The bayside boarding house owner was already retired from the industry before the new regulations had been introduced. But in the past, they too had costly upgrades, especially the installation of fire sprinkler systems and a new fire alarm system, which had to be "hard wired" to the Fire Brigade. However, these issues tend to be secondary issues for the owners of boarding houses. The most pressing issue for them appears to be the current client base.

In the Burdekin Inquiry of 1993, it was estimated that 70-80 percent of the 1300 people in boarding houses in central Sydney had serious mental illnesses, most of whom never saw a health worker (Burdekin, 1993: 387). At that time (1993) it was stated that "...boarding houses became convenient repositories for [a] chronic – but rarely [hospitalised] – clientele (Burdekin, 1993: 387). It was also noted that "the advantage of this situation for boarding house owners is that it provides a generally docile clientele who are easily controlled and prepared to accept

minimal standards; it also guarantees a reliable regular income generated by pensions and benefits” (Burdekin, 1993: 387). This picture is a far cry from the image of the past as told by the retired owner. For him, the last years of his involvement in the industry, the tenants were not docile, but quite troublesome. One owner expressed his views that the people with schizophrenia were highly problematic. Sometimes their medication is not right or they do not take their medication. One owner also suggested that some mental health patients would sell their drugs, thereby bringing on an episode. Beyond the issue of people and prescribed medicines, there is the issue of illegal drugs and dealers in boarding houses. This is attributable to the younger age of the client base. The average age of the tenants within this inner-city boarding house was about mid-thirties. The retired boarding house owner noted that when his business began, the average age of the tenants was around mid sixties. However, just prior to closing down, the ages of the tenants were closer to late twenties to mid thirties.

The inner-city boarding house owner said this was a growing concern for him. His recollections indicated that there were more people using “harder” types of drugs and that this issue was the primary cause of the problems facing the boarding house industry. As the inner-city boarding house operator expanded on the drugs issue, he said, “I know people using Amphetamines...they go off their head and start smashing things up”. One such incident saw a young tenant kick a can of peas through a ceiling panel, which had smoke detectors and a lighting fixture attached. This was a costly repair for the owner, as the tenant did not have the money to pay for the repairs. Apart from people using drugs, there are some tenants selling drugs and this aspect raises serious concerns for the owners and managers alike. The 60 years old manageress found both alcohol and drugs a problem within the boarding house, but alcohol was far more common a problem for her. In that boarding house the average age appeared to be about 54 years of age, whereas the inner-city owner found that the drugs were increasingly a problem, with property damage being a major concern. The tenants who were dealers were a problem, as they had many visitors, and sometimes caused the police to come to the boarding house. The police coming to the boarding house was something that the owners did not like

happening as the drug dealers and the police in the building both disturbed the other tenants.

Many tenants would find such intrusions into their home, by the police, as something that provokes anxiety and fear. As for sharing your home with drug dealers, this too would create fear and anxiety for many of the tenants. The constant presence of police at a boarding house creates problems for the owner in that complaints from the police to the regulating bodies like local councils may see their registration revoked. At a social level, many of the nearby residents may make complaints to the local council to have the boarding house removed from the neighbourhood, as well.

Summary

Often, the tenants of boarding houses are seen are very problematic. As one boarding house owner said, "They weren't easy to take care of. I mean, if you didn't have a daily problem: that was unusual". The major issue, as seen by the owners, has been the changing clientele of boarding house tenants. The older male tenants, which were common in the past, have been progressively replaced by younger males, who often suffer with mental illnesses and drug problems, is the key issue for boarding house owners. The dual governmental actions of the introduction of Housing Commission pensioner units and the deinstitutionalisation process have altered the client base within boarding houses. What was detected from the interviews is that these government initiatives have had a negative effect on the boarding house industry. Boarding house owners have been constrained by the legislation and the governing bodies, which make many of them, feel that they have been left caring for people that they were not equipped to care for, in what has become more of a pseudo care facility than a boarding house. These operators have been caught in a bind. On the one hand, they have many desperate and vulnerable people needing housing, often needing a supported type of housing. On the other hand, when some of the boarding house operators have tried to change their client base by changing to another type of facility, such as a backpacker accommodation, they have been refused permission to do so by the governing bodies. This forces them to operate as a boarding house, which Burdekin (1993: 387) referred to as "repositories", or to leave the industry

altogether. In addition, the introduction of government legislation in the form of RTA (2002) and BOLA (2002) have had further negative influences on many boarding house owners.

According to Hay (1995: 190), every structured situation defines its own range of potential choices. However, what choice do boarding house owners have when it comes to their situation? In the case of the New Farm boarding house owner who wished to change to another form of accommodation business (housing International PhD students), he was prevented from doing so by governing bodies and/or the legislation. Therefore, his choice was severely constrained, as was the case with the boarding house owner who was in her seventies and was required to upgrade her premises, whose choice was to do costly repairs or leave the industry.

The Other Side of the Coin: Tenants

In the Burdekin Report (1993), there are many instances of bad boarding houses and some owners of boarding houses with despicable business practices. The following information is drawn from other reports on boarding houses. Some material comes from CURA, which conducted its research in 1979 and therefore predates the Burdekin Report of 1993. However, the bulk of the material is very recent, which is suggesting that in some cases, little has changed since the Burdekin Report (1993) of 15 years ago.

Boarding house conditions

“The House of Horrors” said Terry, (a pseudonym) a 34 year old ex-tenant talking in 2006 about the last boarding house in which he stayed. “That’s what it’s called, the place is filthy, and it smells”. This particular boarding house does have a strong stale odour of human habitation. The hallway is dimly lit, and the aging building constantly creaks. It was built in the late nineteenth century and is well over one hundred years old. For much of this building’s ‘life’ it has been used as a boarding/guest house. Despite the great age of the building however, it is of better quality than some others that operate as boarding houses.

In 2003 Anderson et al., (2003) wrote of people living in a boarding house in South Australia, that was made from corrugated iron. A number of walls had holes in them and the floors subsided to one corner (p. 39). There were six men living in this house, with another two men living in fibro outhouses. "It's no palace, but it's cheap rent," David told the researcher (in Anderson et al., 2003: 39). These two extracts highlight the Dickensian conditions that some tenants have to live with in some boarding houses. While it may be an error to assume that many boarding house owners do not attempt to keep their establishments in reasonable condition, there are still some boarding houses that do not conform to a reasonable standard.

Conditions of the boarding house:

Often, one of the major complaints about boarding houses from tenants is the size of the room. It is understandable why this would be so, considering this is the main object they are renting, apart from access to cooking, bathing and washing facilities.

Colin (aged 44) said, "It's a tiny room" (in Anderson, et al., 2003). In the present research, the informants had a similar comment. 'Terry' (aged 34) stated, "Yeah, some of the rooms were quite small, to the point where you could put your arms out to the sides of you and touch the walls, so it was no bigger than a prison cell in some cases, some rooms are not much more than six to seven feet across" (1.8m by 2.1m). A tenant from the ill-fated Seabreeze Boarding House, in which three people died when it burnt down in 2002, reported that he paid \$80.00 a week for his room which was about six feet across and eight feet long (1.8 m by 2.4m). The room was just large enough for a cupboard, bed and a television. The room did not have a door; it was missing (A Seabreeze tenant, in 2002). "Half an income for a prison cell" said Tom (48 years), while another said "I feel like I'm in a cage" (Damien, 42 years). "You know, boarding houses are really the end of the road" said Damien.

Often the term "prison" or "prison cell" was used by tenants at various times to describe their boarding house accommodation. For some of the men, boarding houses are not the best housing form. As Tom (48 years) intimated, boarding house life was not always very passive

and sedate. "You need to be pretty tough to survive in that kind of environment," he said. In share accommodation the common areas are also areas of complaint.

Other areas that received much criticism by tenants are the kitchens, bathrooms, toilets and laundries. "In the last place, the kitchen was filthy" (Colin, 44 years). "I hated having to share the bathrooms with the other tenants. Some of those guys, um, their levels of hygiene isn't the best" Terry (34years). Some times, the complaint is the reason for leaving. The commonly cited reasons for leaving the previous boarding house were the poor standards of the house and the other tenants. Some complaints were, "There was too much noise and arguments and police visiting." "There were lots of IV drug users and my room was broken into." "The place was a dump and the people were desperados." Often conflict between tenants is the reason for leaving a boarding house.

Anderson, et al., found that 'Conflict with other residents, which could precipitate eviction, was the next most common reason for moving from one boarding house to another' (2003: 36). These tenants put it like this "I was kicked out over a dispute"; "Problems with other residents"; "I had a fight and got evicted". Another reason for moving are due to work changes "The site work I was doing finished"; "I found casual work in this area". "I live in Melbourne and I'm just over here for 3 months for work". But sometimes there are no particular reason for leaving "[I] just moved around a lot, there was no reason for the move" (Anderson, e, al., 2003: 36). Often the focus is on why people leave boarding houses, but what should also be of interest is why people need to go there in the first place. The reasons for going into boarding house accommodation are as varied as the reasons for leaving them.

Boarding house entry

Anderson, et al. (2003: 35) found that some people had moved into a boarding house from supported accommodation. Their reasoning was that it was too crowded in the supported accommodation. In the supported accommodation there were six people to a room, at least in the boarding house they could have their own room. Another reason given for moving into

boarding house accommodation is “relationship breakdown”. In Anderson’s et, al., (2003: 37) work, about 34 percent of respondents cited relationship breakdown as the reason for them moving into boarding houses. This was the most cited reason given by their respondents.

“I came to Adelaide to see my son”; “I’m travelling around looking for my family”; “I moved to Adelaide to get away from a woman” (Anderson, et, al., 2003: 37). Terry’s (34 years) entry into boarding houses started at a reasonably early age. He initially lived in a foster home, spent some time in gaol and lived in a number of boarding houses across the east coast of Australia. He had moved around quite a lot. His reasons for living in boarding houses was that they were affordable to him and did not restrict his movements. Maggie (60 years) came to boarding houses quite late in life. She and her husband came from Melbourne to Brisbane, where they stayed in a caravan. She saw an advertisement for a manager/caretaker position at a bayside boarding house. She applied for the job. Free accommodation was the payment offered for the work. She had hoped for a small wage too, but this was not offered. It is quite possible that she is being under-paid, as the weekly rental, charge was \$107.00 per week. Many tenants’ housing histories show a high usage of unstable and insecure housing options and vulnerable housing, as was the case with Maggie and her husband when they stayed in a caravan. Other forms of unstable, insecure and vulnerable housing are sleeping rough, sleeping in cars, staying with friends, and shelters. Anderson, et, al., (2003: 36) found that at least 58 percent of their respondents had lived in at least one of these situations. “I lived in private rental with my partner, then I left and lived with a friend and then in a homeless shelter. I moved into Housing Trust accommodation, but I had a breakdown, then went to live with my parents for a while”; and “I lived in private rental for over 14 years. I couldn’t afford the rent rises and became homeless”; “I lived in a few flats in Melbourne and also stayed at mates’ places. I spent time in gaol for drugs and violence. I lived in boarding houses and moved around a lot. I stayed in an unlicensed unregistered car with a mate for 6 months, living on the beaches” (Anderson, et al., 2003:36-7). Interestingly, Terry (34 years) left the last boarding house and stayed with friends for two years, and then moved to public housing. This order appears to be the reverse of some

boarding house entry. Anderson, et, al., (2003: 37) suggests that private rentals are at best considered as a highly vulnerable housing option for people on low incomes along with home ownership.

Over 80 percent of the respondents in the work from South Australia were from private rentals, a further 17 percent had been homeowners, who had lost the home, often following a relationship break-up. A relationship break-up was the most often cited reason for moving into boarding houses, which was a little over 34 percent, and financial pressures were reported in 10.9 percent of cases. "I lived in private rental with my wife, and then we bought a house. After we separated she got the house. I got a payout but I blew it on gambling. I went to live in a boarding house". Another boarding house tenant stated, "I lived in private rental and a Housing Trust [house] with my wife. After we split up she stayed in the house with our daughter." Yet another tenant said, "I mainly lived in Defence Force housing interstate. After I left that I lived in a caravan and then my wife and I were in public housing. After we separated my wife moved to Adelaide so I moved here too, to be close to the children, but I really don't see much of them. I wouldn't want to tell them I'm living in a boarding house" (Anderson, et, al., 2003: 38).

There is a real sense of shame with this person not wanting to tell his children where he is living and he is not the only boarding house tenant who is trying to hide behind a lie. Others will hide behind euphemisms such as saying that they are sleeping in the "Starlight Motel" which means sleeping rough. In essence, this masks the possible feelings of shame that people can feel about their situation and may be a way of relieving any feelings of their "defiled self". Goffman (1963) wrote about the defiled self in "Stigma" and Bauman (1998) wrote of "the flawed consumer". Here, the flawed consumer, the defiled self, have been unable to house themselves and may experience shame. It is through masking the shame with false bravado (so as to avoid criticism and judgment) that some of these men can talk of their experience which led to the boarding house.

Gordon (70 years), like many of those cited above, had also been divorced from his wife, and for the most part, his children also. He came to live in a bayside boarding house over 16 years

ago. He was still living there in 2006. Some tenants are quite settled and do live at the one boarding house for a number of years. "At this boarding house there are three or four others, apart from Gordon, who have been in here over five years. The rest are here for about 3 to six months, sometimes only a week," stated Maggie (60 years) in 2006. There is a high level of transience with some tenants, which often follows a rupture or disconnection from family or significant relationships (Anderson, et, al., 2003: 38).

There is a 'high degree of mobility in approximately one fifth of respondents (Anderson et, al., 2003: 38). "I was born in New South Wales. I've been travelling around Australia picking up casual work for 20 years"; "I lived in public housing with my family, then I was placed into foster care. Since then I've travelled all my life working at odd jobs and living in caravan parks, boarding houses and a flat"; "I'm on the move, I can't settle down," (Anderson, et, al., :38). Terry (34 years) also travelled and used boarding houses as his source of housing. As mentioned above, he had lived in boarding houses in Tasmania, Sydney, Melbourne and Brisbane. Housing histories are quite varied.

Some respondents had previously shared housing with others. "I lived with my mother in private rental. When she died I couldn't afford the rent on the house. I lived in boarding houses and then lived rough in a car until I came to Adelaide"; "I lived with friends in a share house but that was sold...so I came here"; "I had to leave there [a flat in New South Wales] because the other residents were into speed and other stuff. I came here to get away from them." "I was in gaol interstate for 18 years. I moved into private rental then I came to Adelaide and lived in boarding houses".

Anderson, et, al., suggested that drug use, mental health problems and financial pressures all contributed to housing instability and poor housing options: "We owned a house in Perth and lost it due to my 'ex' dealing in speed. We came to Adelaide, lived in private rental. We lost the house, lived in a shelter, split up"; "I lived in flats and then got a Housing Trust place. I fell behind in the rent and it got trashed by druggies. I left the house to get away from them" (Anderson, et, al., 2003: 39). For a small group of men, they had work-based housing supplied

during their life and never experienced any other type of housing. Some men had worked for many years in construction gangs and had lived in camps, tents, caravans and huts. "Bob, an aged pensioner, had spent his working life in remote areas in construction gangs. His accommodation was in camps and he has never lived in private or public rental in Australia or owned a house. He moved into his current boarding house when he retired, and has been there a number of years. It suits his need" (Anderson, et, al., 2003: 39).

Many boarding houses were and some still are centrally located in the city, thereby offering better access to lifestyle, services and other facilities for those on low incomes. This was the case of the Ryan's boarding house in Spring Hill (Ball, 1978), and for those who stay at the boarding houses in New Farm. It is also true for boarding houses in most cities. "It's right in the heart of the city"; "It's very handy to shops and transport"; "It's close to all the things I know"; "I couldn't find anything else for this price" (Anderson, et, al., 2003: 39). Many people on low incomes need to have access to many services that a good location can offer. Some bayside boarding houses also offer good access to services and the like, often by being close to rail and bus services. This also applies to boarding houses in many suburbs as well. Apart from the needs and access to the general culture, there is also the issue of boarding house culture. From the evidence, it appears that there is a 'social order' within boarding houses that is highly stratified, with most of the power being exercised by the owner/manager (CURA, 1979: 35). The next most powerful individuals are the long-term tenants, with the new tenants with the least power are at the bottom of the pecking order. Past reports are replete with instances of abuse and abuse of power (See The Burdekin Report, 1993; CURA, 1979).

"The last manager used to bully the tenants. When I came here, they would all hide in their rooms. You can't do that. We've got people here with mental health problems," said Maggie (60 years) at our interview in 2006. Many of the tenants approached for this study appeared to be very wary and easily intimidated, with the exception of Terry (34 years), who felt quite secure in his tenure status at his last boarding house. Terry's (34 years) presence in a boarding house appears to be exceptional for two reasons, the first he is blind and the second is he is an

Aboriginal. As outlined in the history chapter (Chapter 4) there are no obvious records of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders (ATSI) using boarding houses. However, these two features of Terry (having a disability and coming from a racial minority) do not seem to have impeded him. In fact, given that, Terry is disabled (blind) and Aboriginal he appears to have a higher level of confidence than do many other boarding house tenants. Terry believed that the owner/manager would not be game to evict him: a blind, Indigenous man, "I'd crucify them", he said. However, this degree of self-assuredness is not necessarily common to all boarding house tenants and may be considered an aberration. In fact, a high level of deference is often displayed by tenants toward owner/managers, for it is well known that boarding house owner/managers hold the power in this setting.

It appears that managers/landlords still hold keys of each tenant's room and maintain a right of entry at least once a week. Owners/managers access to boarding house rooms is to be once a week on a day negotiated between the tenant and owner/manager in accordance with the Residential Services (Accommodation) Act (Queensland Government, 2002: 67). In the 1970s, as discussed by CURA (1979:75), some tenants claimed that the weekly entry was a strategy used by the boarding house owners/manager to check up on the tenants, which was conducted under the guise of cleaning the rooms. The researchers found that when the owner/manager would show the researchers the rooms, they did so by knocking and entering in one motion. This activity of owners/managers still goes on in some boarding houses. In the current research, Maggie (60 years) basically explained the same method of entry in the interview in 2006. The CURA researchers noticed high levels of acquiescence, as the tenants never challenged or refused entry to their rooms (CURA, 1979: 75). This acquiescence may be seen as a physical demonstration of an unequal power relation, whereby, the tenant is subordinate to the owner/manager.

As part of Giddens' structuration thesis, he uses the term 'dialectic of control'. What this means is that "those in subordinate positions are never entirely powerless, they always have some albeit limited autonomy with respect to those who seek to control them" (Bagguley,

2003:137). Giddens further argues that:

Anyone who participates in a social relationship, forming part of a social system ...necessarily sustains some control over the character of that relationship or system. Power relations in social systems can be regarded as relations of autonomy or dependence, but no matter how imbalanced they may be in terms of power, actors in subordinate positions are never wholly dependent, and often very adept at converting whatever resources they possess into some degree of control over the conditions of reproduction of the system (Giddens, 1982: 198-9).

Whilst this might be the case in other social settings, it could be argued that this part of Giddens' theory does not apply to this situation, for it is clear that boarding house tenants are completely dependent upon the boarding house owners. If tenants objected to having their rooms entered in this way, more than likely, they would find themselves in conflict with the boarding house owners. They may even find themselves evicted from the premises and therefore made homeless. So what choice does the tenant have but to acquiesce to such demands by boarding house owners? And further, what "resources" do boarding house tenants "possess" that they could use to gain "some degree of control over the conditions of reproduction of the system"? The owner/manager has every right to enter their room and the tenant has little power to object to entry, and this is reinforced by every entry, thus reproducing and not transforming the structure. The owner/manager has this power relation reinforced to themselves and to the others with every room inspection (entry) they make.

From the secondary data, it appears that there are not only power relations between the owner/manager and tenant, but between tenant and tenant also - a pecking order between longer-term tenants and newcomers. The longer-term tenants are known to "keep the newcomers in line" as regarding the house rules (CURA, 1979: 28). In this way, there appears to be an implicit hierarchy based on tenancy seniority. In engaging in the hierarchical power system or structure, the tenants are able to exercise some control over some part of their lives, which, for the rest of it, they are powerless to do much at all. While these actions were not directly observed in this study, there were casual comments made by some boarding house

tenants, which intimated that the behaviour does still occur. However, this is a very limited degree of agency, as often the tenants have no choice in staying or any choice in where they are housed next. Also, the fact that tenants cannot have any say in any decoration in any apart of the boarding house (Burdekin, 1993: 388) also signifies to them their powerless position.

Tenants' Summary

As discussed above, there are many reasons why people use boarding houses for their accommodation. The most common reason is the break-up of a significant relationship, such as a marriage. Financial pressures are the next most often cited reason for people living in boarding houses. In this chapter, the conditions of some boarding houses were explored. It was revealed that there appears to be at least some level of exploitation occurring, as in the case of the SeaBreeze Boarding House tenant, who paid \$80.00 per week for a small room without a door. This example demonstrates some of the negative experiences and situations that tenants have to tolerate just to have some accommodation, and substandard accommodation at that. Also, there are some tenants who cause problems not only for boarding house owners, but for the other tenants as well. Drugs and alcohol are cited as major concerns and the people who have issues with these are disruptive to household amenity. Another feature of boarding house life that has been outlined here is the boarding house culture, in which the owner/manager has almost absolute power over the tenants and senior tenants have power over the newcomers.

The information presented above has been an exploration of the views of the owners and tenants, and it has provided a glimpse of what life is like inside boarding houses. As with any research, there is a great deal of information gathered, however, much of this falls by the wayside as the research progresses and points of relevance shift. This is the present case, with much of what was gathered somewhat irrelevant due to the small numbers of participants.

CHAPTER 7

MORE THAN THE SUM OF ITS PARTS:

THE CONCLUSION

This study is an examination of the loss of a form of affordable housing – the boarding house - an area of housing that has been quite neglected in the academic literature, but is an important part of Australia’s housing history, and therefore needs to be captured in the record books. The loss of boarding houses reduces the number of affordable housing options for many impoverished and vulnerable people in our society. In an attempt to understand fully the scope of these losses, the following research questions were posed: firstly, what are the factors associated with the loss of boarding houses, and what influences these losses? Secondly, what are the social consequences of declining boarding house stock for the current and prospective tenants? To address the first question required the use of a variety of sources of data, such as secondary data sources including Census information and In-depth interviews were conducted with the owners. As for question two, “the social consequences”, in-depth interviews were conducted with boarding house tenants. This information was supported with data gathered from other qualitative research in the area.

The ontological position of structuration was taken because it facilitates the exploration of both structure and agency. Agency was explored through a number of in-depth interviews with boarding house tenants. The boarding house owners were also interviewed as a way of exploring their agency and corroborating the secondary data. Structure was explored by examining the overall changes to the city, which, it appears, is a result of the global influences on the Australian economy and culture. These changes include the various levels of government moving away from a managerialist approach to an Entrepreneurial one. These changes also include changes to the types of employment and approaches in land use within cities.

Most of the manufacturing sector jobs, that were once the staple form of employment in the city, have been moved offshore. This area has been replaced with new business forms and

many of these jobs are tertiary (service sector) type jobs. In order to house the new workforce, new buildings and corporate precincts have been built. To accommodate this radical change to the city, much of the old infrastructure is torn away, thus making way for the new office and apartment buildings and consumption spaces, which contributed to the property boom.

Due to the property boom, many Australians are in a desperate struggle to be housed at the present time. Housing prices have out-paced many people's incomes, which now require some 'seven and a half' times the annual income as opposed to the 'five' in the recent past (Brinsden, 2008: 1). This is a nightmare of overpriced housing and a high degree of competition over what is on offer at the middle and lower end of the range. As for rental accommodation, the data revealed that the average increase for median house rents was approximately 20 percent between 2006 and 2008. The 2006 Census data shows the national median rent for a house was \$190. While the figure from the state capitals cities averaged out at \$303. This figure is 1.6 times the national median during 2006. In fact, over 80 percent of one group of boarding house tenants had come from private rentals, and a further 17 percent had been homeowners, prior to moving into boarding houses.

From what has been presented, it is obvious how new government policies can change the shape of a city and aid the creation of a property boom, which in turn affects boarding house stock. But, government policies can also make changes that indirectly flow on to boarding house owners. For instance, the changes that came with the process of deinstitutionalisation may never have been envisaged as having an affect on boarding houses. The closing down of the mental health care facilities (asylums) combined with the progressive expansion in the government supply of Aged pensioner units saw a shift of aged men moving out of boarding houses and more, younger people with mental illness taking their place. While some of these tenants are docile, generally through their medications, many of them display problematic behaviour that is very disrupting and troublesome for the owners/managers and other tenants.

Another government action was legislation in the form of the Residential Tenancy Act (RTA) in 2002 in Queensland, which included boarding house tenants. This protective legislation was enacted some nine years after this was recommended in the Burdekin Report (1993). This action finally gave boarding house tenants some legal rights as renters, thus preventing them from being evicted on a whim. Also at this time – 2002 – the Queensland government introduced more stringent building codes act, in the Building and Other Legislation Act (BOLA) in 2002. This was prompted by the horrendous fires in the Childers' Backpacker fire and the SeaBreeze Boarding House fire. Both fires claimed lives. The boarding house owners were given until July 2005 to comply, or be closed down.

To look for trends in the boarding house industry secondary data used, and a time series was created to highlight when a trend appears. What was revealed was a negative trend for the boarding house industry across Australia. There was a loss of one third of boarding house stock during 2001 and 2006. In an extended look at the data by including 1991 Census figures, this showed that that loss increased to approximately 35 percent. The situation in Queensland reflects a substantial loss of boarding house stock between 2001 and 2006 (about 30%). Between 1991 and 2001 there appears to be a very small loss of boarding houses, with the bulk of boarding houses disappearing in the last five years of the fifteen-year time series. This feature is interesting for Queensland as this when the RTA and BOLA in 2002 were introduced. While it is tempting to say outright that the legislation caused these reductions, we cannot be sure if that is true. Some other states lost nearly all of their boarding houses. Overall, most state's levels of boarding houses decreased significantly. Only South Australia reversed the trend and increased the number of boarding houses.

Many boarding house owners who had been in the business for a long time were faced with huge repair bills to bring their boarding houses into line with the new codes. However, given the advancing years of some of the boarding house owners, they could not see the sense in continuing on in the industry. Some owners were fortunate in that there was little for them to do to bring their building up to standard. For other boarding house owners this was not the case,

and undoubtedly, some of those that closed down between the two Census dates did so as a result of not meeting the new building regulations. One of the possible consequences of these losses is that some tenants may have been literally, left out on the street.

This failure comes about because no one is providing low-cost housing, apart from a minimal number of state government units. Many of the older houses and buildings, including boarding houses, which have formed a solid rung in the affordable housing ladder for many years, have been demolished. Also, many of the large older houses that were once turned into a number of flats are being returned to single family occupancy. This action alone can change multiple household accommodations to a single household usage. The consequence of this action is an increase in demand by those on a very limited income for affordable housing like boarding house accommodation.

As explained in Chapter 5, there are many homeowners and renters experiencing housing stress, which occurs when people pay more than thirty percent of their income on housing, and boarding house tenants are not immune to this phenomenon. As a way out of housing stress, boarding house tenants, like other low-income people, may become socially displaced. They may move to more remote areas which do not have the services and facilities, friends and other family networks, and employment opportunities to support them, thus placing additional strain not only on themselves, but also on the government and other Not For Profit support services. Given the few vacancies available in all accommodation sectors, people on low incomes have little choice in their housing options. As mentioned above, choice is a term that is highly associated with individual freedom. The “freedom to choose is the marker of the free, autonomous individual, and it is an important ingredient in the notion of agency” (Brannen & Nilsen, 2005: 412). What becomes apparent about boarding house tenants is that they often may not have the mental capacities or economic capacities to be considered autonomous and free agents in the sense that lies at the heart of agency. Boarding house tenants are severely restricted in their choices of housing types based generally on socio-economic, health or both types of factor.

Interviews with the boarding house owners and tenants revealed much about the dramatic changes that have occurred within the boarding house industry and within the boarding houses. From the interviews with the owners, the focus of their problems seems to be directed towards the tenants themselves. It would seem if it were not for the problematic tenants, boarding houses as a business would be more profitable and easier to run. This kind of 'scapegoating' and 'othering' does not take into consideration the many structural reasons why so many troubled individuals end up in boarding houses, but instead this is a case of one group blaming a weaker group for their troubles. Nor does this thinking take in the possibility that boarding houses are not seen as an acceptable form of housing to many everyday Australians. By this it is meant, that collective types of living arrangements do not seem to be very popular within the accommodation market.

Over time, the changes within the boarding house sector have provided a different type of interaction between the owners and tenants. As the retired boarding house owner said in one of the interviews, "the interactions seemed more pleasant and harmonious in the past but since then have gradually deteriorated". Prior to the last thirty years, boarding houses accommodated mainly working-class people. However, in the interim the client base has changed quite a lot, which has brought definite qualitative changes in the relationships between boarding house owners and tenants. Even the relationships between tenants have changed. As one informant put forward, "there are arguments and some of them get violent" (Terry 34 years). Other tenants have spoken of the fights and arguments between tenants and some have even left a boarding house because of them. Obviously, many boarding houses are a volatile mix of poverty and problematic tenants in a confined space. Terry (34years) said that the last boarding house he stayed at was commonly referred to as the 'house of horrors'. The same title was used for the SeaBreeze boarding house, which burnt down in 2002.

The general standard of boarding houses is still questionable in some places. The information provided by Anderson, et, al., (2003) highlighted this. While the current research found some old boarding houses with dimly lit halls and strong stale odours. Anderson, et, al.,

(2003) also highlighted the conditions within some boarding houses and the circumstance that led many people to boarding houses. The conditions of some boarding houses are substandard raising many complaints. Often, the rooms are tiny, dirty kitchens and bathrooms, and toilets. With many people using a few facilities, cleanliness seems to be an issue. In some instances, the actual physical condition of the boarding house is 'substandard' by any interpretation of the word, such as, the corrugated iron boarding house with two fibro outhouses, which housed seven men. However, the major insult is that these people have to pay to live in these substandard conditions or be homeless.

Some of these are run by 'not for profit' groups who are showing compassion and social justice. These houses tend to accommodate people with more demanding levels of care and appear more as hostels. As mentioned earlier in the boarding houses considered in this research are the private businesses and not those run by 'not for profit' organisations. The boarding house industry is in rapid decline and the evidence provided supports this finding. At the present rate (about one third every five years); the prediction is that by the year 2016, there will be no boarding houses left in Australia. Along with the demise of the boarding house industry, a large portion of people from this group may experience homelessness. Over the last decade, the funds set aside for public housing, through the Commonwealth and State Housing Agreement (CSHA) has been reduced, yet the number of people affected by the affordability crisis is increasing. In the end, it leaves the disadvantaged in a situation where they are unable to get out of their predicament. For those who are marginally housed, like those in boarding houses, it may appear as a double-edged sword. It is only a matter of time before the existing boarding houses disappear and the tenants may not have any affordable alternative place for them to live.

Recommendations

The number of people with mental health issues in boarding houses has not been fully addressed some fifteen years after the Burdekin Report (1993) set out its recommendations. The Commission recommended that more should be done for those vulnerable members of our

society who need protection and to make better facilities available for them. Interestingly, the Burdekin Report made many recommendations in 1993 including that tenants of boarding houses be given the same legal protection as other renters. In Queensland, this did not happen until 2002, some 9 years later. Therefore, in echoing the Burdekin Report (1993), this thesis begins its recommendations.

First and foremost, it is recommended that some level of government should fund more housing for people with a mental illness, rather than leaving them to fend for themselves as tenants of boarding houses. Second, there needs to be more funding for public housing. At present, these funds (CSHA) are being criticised because they are being reduced instead of being increased to meet the growing demand for affordable housing. In 2002, the Queensland State Government and Brisbane City Council formed a partnership with private enterprise creating the Brisbane Housing Company. Their brief was to build six hundred public housing units. This type of public and private partnership is very popular in Australia and elsewhere, but in the face of the size of the housing needs, this is a minimal response.

Furthermore, there should be a supply of half-way housing for people with mental illness. This of course means more funding for programs like Supported Accommodation Assistance Program (SAAP) or perhaps, a new model of such a place is needed. It is obvious that there are many people with mental illnesses who are either in boarding houses or on the street who need this type of assistance. The sentence of a life long mental illness is severe enough, without adding further trauma with harsh punishments such as living in draconian conditions that are offered in some boarding houses.

By removing those individuals with a mental illness from boarding houses and into another form of accommodation would, in turn, free up many boarding house rooms. This would allow boarding house operators to cater to fewer problematic clients as they could offer cheap housing for men from family break-ups, for example. Given the current divorce rates and the later age of marriage (see Birrel, et, al., 2004), there appears to be a need for affordable housing for men in these circumstances which was one of the prominent factors which was highlighted in Chapter 6.

Also, the youth, who are a valid client base, are generally discriminated against when it comes to housing. As Burke (1998) notes the youth's housing issues are related to the low wage scales for young people and the high costs of housing. They too need affordable housing. Certainly, the boarding house industry would need to re-image itself. However, there is a severe lack of affordable housing at this time in Australia; and boarding houses could do the job, as they once did.

Concluding this thesis are the following research recommendations. There are two areas of consideration. The first is to do with the ethics requirements and procedures and the second is for future research. Firstly, while it is paramount that vulnerable people should be protected from unscrupulous researchers and other people, it is felt that there is far too much formality and legality associated with the recruitment process. Many of the people approached appeared quite willing to talk, informally. However, when they were presented with the information letter and consent forms to be signed they became fearful, hostile and untrusting. With this, many walked away, while others watched and followed suit. Many were not willing to touch the form or letter, even if it was to be collected at some future date, after they had time to think it over. This research experience makes me believe that informal approaches and informal conversations over a lengthy period may be more productive in the research. This is not suggesting that the research process be covert observation, even though this may offer insights beyond what the owners/managers and tenants may be willing to divulge, but relaxed conversations without the official paperwork might prove more generative and beneficial. In the end, the interviews may be less upsetting for the interviewee and a much more positive experience for the researcher and student researcher alike.

An area of further research which may be beneficial and timely, would be the collection of oral histories of owners of boarding houses and past tenants personal histories. Both of these positions would reveal many aspects of the life inside boarding houses. There are very few histories on the subject of boarding houses. To date, the only history of this type found was Shirley Ball's "Muma's Boarding House", and this only covers a period of a few years – the late

1920s to the early 1930s, told from the perspective of a young girl growing up in a Brisbane boarding house. The other historical work directly concerned with boarding houses is O'Hanlon's 2003 book "Together Apart: Boarding house, hostel and flat life in pre-war Melbourne", however this covers larger more upmarket boarding houses.

Finally, another area of further research is in regard to the disproportionate changes in women's out-movement from the boarding houses. It is unclear what is behind this change. It may be due to heightened patriarchy, or perhaps women are being offered a better form of housing by other parties. If it is the former then this should be highlighted. If it is the latter, then this might suggest that men are being discriminating against and, if so, this should be brought to the attention of relevant parties. However, if it were revealed that women are being appropriately housed in some way, then the same model should also be used for men.

Appendix A: Information Letter to Participants: Boarding House Owners

Australian Catholic University
Brisbane Sydney Canberra Ballarat Melbourne



INFORMATION LETTER TO PARTICIPANTS: BOARDING HOUSE OWNERS

TITLE OF PROJECT: Boarding Houses, Owners and Tenants:
The decline of an old form of working-class housing

Names of Supervisors: Dr C. Kynaston
Dr A. Bramwell-Vial

Name of Student Researcher: Mr Daniel Carmody

Name of Programme in which enrolled: Master of Philosophy

Dear

I am a student at the Australian Catholic University at the McAuley at Banyo Campus. I am seeking your help in relation to a research project that I am currently undertaking. The research project is the thesis for my Master's degree.

My project focuses on the nature of the changes (both physical and social) to and within boarding houses in recent years. I am particularly interested in exploring the extent to which changes (particularly the loss of boarding house stock) are being influenced by rising land and house prices. At the same time, I am very interested in the lives of people living in boarding houses: the social composition (age, socioeconomic status, relationships, etc.) and the everyday lives of the residents.

I believe, as an owner of a boarding house, that your input would be invaluable and I would be most appreciative of an opportunity to conduct an interview (of about 1-2 hours) with you. I will contact you again in about seven days time to see if you wish to participate and, if you do, to arrange a convenient time and location for the interview to take place.

It is hoped that you will gain a sense of satisfaction from participating in this research project and from giving your insights on an important community issue. In a broader sense, the research project will also add to existing stocks of knowledge regarding contemporary Australian society. A copy of the completed project will be lodged with the Australian Catholic University Library at Banyo. It is also the intention of the researcher to, if possible, publish aspects of this research in the future.

Your participation in this research would be warmly welcomed, however, it is entirely voluntary on your part and, therefore, you are free to refuse to take part in this study. Also, please be assured that, should you consent to participate in this study, you are free to withdraw that consent and to discontinue participation in the study at any time without giving a reason.

In line with the ethical guidelines for research, let me reassure you that your identity will be held in strictest confidence (by using an alias or a code number) and will not be exposed in the research, any arising publications, or, in data provided to other researchers. However, please be aware that the suburb/s (and your boarding house) may, with your permission, be identified in the research and in future uses of the research.

Any questions regarding this project should be directed to the Supervisor and the Student Researcher:

Dr. Chris Kynaston (Supervisor) Phone (07) 3623 7169

Mr. Daniel Carmody (Student Researcher) Phone (07) 3623 7345

Or if you prefer, you may write to them at:

The School of Arts and Sciences
Australian Catholic University
Brisbane Campus
1100 Nudgee Road
BANYO QLD 4014

At the end of the research project, if you would like, I will send you a summary of the research results, as a token of appreciation for your participation in this project.

I would like to assure you that this study has been approved by the Human Research Ethics Committee at Australian Catholic University.

In the event that you have any complaint or concern about the way you have been treated during the study, or if you have a query that the Supervisor or Student Researcher have not been able to satisfy, you may write to the Chair of Human Research Ethics Committee care of the nearest branch of the research services unit:

Chair, HREC
C/o Office of Research
Australian Catholic University
Brisbane Campus
PO Box 456
VIRGINIA QLD 4014
Tel: 07 3623 7294
Fax: 07 3623 7328

Any complaint or concern will be treated in confidence, investigated fully and the participant informed of the outcome.

If you agree to participate in this project please retain both copies of the Consent Form, as these will need to be signed at the time of the interview. Then, you will be able to retain one copy for your records, and the other copy is for the researcher's records.

Thanking you in anticipation,

Yours sincerely,

Dan Carmody

Appendix B: Consent Form

Australian Catholic University
Brisbane Sydney Canberra Ballarat Melbourne



CONSENT FORM

TITLE OF PROJECT: Boarding Houses, Owners and Tenants:

The decline of an old form of working-class housing

NAMES OF SUPERVISORS:

Dr C. Kynaston
Dr A. Bramwell-Vial

NAME OF STUDENT RESEARCHER:

Mr Daniel Carmody

RESEARCHER'S COPY

Please sign and return to the researcher at time of interview

I.....have read/have had read to me and understand the information provided in the Letter to Participants. Any questions I have asked have been answered to my satisfaction. I agree to participate in being interviewed, realising that I can withdraw at any time. I agree that research data collected for the study may be published or may be provided to other researchers in a form that does not identify me in any way.

NAME OF PARTICIPANT:.....

(Block Letters)

SIGNATURE.....

DATE.....

NAME OF STUDENT RESEARCHER: DANIEL CARMODY

SIGNATURE.....

DATE.....

Appendix C: Information Letter to Participants: Boarding House Tenants

Australian Catholic University
Brisbane Sydney Canberra Ballarat Melbourne



INFORMATION LETTER TO PARTICIPANTS: BOARDING HOUSE TENANTS

TITLE OF PROJECT: Boarding Houses, Owners and Tenants:
The decline of an old form of working-class housing

Names of Supervisors:	Dr C. Kynaston Dr A. Bramwell-Vial
Name of Student Researcher:	Mr Daniel Carmody
Name of Programme in which enrolled:	Master of Philosophy

Dear Sir

I am a student at the Australian Catholic University at the McAuley at Banyo campus. I am seeking your help in relation to a research project that I am currently undertaking. The research project is the thesis for my Master's degree.

My project focuses on the nature of the changes (both physical and social) to and within boarding houses in recent years. I am particularly interested in exploring the extent to which changes (particularly the loss of boarding house stock) are being influenced by rising land and house prices. At the same time, I am also very interested in the everyday lives of the residents.

I believe that as a tenant of a boarding house your input would be extremely valuable. Therefore, I would be most grateful if you would consent to participate in a group discussion and/or an interview. It is estimated that the group discussions will take about 1-2 hours, while the interviews will take about 1-2 hours also. If you would like to participate please print your name, tick your preferred group session time, and/or tick if you are interested in an interview on the attached form and return it in the envelope supplied within seven days.

It is hoped that you will gain a sense of satisfaction from participating in this research project and from giving your insights into the nature of boarding house living, a type of housing, and a lifestyle that may be rapidly disappearing. In a broader sense, the research project will also add to existing stocks of knowledge regarding contemporary Australian society. A copy of the completed project will be lodged with the Australian Catholic University Library at Banyo. It is also the intention of the researcher to, if possible, publish aspects of this research in the future.

Your participation in this research would be warmly welcomed, however, it is entirely voluntary on your part and, therefore, you are free to refuse to take part in this study. Also, please be assured that, should you consent to participate in this study, you are free to withdraw that consent and to discontinue participation in the study at any time without giving a reason.

Let me reassure you that your identity will be held in strictest confidence (by using an alias or a code number) and will not be exposed in the research, any arising publications, or, in data provided to other researchers. However, please be aware that the suburb/s will be identified in the research and in future uses of the research.

Any questions regarding this project should be directed to the Supervisor and the Student Researcher:

Dr. Chris Kynaston (Supervisor) Phone (07) 3623 7169

Mr. Daniel Carmody (Student Researcher) Phone (07) 3623 7345

Or if you would prefer, you may write to them at:

The School of Arts and Sciences
Australian Catholic University
Brisbane Campus
1100 Nudgee Road
BANYO QLD 4014

At the end of the research project, if you would like, I will send you a summary of the research results, as a token of appreciation for your participation in this project.

I would like to assure you that this study has been approved by the Human Research Ethics Committee at Australian Catholic University.

In the event that you have any complaint or concern about the way you have been treated during the study, or if you have a query that the Supervisor or Student Researcher have not been able to satisfy, you may write to the Chair of Human Research Ethics Committee care of the nearest branch of the research services unit:

Chair, HREC
C/o Research Services
Australian Catholic University
Brisbane Campus
P.O. Box 456
VIRGINIA QLD 4014
Tel: 07 3623 7294
Fax: 07 3623 7328

Any complaint or concern will be treated in confidence, investigated fully and the participant informed of the outcome.

If you agree to participate in this project please retain both copies of the Consent Form, as these will need to be signed at the time of the interview. Then, you will be able to retain one copy for your records, and the other copy is for the researcher's records.

Thanking you in anticipation,

Yours sincerely,

Dan Carmody

Appendix D: Group Discussion Meeting & Interview Response Form

TITLE OF PROJECT: Boarding Houses, Owners and Tenants:
The decline of an old form of working-class housing

Group Discussion Meeting & Interview Response Form

Names of Supervisors: Dr C. Kynaston
Dr A. Bramwell-Vial

Name of Student Researcher: Mr Daniel Carmody

Name of Programme in which enrolled: Master of Philosophy

Response Form

Please return this form (in the envelope attached) within seven days.

Group Discussion Meetings

I would like to attend a group discussion

I am unable to attend a group discussion

Preferred group discussion session 3.00 p.m.

7.00 p.m.

and/or

Interviews

I am interested in participating in a personal interview

I am not interested in participating in a personal interview

(With your permission, in order to assist the researcher's recall, audio-recordings will be made of the meetings and interviews)

Your Name.....

(PLEASE PRINT)

All information supplied will be held in the strictest confidence

Appendix E: Sample Questions for Boarding House Owners (2pp)

Demographic Data

What age group best describes you? 15-25, 26-35, 36-45, 46-55, 56-65, 66-75, 76-85, 86-95.

Age group_____ Do you have a Partner? Yes No. Their Age group_____

Present occupation?

Your partner's present occupation?

Past occupation?

Your partner's past occupation?

Background: Boarding House Involvement

Q1 How long have you owned the current Boarding House?

Q2 Do you currently own other boarding houses? (If so, where and length of ownership?)

Q3 Have you owned other boarding house/s prior to this one/these?

Q4 Reason for being in the boarding house industry? (i.e. carrying on the family business, liked to do this as a job/career change or job/investment or purely as an investment)

Current Situation Questions

Q5 In your experience, has the boarding house industry changed much in recent years?
(5 or 10 years depending on length of time in industry)

Q6 What level of demand for boarding house accommodation would you say there is; large or small ?

Q7 Does your boarding house have a high tenant turn-over? What would you attribute this to?

Q8 For yourself, has the socioeconomic composition of your clients/tenants changed much in recent years?

Q9 Has this had an impact on you in terms of involvement/work (i.e. extra work, or other ways?)
If other ways, what would they be?

Q10 Has gentrification (the in-movement of middle class households into older working-class areas) had an impact on this area?

If so, how has it affected your business?

Q11 Has gentrification encouraged you to contemplate selling you boarding house property/properties

Legislative Changes

Q12 With changes to Residential Tenancies Act (2002) for boarding house tenants, what sort of impact do you think this will have on the Boarding House industry?

Q13 Still on legislative changes, with the change to the fire safety regulations how did this impact on you? Was there much that had to be changed?

Was this costly?

Q14 Some sources say that there was a low up-take for the government loans/assistance packages, why would that be do you think?

Q15 How long do you see yourself staying in the boarding house industry?

Q16 Are there any additional important issues relating to boarding house ownership and boarding houses in general that you would like to raise?

APPENDIX F: Sample Questions for Boarding House Tenants (2pp)

Which age group best fits you: 15-25, 26-35, 36-45, 46-55, 56-65, 66-75, 76-85, 86-95.

What is your marital status: Single, Married, Separated, Divorced?

Income Type: Working, Government Benefit or other?

Length of stay at current address?

Previous type of accommodation?

Length of stay there?

Q1 How much do you currently pay in weekly rental?

Q2 Why did you choose to stay in a boarding house?

Q3 Do you share a room?

If so, do you like sharing?

Q4 Are any meals included in your rent?

Q5 What facilities are available in the boarding house? For instance, do you have access to a telephone, common room, cooking facilities, etc?

Q6 Does your rental cover things like electricity and gas?

Q7 I have heard that in some boarding houses that some of the rooms are rather small for the rent paid. What is your view?

Q8 When you get visitors where do you entertain them?

Q9 Do you have the freedom to have visitors in your room if you wish?

Q10 What are the good things and the bad things about living in a boarding house?

Q11 Do you have much money left over for other things after you have paid your rent?

Q12 Do the tenants get along? Is there much trouble between the tenants?

Q13 In a hypothetical situation, if you had trouble with a landlord what would do, stay, leave or see

someone? If you were to see someone, who would you see; relative, friend or someone else?

Q14 Have you heard about the changes to the Residential Tenancies Act? If so, do you think that this will/has make/made things better or worse for tenants?

Q15 Have you heard of the changes to the “Fire Safety Regulations”, and have these changes

affected your accommodation?

Q16 Do you believe that there is a shortage of boarding house accommodation in this area?

Q17 On a scale of 1 – 10 with one being “not satisfied” and ten being “very satisfied”, How would you

rate your satisfaction with boarding house life?

Q18 On your income, what sort of housing would you prefer: Boarding house, Single Flat, Shared

house, or other?

Q19 Would you like to live in public housing?

Q20 Are there any additional important aspects of living in boarding houses which you would like to comment on?

Appendix G: Human Research Ethics Committee Approval

Australian Catholic University
Brisbane Sydney Canberra Ballarat Melbourne



Human Research Ethics Committee

Committee Approval Form

Principal Investigator/Supervisor: Dr Chris Kynaston Brisbane Campus
Co-Investigators: Dr Ann Bramwell Brisbane Campus
Student Researcher: Mr Daniel Carmody Brisbane Campus

Ethics approval has been granted for the following project:
 Boarding Houses, Owners and Tenants: The demise of an old form of working-class housing

for the period: 28 July 2005 to 16 September 2005

Human Research Ethics Committee (HREC) Register Number: Q200405 23

The following standard conditions as stipulated in the *National Statement on Ethical Conduct in Research Involving Humans (1999)* apply:

- (i) that Principal Investigators / Supervisors provide, on the form supplied by the Human Research Ethics Committee, annual reports on matters such as:
 - security of records
 - compliance with approved consent procedures and documentation
 - compliance with special conditions, and
- (ii) that researchers report to the HREC immediately any matter that might affect the ethical acceptability of the protocol, such as:
 - proposed changes to the protocol
 - unforeseen circumstances or events
 - adverse effects on participants

The HREC will conduct an audit each year of all projects deemed to be of more than minimum risk. There will also be random audits of a sample of projects considered to be of minimum risk on all campuses each year.

Within one month of the conclusion of the project, researchers are required to complete a *Final Report Form* and submit it to the local Research Services Officer.

If the project continues for more than one year, researchers are required to complete an *Annual Progress Report Form* and submit it to the local Research Services Officer within one month of the anniversary date of the ethics approval.

Signed: *C. Lucas*
 (Research Services Officer, McAuley Campus)

Date: *28/07/05*

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