Social inclusion: Policy, practice, people and place

Sharon Ruth Fingland
Statement of Authentication

The work presented in this thesis is, to the best of my knowledge and belief, original except as acknowledged in the text. I hereby declare that I have not submitted this material, either in full or in part, for a degree at this or any other institution.

.................................................................
Sharon R. Fingland
Acknowledgements

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<td>Area Based Initiatives</td>
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<td>ABS</td>
<td>Australian Bureau of Statistics</td>
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<td>ACELG</td>
<td>Australian Centre for Excellence for Local Government</td>
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<td>ACROSS</td>
<td>Australian Council of Social Services</td>
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<td>AHURI</td>
<td>Australian Housing and Research Institute</td>
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<td>AIUS</td>
<td>Australian Institute of Urban Studies</td>
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<td>ALGA</td>
<td>Australian Local Government Association</td>
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<td>ALP</td>
<td>Australian Labor Party</td>
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<td>AMCORD</td>
<td>Australian Model Code for Residential Development</td>
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<td>ARTC</td>
<td>Australian Rail Track Corporation Ltd</td>
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<tr>
<td>ASBO</td>
<td>Anti-Social Behaviour Order</td>
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<tr>
<td>ATSI</td>
<td>Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander</td>
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<td>BBC</td>
<td>Building Better Cities Program</td>
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<td>BFBS</td>
<td>Banking, Financial and Business Services</td>
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<tr>
<td>BOOT</td>
<td>Build, Own, Operate and Transfer System</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CALD</td>
<td>Culturally and Linguistically Diverse</td>
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<tr>
<td>CBD</td>
<td>Central Business District</td>
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<tr>
<td>CCD</td>
<td>Census Collector District</td>
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<td>COAG</td>
<td>Council of Australian Governments</td>
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<td>CPI</td>
<td>Consumer Price Index</td>
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<td>CRESC</td>
<td>Centre for Research on Socio-Cultural Change, Manchester University</td>
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<td>CSHA</td>
<td>Commonwealth State Housing Agreement</td>
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<td>DCP</td>
<td>Development Control Plan</td>
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<td>DHA</td>
<td>Defence Housing Authority</td>
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<td>DIPNR</td>
<td>Department of Infrastructure, Planning and Natural Resources</td>
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<td>DP&amp;C</td>
<td>Department of Premier and Cabinet</td>
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<td>DUAP</td>
<td>Department of Urban Affairs and Planning</td>
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<td>Duplex</td>
<td>A residential building divided into two self-contained residences</td>
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<td>DURD</td>
<td>Department of Urban and Regional Development</td>
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<td>EP&amp;A Act</td>
<td>Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979 (NSW)</td>
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<td>EPHA</td>
<td>European Public Health Alliance</td>
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<td>ESD</td>
<td>Ecologically Sustainable Development</td>
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<td>EU</td>
<td>European Union</td>
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<td>FACS</td>
<td>NSW Department of Family and Community Services</td>
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<td>FHCSIA</td>
<td>Australian Government Department of Families, Housing, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs</td>
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<tr>
<td>Globalisation</td>
<td>The process of international integration arising from the interchange of world views, products, ideas and other aspects of culture.</td>
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<tr>
<td>GFC</td>
<td>Global Financial Crisis</td>
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<tr>
<td>GRP</td>
<td>Gross Regional Product</td>
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<td>GWS</td>
<td>Greater Western Sydney</td>
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<tr>
<td>HIA</td>
<td>Housing Institute of Australia</td>
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<td>HUD</td>
<td>US Department of Housing and Urban Development</td>
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<td>ILAP</td>
<td>Integrated Local Area Planning</td>
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<td>IPART</td>
<td>Independent Pricing and Regulatory Tribunal</td>
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<td>IMF</td>
<td>International Monetary Fund</td>
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<td>KDR</td>
<td>Knockdown-rebuild</td>
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<td>KPI</td>
<td>Key Performance Indicator</td>
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<td>KSA</td>
<td>Kingsford Smith Airport</td>
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<td>LARP</td>
<td>Local Approvals Review Program</td>
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<td>LCP</td>
<td>Land Commission Program</td>
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<tr>
<td>LEP</td>
<td>Local Environmental Plan</td>
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<td>LGA</td>
<td>Local Government Area</td>
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<td>LGSA</td>
<td>Local Government and Shires Association</td>
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<tr>
<td>McMansion</td>
<td>Oversized single family homes criticised for their over-consumption of land and resources</td>
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<tr>
<td>MDP</td>
<td>Metropolitan Development Program</td>
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<tr>
<td>MUIM</td>
<td>Ministry of Urban Infrastructure Management</td>
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<td>NBESP</td>
<td>Nation Building Economic Stimulus Plan</td>
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<td>NCOSS</td>
<td>NSW Council of Social Services</td>
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<td>NGO</td>
<td>Non Government Organisation</td>
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<td>NIMBY</td>
<td>Not in my backyard</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NRAS</td>
<td>National Rental Affordability Scheme</td>
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<td>NIMBY</td>
<td>Not in my back yard</td>
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<tr>
<td>OECD</td>
<td>Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development</td>
</tr>
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<td>PCA</td>
<td>Property Council of Australia</td>
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<tr>
<td>PIA</td>
<td>Planning Institute of Australia</td>
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<tr>
<td>ppd</td>
<td>persons per dwelling</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>pph</td>
<td>persons per hectare</td>
</tr>
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<td>RDA</td>
<td>Regional Development Australia</td>
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<td>RTA</td>
<td>Roads and Traffic Authority</td>
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<td>RDO</td>
<td>Regional Development Organisation</td>
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<tr>
<td>REP</td>
<td>Regional Environmental Plan</td>
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<td>SEIFA</td>
<td>Socio-Economic Indexes for Areas</td>
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<td>SEPP</td>
<td>State Environmental Planning Policy</td>
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<td>SEU</td>
<td>Social Exclusion Unit (UK)</td>
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<td>SIA</td>
<td>Social Impact Assessment</td>
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<td>SIU</td>
<td>Social Inclusion Unit</td>
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<td>SMDA</td>
<td>Sydney Metropolitan Development Agency</td>
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<tr>
<td>SMH</td>
<td>Sydney Morning Herald</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SMR</td>
<td>Sydney Metropolitan Region</td>
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<tr>
<td>SoE</td>
<td>State of the Environment</td>
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<tr>
<td>SPA</td>
<td>State Planning Authority</td>
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<td>SSFL</td>
<td>Southern Sydney Freight Line</td>
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<tr>
<td>Strata title</td>
<td>Property law in NSW allowing individual ownership of part of a property</td>
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<td>TAFE</td>
<td>Technical and Further Education</td>
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<td>TDC</td>
<td>Transport Data Centre NSW</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOD</td>
<td>Transit Orientated Development</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Torrens title</td>
<td>A system of land title whereby a purchaser owns both the building and the land on which it is located</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Triplex</td>
<td>A building divided into three self-contained residences</td>
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<td>T-Way</td>
<td>Dedicated bus-only corridor linking major centre in GWS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UDIA</td>
<td>Urban Development Institute of Australia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UNSW</td>
<td>University of New South Wales</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UTS</td>
<td>University of Technology, Sydney</td>
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<td>UWS</td>
<td>University of Western Sydney</td>
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<tr>
<td>VCOSS</td>
<td>Victorian Council of Social Services</td>
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<tr>
<td>WHO</td>
<td>World Health Organisation</td>
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<td>WSCF</td>
<td>Western Sydney Community Forum</td>
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Abbreviations
Abstract

In 2010, the UN legitimised social inclusion as a central concept of social policy in Europe and elsewhere. Social inclusion describes the ideal situation whereby individuals can participate in the relevant institutions of society; while conversely social exclusion describes the manifold consequences of poverty and inequality. Through a case study of West-Central Sydney in NSW Australia, this thesis explores how social inclusion outcomes can be enhanced in the older suburbs of one of Sydney’s most culturally diverse sub-regions, by increasing property and neighbourhood value without displacing poorer households.

Socio-economic polarisation within suburban Australia over the last twenty years is evidenced by a combination of rising wealth and increasing deprivation. For many in West-Central Sydney there are now more opportunities and more choice, but these are not universally shared. West-Central is the area with Australia’s highest number of new migrants and contains large proportions of low income households and experiences poor employment and education participation rates, high car dependence and limited accessibility to facilities and services. Yet the sub-region is targeted by the NSW government for a substantial population increase, requiring 96,000 new dwellings and 98,000 more jobs by 2036; further stressing the area’s limited resources. Some suburbs suffer multiple deprivation which can have a depressing influence on the life experiences of all living there; whatever their individual circumstances.

Following a review of related literature, the research for this thesis adopts a mixed quantitative and qualitative approach to evidence-based research into the wide-ranging interrelated factors impacting on urban regeneration policies. The empirical data draws largely from semi-structured interviews conducted with key regional stakeholders, supplemented with census statistics and information contained in government and industry reports. Examining overseas examples of the effectiveness of government policy interventions to reduce inequality, the thesis demonstrates how a more integrated approach to urban regeneration could be formulated. It explores how such an approach might require combining market demands with innovative public interventions, a better understanding of the drivers of housing and job supply and the role of public transport in the regeneration process; all in the context of an evolving Metropolitan Strategy.
Abstract

The research brings together cross-disciplinary findings and assesses current policy settings which are attempting to deal with West-Central’s problems. Key insights emerge when socio-economic disadvantage is explored through the lens of a social inclusion agenda, revealing the strong association between social exclusion and housing, employment and transport policies, together with the role of individual agencies and structural factors in determining poverty and inequality. Three interwoven conclusions emerge from this research: the first calls for a broader holistic approach to framing policies explicitly endorsing and nurturing social diversity, providing compassionate responses to disadvantage. The second recognises the link between disparate housing, employment and transport policies to strengthen social inclusion and to avoid exacerbating social exclusion. The third requires a review of governance arrangements, to embrace a social inclusion agenda and the development of new skills in sustainable urban management.
CHAPTER 1: Overview of the issues

Introduction

This research concerns the challenges arising from urban regeneration in the West-Central Sydney sub-region of Greater Western Sydney (GWS) in NSW Australia, by assessing whether the concept of social inclusion is a transformative idea sufficiently robust to guide policy action in disadvantaged areas like this. The purpose of the research is to investigate the hierarchy of choices the sub-region faces and the unique territorial relationships that can be found between housing affordability, labour market performance and transport access, both conceptually and empirically. This focus on metropolitan and local housing, employment and transport policies provides the necessary basis for promotion of social inclusion to help achieve enhanced social, economic and sustainability outcomes at the metropolitan level.

Figure 1.1: Greater Western Sydney sub-regions

Source: Geosciences Australia and ABS, UWS Urban Research Centre, 2008

West-Central Sydney is a NSW Department of Planning sub-region comprising five of fourteen local government areas (LGAs) in GWS — a region represented
Chapter 1: Overview of the issues

in 2005 by the Western Sydney Regional Organisation of Councils (WSROC) Ltd together with the Macarthur Regional Organisation of Councils (MACROC).

This Chapter focuses on the research objectives and how they were derived and the broad policy context. It explains the research methodology and establishes the reasoning behind selecting specific suburbs in the West-Central Sydney case study area. Early sections of the chapter provide the objectives and motivation for the research, the use of theory and the methods employed to investigate whether a social inclusion agenda with greater policy integration could lead to a more sustainable form of urban management.

Importantly, in contrast to urban regeneration measures in the UK, the EU and the US — occurring in areas of urban decline — renewal in Western Sydney takes place in a context of population growth. The 2010 Metropolitan Plan for Sydney indicated a population increase of 1.7 million people for Sydney from 2006 to 2036 (NSW Planning 2010b). Currently Western Sydney accommodates one in eleven of all Australians and an 89,600 (58.1%) population increase is predicted for the region from 2006 to 2036. Some 217,000 (31.9%) of the population increase is forecast for West-Central Sydney (ibid), requiring 96,000 (12.5%) of Sydney’s additional dwellings and 98,000 (12.9%) net new jobs. This creates a task, perhaps a burden, for West-Central to undertake urban transformation at a time when the resources for change are scarce.

In general, as this thesis demonstrates, rising wealth in suburban Australia including in Sydney over the last twenty years has been accompanied by socio-economic polarisation and increasing deprivation. For many in West-Central Sydney there are now more opportunities and more choice, but these benefits are not widely shared. In the absence of appropriate government assistance, the sub-region is the least capable of Sydney’s ten sub-regions of delivering good quality, high density urban renewal. West-Central has significant concentrations of people experiencing socio-economic problems and a sub-regional economy struggling to undergo transformation chiefly as a result of de-industrialisation (Gleeson and Randolph, 2002a; Fagan, Dowling and Langdale, 2004; Urban Research Centre, 2008; Randolph, Ruming and Murray, 2009).

West-Central is culturally very diverse. The area has the highest number of new migrants so the sub-region’s pre-existing complex mix of languages, religions, lifestyles and interests is always changing. West-Central also has large proportions of low income households, experiences low employment and education participation rates, high car dependence and poor accessibility to facilities and services.
Urban consolidation targets in the sub-region are intended to make better use of urban infrastructure by focusing on existing ‘brownfield’ sites rather than non-urbanised ‘greenfield’ land to limit urban sprawl, yet they are tackled by local government authorities in a piecemeal fashion. Poorly integrated development of individual parcels of land is common, resulting in an unfortunate mix of oversized houses on increasingly smaller lots ('McMansions'), intermixed seemingly at random with ‘villas’, ‘duplexes’ and ‘townhouses’; seldom forming cohesive developments and subject to community backlash (Randolph, 2004a; Easthope and Judd, 2010). A lack of housing amenity and affordability means property and land values are low. There can be little doubt that West-Central’s range of deficits and disadvantage has a depressing or unpleasant influence on the life experience of the sub-region’s residents; exacerbating problems arising from individual circumstances (Fingland in Freestone, Randolph and Butler-Bowden (eds.) 2006:55). With access problems to the private housing market and limited job opportunities, the result is social exclusion.

Social exclusion is an important concept because it refers to more than poverty or low income. The term captures what can happen when people or areas suffer from a combination of problems such as unemployment, poor skills, bad housing, high crime and a lack of transport (Atkinson and Marlier, 2010). As a counterpoint to social exclusion, the concept of social inclusion describes an ideal situation whereby individuals are able to participate in the relevant institutions of society and share in its goods and services (ibid). Social inclusion is a particular subject of this research and is used to interrogate current and possible urban regeneration policies for the sub-region.

Like most disadvantaged places around the globe, an important consideration for this thesis is the portrayal of West-Central’s suburbs. One account says these suburbs are:

... stuck between a gentrifying inner city and an upwardly mobile periphery, as a liminal zone of social disadvantage, poor quality housing stock, high unemployment and ad hoc physical change (Freestone, Randolph and Butler-Bowden, 2006: xiv; cited by Fingland, 2010:4).

The narrative strategy for building my portrayal of the sub-region therefore is very important, drawing deliberately from the thesis title — Social inclusion: Policy, practice, people and place — with a repeated focus on five predominant concerns:

1. The concept of social inclusion as a lens through which to view the urban regeneration policy agenda, thus helping to create a more equitable
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society for all and leading to more effective, coordinated governance arrangements.

2. The policies adopted by governments and agencies to deal with complex issues of socio-economic disadvantage.

3. The practice of these policies.

4. The impacts of these policies and practices on the people resident in the sub-region.

5. The lessons that can be drawn for the place that is West-Central Sydney.

How these five concerns translate into my thesis objectives is spelt out in Section 1.4.

While the study provides an overview of the breadth of the determinants of social inclusion and exclusion based on a review of literature from a range of fields and bringing together cross-disciplinary research findings, it does not attempt to demonstrate a full understanding of the subtleties explored by experts in particular fields. The aim is to extend the scope of existing studies, in order to expose the inadequacies of current measures emanating from a range of different government departments and agencies. Secondary data is deployed to examine the territorial relationship between housing, employment and transport policies, seeking to capture and reinforce the complexity of the social inclusion/exclusion argument. While previous research has provided clues to their empirical relationship, it appears there has been no systematic attempt to present these concepts coherently in relation to one another.

1.1 A focus on West-Central Sydney

West-Central Sydney, located in Australia’s only global city, was first defined as a planning sub-region of Western Sydney in the metropolitan strategy City of cities: A plan for Sydney’s future (Department of Planning, 2005a). Comprising the local government areas (LGAs) of Auburn, Bankstown, Fairfield, Holroyd and Parramatta it covers an area of 312 sq km (Figure 1.2). While predominantly residential, it contains substantial industrial, commercial and institutional areas.

Despite re-affirming the sub-regional boundaries in a 2010 metropolitan strategy, a 2013 NSW Department of Planning and Infrastructure draft update proposed major changes to the definitions of the sub-regions and re-cast the timeline covered by the plan back to 2031, but emerged too late to be considered in this thesis; although the adverse implications of constantly changing planning scenarios add further costs to councils as discussed in Section 6.7.
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Figure 1.2: West-Central Sydney sub-region

Source: NSW Department of Planning, 2007: 6

West-Central is an increasingly complex arena. The sub-region’s population is characterised by an abundance of cultural, linguistic and religious diversity, with 46.0% of its population in 2011 born overseas (326,635 persons) and 42.9% (302,838 persons) originating from non-English speaking backgrounds (Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2011 census). This was greater than the proportion of overseas-born people nationally (30.2%) and in Sydney as a whole (34.2%). Two of West-Central’s municipalities — Auburn and Fairfield — represent some of Australia’s most ethnically diverse LGAs (Gleeson and Randolph, 2002:8).

Federal government immigration policies have a significant impact on the sub-region as NSW is the preferred state of destination for migrants to Australia. Between 2006 and 2011 44,041 overseas-born immigrants settled in West-Central Sydney (ABS, 2011). The impacts of immigration have changed the social landscape of the sub-region. That said, migration has also been occurring between suburbs in Sydney with West-Central’s older areas losing upwardly mobile populations to the new fringe areas, leaving behind a much more diverse housing market and greater social problems in the older suburbs.

West-Central is the most urbanised of the three Western Sydney sub-regions, accommodating 15% of all Sydney’s households and a large proportion of families (ibid). The sub-region has contributed 12.4% of the metropolitan area’s growth and almost one fifth of Western Sydney’s population increase over the past 25 years, despite comprising only 2.6% of Sydney’s land area. While
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Separate houses remain the dominant form of housing, West-Central has a much wider mix of dwelling types than Western Sydney as a whole. Most of the recent growth has resulted from urban consolidation and infill development, in the form of medium and higher density housing, with some redevelopment of former industrial brownfield sites. The remaining low density housing areas have a recent history of being adapted for a wide range of housing needs and different housing careers, catering for a strong desire among many for home ownership and space to bring up a family.

Over time West-Central Sydney has benefited from the outward movement of manufacturing, industrial and distribution activities previously located in the inner city (Fagan, Dowling and Langdale, 2004). This movement made West-Central an important employment destination, estimated to contain 330,000 jobs in 2006, with some 76 jobs per 100 working age persons (Urban Research Centre, 2008). But two major labour market concerns have arisen. Only 41% of the resident labour force are employed in jobs located within the sub-region and West-Central’s industrial employment base is in decline. Significantly though, the sub-region’s major urban centre, Parramatta, is emerging as Sydney’s second CBD; while Sydney Olympic Park is developing into a commercial, business, cultural and retailing precinct; and Westmead, to Parramatta’s west, is a growing centre for health services, higher education and medical research. In contrast to the older West-Central suburbs these three employment growth areas experience rising local employment self-containment ratios, higher proportions of professional career employment, significant drawing power on labour from other council areas and a greater diversity of job opportunities than can be found elsewhere in the sub-region (ibid).

The population growth agenda for Sydney as a whole and for Western Sydney in particular, bears heavily on the West-Central sub-region. Rapid population growth since the end of World War II left strategic plans for the development of the Sydney Metropolitan Region (SMR) grappling with issues of residential expansion, affordable housing, access to services and infrastructure and poor employment distribution. Then with the 1970s came rising awareness of increased socio-economic inequities and threatened environmental quality. Hence Western Sydney and West-Central have long experienced inadequate urban provisioning, affecting a growing number of people.
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1.2 The research context

This section provides a brief introductory context for the research by drawing on the changes occurring in cities world-wide. As will become apparent, comparing and contrasting with non-Australian experiences of urban change is a much used practice in this thesis. This emanates from a belief that the urban experience and its policy responses are often common ones (Tallon, 2010).

The role of urban places. One common understanding in urban studies is the importance of place and this thesis assigns a major emphasis to place. Sydney is a multi-faceted, diverse city undergoing economic, cultural and political change. Unlike other parts of the metropolitan area that have benefitted from globalising city processes, West-Central has undergone demographic shifts, suffers multiple deprivations leaving communities in stress, but has not attracted public policies or land use planning interventions to provide appropriate solutions for its older suburbs. So West-Central has a place problem.

As such, there is a need to think through what ‘place’ means, and how a better understanding of the concept of place can translate into better policy outcomes. Harvey considers that place and space are complex constructs, defining place as:

... a socially constructed site or location in space marked by identification or emotional investment ... place (like space and time) also has an extraordinary range of metaphorical meanings ... Place has to be one of the most multi-layered and multi-purpose keywords in our language (Harvey, 1996:208).

Harvey also demonstrates the importance of recognising the plurality of urban life requiring a deeper understanding of the intricacy of urban issues.

During the last two decades social dynamics in most European countries intensified differences in living conditions between groups and neighbourhoods within cities. Coupled with increasing social polarisation there has been a clear spatial dimension to this process of increased disadvantage (Anderson and Van Kempen, 2003:77). This thesis sees place as central to this spatialisation.

Urban policy can be viewed as spatial in that it relates to urban areas and urban processes and to the population who live in urban areas, and particularly the resolution of urban problems (Tallon 2010:4).

Pacione sees urban places as:

... spatial concentrations of human, economic, social, cultural and political activities distinguished from non-urban/rural places by both physical aspects such as population density or administrative definition and lifestyle characteristics (Pacione, 2005:684).

Likewise, Western Sydney’s spatial concentrations are its diverse urban places, reflecting heritage, urban character and its residents’ aspirations; with its
cultural diversity contributing significantly to the region’s identity. Places, including West-Central’s suburbs, also have characteristics (such as health-affirming services and community norms) that profoundly influence social behaviour and outcomes. Moreover, places suffering high concentrations of multiple socio-economic disadvantages can generate a poverty of experience and a sense of loss and social connectedness:

The built environment impacts people’s senses, emotions, general well-being and their opportunities to participate in physical activity and community life. How these places are created and shaped influences the degree of access to facilities and services and the way people use spaces (WSROC, 2009b:8).

That is not to say that understandings about place are readily transferrable from one city to another. Shifting scale upwards, Amin and Thrift (2002) argue convincingly that cities are not the same, differing between themselves and lacking a single identity or structure. They stress that assuming an apparent order in cities does not allow for shape-changing. Understanding of the commonplace as well as the exceptional is necessary in the re-construction of places — an advance in urban studies thinking which is drawn on in this study.

Notable research into the social and urban condition by Healey (2004); Allmendinger and Haughton (2007); and the aptly titled The new spatial planning: Territorial management with soft spaces and fuzzy boundaries (Haughton et al., 2010), provides further insights into spatial planning and the integration of planning into other policy sectors. While recognising social processes (in this case economic ones) that are both local and global, Amin and Thrift argue for greater attention to local urban provisioning; with cities becoming ‘increasingly unbound as discrete spaces’ (Amin and Thrift 2002:53).

Distinct economic processes sit alongside consideration of urban geographic processes. In the 1950s and 1960s agglomeration in cities in the developed world was thought to offer increasing returns to scale linked to market size, as well as new business opportunities associated with rising specialisation (ibid). The organisational spaces of national and international economies were viewed as built around urban hierarchies, with firms deriving initial market opportunities and sources of competitive advantage from participating in these urban economic systems. In the late 1970s however cities became an obstacle to economic performance in many ways, with rising costs of production due to congestion, pollution and access to quality labour, thwarted by housing shortages, redundant skills associated with de-industrialisation and general issues of urban decay. While Amin and Thrift (2002:54) noted how some commentators considered the dispersal of industries to remote regions to be an
appropriate economic response, conversely these authors saw the economic power of major cities as explicable by their role as centres of command and control, quoting Castell’s (1989 and 1996) description of cities as:

... the hubs and spokes of knowledge production and transmission in a new global ‘space of flows’ of information, people and commodities. Where evidence was found of industrial clustering (financial centres, high-tech clusters, industrial districts, media clusters), these sites were seen, at least by some, as the forcing houses of international networks (Amin and Thrift, 2002:54-55).

Likewise Brugmann (2009:28) describes cities as remaining prime locations for revolutionary social change, with technological, economic and cultural innovations forged in urban centres. Thus the primacy of the urban in economic growth is much recognised. Yet, as is important to this thesis, it should also be understood that processes of global economic change are rendering many parts of cities economically redundant, while at the same time mobilising urban processes in ways to produce new economic roles for specific urban places.

The social policy literature also contributes to our understanding of urban places. This literature uses terms such as social inclusion and exclusion, social polarisation, social diversity, social capital and social mix — all describing the presence of socio-economic inequality across space. These concepts have a relationship to place, comprising spatial units ranging from national or sub-national jurisdictions (e.g. states and territories), to regions, cities, towns, suburbs and neighbourhoods. This is an important insight for the understanding of the issues confronting West-Central Sydney’s older suburbs that are currently ill-equipped to deal with increasing locational and social disadvantage, with no representative process to ensure their well-being, or establish effective regeneration programs based on much-needed social interventions.

The need for urban regeneration. What has become apparent is that Australia lags behind other developed nations in producing policies to deal with urban regeneration in its major cities. In the UK, urban regeneration — on the national policy agenda for decades — involves policies to influence the social, economic and physical development of cities and strategies adopted by regions and local government, focusing on economic development, competitiveness and tackling social disadvantage and exclusion (Tallon, 2010). A number of UK urban regeneration publications draw on national and international experience. The chair of the British Urban Regeneration Association, described the evolution, definition and purpose of urban regeneration, stressing that:

Urban areas are complex and dynamic systems and reflect the many processes that drive economic, social, physical and environmental transition (Roberts, 2009:9).
Roberts defined urban regeneration as:

... a comprehensive and integrated vision and action which leads to the resolution of urban problems and seeks to bring about a lasting improvement in the economic, physical, social and environmental conditions of an area that has been subject to change (ibid: 10).

Urban renewal in the UK in the 1960s was public sector driven and primarily concerned with large scale re-development of over-crowded city slums. By the 1980s urban regeneration focused on economic growth objectives using public sector funds to lever-in largely undirected private investment (Tallon, 2010:4). Later, UK policies combined both the public and private sectors in urban regeneration. Certainly, success has been mixed. Poorly targeted programs for urban regeneration by cities and national governments have struggled to address the problems of rising socio-economic polarisation. Some interventions have taken the form of contracts or covenants but seem confined to maximising public policy efficiency rather than resolving issues of inequality (Anderson and Van Kempen, 2003). Meanwhile, a broader European policy focus considered how different types of deprivation — manifest in specific areas — compounded area-based effects, such as a lack of contact with the world of work (or information about jobs) and discrimination. Hence, UK and European experiences of urban economic decline, stemming from long-running de-industrialisation processes and resulting in social inequalities, point to the need for a greater focus on the urban regeneration of the older major cities’ suburbs to prevent a similar occurrence in Australia. Discussion of this overseas research is expanded in Chapter 4.

**Urban regeneration in Australia.** According to the United Nations, by 2009 more than half the world’s population lived in cities, a proportion expected to exceed two thirds by 2050; pointing to the need for greater attention to urban matters. Given that Australia became dominated by urban living more than half a century ago (Infrastructure Australia/Major Cities Unit, 2010) and remains profoundly influenced by migration to its large cities, it is remarkable that with the exceptions of the Whitlam Labor government (1972 to 1975) and the Hawke-Keating government (1991-1996) until recently Commonwealth governments have:

... consciously side-stepped urban policy development ... [failing] to counter the impacts of broader policy settings across the metropolis (McGuirk and O’Neill, 2002:314).

Not surprisingly, in such a context of neglect, metropolitan planning in Australia is able to be described as:
... increasingly complex and spatially variable urban conditions ...[and] planning processes will require an increased spatial sensitivity capable of responding to differentiation in how localities are affected by ... Sydney’s changing social, economic and policy contexts (ibid).

This has significant ramifications:

The task of preparing the Australian economy for competitive status in an apparently inevitably globalising economy framed a parallel reconfiguration of the dominant public policy paradigm characterised by public-sector marketisation and growing fiscal conservatism (McGuirk and O’Neill, 2002:308).

Yet there is a wide variety of urban living arrangements in cities. More than any other country, Australia is a nation of suburbs (Forster, 2006; Randolph and Freestone, 2008). Nowadays three quarters of Australians live in eighteen major cities (containing over 100,000 people) in predominantly suburban configurations and generating about 80% of Australia’s GDP and employing three quarters of the national workforce (ABS, 2010). However, as Keil’s research at York University, Toronto, stresses:

... we need to move away from the idea of suburbs as subordinate to the inner city, as derivative of the inner city, and see them in their own right ... by looking at them not as pristine, semi-rural, seemingly non-urban extensions of the inner city but urban constellations that have developed a dynamic of their own (Keil, 2013:1).

Concurring with this view, this research takes as its focus the urban dynamics of the older suburbs of West-Central Sydney in their own right, rather than as outcomes of grander happenings elsewhere, especially in those areas often tagged global Sydney to the east.

1.3 Why the emphasis on social inclusion?

Social inclusion is investigated throughout this thesis as a major concept with the potential to deliver more integrated policy attention. This section defines the related terms social cohesion and social capital, social exclusion and social inclusion and their emerging importance in North America, the EU, the UK and Australia — the core concepts underpinning this thesis. These terms are elaborated on in Section 3.2 which provides a critical analysis of the social exclusion and social inclusion agenda.

Social cohesion and social capital. From the mid-2000s Australian academics highlighted how:

... policy-makers in Australia and other countries such as Canada, the UK and parts of Europe ... have expressed interest in social cohesion — an old concept which has been revived and recast in the light of current public policy concerns and issues (Hulse and Stone, 2006:3).

A decade of Australian research and debate into issues such as loss of community, a decline in social capital and a fear of crime reducing social
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cohesion (when group members lose bonds linking them to one another and becoming a threat to social order), is described by Hulse and Stone (2006). Of these issues and concerns it is probably social capital that has been in most common use. Thompson captures the contemporary interest in social capital, seeing it as:

... a fairly new concept that has been taken up by policy-makers keen to build and strengthen communities weakened by the breakdown of traditional community support networks (Thompson, 2007:208).

Writing for the Australian Institute of Family Studies in 2003 Stone defined the concept:

Social capital is a concept that describes the extent and nature of relationships people have with others ... with their communities, and ... between people and various services, institutions and systems. It is also a concept ... directly linked to broader concepts such as social cohesion, democracy, economic wellbeing and sustainability [attracting] ... much policy and academic interest in Australia in recent years (Stone, 2003:13).

While difficult to define and measure, the concept has attracted interest across the political spectrum, with general agreement that enhancing community social capital can improve well-being. Stone describes how the term is used to indicate disadvantage:

... individuals, families and communities experience uneven levels of social capital, and that these relate in systematic ways to various indicators or risks of disadvantage, has implications for the ways in which policy and services are delivered to families and communities (ibid:15).

Social capital’s emphasis on holistic and integrated processes, pointing to a better understanding of complex, changing community structures, was a precursor to the following concepts of social exclusion and inclusion.

Social exclusion and inclusion. While Chapter 3 presents a detailed assessment of the concepts of social exclusion and social inclusion, the next section outlines how, in recent years, the UN legitimised these concepts in social policy development in Europe and elsewhere. An important objective of a landmark UN meeting in Paris (2007) entitled Creating an inclusive society: Practical strategies to promote social integration, was to:

... explore a variety of existing approaches to capturing, analysing, and measuring the multiple dimensions of social inclusion ... and to identify common elements necessary for developing the indicators required to measure and monitor the progress of interventions aimed at fighting poverty and social exclusion and promoting social inclusion (Atkinson and Marlier, 2010:iv).

At the global level international bodies such as the UN and the World Bank had examined measures to reduce poverty and social exclusion. The World Bank noted:
Poor people's inability to access jobs and services is an important element of the social exclusion which defines urban poverty (World Bank, 2002:25).

Subsequently a 2010 UN report — *Analysing and measuring social inclusion in a global context* — proposing guidelines for measuring social interventions at the local, regional, national and global levels, found:

The necessity for timely interventions has been felt more than ever in the current environment. Therefore, moving beyond the concept and devising concrete and practical strategies to promote social integration and inclusion are of the utmost importance in order to ensure that the lives of the many who are disadvantaged in society — those traditionally excluded or marginalized, those living in poverty and those falling into poverty — are protected and further improved (Atkinson and Marlier, 2010:iv).

Commenting on the desirability of the social cohesion objective, these researchers stressed:

... but it may or may not emerge from the elimination of poverty and social exclusion. Social inclusion does not equal social integration (Atkinson and Marlier, 2010:5)

While social inclusion had been central to UK and various EU countries' thinking prior to 2010, the UN report represented a milestone in the passage of the concept of social inclusion into mainstream policy thinking. The UN defined **social exclusion** as:

... involuntary exclusion of individuals and groups from society's political, economic and social processes, which prevents their full participation in the society in which they live (ibid:1).

**Significantly, the report highlighted:**

... the multi-dimensional nature of the mechanisms whereby individuals and groups are excluded from taking part in the social exchanges, from the component practices and rights of social integration (ibid:7).

Recognising the importance of social integration and inclusion, Atkinson and Marlier highlighted the place of urban renewal policies within a social inclusion agenda, stressing the ways more coordinated governance arrangements could help create a better society for all. The UN research pointed to social inclusion, social equity and justice as prime ingredients of economic success and long-term social and environmental sustainability in a modern city (ibid). Having the weight of the UN behind the concept means that policymakers are now more aware of the need for greater social inclusion, especially in a context of an ongoing financial and economic crisis which threatens the limited gains in social development processes that have otherwise been achieved (ibid:iii).

The UN report came at a time when research into US inequality revealed how wide disparities in wealth heightened levels of social distrust, with more equal societies scoring better on many measures of social health and well-being (Wilkinson and Pickett, 2009). Defining unfairness, inequality and the rejection
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of cooperation as forms of exclusion, Wilkinson and Pickett concluded that reducing inequality would help stabilise economic systems and ‘make a major contribution to social and environmental sustainability’ (ibid:263). Similarly Dorling (2010:308) highlighted the growing discrepancy between rich and poor countries, citing ‘hidden and unacknowledged beliefs’ as the cause of the UK’s social inequality. Dorling argued that five social evils leading to the establishment of the British welfare state — ignorance, want, idleness, squalor and disease — while gradually being eradicated, were being replaced by another set of unjust beliefs — elitism, exclusion, prejudice, greed and despair; presenting evidence that the UK was the fourth most unequal of the 25 richest countries in the world. Social exclusion and social polarisation in cities were recognised as long-standing prominent features of urban landscapes. The works of Dorling, Wilkinson and Pickett demonstrate the value of viewing urban regeneration policies through a social inclusion lens (see also Finn, Atkinson and Crawford, 2007).

1.4 The objectives of the thesis

A body of evidence is emerging from the US, Canada, the UK and Northern Europe demonstrating the need to re-examine urban regeneration principles and the relationship between housing, employment and transport policies. This thesis responds directly to this agenda and the key empirical aspects of the research identified in Chapter 1, aiming to:

1. Mobilise social inclusion as a framework to develop better conceptual understandings of the relationship between housing, employment and transport policies and the underpinning governance arrangements.
2. Critically assess how housing, employment, transport and governance measures in a context of urban regeneration could add social and economic value in the West-Central Sydney sub-region.
3. In the light of selected overseas interventions, examine the effectiveness of planning policy in Sydney, particularly pertaining to a social inclusion agenda.

Hence this research suggests how a more integrated approach to urban regeneration of West-Central’s older suburbs might be formulated. It explores whether this requires combining market demands with innovative public interventions, a better understanding of the drivers of housing and job supply and the role of public transport in the regeneration process, in the context of an evolving Metropolitan Strategy.
1.5 The motivation for this research

This study is motivated by involvement in a wide range of urban projects spanning my career. As an architect and town planner involved in research, design and renewal, I worked for ten years in senior strategic planning roles in multi-disciplinary consultancy teams in the UK, Hong Kong, Indonesia and Australia, followed by fourteen years in local government in Australia. Subsequently, from 2004 to 2010, I was the Assistant Director of WSROC Ltd, one of Australia’s oldest and most respected local government organisations, advocating for greater sustainability and more equitable provision of services and amenities on behalf of the 1.9 million residents of GWS.

As a female, white, university-educated professional, growing up in the UK immediately after WWII, I was part of a fortunate generation benefitting from the establishment of the welfare state and a free education. Living and working in a range of developed and developing countries exposed me to different cultural attitudes and policy perspectives, widening my professional understandings of city development. Moving from the planning, design and development of UK New Towns in the early 1970s, I participated in a four-year in-depth Birmingham Inner Area Study, for the UK Department of the Environment, examining the multiple, interconnected problems and challenges confronting the inner urban areas of a major city that, together with similar studies in London and Liverpool, became a central focus of the UK government’s social, economic and planning policies. The inner areas studies shed light on the issues, generated action projects and brought practical benefits to the residents of socio-economically disadvantaged areas. A particularly poignant comment I recall, pointing to the impact of an area’s stigmatisation, was from a Birmingham resident:

If you go into town and tell people you’re from Small Heath, they think you’re living in a slum. If you’ve got a teenage daughter and she goes for an interview for a job, if she says she comes from Small Heath her chances of a job have gone downhill. It’s a terrible thing to say, but my daughter says she’s from South Yardley (Llewelyn-Davies Weeks et al., 1977:223).

On first visiting Australia in 1975 I was involved in initial planning for the Bathurst-Orange growth centre and development of a strategic plan for Greater Western Sydney (Llewelyn-Davies et al., 1977). Later I participated in multidisciplinary, culturally diverse teams responsible for urban regeneration in Hong Kong and a Kampung Improvement Program in Bandung, West Java. After migrating to Australia with my family in 1987, for ten years I was the strategic planning manager responsible for the design and development of a major urban
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release — the Rouse Hill Development Area — and the urban renewal of the older suburbs of Baulkham Hills LGA, in Sydney’s North-West. Moving to Fairfield Council to manage an Accessible City Program in 2000, I explored the interconnected issues of housing, employment and transport accessibility in one of Australia’s most culturally diverse and socio-economically disadvantaged LGAs, investigating the area’s capacity to cope with population growth and developing residential and accessible city strategies.

Representing local government in numerous regional planning processes and an industry partner in two Australian Research Council (ARC) funded projects entitled Community 2000+: Designing the future in Baulkham Hills Shire and Socially sustainable urban renewal, 2008, I benefitted from the close collaboration between academic research and the grounded experience of working in the local government sector. Joining WSROC in 2004, co-authoring FutureWest: Greater Western Sydney regional planning and management framework (WSROC, 2005b), working with academics from the Universities of Western Sydney (UWS), New South Wales (UNSW) and Macquarie, I coordinated the representation of thirteen GWS councils on this and subsequent projects. Between 2004 and 2010, preparing numerous submissions to governments, I presented evidence at many inquiries on the wide-ranging, interconnected issues confronting GWS.

This professional journey led to my desire to apply my experience and previous research to one of Sydney’s most disadvantaged sub-regions. West-Central Sydney was selected for the case study by using the sub-region’s data to assess theoretical relevance, focusing on those suburbs with the lowest ranking in the ABS Relative Socio-Economic Index of Disadvantage (SEIFA) This Index — derived from attributes including low income, limited educational attainment, high unemployment and jobs in relatively unskilled occupations — reflects disadvantage; rather than measuring specific attributes such as Aboriginality or events such as separation/divorce rates. Low scores on SEIFA occur in areas accommodating many low income households, where people have little training and work in unskilled jobs. Conversely, areas with high scores have few low income households, or adults with better training working in unskilled occupations; reflecting a lack of disadvantage rather than high advantage, which is a subtly different concept.

I was strongly encouraged by professional colleagues, particularly one who commented on my ability to provide:
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... practical planning/transport/social answers that elude conventional planning at all levels of government and the private sector too (email received from a senior NSW state government manager, 2009).

Hence I was keen to draw on insights gained from working on major urban projects and 20 years of advocacy on behalf of Western Sydney, to present the case for a more socially inclusive approach to assisting the sub-region’s disadvantaged communities.

1.6 The use of theory

Amin and Thrift (2002) reminded us that cities are never the same, lacking a single identity or structure. Rather than a city built on consensus there remains:

... the crucial role of disagreement and conflict, but within a framework of universal rights designed to build disciplines of empowerment (Amin and Thrift, 2002:6).

Arguing that consideration of the ‘urbanism of the everyday’ as a mechanism of ‘knowing the multiplex city’, requires integration with systems of regulation, the application of technologies and the role of spatially stretched and distant connections (ibid:9), Amin and Thrift described cities as not what they are but what they are becoming. Hence they reinforced the case for the use of multiple methods to understand cities.

Mindful of Amin and Thrift’s warnings about how we treat cities from a theoretical stance, there is also a need for care about over-generalising from a policy viewpoint. The landmark UN report on social inclusion referred to in Section 1.3 for example, stressed that measuring social inclusion required a combination of qualitative and quantitative methods, drawing from a range of disciplines (Atkinson and Marlier, 2010:2). This thesis draws from town planning, urban studies, geography, local government and sociological literature, in an attempt to embrace the possibilities emerging from both diverse theoretical and policy approaches. This exposes the need for a mix of qualitative and quantitative methods which are now explored.

Qualitative and quantitative methods. This thesis deploys a variety of methodologies. One set is broadly defined as qualitative. Qualitative research has been defined as:

... an inquiry process of understanding a social or human problem, based on building a complex, holistic picture, formed with words, reporting detailed views of informants and conducted in a natural setting (Cresswell, 1994:2).

As such it helps to observe, discover and describe the underlying dimensions of social life using largely non-numerical data (Minichiello et al, 1995).
Chapter 1: Overview of the issues

This research draws on Bacchi’s 2006 findings pointing to the importance of interpretative policy analysis as a subset of qualitative research with consideration of how governments frame problems such as concentrations of socio-economic disadvantage, the underlying pre-suppositions and assumptions, the effects of this representation, where the responsibilities lie and whether reactions to these perceived issues helps give shape to the problems.

Glasmeier offered significant insights, as well as reflecting my own experience, by stating:

... the absence of conventional (this means statistical) evidence is a non-starter in most policy circles ... I see myself using a variety of social science research methods to contribute to public policy debate (Glasmeier, 2007:212).

She highlighted the split between ‘qualitative and quantitative approaches’, an alleged ‘lack of credibility of policy research in the academy’ and the ‘decline in idealism in academic life’. Importantly Glasmeier stressed that:

A desire to participate in policy discussions ... must be coupled with a deep appreciation for the history of the issue in question and built on recognition of political intent which is often paradoxically linked to the underlying policy problem. It is through this type of qualitative analysis that geographers can understand both the intent behind policies and the explicit role that geography plays in the interpretation of policy problems and pragmatic approaches to their resolution (ibid:213).

I concur with Glasmeier’s view when she stated:

I see policy research as being problem-focused and empirical and for which there is presumed to be some legislative, administrative, or legal means to lesson or somehow alter the underlying circumstances of causes of the problem (ibid:210).

In addition to official statistics contained in census publications, this thesis also employed a range documentary research methods (Mogalakwe, 2006), using both quantitative and qualitative material in official statistics contained in census publications, government reports and newspapers, supplemented with consultancy reports.

As well as any references cited, this thesis draws on my experience in planning and development of major new release areas and urban renewal in Western Sydney since 1989, and particularly from working in a senior role in WSROC from 2004 to 2010. Hence there are places in this thesis where I draw on undocumented knowledge of processes affecting the development of Sydney, emerging from involvement in inter-disciplinary physical and human services release area management committees and numerous consultations with Western Sydney councils, staff and constituents on the issues confronting the region. Building on these insights, this thesis presents the opportunity for this information to be forwarded, despite the fact that the formal reference requirements of the academy are unable to be met.
Qualitative methods also involve engagement with the policy and therefore the political dimensions of research. In an examination of government and sustainability in Australia, Smith and Scott outlined the research hurdles confronting the social analyst leading to a disengagement of the public with the political process:

Social levels of harm are often interpreted and informed by quantitative data such as employment statistics, level of debt, home ownership and waiting times in emergency departments of hospitals. Few of these social indicators, however, have much meaning for the average citizen, for whom the quality of life issues more often revolve around the ease of access to goods and services, the quality of the local environment, educational opportunities and recreational resources. Security, good quality housing and employment are vital to well-being but often fail to reflect anything other than first-order effects of societal ills. Social threshold levels of harm need to account for more (Smith and Scott, 2006:124).

Alongside a desire to meld qualitative and quantitative approaches in seeking to discover the challenges posed by pursuing a social inclusion agenda, a heuristic approach to finding solutions to the problems was adopted, reinforced by largely intuitive procedures based on my practical experience. As the British sociologist J. Clyde Mitchell argued:

*Heuristic case studies* are distinguished from configurative-idiographic and disciplined-configurative studies in that they are deliberatively chosen in order to develop theory (Mitchell, 1983:196).

Thus the use of case studies underpins my approach to the research. Mitchell stated that case studies are:

... a reliable and respectable procedure of social analysis and that much criticism of their reliability and validity has been based on a misconception of the basis upon which the analyst may justifiably extrapolate from an individual case study to the social process in general (ibid: 207).

Yin (2003) traced the uses and importance of case studies in a wide range of disciplines including sociology, management, planning and social work. While Flyvberg (2006) corrects five misunderstandings about case study research and argued that social science may be strengthened by a greater number of good case studies.

Deliberately interdisciplinary in scope and using a mix of qualitative and quantitative approaches, this thesis uses heuristic case studies to develop a better understanding of how government policy is framed in terms of reacting to the problems and issues associated with socio-economic disadvantage.

While policy research methods as such are not central to the approach of this thesis the works of Raco (1999), on local government, governance and urban policy; Hajer and Wagenaar (2003), who described the shift from ‘government’ to ‘governance’ in political science; Casell and Symon (2004), who provided a
guide to qualitative methods in organisational research; and Fischer, Miller and Sidney (2006) study of public policy and methods of policy analysis in the social sciences are acknowledged as further examples of the methodology used to analyse quantitative and qualitative policy aspects of this research. These authors provide valuable insights into pressing economic and social problems. Section 1.7 now sketches the pathways undertaken for this research project.

1.7 Research design

Research informs policy, but does not take the place of politics and in some cases may be entirely ignored or used purposefully to fulfil a political goal sometimes opposite of its intent (Glasmeier 2007:217).

While researchers observe and interpret the world, they should seek to develop knowledge helping to bring about change — hence my focus on policies and practical solutions for more effective outcomes. However, as Amin and Thrift (2002) stressed, research of this kind is unavoidably partial, coming from a subjective position and providing an incomplete overview of a topic. For example Baxter and Eyles (1997:513 to 514) highlighted how the interview process (used extensively here) is influenced by the interaction between the interviewer and the interviewee’s socio-economic backgrounds, education levels, gender, biases, ethnicity, religious beliefs (or lack of) and cultural characteristics. This understanding required me to ponder upon reflexivity, which I have not found to be easy.

Reflecting on the role of an interviewer I considered how reactions to what I was being told influenced my interpretation. I aimed to gain a better understanding of institutional structures and practices, to uncover common, consistent and deeply-embedded views on urban disadvantage and its causes. The privileged access I was given to a number of Western Sydney’s senior urban policy managers helped my interpretation of the impacts of the interview findings. My professional research has been circulated within Western Sydney and across various government departments at a local, state and federal level and I knew most of the interviewees, which may have influenced their agreement to participate in the interview process and the frank way they engaged with me. Conversely, the limited few who chose not to be interviewed may have perceived my previous advocacy role as a threat. While many doors were opened to me because of my personal connections, a few remained closed.

Haraway (1988) argued that ‘all knowledge is situated’ and like all researchers I am necessarily limited by my positionality, which both constrained and directed the design and conduct of this research. A particular challenge on commencing
Chapter 1: Overview of the issues

dthis project required analysing the groundswell of research on social inclusion as a social policy response to assisting areas of socio-economic disadvantage. While I was heartened by the greater currency that social inclusion was gaining across western developed nations, including Australia, recent government changes have now led to its demise.

The complexity and dynamic nature of West-Central cannot be understood without grouping observations and statements, processes and measures for policy implementation, allowing additional information and theoretical propositions beyond the conventional view. As Glasmeier observed:

Policy is made and implemented at multiple spatial scales: ... By implication, linkages and paths of influence between these levels are also significant for understanding policy (ibid:213).

Case study examples are integrated throughout this thesis to establish the link between theory and real-world practice. Notably I chose not to follow the standard practice of devoting a separate chapter to a literature review, but embedded theory across the thesis so as to inform its methodology, analysis and reporting activity. Hence Section 1.2 incorporated discussion of place theory, urban regeneration processes and approaches to disadvantage. Section 1.3 included academic insights into the interpretation of urban complexities. Chapter 3 is devoted to presenting a review of the development of the nation state and the findings from research into social inclusion and exclusion in the US, the EU, the UK and Australia. Chapter 4 then examines urban regeneration lessons that can be drawn from both the overseas and Australian literature. Concepts from all these discussions are then interwoven with the analysis in the remaining chapters. Given the complexity and interrelationship of the issues being addressed, ideally the views of the residents of West-Central would have been canvassed, but this was beyond the resources, scope and word-length of the study. As a guide Box 1.1 now provides an overview of how the research objectives, outlined above, are linked to the thesis methodology.
### Box 1.1: Thesis methodology

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Thesis objectives</th>
<th>Approach to achieving objectives</th>
<th>How and where addressed</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Mobilise social inclusion as a framework to develop better conceptual understandings of the relationship between housing, employment and transport policies and the underpinning governance arrangements.</strong></td>
<td>Assessment of the concept of social inclusion as a lens through which to view the urban regeneration policy agenda, thus helping to create a more equitable society for all and leading to more effective, coordinated governance arrangements. Preparation of a spatial and demographic profile of the West-Central sub-region. Identification of the conditions and policies which could lead to more social inclusion.</td>
<td>Chapter 1 describes the research objectives, the theory and thesis structure and provides an overview of the issues, the main focus and research context and the concept of social inclusion. Chapter 2 provides a spatial and demographic profile of West-Central. Chapter 3 reviews policy-related literature on the role of the nation state and how overseas and Australian governments deal with social inclusion issues.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Critically assess how housing, employment, transport and governance measures in a context of urban regeneration could add social and economic value to households in the West-Central sub-region.</strong></td>
<td>A review of the policies adopted by governments and agencies to deal with the complex interconnected issues of socio-economic disadvantage.</td>
<td>Chapter 4 describes the overseas regeneration context; highlighting the overseas lessons from housing, employment and transport policies for Australian social inclusion policy development process.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>In the light of selected overseas interventions, examine the effectiveness of planning policy in Sydney, particularly pertaining to a social inclusion agenda.</strong></td>
<td>A critique of the practice of these policies as contained in previous strategic plans for Sydney, outlining failed or absent policies and programs, leading to ineffective outcomes. Analysis of the impacts of these policies and practices on the sub-region’s people. The lessons that can be drawn for the place that is West-Central Sydney and the implications and success or otherwise of the practice of these policies. Analysis of the findings from the spatial and demographic profile of West-Central and the results of a series of</td>
<td>Chapter 5 critiques NSW strategic and sectoral plans in respect of housing, employment and transport policies, highlighting land use planning and centres issues. Chapter 6 describes how the strategies, policies and regeneration practices impact on the sub-region, describing the key housing, employment and urban transport issues. Chapters 5 and 6 present the interview evidence and reflect on the inherent policy paradoxes in the areas of housing, employment and transport issues. Chapter 6 discusses...</td>
</tr>
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</table>
The research commenced with a literature review of how the term *social inclusion* — first emerging in policy discussions in Europe in the early 1970s — developed into a wider area of political and policy reform in many countries, including Australia. A mixed quantitative and qualitative approach to evidence-based research helped to address the wide-ranging interrelated housing, employment and transport factors impacting on regeneration policies.

The methodological approach for obtaining the empirical data for this research as my primary source drew largely from semi-structured interviews conducted with regional stakeholders from non-government organisations, local government, state government departments, the development industry and a minister in the previous NSW government. By outlining in advance the ground to be covered the use of semi-structured interviews helped focus the discussion while providing the interviewees with a fair degree of freedom to express themselves.

The interviewees were selected on the basis of their senior roles in the organisations within which they were affiliated. Of the two female and three male local government interviewees, all had occupied their current position for over two years, having been promoted from within the local government sector. Similarly the one female and two male NGO representatives had performed their roles for periods ranging from three to eight years. The three male and two of the four female state government department respondents had all worked extensively in the NSW public service, leaving only the two female NSW Planning’s representatives relatively new to their positions. The development industry interviewee had fifteen years experience in his role and the previous politician had ministerial experience in a number of relevant state government portfolios. No significant ethical issues were anticipated, with the research assessed as having a low risk of harm, discomfort and inconvenience and, given that the interviewees were professional and technical experts in their policy fields, none were under 18 years of age. My research proposal H8868, forwarded
Chapter 1: Overview of the issues

as a National Ethics Application, was formally approved by the Human Research Ethics Committee on 14 March 2011.

Prior to the interviews I re-configured and updated previous research understandings to present a profile of the West-Central sub-region, emphasising LGA and suburb variations. I sought to uncover four areas of interest: first, the opportunities and challenges of pursuing a social inclusion agenda through housing, employment and transport policy interventions; second, the gaps in the knowledge; third, the contribution of housing, employment and transport programs in advancing the concept; and finally, best practice examples for evaluating policies aimed at achieving social inclusion. Building on previous research for Western Sydney (outlined in Sections 1.1, 1.5 and 2.2), the interview questions sought to unpack the reasons behind West-Central’s ongoing disadvantage; for instance, why the increasing socio-economic divide in Western Sydney — arguably the nation’s third largest regional economy — was not given greater attention in national policy or social/scientific enquiry; how patterns of low public expenditure in West-Central could be justified; and why development of social infrastructure is rarely considered a form of public investment in Australia. The previous research on Western Sydney demonstrated a lack of understanding of the impacts of national policy shifts regionally and blindness to the uneven spatial distribution of social and economic needs; since despite periods of economic growth, there had been a simultaneous expansion of aggregate incomes and an increase in the numbers of poor households.

Interviewees were provided with a range of information (see Appendix 1) including a Participant Information Sheet outlining the nature and purpose of the study, the timeframe and contact details of my primary supervisor and an ethics advisor from UWS. This stressed that participation in the research was voluntary and respondents could withdraw at any time without adverse consequences; assuring confidentiality of participants and anonymity would be maintained. An outline set of questions was forwarded prior to the interviews. At the commencement each interviewee signed a Participant Consent Form (Appendix 1) and all agreed to have the discussion tape-recorded. Local government interviewees were presented with a demographic overview of their LGA, highlighting policy perspectives of government targets for housing, employment and transport gleaned from NSW strategic documents dating from 2005. During the briefings I sought advice on recent changes to the case study suburbs and other strategic information. More specifically, interviewees’ views on the impediments to urban regeneration were sought.
Chapter 1: Overview of the issues

The taped interviews ranged from 60 to 90 minutes in length, with mostly one but occasionally two interviewees at a time, following which I transcribed the tapes. This approach offered an insight into the way participants perceived themselves and their experiences, rather than simply providing an account of events (Minichiello et al, 1995:930). Respondents described their role in the urban regeneration process and where they positioned their organisations in the governance structures in which they were situated, bringing the research alive by their detailed and grounded stories.

The interview text formed a key part of my analysis. I was cautious not to present interviewee statements as indisputable facts nevertheless; by citing participant’s views fairly extensively I afforded them a privileged position in my text. Quotations used directly were kept anonymous, chosen for their distinctive voice and how they captured widely held, or alternatively, dissident views. Where interviewee statements were seen as interesting, relevant further discussion and comments were encouraged. On some issues a consistency of views emerged, albeit expressed and interpreted differently. In others the hurdles arising from a current poor working relationship and tensions between state and local governments in NSW became apparent (detailed in Chapters 5 and 6).

The interview findings were supplemented with analysis of secondary data from the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) and the NSW Bureau of Transport Statistics’s Transport Data Centre (TDC), together with a review of the national perspective contained in government and development industry reports. These data, distilled from the 1986 to 2011 ABS Censuses, non-census data and previous research in Western Sydney, provided the most recent demographic information on the population of the sub-region and the five LGAs. Section 2.1 presents this information in the form of tables, figures and charts, coupled with empirical observations of the findings.

Census analysis alone could not sufficiently inform policies for the urban regeneration of West-Central. For any urban area to function effectively on a daily basis, considerable local information about housing, employment and transport issues needed to be captured. However, since such knowledge is almost always partial, put simply, the Census analysis attempted to provide a background picture of the sub-region’s demography, to assist the development of more coherent and directed future urban regeneration plans and policies. Journey-to-work data, housing statistics and Metropolitan Development Program (MDP) reports, also highlighted how the extensive concentrations of
disadvantage within the sub-region are not confined within individual LGAs. These predominantly quantitative inputs helped build a framework into which the more qualitative research was fitted.

1.8 Thesis structure

An important question arose as to whether an overview of the case study area should precede the wider context in which it is situated, or vice versa. On reflection it seemed preferable to situate the theory, methodology, spatial and demographic context of West-Central first, followed by lessons drawn from overseas experience, leaving later chapters devoted to the evaluation and analysis of the interview findings from key informants and the implications for metropolitan policy development in the sub-region.

Chapter 1 provided an introduction to the issues prompting the research. Highlighting renewed federal government’s interest in urban regeneration in 2007, following a decade of neglect, Chapter 1 discussed whether the emerging concept of social inclusion in Australia could be mobilised as a key policy imperative for the renewal of the older suburbs of West-Central Sydney. Section 1.3 centrally positioned the concept of social inclusion, arguing for better solutions through a more integrated policy approach. Sections 1.4 to 1.6 provided an outline of the thesis objectives, my motivation for undertaking the research and the use of theory. Section 1.6 described how the research design used a combination of qualitative and quantitative data and analysis, the methodology and established the arguments behind the thesis structure.

The following Chapter 2 provides the spatial context and a demographic profile of the case study area (Section 2.1). A description of West-Central’s rising disadvantage presented in section 2.2 points to increasing socio-economic polarisation, an ageing population, rising inequality, unprecedented climate change, oil insecurity and globalisation; coupled with ongoing policy failure, with the issues remaining invisible to policymakers. Section 2.3 discusses the political context in which West-Central is situated.

Chapter 3 then considers the idea of social inclusion, providing an extensive review of relevant policy-related literature across a range of genres; examining how the concepts of social exclusion and social inclusion influence the social policy agenda, with current government perspectives on the issues reflecting dominant political ideologies. The implications arising from a literature review of the housing, employment, transport and governance policies potentially contributing to or detracting from social inclusion are also discussed. Following
an historical overview of overseas approaches to urban renewal/regeneration, Chapter 4 draws on evidence, particularly from the UK, providing lessons for Australia of how interventionist policies, delivering improved housing, employment and transport outcomes through progressive leadership, focused on strategic objectives.

Chapters 5 and 6 place a strong emphasis on the interview findings, graphically expressed in the words of the interviewees. Chapter 5 provides an historical overview of strategic planning for Sydney, identifying failed or absent planning programs and policies and outlining the limitations of past and current government strategic documents. Presenting the social inclusion evidence gleaned from the targeted interviews with regional stakeholders, the chapter reflects upon the inherent paradoxes implicit in current housing, employment, transport and governance policies leading to ineffective planning in NSW.

West-Central’s specific problems — lacking the attention it deserves from a national, state and metropolitan perspective are highlighted in Chapter 6. Describing the sub-region’s key housing, employment, transport and governance issues, the chapter draws on a body of academic research and my own grounded knowledge of the area. Key insights from the interview findings suggest policy paradoxes and underlying governance issues are impeding effective urban regeneration. Chapter 6 concludes with an overview of some successful strategic alliances between the state and local government, signalling opportunities for the future. The policy conclusions emerging from these separate chapters are drawn together in Chapter 7. Emphasis is placed on the implications for urban governance structures, suggesting a set of practical interventions to replace outdated strategies which, at best, are providing only partial solutions to West-Central’s problems and, at worst, may be contributing to increasing polarisation.

1.9 Summary and conclusions

This chapter commenced by providing a brief description of the place that is West-Central Sydney and an overview of the issues it confronts; outlining the main focus of the thesis and the interrelationship of the various themes to be explored. Emerging large-scale influences — world-wide urbanisation processes and the need for urban regeneration were highlighted. Chapter 1 points to how social disadvantage appears to be worsening in Sydney, with widening sub-regional differentials in income, educational attainment and employment status observable in markedly different enclaves, each with distinct combinations of social exclusion, locational inaccessibility and environmental blight. Section 1.3
Chapter 1: Overview of the issues

centrally positioned the concept of social inclusion, arguing for better solutions through a more integrated policy approach.

Sections 1.4 to 1.8 described the thesis objectives, the motivation for the research, the methodology employed and the thesis structure. Combining theoretical analysis, quantitative, qualitative and empirical data, this research seeks a clearer understanding of the causes of socio-economic inequality — as opposed to viewing inequity as a given state of affairs. Considering the ways in which housing, employment and transport policies might assist in moderating the sub-region’s inequality, helped establish the basis for investigating some policy initiatives for improving social outcomes. This thesis has not attempted to provide an in-depth account of every theme covered, but draws together key ideas and examples cross-cutting the subject.

This chapter argued that plans for West-Central Sydney needed to consider the impact of social structure, place and time on people’s knowledge, attitudes and behaviours; suggesting the need for renewed urban policies as now discussed. Chapter 2 provides the spatial and demographic context for the research; highlighting issues of ethnic diversity, population growth, unemployment and declining employment participation, transport poverty, congestion and stressed social and physical infrastructure in the sub-region. Chapter 3 then examines the concepts of social inclusion and exclusion contained in the policy-related literature. A discussion on the important role played by the nation state in dealing with disadvantage is followed by an assessment of the conditions and lessons for more effective social inclusion policies and whether the concept of social inclusion could act as a driver to assist regeneration of West-Central’s older suburbs (discussed in Chapter 4). The research findings from these four earlier chapters informed the critiques of NSW policy directions through an evaluation of metropolitan strategies and sectoral studies in Chapter 5, and the specific policy impacts on the West-Central sub-region in Chapter 6. The government responses to place-based socio-economic disadvantage explored in these later chapters, show how the issues represented in housing, employment and transport policies is leading to either increased or diminished social inclusion; exploring questions of housing affordability, labour market performance and transport accessibility.
CHAPTER 2: Socio-economic profile of West-Central

Introduction

This chapter describes the spatial and demographic context of the sub-region, the rise of West-Central’s disadvantage and the political context in which it is located. By way of summary and because these issues bear heavily on the discussion throughout the thesis, Appendix 2 Box A.2.1 summarises the major demographic differences between West-Central and the Sydney average in 2011.

Figure 2.1: Auburn LGA a major migrant reception area

Chapter 1 presented an introductory account of the socio-economic disadvantage confronting West-Central, the research objectives and the broad policy context. Chapter 2 now establishes the significance of the sub-region for research purposes via a systemic and data-rich approach. When urban regeneration research focuses at a metropolitan level of analysis it often ignores the fine-grained, local perspectives and bypasses concentrations of severe socio-economic disadvantage masked at a
Chapter 2: A socio-economic profile of West-Central

regional scale (Fingland, 2003). Even individual LGA’s census data averages can be described as:

... a poor proxy for neighbourhood scale and can hide pockets of both deprivation and wealth (Syrett and North, 2008:17).

Also, focusing on economic data pointing to public and private investment, business start-ups and labour force participation generally fails to capture or measure informal activity. Hence this research looks in detail at West-Central’s older suburbs, providing the important background for discussion of issues of urban renewal, gentrification and displacement, plus the related issues of employment and accessibility. The material exposes the need for greater social inclusion and how the concept is perceived by various governments, NGOs and communities. This basic analysis underpins later discussions on the limited framing of urban regeneration policies in the context of a review of current strategic plans and policy documents discussed in Chapter 5. A focus in Chapter 6 is on the sub-region’s unique characteristics, its strengths and weaknesses, followed by an analysis of the actors involved, their roles and relationship with each other and the governance implications of these findings.

While detailed, the following quantitative material is seen as an essential precursor to the qualitative material presented later in the thesis. The treatment commences with an overview of West-Central’s development and finishes with an analysis of its current situation.

2.1 The spatial and demographic context

The Cabrogal, Dharug and Eora Aboriginal people, the original human inhabitants, lived in the area known as Western Sydney for over 30,000 years. European settlement commenced in 1788 with establishment of a penal colony in Parramatta and the area contains some of Australia’s earliest European settlement sites, including Old Government House and Parramatta Park. During the early 1800s the land was developed for sheep, cattle and crop farming, market gardening and collection of timber. In the early 1900s urban growth was aided by the opening of railway lines and industrial development. Rapid population increase after WWII — resulting from the influx of many ex-service families — was spurred on by immigration and the construction of large-scale public housing estates in the 1950s, coupled with continuing urban land releases promoting low density project home developments. The population expanded rapidly during the 1970s and 1980s, growing 8.9% from 1981 to 1991, slowing to 7.2% from 1991 to 2001 (WSROC, 2003a) but increasing by 12.6%, at a rate of 1.7% per annum from 2006 to 2011 (ABS census 2006 and 2011). By 2001, 58% of Sydney’s public rental housing was
located in Western Sydney, providing accommodation for a range of lower income households, albeit very unevenly distributed.

**Figure 2.2: The West-Central Sydney sub-region**

Source: NSW Department of Planning 2007:11

**West-Central Sydney.** West-Central contains the main venue for the 2000 Olympic Games, six NSW TAFE colleges, one Sydney University and three University of Western Sydney (UWS) campuses. Important strategic centres include Parramatta regional city (classified as Sydney’s second CBD), with Bankstown and Fairfield town
centres nominated as major or potential centres and the Sydney Olympic Park/Rhodes area, Bankstown Airport/Milperra and the Westmead Hospital complex providing specialist facilities (NSW Planning, 2005a). Substantial institutional land uses include Silverwater Correctional Centre, Villawood Immigration and Detention Centre and Rookwood Cemetery.

The sub-region is served by the M7, M5 and M4 Motorways, the Cumberland, Great Western and Hume Highways and numerous railway lines. The Liverpool-Parramatta Transitway (T-Way) — a dedicated bus-only corridor connecting two regional centres, opened in 2003, links residential areas and education facilities, industrial areas and commercial centres, while the North-West T-Way, opened in 2007, links Rouse Hill to Parramatta.

Local government areas. The following descriptions of West-Central’s five constituent LGAs are based on previously complied Council Local Area Profiles (WSROC, 2003a), updated with available 2006 and 2011 ABS census data and interviewees’ information provided in 2011. As Table 2.1 demonstrates West-Central’s five LGAs show considerable variations in land area, population size and distribution.

### Table 2.1: Gross population densities in West-Central 2011

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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Auburn</td>
<td>64,959</td>
<td>73,738</td>
<td>3,247</td>
<td>22.7</td>
<td>1.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bankstown</td>
<td>170,488</td>
<td>182,354</td>
<td>7,684</td>
<td>23.7</td>
<td>4.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fairfield</td>
<td>179,893</td>
<td>187,768</td>
<td>10,159</td>
<td>18.5</td>
<td>4.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Holroyd</td>
<td>89,764</td>
<td>99,163</td>
<td>4,025</td>
<td>24.6</td>
<td>2.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parramatta</td>
<td>148,323</td>
<td>166,856</td>
<td>6,102</td>
<td>27.3</td>
<td>3.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>West-Central</strong></td>
<td><strong>653,427</strong></td>
<td><strong>709,879</strong></td>
<td><strong>31,217</strong></td>
<td><strong>22.7</strong></td>
<td><strong>16.2</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GWS</td>
<td>1,788,956</td>
<td>1,923,698</td>
<td>894,074</td>
<td>2.2</td>
<td>43.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SMR</td>
<td>4,119,190</td>
<td>4,391,674</td>
<td>1,214,291</td>
<td>3.6</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: ABS Census 2006 and 2011 of enumerated residents excluding overseas visitors

Auburn City, located 17 kilometres west of Sydney CBD and 6 kilometres east of Parramatta, has the smallest population and land area of West-Central’s LGAs, with 73,738 persons in 2011, at a gross density of 22.7 persons per hectare (pph). Predominantly a residential and industrial area, the city also contains significant commercial, recreational and parkland precincts. A major impetus for residential development arose through the incorporation of the Sydney Olympic Village into a suburb known as Newington, plus conversion of industrial land to apartments at Wentworth Point. Both Sydney Olympic Park and the Homebush Bay area are subject to the statutory provisions of State Environmental Planning Policies administered by

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the Department of Planning and Infrastructure. Auburn is located on both the Western and Bankstown railway lines and served by a mixture of public and private bus services and is also traversed east to west by the M4 Motorway.

**Bankstown City** is an established urban LGA located 23 kilometres south-west of the Sydney CBD. In 2011 Bankstown had an enumerated resident population of 182,354 persons in an area of 7,684 hectares, at a gross density of 23.7 pph. A residential, commercial and industrial LGA, the city contains Bankstown Regional Airport and parts of the Hume Highway and the M5 Motorway. The Bankstown and East Hills railways provide direct links to Sydney CBD, the South-West sub-region, connections to other rail lines and a network of 30 bus routes. Residential occupation of Bankstown was completed by the 1970s, with the population increasing due to higher density housing development in Bankstown town centre.

**Fairfield City,** West-Central’s most western LGA, with the largest land area and population, is located approximately 32 kilometres from Sydney CBD, south-west of Parramatta and Holroyd. While predominantly residential, Fairfield contains a rural/residential component, several commercial centres, plus six areas of industrial and business lands (829.8 hectares in area) extending from the Western Sydney Employment Lands in its north along a corridor between Wetherill Park and Fairfield East (illustrated in Figure 6.8). While predominantly residential, Fairfield contains a rural/residential component, several commercial centres, plus six areas of industrial and business lands (829.8 hectares in area) extending from the Western Sydney Employment Lands to its north, along a corridor between Wetherill Park and Fairfield East.

In 2011 Fairfield had an enumerated resident population of 187,768 persons in an area of 10,159 hectares at a population density of 18.5 pph — the lowest gross population density in the sub-region. Poorly regulated private buses operated for many years in Fairfield and service levels were inconsistent. The focus was on east-west peak hour commuter transport to railway stations, with few north-south linkages. Now the Liverpool to Parramatta T-Way, located in the western part of the LGA connecting Fairfield to Holroyd, bisects the extensive Smithfield/Wetherill Park employment area. Major roads, including the M7 Motorway, the Hume and Cumberland Highways, link Fairfield to the M4 and M5. Four railway lines run through the eastern area, with CityRail patronage data showing Cabramatta and Fairfield among some of the busiest stations on the rail network (Department of Planning, 2006).

**Holroyd City,** located approximately 25 kms from Sydney CBD, covers 4,025 hectares, with a 2011 population of 99,163 persons at a gross density of 24.6 pph.
Comprising a residential and industrial area with some commercial uses, Holroyd grew significantly in the early post-war period. Recent urban consolidation resulted in residential and employment redevelopment of redundant industrial land, creating a new suburb of Pemulwuy, although at a lower density than originally anticipated due to limited market demand for apartment buildings. The North Shore, Western and Southern lines provide regular rail services to Holroyd, with additional peak hour trains provided on the Cumberland and Blue Mountains lines.

**Parramatta City**, located at the geographical centre of Sydney’s population approximately 24 kilometres west of Sydney CBD, covers an area of 6,102 hectares, with a 2011 population of 166,856 at a gross density of 27.3 pph — the highest gross density in Western Sydney. Recent medium density development has located in Parramatta CBD and around transport nodes. In addition to its residential function, the LGA is undergoing substantial commercial and retail re-development and now contains the third largest legal precinct in Australia.

Figure 2.3: Parramatta ferry wharf

Source: NSW Department of Planning 2010:33

Four major roads, the Great Western Highway, James Ruse Drive, Victoria Road and the M4 Motorway (connecting to the M7) join Parramatta to other parts of Sydney. With a major transport interchange, operating since 2006, Parramatta is served by the Western and Cumberland railway lines, privately operated and government buses, two T-Ways and a ferry wharf on Parramatta River providing low-patronage services to Sydney CBD.

**Demographic profile.** In 2011, 0.8% of West-Central’s population identified as being of Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander (ATSI) descent, compared with 1.2%
across the Sydney Metropolitan Region (SMR). Similar proportions of Indigenous people live in each of the five LGAs comprising between 0.6% and 0.8% of the population. Accommodating the most ethnically diverse population in Sydney, in 2011 46.0% of the sub-region’s residents were born overseas and diversity is increasing. Table 2.2 shows a 2.8% increase in proportion of those born overseas since 2006, compared to 2.5% across the SMR. In 2011, 42.7% of West-Central’s overseas born population originated from countries where English is not the first language (a 3.2% increase since 2006), further reinforcing the sub-region’s ethnic diversity.

**Table 2.2: Birthplace summary West-Central 2006 and 2011**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>West-Central birthplace</th>
<th>2006 Number</th>
<th>2006 %</th>
<th>SMR</th>
<th>2011 Number</th>
<th>2011 %</th>
<th>SMR</th>
<th>Change 2006 to 2011</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Total overseas born</td>
<td>282,594</td>
<td>43.2</td>
<td>31.7</td>
<td>326,635</td>
<td>46.0</td>
<td>34.2</td>
<td>44,041</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Overseas born from non-English speaking background</td>
<td>258,066</td>
<td>39.5</td>
<td>23.9</td>
<td>302,838</td>
<td>42.7</td>
<td>26.3</td>
<td>44,772</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Overseas born from mainly English speaking background</td>
<td>24,528</td>
<td>3.8</td>
<td>7.8</td>
<td>23,797</td>
<td>3.4</td>
<td>7.9</td>
<td>-731</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Born in Australia</td>
<td>319,446</td>
<td>48.9</td>
<td>60.4</td>
<td>339,664</td>
<td>47.8</td>
<td>59.9</td>
<td>20,218</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not stated</td>
<td>51,389</td>
<td>7.9</td>
<td>7.9</td>
<td>43,580</td>
<td>6.1</td>
<td>5.9</td>
<td>-7,809</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total population</strong></td>
<td><strong>653,429</strong></td>
<td><strong>100.0</strong></td>
<td><strong>100.0</strong></td>
<td><strong>709,879</strong></td>
<td><strong>100.0</strong></td>
<td><strong>100.0</strong></td>
<td><strong>56,450</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: ABS Census 2006 and 2011

Table 2.3 shows ethnic diversity was particularly pronounced in the LGAs of Auburn (56.9% born overseas) and Fairfield (52.5%). Over half of Auburn’s population (54.2%) had a non-English speaking background while 18.7% lacked proficiency in English (see Table 2.19). In 2011 over half of Fairfield’s population were overseas born and more than a fifth of residents aged 5 or more years lacked English proficiency.
While not as ethnically diverse, Bankstown’s residents came from 160 different countries with 37.6% of its population overseas born, the majority originating from Lebanon and Vietnam. Holroyd also had a much higher proportion of its population born overseas (43.1%) than the SMR average (34.2%) with larger proportions of people born in Lebanon, India and Sri Lanka. In 2011 44.8% of Parramatta’s population were recorded as born overseas (increasing from 40.2% in 2006), 40.3% coming from non-English speaking countries compared to 26.3% in the SMR; the majority coming from China, India, Lebanon and Korea (ABS, 2011). The dominant non-English speaking countries of birth in West-Central in 2011 were Vietnam, China and Lebanon, with increasing proportions of arrivals from India and Iraq since 2006, but decreasing proportions from the UK and Italy (Table 2.4), although across the SMR the highest proportion (4.1%) of overseas-born immigrants originated from the UK.

Table 2.4: Immigrants’ country of birth 2006 and 2011

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country of birth</th>
<th>West-Central 2006 %</th>
<th>West-Central 2011 %</th>
<th>Change 2006 to 2011</th>
<th>SMR 2011 %</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Vietnam</td>
<td>6.3</td>
<td>6.4</td>
<td>4,787</td>
<td>1.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>China</td>
<td>3.8</td>
<td>4.5</td>
<td>7,116</td>
<td>3.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lebanon</td>
<td>4.2</td>
<td>4.0</td>
<td>1,083</td>
<td>1.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>India</td>
<td>2.1</td>
<td>3.7</td>
<td>12,537</td>
<td>2.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Iraq</td>
<td>2.1</td>
<td>2.6</td>
<td>4,943</td>
<td>0.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New Zealand</td>
<td>1.5</td>
<td>1.4</td>
<td>129</td>
<td>1.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Philippines</td>
<td>1.3</td>
<td>1.4</td>
<td>1,493</td>
<td>1.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>United Kingdom</td>
<td>1.7</td>
<td>1.3</td>
<td>-1,340</td>
<td>4.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Italy</td>
<td>1.4</td>
<td>1.2</td>
<td>-889</td>
<td>1.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South Korea</td>
<td>0.9</td>
<td>1.2</td>
<td>2,249</td>
<td>0.9</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: ABS Census 2006 and 2011
Population growth of the SMR results from natural increase (both births and ageing) and by net domestic and overseas migration. From 1981 to 2011 Western Sydney’s population increased from 1.2 million to over 1.9 million, accounting for 60.0% of Sydney’s total growth over that period. West-Central contributed 14.3% of metropolitan growth and almost a quarter (24.0%) of Western Sydney’s population increase in only 2.6% of Sydney’s land area.

Table 2.5 shows the population growth of each of the sub-region’s LGAs in the intercensal periods 2001 to 2011, representing an 8.6% sub-regional population change between 2006 and 2011, with the greatest proportional growth (13.5%) occurring in Auburn, followed by Parramatta (12.5%) and Holroyd (10.5%).

Table 2.5: Population growth by LGA 2001 to 2011

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Auburn</td>
<td>55,851</td>
<td>64,948</td>
<td>73,738</td>
<td>8,779</td>
<td>13.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bankstown</td>
<td>164,841</td>
<td>169,873</td>
<td>182,354</td>
<td>11,866</td>
<td>7.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fairfield</td>
<td>181,3004</td>
<td>179,893</td>
<td>187,768</td>
<td>7,875</td>
<td>4.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Holroyd</td>
<td>89,291</td>
<td>89,764</td>
<td>99,163</td>
<td>9,399</td>
<td>10.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parramatta</td>
<td>143,143</td>
<td>148,323</td>
<td>166,856</td>
<td>18,533</td>
<td>12.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>West-Central Sydney</td>
<td>630,417</td>
<td>653,427</td>
<td>709,879</td>
<td>56,452</td>
<td>8.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>North-West Sydney</td>
<td>704,202</td>
<td>737,867</td>
<td>787,729</td>
<td>49,862</td>
<td>6.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South-West Sydney</td>
<td>381,344</td>
<td>397,662</td>
<td>417,179</td>
<td>19,517</td>
<td>4.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GWS</td>
<td>1,715,963</td>
<td>1,788,9567</td>
<td>1,923,698</td>
<td>134,742</td>
<td>7.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SMR</td>
<td>3,961,451</td>
<td>4,119,191</td>
<td>4,391,674</td>
<td>272,483</td>
<td>6.6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: ABS Census 2001, 2006 and 2011

Fairfield’s population decreased slightly from 2001 to 2006 but grew by 4.4% from 2006 to 2011. By June 2010 the Parramatta suburb of Ermington became the weighted geographic centre of the SMR population (ABS 3218.0 Regional Population Growth, 2009-2010).

Previous research on demographic change from 1986 to 2001 highlighted some disturbing trends leading to stigmatisation occurring in West-Central’s older suburbs targeted for urban consolidation (Fingland, 2003). Overall, eight of Fairfield’s eastern
suburbs lost 5.4% of their population from 1991 to 2001, with Cabramatta alone losing 2,068 people or 9.4% of its population. Yet the trend is reversing, with 2011 Census results showing a 4.0% population increase in Cabramatta since 2006; although the ABS acknowledges the unreliability of Census results from such culturally diverse areas, due to a community reluctance or inability to complete the Census in English.

In mature urban areas population levels are essentially housing driven, with population growth linked to the prevailing planning controls determining the number of units permitted to be developed and the amount and type of dwellings provided (i.d. consulting. 2012). Containing very little undeveloped land, West-Central relies therefore on urban regeneration of sites to achieve its dwelling targets. Previous forecasts assumed that, without an increase in dwellings, the population of West-Central Sydney would fall, since average household size has been declining for the last 100 years, albeit not at the same rate in the sub-region as nationally.

Population projections. The 2005 Metropolitan strategy for Sydney forecast a metropolitan population increase of 1.1 million people by 2031. Revised upwards in 2010, the Metropolitan Plan for Sydney 2036 — Sydney’s ninth growth strategy since 1945 — updated the earlier forecasts, indicating an increase of 1.6 million people by 2036 (excluding the Central Coast).

Table 2.6: Population projections 2006 to 2036

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sub-region</th>
<th>2006 population</th>
<th>2036 population</th>
<th>Increase</th>
<th>% increase 2006-2036</th>
<th>% of SMR by 2036</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>West-Central</td>
<td>679,600</td>
<td>896,600</td>
<td>217,000</td>
<td>31.9</td>
<td>16.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>North-West</td>
<td>761,100</td>
<td>1,155,600</td>
<td>394,500</td>
<td>51.8</td>
<td>20.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South-West</td>
<td>410,500</td>
<td>874,800</td>
<td>464,300</td>
<td>113.1</td>
<td>15.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GWS</td>
<td>1,851,200</td>
<td>2,927,000</td>
<td>1,075,800</td>
<td>58.1</td>
<td>52.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SMR</td>
<td>3,977,200</td>
<td>5,557,400</td>
<td>1,580,200</td>
<td>39.7</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Department of Planning 2010 projections 2006 to 2036 based on the ABS estimated population count

NSW Department of Planning projections anticipated Western Sydney and West-Central catering for increasing proportions of Sydney’s population. Overall, an estimated 2,927,000 people were expected to be accommodated in Western Sydney by 2036 (a 58.1% population increase) representing over half (52.6%) of the metropolitan population, with West-Central targeted to increase its population by
Chapter 2: Socio-economic profile of West-Central

31.9% to accommodate 16.1% of Sydney’s population by 2036 (Table 2.6). Table 2.7 illustrates the impacts of the population targets within West-Central’s LGAs, with Auburn LGA’s population more than doubling from 2011 to 2036 alongside increased populations in the other four LGAs, resulting in an overall 26.3% population increase.

Table 2.7: Population projections West-Central LGAs 2011 to 2036

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Auburn</td>
<td>73,738</td>
<td>95,500</td>
<td>100,100</td>
<td>109,900</td>
<td>115,600</td>
<td>56.8</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bankstown</td>
<td>182,354</td>
<td>191,900</td>
<td>199,600</td>
<td>215,500</td>
<td>225,100</td>
<td>23.4</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fairfield</td>
<td>187,768</td>
<td>196,200</td>
<td>202,500</td>
<td>216,700</td>
<td>226,900</td>
<td>20.8</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Holroyd</td>
<td>99,163</td>
<td>112,900</td>
<td>116,900</td>
<td>123,700</td>
<td>127,600</td>
<td>28.7</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parramatta</td>
<td>166,856</td>
<td>176,500</td>
<td>183,100</td>
<td>194,700</td>
<td>201,400</td>
<td>20.7</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>West-Central</td>
<td>709,879</td>
<td>773,000</td>
<td>802,200</td>
<td>86,500</td>
<td>896,600</td>
<td>26.3</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: ABS Census 2011 and Department of Planning projections 2006 to 2036

Yet results of the 2011 census show four of the five West-Central LGAs falling well short of the 2010 projections, only offset by a slight 756 population increase in Parramatta (Table 2.8).

Table 2.8: 2011 population compared with 2010 projection

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>LGA/region</th>
<th>Projected population 2010</th>
<th>Census 2011</th>
<th>Difference</th>
<th>% difference</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Auburn</td>
<td>83,100</td>
<td>73,738</td>
<td>-9,362</td>
<td>-12.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bankstown</td>
<td>185,200</td>
<td>182,354</td>
<td>-2,846</td>
<td>-1.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fairfield</td>
<td>191,600</td>
<td>187,768</td>
<td>-3,832</td>
<td>-2.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Holroyd</td>
<td>104,400</td>
<td>99,163</td>
<td>-5,237</td>
<td>-5.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parramatta</td>
<td>166,100</td>
<td>166,856</td>
<td>+756</td>
<td>+0.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>West-Central</td>
<td>730,400</td>
<td>709,879</td>
<td>20,521</td>
<td>-2.8</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: NSW Planning, 2010 and ABS Census 2011

Population age. While West-Central’s population profile in 2011 was older and ageing more rapidly than in the other two sub-regions — 12.1% were aged 65 years
Chapter 2: A socio-economic profile of West-Central

...or older compared to 10.6% in the North-West and 10.1% in the South-West — it remained below the Sydney average (12.7%). Compared to the SMR average, West-Central contained higher proportions in each of the age groups up to 35 years of age (Table 2.9 and Figure 2.4).

Table 2.9: West-Central’s age structure 2006 and 2011

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age groups</th>
<th>Number</th>
<th>2006 %</th>
<th>SMR</th>
<th>Number</th>
<th>2011 %</th>
<th>SMR</th>
<th>Change 2006-2011</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>0 to 4</td>
<td>46,416</td>
<td>7.1</td>
<td>6.6</td>
<td>52,573</td>
<td>7.4</td>
<td>6.8</td>
<td>6,157</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 to 9</td>
<td>44,984</td>
<td>6.9</td>
<td>6.5</td>
<td>46,744</td>
<td>6.6</td>
<td>6.3</td>
<td>1,760</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10 to 14</td>
<td>45,168</td>
<td>6.9</td>
<td>6.5</td>
<td>45,299</td>
<td>6.4</td>
<td>6.1</td>
<td>131</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15 to 19</td>
<td>45,826</td>
<td>7.0</td>
<td>6.6</td>
<td>47,515</td>
<td>6.7</td>
<td>6.3</td>
<td>1,689</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20 to 24</td>
<td>49,940</td>
<td>7.6</td>
<td>7.2</td>
<td>52,502</td>
<td>7.4</td>
<td>7.0</td>
<td>2,562</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25 to 29</td>
<td>49,517</td>
<td>7.6</td>
<td>7.4</td>
<td>59,961</td>
<td>8.4</td>
<td>7.8</td>
<td>10,444</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30 to 34</td>
<td>49,473</td>
<td>7.6</td>
<td>7.9</td>
<td>55,710</td>
<td>7.8</td>
<td>7.7</td>
<td>6,237</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>35 to 39</td>
<td>47,733</td>
<td>7.3</td>
<td>7.7</td>
<td>50,890</td>
<td>7.2</td>
<td>7.6</td>
<td>3,157</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>40 to 44</td>
<td>47,885</td>
<td>7.3</td>
<td>7.6</td>
<td>47,934</td>
<td>6.8</td>
<td>7.3</td>
<td>49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>45 to 49</td>
<td>45,740</td>
<td>7.0</td>
<td>7.2</td>
<td>47,396</td>
<td>6.7</td>
<td>7.0</td>
<td>1,656</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>50 to 54</td>
<td>39,896</td>
<td>6.1</td>
<td>6.3</td>
<td>45,465</td>
<td>6.4</td>
<td>6.5</td>
<td>5,569</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>55 to 59</td>
<td>35,390</td>
<td>5.4</td>
<td>5.8</td>
<td>39,039</td>
<td>5.5</td>
<td>5.7</td>
<td>3,649</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>60 to 64</td>
<td>26,572</td>
<td>4.1</td>
<td>4.4</td>
<td>33,372</td>
<td>4.7</td>
<td>5.1</td>
<td>6,800</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>65 to 69</td>
<td>21,804</td>
<td>3.3</td>
<td>3.4</td>
<td>24,331</td>
<td>3.4</td>
<td>3.8</td>
<td>2,527</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>70 to 74</td>
<td>18,606</td>
<td>2.8</td>
<td>2.8</td>
<td>19,839</td>
<td>2.8</td>
<td>2.9</td>
<td>1,233</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>75 to 79</td>
<td>16,845</td>
<td>2.6</td>
<td>2.5</td>
<td>16,053</td>
<td>2.3</td>
<td>2.3</td>
<td>-792</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>80 to 84</td>
<td>12,665</td>
<td>1.9</td>
<td>2.0</td>
<td>13,379</td>
<td>1.9</td>
<td>1.9</td>
<td>714</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>85 &amp; over</td>
<td>8,967</td>
<td>1.4</td>
<td>1.6</td>
<td>11,877</td>
<td>1.7</td>
<td>1.8</td>
<td>2,910</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>709,879</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>56,452</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: ABS Census 2006 and 2011.

Figure 2.4: Five year age structure 2011

Characterised by an ageing demographic profile since 1991, 13.7% of Bankstown’s population in 2011 were aged 65 or over compared with only 8.6% in Auburn,
whereas the proportions of the aged in Fairfield, Holroyd and Parramatta LGAs were in line with the SMR average (12.7%). Conversely, Bankstown and Fairfield LGAs had lower proportions in the 25 to 44 age groups (both 26.9%) compared to 30.4% in the SMR. Parramatta’s population profile showed ageing, but this is occurring at a slower rate than the Sydney average, with Parramatta’s population increase in recent years dominated by growth in all the younger age groups from 0 to 34 years compared to the SMR. The demand for housing and jobs in West-Central Sydney is affected by a range of demographic, social and economic factors including the natural progression of certain age cohorts through the population profiles for the sub-region. Most notably, two age groups are likely to rise in prominence in the future: those in the 25 to 34 age groups (comprising a substantial proportion of first-time home buyers) and those aged over 50 (including relatively able-bodied retirees, empty-nesters and the frail aged).

Table 2.10: Average household size 2001 to 2011 (persons per dwelling)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Local government area</th>
<th>2001</th>
<th>2006</th>
<th>2011</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Auburn</td>
<td>3.13</td>
<td>3.03</td>
<td>3.08</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bankstown</td>
<td>2.96</td>
<td>2.93</td>
<td>3.02</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fairfield</td>
<td>3.27</td>
<td>3.18</td>
<td>3.23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Holroyd</td>
<td>2.76</td>
<td>2.74</td>
<td>2.84</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parramatta</td>
<td>2.70</td>
<td>2.67</td>
<td>2.74</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>West-Central Sydney</td>
<td>2.96</td>
<td>2.91</td>
<td>2.98</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>North-West Sydney</td>
<td>2.99</td>
<td>2.92</td>
<td>2.94</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South-West Sydney</td>
<td>3.09</td>
<td>3.02</td>
<td>2.94</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GWS</td>
<td>3.00</td>
<td>2.94</td>
<td>2.98</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SMR</td>
<td>2.71</td>
<td>2.65</td>
<td>2.69</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: ABS Census 2001, 2006 and 2011

**Occupancy rates.** Household size had been declining in Australia for decades (from 4.5 people per household in 1911 to 2.5 in 2006), although the latest Census showed this trend reversing with increasing occupancy rates in Sydney and across the nation; attributed *inter alia* to the impacts of the GFC on the building industry and high migrant intakes into the sub-region (.id consulting, 2012). Nowadays many older Australians reside in extended families, living with their children or their children’s family, other relatives or unrelated people. With high migrant concentrations, occupancy rates in West-Central remained much higher than the Sydney average (Table 2.10), with average household size increasing in each of West-Central’s LGAs from 2006 to 2011 because migrants tend to live in multi-generational households.

In 2011 West-Central’s average of 2.98 people per dwelling (ppd) was greater than in the other two Western Sydney sub-regions or the SMR average (2.69 ppd), with
Chapter 2: A socio-economic profile of West-Central

the largest average household occupancy rates located in the most ethnically diverse LGAs of Fairfield and Auburn (3.23 and 3.08 respectively).

Figure 2.5: Household size 2011

In any case, reductions in household size do not necessarily equate with an increased demand for smaller homes. There are many reasons why older people may wish to remain in their dwellings — security, familiarity, stability, freedom of expression, lifestyle choices and increasing living standards — explaining why home ownership is often preferred, while negative factors influencing staying put include relocation and transaction costs and taxes. Higher occupancy ratios can also result from group sharing of dwellings, due to housing shortages and/or low income households and students. West-Central’s higher average occupancy rates reflect the high proportions of households with children, plus family reunion policies bringing elderly people into the area adding to household size. Also, many overseas migrants and Indigenous persons traditionally live with extended family members and/or other families. Anecdotal evidence suggesting sharing of housing occurs increasingly in West-Central is borne out by 2011 census findings, with higher proportions of dwellings in the sub-region containing two or more families, than across Sydney. Chapters 5 and 6 discuss the important implications of these findings for current urban consolidation policies.
### Table 2.11: Household composition by LGA in West-Central in 2011

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>LGA</th>
<th>Auburn %</th>
<th>Bankstown %</th>
<th>Fairfield %</th>
<th>Holroyd %</th>
<th>Parramatta %</th>
<th>West Central %</th>
<th>SMR %</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Couple family no children</td>
<td>19.7</td>
<td>18.5</td>
<td>16.7</td>
<td>20.4</td>
<td>21.4</td>
<td>19.2</td>
<td>22.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Couple family with children</td>
<td>40.1</td>
<td>40.6</td>
<td>43.4</td>
<td>38.1</td>
<td>35.2</td>
<td>39.5</td>
<td>34.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>One parent family</td>
<td>11.2</td>
<td>14.3</td>
<td>17.7</td>
<td>12.7</td>
<td>10.6</td>
<td>13.7</td>
<td>10.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other family</td>
<td>2.3</td>
<td>1.4</td>
<td>1.8</td>
<td>1.7</td>
<td>1.6</td>
<td>1.7</td>
<td>1.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total families</strong></td>
<td><strong>73.3</strong></td>
<td><strong>74.8</strong></td>
<td><strong>79.6</strong></td>
<td><strong>72.9</strong></td>
<td><strong>68.8</strong></td>
<td><strong>74.1</strong></td>
<td><strong>69.6</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lone person household</td>
<td>16.0</td>
<td>19.2</td>
<td>15.1</td>
<td>20.0</td>
<td>22.0</td>
<td>18.7</td>
<td>21.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Group households</td>
<td>4.8</td>
<td>1.9</td>
<td>2.0</td>
<td>2.6</td>
<td>4.0</td>
<td>2.8</td>
<td>4.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other not classified</td>
<td>4.8</td>
<td>3.6</td>
<td>2.7</td>
<td>4.1</td>
<td>4.2</td>
<td>3.7</td>
<td>4.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Visitor only households</td>
<td>1.0</td>
<td>0.5</td>
<td>0.5</td>
<td>0.5</td>
<td>0.9</td>
<td>0.7</td>
<td>0.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total households</strong></td>
<td><strong>23,451</strong></td>
<td><strong>59,683</strong></td>
<td><strong>57,664</strong></td>
<td><strong>34,613</strong></td>
<td><strong>59,774</strong></td>
<td><strong>235,185</strong></td>
<td><strong>1,521,398</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: ABS Census 2006
**Household formation.** The household and family structure of the population provides an important indicator of West-Central’s residential role and function relating to the types of housing markets attracted to the area. Each of West-Central’s five LGAs continues to accommodate high proportions of families with children. Table 2.11 shows West-Central contained higher proportions of couple families with children (39.5%) and one-parent families (13.7%) than the SMR (34.8% and 10.8% respectively) in 2011.

**Household type and dwelling form.** Randolph, Easthope and Tice (2009) demonstrated the important relationship between household type and dwelling form. Census data for West-Central in 2006 (Table 2.12) showed 24.0% of flats occupied by couple families with children and 12.4% by single parent families compared to 14.7% and 8.7% respectively in the SMR. A further 20.4% of flats were occupied by childless couples, 34.2% contained lone persons and 6.5% were group households. Conversely, 46.9% of separate dwellings were occupied by couple families with children and 14.0% by single parent families compared to 46.6% and 11.9% across Sydney. Particularly high proportions of the dwelling stock in Fairfield (77.1%) and Bankstown (72.7%) comprised separate dwellings. In Fairfield and Auburn LGAs over half of the separate houses and more than two thirds of the semi-detached or terraced housing contained couple families with children. This differentiation between dwelling types by household types clearly dramatically affects the demographics of suburbia.

When a disproportionate type or tenure of dwellings is provided in an area, households who can exercise choice leave to find more suitable accommodation; further distorting the demographic mix. Maintaining a significant proportion of separate houses is therefore important for attracting and retaining families with children. Apartments tend to accommodate higher proportions of lone person households, while terraces, semi-detached and townhouses (comprising a much smaller proportion of Sydney’s and West-Central’s dwelling stock) are more neutral (ibid).
### Chapter 2: A socio-economic profile of West-Central

Table 2.12: Dwellings by household composition in 2006 (excludes 'other and 'not stated')

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Dwelling and household composition</th>
<th>Auburn</th>
<th>Bankstown</th>
<th>Fairfield</th>
<th>Holroyd</th>
<th>Parramatta</th>
<th>West Central Sydney</th>
<th>SMR</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Separate House</strong></td>
<td>56.0</td>
<td>72.7</td>
<td>77.1</td>
<td>65.0</td>
<td>57.5</td>
<td>67.5</td>
<td>63.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Couple family no children</td>
<td>17.2</td>
<td>21.5</td>
<td>17.7</td>
<td>23.2</td>
<td>22.0</td>
<td>20.3</td>
<td>23.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Couple family with children</td>
<td>50.2</td>
<td>45.3</td>
<td>50.3</td>
<td>43.8</td>
<td>45.0</td>
<td>46.9</td>
<td>46.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>One parent family</td>
<td>12.7</td>
<td>13.5</td>
<td>16.3</td>
<td>13.1</td>
<td>12.6</td>
<td>14.0</td>
<td>11.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other family</td>
<td>1.9</td>
<td>1.3</td>
<td>1.6</td>
<td>1.4</td>
<td>1.4</td>
<td>1.5</td>
<td>1.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total families</strong></td>
<td><strong>81.9</strong></td>
<td><strong>81.7</strong></td>
<td><strong>85.9</strong></td>
<td><strong>81.6</strong></td>
<td><strong>81.0</strong></td>
<td><strong>82.8</strong></td>
<td><strong>82.9</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lone person household</td>
<td>15.4</td>
<td>16.6</td>
<td>12.4</td>
<td>16.4</td>
<td>16.5</td>
<td>15.3</td>
<td>14.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Group households</td>
<td>2.7</td>
<td>1.7</td>
<td>1.6</td>
<td>2.0</td>
<td>2.4</td>
<td>1.9</td>
<td>2.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Semi/ Row/Terrace</strong></td>
<td><strong>10.3</strong></td>
<td><strong>14.1</strong></td>
<td><strong>10.6</strong></td>
<td><strong>11.0</strong></td>
<td><strong>12.5</strong></td>
<td><strong>12.0</strong></td>
<td><strong>11.8</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Couple family no children</td>
<td>19.0</td>
<td>18.4</td>
<td>14.5</td>
<td>18.6</td>
<td>20.2</td>
<td>18.1</td>
<td>23.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Couple family with children</td>
<td>44.2</td>
<td>36.7</td>
<td>38.4</td>
<td>29.5</td>
<td>32.8</td>
<td>35.7</td>
<td>26.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>One parent family</td>
<td>14.0</td>
<td>15.4</td>
<td>24.4</td>
<td>12.8</td>
<td>13.2</td>
<td>16.4</td>
<td>13.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other family</td>
<td>1.6</td>
<td>1.5</td>
<td>2.3</td>
<td>1.6</td>
<td>1.5</td>
<td>1.7</td>
<td>1.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total families</strong></td>
<td><strong>78.8</strong></td>
<td><strong>72.0</strong></td>
<td><strong>79.7</strong></td>
<td><strong>62.5</strong></td>
<td><strong>67.8</strong></td>
<td><strong>72.0</strong></td>
<td><strong>65.9</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lone person household</td>
<td>17.5</td>
<td>25.7</td>
<td>18.2</td>
<td>34.6</td>
<td>28.7</td>
<td>63.6</td>
<td>28.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Group households</td>
<td>3.7</td>
<td>2.3</td>
<td>2.2</td>
<td>2.9</td>
<td>3.5</td>
<td>2.8</td>
<td>5.6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Table 2.12: continued

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Dwelling and household composition</th>
<th>Auburn</th>
<th>Bankstown</th>
<th>Fairfield</th>
<th>Holroyd</th>
<th>Parramatta</th>
<th>West Central Sydney</th>
<th>SMR</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Flat/ Unit/ Apartment</td>
<td>32.4</td>
<td>12.7</td>
<td>12.0</td>
<td>23.6</td>
<td>29.4</td>
<td>20.0</td>
<td>23.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Couple family no children</td>
<td>22.3</td>
<td>16.9</td>
<td>16.7</td>
<td>19.6</td>
<td>23.2</td>
<td>20.4</td>
<td>24.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Couple family with children</td>
<td>30.7</td>
<td>27.3</td>
<td>25.6</td>
<td>24.4</td>
<td>18.8</td>
<td>24.0</td>
<td>14.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>One parent family</td>
<td>11.4</td>
<td>14.2</td>
<td>19.0</td>
<td>13.5</td>
<td>8.7</td>
<td>12.4</td>
<td>8.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other family</td>
<td>2.9</td>
<td>1.5</td>
<td>2.7</td>
<td>2.6</td>
<td>2.8</td>
<td>2.5</td>
<td>2.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total families</strong></td>
<td><strong>67.4</strong></td>
<td><strong>59.9</strong></td>
<td><strong>64.0</strong></td>
<td><strong>60.1</strong></td>
<td><strong>53.5</strong></td>
<td><strong>59.4</strong></td>
<td><strong>49.7</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lone person household</td>
<td>23.5</td>
<td>36.7</td>
<td>31.8</td>
<td>34.2</td>
<td>38.4</td>
<td>34.2</td>
<td>41.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Group households</td>
<td>9.1</td>
<td>3.5</td>
<td>4.2</td>
<td>5.7</td>
<td>8.1</td>
<td>6.5</td>
<td>8.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total households</strong></td>
<td><strong>100.0</strong></td>
<td><strong>100.0</strong></td>
<td><strong>100.0</strong></td>
<td><strong>100.0</strong></td>
<td><strong>100.0</strong></td>
<td><strong>100.0</strong></td>
<td><strong>100.0</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Randolph, Easthope and Tice, 2009 derived from ABS Census 2006
Housing tenure. Analysis of housing tenure in West-Central in 2011 compared with the SMR (Table 2.13) shows slightly smaller proportions of outright home ownership, fewer purchasers and a larger proportion of renters. The largest tenure changes between 2006 and 2011 were increases of households with a mortgage and renting (both private and social housing) and a decrease in the proportion fully-owned. There was also little difference in the proportions renting (both public and private) over that period. Hence limited change occurred in the proportions of people owning/buying compared to renting over the past decade, with a similar trend reflected in West-Central and the more recent 2011 results.

Table 2.13: Tenure types 2001 to 2011

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Tenure Type</th>
<th>West-Central</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th>SMR</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2001 %</td>
<td>2006 %</td>
<td>2011 %</td>
<td>2001 %</td>
<td>2006 %</td>
<td>2011 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Owned outright</td>
<td>41.5</td>
<td>30.6</td>
<td>28.6</td>
<td>39.0</td>
<td>30.1</td>
<td>29.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Being purchased</td>
<td>19.9</td>
<td>28.5</td>
<td>31.2</td>
<td>23.7</td>
<td>31.1</td>
<td>33.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total owned/being purchased</td>
<td>61.4</td>
<td>59.1</td>
<td>59.8</td>
<td>62.7</td>
<td>61.2</td>
<td>62.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rented (govt.)</td>
<td>8.3</td>
<td>7.5</td>
<td>8.1</td>
<td>5.1</td>
<td>4.5</td>
<td>5.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rented (private and not stated)</td>
<td>22.2</td>
<td>24.5</td>
<td>24.0</td>
<td>23.9</td>
<td>25.2</td>
<td>25.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total rented</td>
<td>30.5</td>
<td>32.0</td>
<td>32.6</td>
<td>29.0</td>
<td>32.7</td>
<td>30.5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: ABS Census 2001, 2006 and 2011

The increasing socio-economic divide is shown by higher proportions renting social housing in West-Central (8.1%) compared with the SMR (5.0%) in 2011 and a growing gap between those owning/purchasing (59.8%) compared to the Sydney average (62.3%). Table 2.14 shows a higher proportion of Bankstown’s owner/purchaser households (64.6%) and lower proportion of renters (27.9%) which may reflect the LGAs ageing population profile discussed above. Bankstown also had the highest proportion (9.7%) of public housing tenants (an effect of the Villawood Immigration/Detention centre), followed by Parramatta (8.7%). Conversely, while Auburn only contained 4.7% of public housing, the proportion of private rental (32.5%) exceeded the Sydney average (25.0%) and Parramatta LGA had the sub-region’s highest proportion of rental overall (37.7%) compared to the 30.5% metropolitan average.
Table 2.14: Tenure types by LGA 2011

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Tenure Type</th>
<th>Auburn %</th>
<th>Bankstown %</th>
<th>Fairfield %</th>
<th>Holroyd %</th>
<th>Parramatta %</th>
<th>West Central %</th>
<th>SMR %</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Fully Owned</td>
<td>23.6</td>
<td>32.7</td>
<td>31.6</td>
<td>27.7</td>
<td>23.9</td>
<td>28.6</td>
<td>29.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mortgaged</td>
<td>30.5</td>
<td>31.9</td>
<td>31.4</td>
<td>31.3</td>
<td>30.4</td>
<td>31.2</td>
<td>33.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total owning/purchasing</strong></td>
<td><strong>54.1</strong></td>
<td><strong>64.6</strong></td>
<td><strong>63.0</strong></td>
<td><strong>59.0</strong></td>
<td><strong>54.3</strong></td>
<td><strong>59.8</strong></td>
<td><strong>62.3</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>State Housing Authority</td>
<td>4.1</td>
<td>9.7</td>
<td>8.0</td>
<td>7.2</td>
<td>8.7</td>
<td>8.1</td>
<td>5.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Renting Private</td>
<td>32.5</td>
<td>17.7</td>
<td>21.5</td>
<td>25.7</td>
<td>28.5</td>
<td>24.0</td>
<td>25.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Renting not stated</td>
<td>0.6</td>
<td>0.5</td>
<td>0.6</td>
<td>0.5</td>
<td>0.5</td>
<td>0.5</td>
<td>0.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total renting</strong></td>
<td><strong>37.2</strong></td>
<td><strong>27.9</strong></td>
<td><strong>30.1</strong></td>
<td><strong>33.4</strong></td>
<td><strong>37.7</strong></td>
<td><strong>32.6</strong></td>
<td><strong>30.5</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other/ not stated</td>
<td>8.8</td>
<td>7.4</td>
<td>6.9</td>
<td>7.5</td>
<td>8.0</td>
<td><strong>7.6</strong></td>
<td>7.3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: ABS Census 2011

**Dwelling type.** Table 2.15 points to significant variations in dwelling types between the three sub-regions and the metropolitan average. From 2006 to 2011 the proportions of medium and high density dwellings increased and the proportions of separate dwellings decreased slightly and, while detached dwellings remained the dominant form of housing in West-Central (62.1%), the proportion of both medium and high density housing (37.4%) was much higher than in the North-West (15.9%) and South-West (21.3%). This reflects the sub-region’s role in providing higher density development in the established centres; while the urban fringe overwhelmingly continues to cater for families with children — further demonstrating how market-driven housing policies are reinforcing Sydney’s demographic divide.
Table 2.15: Dwelling types 2006 and 2011

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Dwelling type</th>
<th>North-West Sydney (%)</th>
<th>West-Central Sydney (%)</th>
<th>South-West Sydney (%)</th>
<th>SMR (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>2006</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Separate houses</td>
<td>80.2</td>
<td>62.5</td>
<td>78.2</td>
<td>63.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Medium density</td>
<td>10.4</td>
<td>18.1</td>
<td>12.7</td>
<td>11.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High density</td>
<td>2.3</td>
<td>13.1</td>
<td>3.6</td>
<td>23.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other and not stated</td>
<td>0.7</td>
<td>0.6</td>
<td>0.4</td>
<td>0.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total occupied private dwellings</strong></td>
<td><strong>248,532</strong></td>
<td><strong>221,136</strong></td>
<td><strong>129,684</strong></td>
<td><strong>1,423,529</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>2011</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Separate houses</td>
<td>83.6</td>
<td>62.1</td>
<td>78.2</td>
<td>60.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Medium density</td>
<td>12.7</td>
<td>22.0</td>
<td>16.3</td>
<td>12.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High density</td>
<td>3.2</td>
<td>15.4</td>
<td>5.0</td>
<td>25.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other and not stated</td>
<td>0.6</td>
<td>0.4</td>
<td>0.5</td>
<td>0.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total occupied private dwellings</strong></td>
<td><strong>263,526</strong></td>
<td><strong>235,185</strong></td>
<td><strong>139,328</strong></td>
<td><strong>1,521,398</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dwelling increase 2006 to 2011</td>
<td>14,994</td>
<td>14,049</td>
<td>9,644</td>
<td>97,869</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: ABS Census 2011

Figure 2.6 illustrates the impacts of urban consolidation in West-Central’s centres in Fairfield and Parramatta in recent years.

**Figure 2.6: Apartments concentrated in West-Central’s centres**

![Photographs by the author 2010](image1)

**Employment status.** Table 2.16 shows that in 2011 West-Central’s labour force (308,453 persons) contained smaller proportions employed full-time (60.5%) and part-time (28.5%) than the SMR (with 62.0% and 30.1% respectively).

While the region’s average 3.0% annual jobs growth was marginally higher than in the SMR (2.9%), the unemployment rates in 2011 in Western Sydney (6.6%) and West-Central (8.0%) still exceeded the Sydney average (5.7%). While
unemployment rates dropped marginally in West-Central from 2006 to 2011, the rates remained particularly high in Fairfield (9.7%) and Auburn (8.6%) LGAs and, while Parramatta’s rate (7.0%) was the lowest in the sub-region, it exceeded the metropolitan average (5.7%). Unemployment rates dropped in Auburn and Fairfield from 2006 to 2011 but rose in Bankstown, Holroyd and Parramatta, contributing to 1,922 more persons unemployed in West-Central than in 2006.

Table 2.16: Unemployment rates in West-Central 2006 and 2011

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>LGA</th>
<th>Males 2006 %</th>
<th>Females 2006 %</th>
<th>Persons 2006 %</th>
<th>Persons 2011 %</th>
<th>Unemployed in 2006</th>
<th>Unemployed in 2011</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Auburn</td>
<td>9.2</td>
<td>9.0</td>
<td>9.1</td>
<td>8.6</td>
<td>2,318</td>
<td>2,723</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bankstown</td>
<td>7.6</td>
<td>7.1</td>
<td>7.4</td>
<td>7.6</td>
<td>5,240</td>
<td>5,742</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fairfield</td>
<td>10.0</td>
<td>11.2</td>
<td>10.5</td>
<td>9.7</td>
<td>7,725</td>
<td>7,344</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Holroyd</td>
<td>6.9</td>
<td>6.9</td>
<td>6.9</td>
<td>7.2</td>
<td>2,830</td>
<td>3,284</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parramatta</td>
<td>6.7</td>
<td>6.6</td>
<td>6.7</td>
<td>7.0</td>
<td>4,601</td>
<td>5,543</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>W-C Sydney</td>
<td>8.1</td>
<td>8.1</td>
<td>8.1</td>
<td>8.0</td>
<td>22,714</td>
<td>24,636</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GWS</td>
<td>6.3</td>
<td>6.6</td>
<td>6.5</td>
<td>6.6</td>
<td>54,012</td>
<td>60,103</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SMR</td>
<td>5.3</td>
<td>5.3</td>
<td>5.3</td>
<td>5.7</td>
<td>106,490</td>
<td>125,586</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: ABS Census 2006 and 2011

Table 2.17: Fairfield’s unemployment status 1996 to 2011

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Suburb, LGA and region</th>
<th>Unemployed in 1996 %</th>
<th>Unemployed in 2006 %</th>
<th>Unemployed in 2011 %</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Abbotsbury</td>
<td>5.9</td>
<td>3.7</td>
<td>2.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cabramatta</td>
<td>29.6</td>
<td>15.7</td>
<td>16.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fairfield (suburb)</td>
<td>21.7</td>
<td>15.6</td>
<td>14.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Villawood</td>
<td>19.9</td>
<td>11.2</td>
<td>14.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fairfield LGA</td>
<td>16.3</td>
<td>10.5</td>
<td>9.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>West-Central</td>
<td>11.4</td>
<td>8.1</td>
<td>8.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Western Sydney</td>
<td>9.0</td>
<td>6.5</td>
<td>6.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SMR</td>
<td>7.5</td>
<td>5.3</td>
<td>5.7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 2.17 demonstrates stark variations remaining in unemployment rates between some of Fairfield LGA’s older and newer suburbs. In 1996 Cabramatta’s unemployment rate (29.6%) was over two and a half times the West-Central average (11.4%) while the recently developed Abbotsbury suburb’s rate (5.9%) was below the SMR average (7.5%). Despite improving in 2011, unemployment rates remained much higher in Cabramatta, Villawood and Fairfield, while Abbotsbury maintained a consistently low unemployment level.

**Participation rates** (i.e. the proportion of people of working age employed or actively seeking work across the sub-region) are also of concern; trending downwards at each Census from 1991 to 2006 and only recovering slightly between 2006 and 2011 (Table 2.18). Employment participation in West-Central dropped to 54.1% in 2006, compared with 60.4% in Western Sydney and 60.7% in the SMR. Auburn maintained a history of very low employment participation rates (49.6%) in 2006 but improved to 53.4% by 2011.

**Table 2.18: Labour force participation rates by LGA 1991 to 2011**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>LGA</th>
<th>1991 %</th>
<th>1996 %</th>
<th>2001 %</th>
<th>2006 %</th>
<th>2011 %</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Auburn</td>
<td>55.2</td>
<td>51.4</td>
<td>49.1</td>
<td>49.6</td>
<td>53.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bankstown</td>
<td>58.2</td>
<td>55.4</td>
<td>54.3</td>
<td>53.2</td>
<td>52.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fairfield</td>
<td>61.2</td>
<td>55.1</td>
<td>52.9</td>
<td>51.9</td>
<td>50.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Holroyd</td>
<td>61.7</td>
<td>59.6</td>
<td>58.9</td>
<td>57.6</td>
<td>58.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parramatta</td>
<td>60.7</td>
<td>58.7</td>
<td>57.9</td>
<td>57.4</td>
<td>58.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>W-C Sydney</strong></td>
<td><strong>59.9</strong></td>
<td><strong>56.4</strong></td>
<td><strong>55.0</strong></td>
<td><strong>54.1</strong></td>
<td><strong>54.6</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N-W Sydney</td>
<td>65.9</td>
<td>65.4</td>
<td>65.4</td>
<td>65.1</td>
<td>64.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>S-W Sydney</td>
<td>64.7</td>
<td>63.6</td>
<td>63.1</td>
<td>62.4</td>
<td>60.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>GWS</strong></td>
<td><strong>63.3</strong></td>
<td><strong>61.4</strong></td>
<td><strong>60.9</strong></td>
<td><strong>60.4</strong></td>
<td><strong>60.3</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>SMR</strong></td>
<td><strong>62.6</strong></td>
<td><strong>61.5</strong></td>
<td><strong>61.4</strong></td>
<td><strong>60.7</strong></td>
<td><strong>61.7</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: ABS Census 1991 to 2011

While three of West-Central’s LGAs improved participation rates slightly over the past five years, Bankstown and Fairfield’s rates continued dropping — reflecting a combination of older men (retrenched from manufacturing and low-skilled labouring occupations) leaving the workforce and lower participation rates for women in some culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) groups.
Chapter 2: A socio-economic profile of West-Central

**English proficiency.** A Senate Committee report on poverty and hardship highlighted particular issues for migrants and refugees in Western Sydney, requiring intensive programs to assist people facing additional barriers to employment (Australian Government, 2004).

A culturally and linguistically diverse population and high proportions of people with poor English proficiency are indicators of the sub-region’s disadvantage. 2011 Census results revealed increasing diversity across Sydney and Figure 2.7 demonstrates the marked differences in English proficiency between West-Central and the metropolitan average.

**Figure 2.7: English proficiency 2011**

![Graph showing English proficiency in West-Central and Greater Sydney](image)

With 42.7% of West-Central’s residents originating from a non-English speaking background in 2011 compared to 39.5% in 2006 (Table 2.2), some 13.4% of those aged five or more years experienced difficulty in speaking English (Table 2.19) — a much higher proportion than in the North-West (3.9%) and the South-West (5.00) or the Sydney average (5.8%). These variations are significant for a sub-region continuing to attract high proportions of immigrants lacking English proficiency. In 2011 in Fairfield LGA more than a fifth (20.4%) of the population lacked English skills, followed by Auburn (18.7%) and the language divide was increasing. In 2011 39.8% of incoming residents to West-Central lacked English proficiency, compared to 29.6% in the North-West and 30.7% in Sydney overall (ABS, 2011). Family migration and humanitarian (i.e. non-skills based migration categories), rising unemployment and the early 1990s recession all contributed.
Yet many of these factors reducing employment participation in West-Central remain ongoing and ignored.

**Table 2.19: English proficiency 2011**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>LGA/Sub-region</th>
<th>Speaks English only %</th>
<th>Speaks English not well/at all %</th>
<th>Speaks another language + English well %</th>
<th>Not stated %</th>
<th>Change in total not speaking English well 2006-2011</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Auburn</td>
<td>20.5</td>
<td>18.7</td>
<td>52.0</td>
<td>8.8</td>
<td>1,992</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bankstown</td>
<td>39.7</td>
<td>11.0</td>
<td>43.6</td>
<td>5.8</td>
<td>1,984</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fairfield</td>
<td>25.9</td>
<td>20.4</td>
<td>49.2</td>
<td>4.6</td>
<td>2,253</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Holroyd</td>
<td>43.2</td>
<td>8.1</td>
<td>42.7</td>
<td>6.0</td>
<td>1,154</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parramatta</td>
<td>43.4</td>
<td>9.0</td>
<td>41.1</td>
<td>6.5</td>
<td>2,670</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>W-C Sydney</td>
<td>35.4</td>
<td>13.4</td>
<td>45.2</td>
<td>6.0</td>
<td>10,053</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N-W Sydney</td>
<td>71.5</td>
<td>3.0</td>
<td>21.5</td>
<td>4.0</td>
<td>4,171</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>S-W Sydney</td>
<td>63.4</td>
<td>5.0</td>
<td>26.4</td>
<td>5.1</td>
<td>1,975</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GWS</td>
<td>56.4</td>
<td>7.3</td>
<td>31.4</td>
<td>4.9</td>
<td>16,500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SMR</td>
<td>62.2</td>
<td>5.8</td>
<td>26.7</td>
<td>5.4</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: ABS Census 2011

**Occupations.** Analysis of West-Central’s resident population in less skilled occupations in 2011 shows clerical and administrative workers, technicians, trade workers and labourers, machinery operators and drivers, collectively comprised over a third (34.6%) of occupations, compared with a quarter (25.2%) in the SMR, the major difference being a smaller proportion of professionals (19.3% compared with 25.5%). Importantly, these low skilled occupations are not experiencing jobs growth and reflect the skills base and socio-economic status of the sub-region's residents, plus the industries and employment opportunities present in West-Central.

**Industry sector of employment.** The West-Central employment profile demonstrated more residents working in manufacturing than in any other industry — 12.3% in 2011— compared to the 8.5% in the SMR (Table 2.20). Slightly higher proportions were employed in retail (10.8%) compared to 9.8% overall in Sydney, but proportions in BFBS and health care and social assistance were both lower (5.7% and 10.3% compared with 6.6% and 10.9% in the SMR respectively). Table 2.20 illustrates the ongoing declining trend in the proportion of manufacturing jobs across the sub-region and the SMR. While more residents were employed in manufacturing in four of the West-Central LGAs, Parramatta (9.2%) remained the exception, with higher proportions in health care (11.9%) and retail (10.1%); aided by significant state government interventions since 1996 to develop Parramatta as Sydney’s second CBD. In 2011 Fairfield retained
a high proportion of manufacturing employment, representing 17.8% of total employment, exacerbating concerns due to manufacturing's limited ongoing growth prospects.

Table 2.20: Manufacturing sector employment 2006 and 2011

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>LGA/Sub-region</th>
<th>2006</th>
<th>2011</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Auburn</td>
<td>13.8</td>
<td>11.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bankstown</td>
<td>13.5</td>
<td>11.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fairfield</td>
<td>20.2</td>
<td>17.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Holroyd</td>
<td>12.5</td>
<td>11.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parramatta</td>
<td>10.7</td>
<td>9.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>W-Central Sydney</strong></td>
<td><strong>14.4</strong></td>
<td><strong>12.3</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N-West Sydney</td>
<td>12.0</td>
<td>10.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>S-West Sydney</td>
<td>14.9</td>
<td>13.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GWS</td>
<td>13.4</td>
<td>11.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SMR</td>
<td>9.7</td>
<td>8.5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: ABS Census 2006 and 2011

*Incomes.* The low income nature of West-Central’s population in 2011 — the lowest of all Sydney's sub-regions — is demonstrated in Figure 2.8 and Table 2.21, which show higher proportions (22.8%) of households earning low incomes compared with 18.3% across the SMR and much smaller proportions (14.4%) on high incomes compared to the metropolitan average (23.6%). For the purposes of this research, the ABS definitions of the *lowest income quartile* for average weekly household incomes in 2006 as $0 to $530 and $0 to $614 in 2011, with the *highest income income quartile* as $1,789 and above per week in 2006 and $2,273 or more in 2011, are adopted.

Figure 2.8: Weekly household income 2011

[Bar chart showing weekly household income distribution for West-Central and Greater Sydney in 2011.]

Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics, Census of Population and Housing, 2011 (Enumerated data). Compiled and presented in profile.id by id, the population experts.
Table 2.21 Household weekly incomes 2006 and 2011

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>LGA</th>
<th>2006</th>
<th>2011</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>&lt;$530 per week %</td>
<td>&gt;$1,789 per week %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Auburn</td>
<td>22.0</td>
<td>18.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bankstown</td>
<td>23.3</td>
<td>19.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fairfield</td>
<td>23.7</td>
<td>16.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Holroyd</td>
<td>20.4</td>
<td>20.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parramatta</td>
<td>19.7</td>
<td>23.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>West-Central</td>
<td>21.9</td>
<td>19.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GWS</td>
<td>17.7</td>
<td>24.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SMR</td>
<td>16.8</td>
<td>29.5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: ABS Census 2006 and 2011

The income divide continues to be of concern. In 2006 the average weekly household income in Sydney’s richest council area — Ku-ring-gai — was 2.8 times that of the poorest — Fairfield — compared to 2.6 times in 2001 (Randolph, Pinnegar and Tice, 2007). By 2011 almost a quarter of Fairfield’s lowest income quartile households earned less than $614 per week, with only 10.9% having weekly earnings of $2,273 or more. Mosman LGA had Sydney’s highest median weekly household income area (with $2,832 per week on average) while Fairfield remained the lowest (at a weekly average of $1,065).

**Tertiary education.** West-Central’s participation in tertiary education continues to perform below the Sydney average, with lower levels of qualifications and fewer training opportunities for higher-order employment. In 2011 only 17.0% of residents held a Bachelor or higher degree compared with 24.1% across Sydney; with trends over time indicating the sub-region is falling further behind in the overall proportion attending higher education. While from 2006 to 2011 the proportion of university students from West-Central increased slightly to 4.6% compared to 5.2% in the SMR, TAFE proportions declined to 2.8%; adding to concerns that the ageing workforce and falls in apprenticeships were leading to trade skills shortages in Western Sydney. Bankstown had the lowest proportion of people undertaking tertiary education, behind Fairfield and Holroyd, with all three LGAs below the West-Central (7.3%) average. However both Auburn (9.3%) and Parramatta (8.3%) exceeded the Sydney average (7.6%); probably reflecting the increase in young, two-person households and more accessible public transport provision in these two LGAs. These figures
further illustrate the increasing socio-economic polarisation occurring across West-Central.

The University of Western Sydney (UWS) — the key tertiary education provider in the region — with over 39,000 students and 3,000 staff distributed across six campuses — is forecast to expand to 53,000 students and 4,000 staff by 2020 (UWS, 2010). Continuing population growth, current educational disadvantage and impediments to providing tertiary education over such a large, dispersed area, are straining UWS resources. An OECD report suggests a university degree increases higher-order employment opportunities and an ability to retain jobs in a downturn (ibid). Universities are large trip generators, operating throughout the day, evenings and weekends. However accessing UWS campuses, separated from commercial centres and often involving several travel modes and increasing travel times, leads to perceptions of poorer opportunities than found in inner Sydney university equivalents. Furthermore, higher proportions of UWS students participate in paid employment to support their studies, increasing the number of trips required between home, work and the various campuses and their vulnerability to long-term transport costs (Major Cities Unit/Infrastructure Australia, 2010).

**Urban transport issues.** A vicious circle perpetuated by the lack of mass transit services, delays on the arterial road system and increasing diversity of origins and destinations difficult to service by regular public transport, all contribute to West-Central’s high car dependence (Figure 2.9 and Table 2.22).

**Figure 2.9: Travel to work mode 2011**
Table 2.22 Travel to work mode by sub-region 2011

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Method of Travel</th>
<th>W-C-Sydney %</th>
<th>N-W Sydney %</th>
<th>S-W Sydney %</th>
<th>GWS %</th>
<th>SMR %</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Car as driver</td>
<td>57.8</td>
<td>62.8</td>
<td>64.2</td>
<td>61.4</td>
<td>53.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Car passenger</td>
<td>5.7</td>
<td>5.1</td>
<td>5.6</td>
<td>5.4</td>
<td>4.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total private car</td>
<td>63.5</td>
<td>67.9</td>
<td>69.8</td>
<td>66.8</td>
<td>58.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bicycle</td>
<td>0.3</td>
<td>0.3</td>
<td>0.4</td>
<td>0.3</td>
<td>0.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Motorbike</td>
<td>0.3</td>
<td>0.5</td>
<td>0.4</td>
<td>0.4</td>
<td>0.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other mode</td>
<td>0.9</td>
<td>0.8</td>
<td>0.9</td>
<td>0.8</td>
<td>1.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Taxi</td>
<td>0.2</td>
<td>0.1</td>
<td>0.2</td>
<td>0.2</td>
<td>0.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tram or ferry</td>
<td>0.1</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>0.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bus</td>
<td>2.5</td>
<td>3.3</td>
<td>1.3</td>
<td>2.6</td>
<td>5.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Train</td>
<td>16.9</td>
<td>9.9</td>
<td>10.4</td>
<td>12.5</td>
<td>13.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All public transport</td>
<td>19.5</td>
<td>13.2</td>
<td>11.7</td>
<td>15.1</td>
<td>20.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Truck</td>
<td>1.4</td>
<td>1.5</td>
<td>1.7</td>
<td>1.5</td>
<td>1.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Walked only</td>
<td>2.5</td>
<td>1.6</td>
<td>2.0</td>
<td>1.9</td>
<td>4.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Worked at home</td>
<td>2.2</td>
<td>3.7</td>
<td>2.6</td>
<td>3.0</td>
<td>4.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Did not go to work</td>
<td>7.1</td>
<td>8.9</td>
<td>8.5</td>
<td>8.2</td>
<td>8.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not stated</td>
<td>2.1</td>
<td>1.5</td>
<td>1.0</td>
<td>1.8</td>
<td>1.5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: ABS Census 2011

Table 2.23: Travel to work mode by LGA 2011

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Method of Travel</th>
<th>Auburn %</th>
<th>Bankstown %</th>
<th>Fairfield %</th>
<th>Holroyd %</th>
<th>Parramatta %</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Car as driver</td>
<td>50.8</td>
<td>61.2</td>
<td>63.1</td>
<td>57.6</td>
<td>52.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Car passenger</td>
<td>5.4</td>
<td>5.3</td>
<td>7.4</td>
<td>5.5</td>
<td>4.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total private car</td>
<td>56.2</td>
<td>66.5</td>
<td>70.5</td>
<td>63.1</td>
<td>57.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bus</td>
<td>1.1</td>
<td>1.5</td>
<td>1.9</td>
<td>2.8</td>
<td>4.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Train</td>
<td>26.7</td>
<td>14.9</td>
<td>11.7</td>
<td>17.7</td>
<td>19.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Train +bus</td>
<td>27.8</td>
<td>16.4</td>
<td>13.6</td>
<td>20.5</td>
<td>24.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Walked only</td>
<td>3.0</td>
<td>1.8</td>
<td>1.7</td>
<td>2.1</td>
<td>4.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Worked at home</td>
<td>1.9</td>
<td>2.2</td>
<td>2.0</td>
<td>2.0</td>
<td>2.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Did not go to work</td>
<td>6.0</td>
<td>7.7</td>
<td>6.2</td>
<td>7.4</td>
<td>7.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not stated</td>
<td>2.2</td>
<td>2.2</td>
<td>2.6</td>
<td>1.7</td>
<td>1.6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: ABS Census 2011

From 2006 to 2011 car ownership levels increased across the sub-region and the SMR. Although Auburn had the least car use (56.2%) and the highest use of
Chapter 2: A socio-economic profile of West-Central

trains (26.7%), bus patronage remained particularly low in both Auburn (1.1%) and Bankstown (1.5%). In 2011 the proportion of West-Central’s households containing no motor vehicle decreased to 12.1% and households with access to two or more vehicles increased to 43.5% (Table 2.24). Fairfield LGA’s long history of high car dependency resulting from poor public transport provision is detailed in Appendix 6 Box A.6.1.

Table 2.24: Households by number of vehicles 2006 and 2011

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>LGA 'sub-region'</th>
<th>No Motor Vehicles% 2006</th>
<th>No Motor Vehicles% 2011</th>
<th>1 Motor Vehicle% 2006</th>
<th>1 Motor Vehicle% 2011</th>
<th>2 Motor Vehicles% 2006</th>
<th>2 Motor Vehicles% 2011</th>
<th>3 or more Vehicles% 2006</th>
<th>3 or more Vehicles% 2011</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Auburn</td>
<td>16.1</td>
<td>13.7</td>
<td>39.9</td>
<td>40.5</td>
<td>23.8</td>
<td>27.8</td>
<td>7.9</td>
<td>9.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bankstown</td>
<td>12.5</td>
<td>10.7</td>
<td>35.9</td>
<td>34.7</td>
<td>30.5</td>
<td>32.1</td>
<td>12.7</td>
<td>15.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fairfield</td>
<td>12.6</td>
<td>11.8</td>
<td>36.4</td>
<td>33.0</td>
<td>30.2</td>
<td>30.7</td>
<td>11.5</td>
<td>17.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Holroyd</td>
<td>13.8</td>
<td>11.7</td>
<td>39.5</td>
<td>39.0</td>
<td>27.0</td>
<td>30.1</td>
<td>11.1</td>
<td>12.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parramatta</td>
<td>15.1</td>
<td>13.6</td>
<td>38.8</td>
<td>40.1</td>
<td>27.0</td>
<td>28.5</td>
<td>9.3</td>
<td>10.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>W-C Sydney</strong></td>
<td><strong>13.7</strong></td>
<td><strong>12.1</strong></td>
<td><strong>37.2</strong></td>
<td><strong>36.9</strong></td>
<td><strong>28.3</strong></td>
<td><strong>30.1</strong></td>
<td><strong>11.7</strong></td>
<td><strong>13.4</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N-W Sydney</td>
<td>8.0</td>
<td>6.8</td>
<td>31.6</td>
<td>36.8</td>
<td>37.4</td>
<td>37.8</td>
<td>16.7</td>
<td>18.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>S-West Sydney</td>
<td>9.0</td>
<td>8.5</td>
<td>31.4</td>
<td>32.0</td>
<td>35.1</td>
<td>34.4</td>
<td>16.4</td>
<td>18.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>GWS Region</strong></td>
<td><strong>10.3</strong></td>
<td><strong>9.0</strong></td>
<td><strong>33.6</strong></td>
<td><strong>33.2</strong></td>
<td><strong>33.5</strong></td>
<td><strong>34.5</strong></td>
<td><strong>14.8</strong></td>
<td><strong>15.6</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SMR</td>
<td>12.6</td>
<td>11.8</td>
<td>36.4</td>
<td>36.8</td>
<td>30.2</td>
<td>31.4</td>
<td>11.5</td>
<td>13.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: ABS Census 2006 and 2011

**Accessibility.** Sydney’s rail system caters for 11% of weekly passenger kilometres and remains focused on delivering 50% of peak period trips into the CBD (Christie, 2010:29). Yet in GWS 63.7% of all origin-destination trip activity occurs within the region and the proportion is increasing (Beard, 2011). Improving cross-regional journeys may well deliver a far bigger social return per dollar invested, rather than simply improving access to the CBD, but necessitates the integration of transport and strategic land use planning. Improving access to jobs helps to drive economic growth and Western Sydney is where population growth is concentrated, transport journeys are longest, transport costs are highest (accentuated by oil price rises since 2003) and the need to plan is greatest (WSROC, 2009b:8).
Chapter 2: A socio-economic profile of West-Central

Table 2.25: Journey-to-work destinations 2006

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>LGA</th>
<th>Worked in LGA</th>
<th>Worked in W-CS</th>
<th>Worked in GWS including W-CS</th>
<th>Worked outside GWS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>No</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Auburn</td>
<td>4,631</td>
<td>20.1</td>
<td>8,515</td>
<td>37.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bankstown</td>
<td>18,745</td>
<td>28.7</td>
<td>26,140</td>
<td>40.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fairfield</td>
<td>17,888</td>
<td>27.4</td>
<td>31,711</td>
<td>48.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Holroyd</td>
<td>6,525</td>
<td>17.1</td>
<td>17,985</td>
<td>47.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parramatta</td>
<td>15,992</td>
<td>24.9</td>
<td>24,720</td>
<td>38.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>West-Central</td>
<td>63,781</td>
<td>24.8</td>
<td>109,071</td>
<td>42.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GWS</td>
<td>202,734</td>
<td>26.1</td>
<td>495,795</td>
<td>63.7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>LGA</th>
<th>Worked in N-WS</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>Worked in S-WS</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>Worked in Sydney CBD</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>LGA workforce in 2006</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Auburn</td>
<td>997</td>
<td>4.3</td>
<td>478</td>
<td>2.1</td>
<td>3,679</td>
<td>16.0</td>
<td>23,010</td>
<td>3.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bankstown</td>
<td>1,372</td>
<td>2.1</td>
<td>2,864</td>
<td>4.4</td>
<td>8,740</td>
<td>13.4</td>
<td>65,200</td>
<td>8.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fairfield</td>
<td>3,986</td>
<td>6.1</td>
<td>6,521</td>
<td>10.0</td>
<td>5,372</td>
<td>8.2</td>
<td>65,284</td>
<td>8.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Holroyd</td>
<td>4,242</td>
<td>11.1</td>
<td>924</td>
<td>2.4</td>
<td>4,230</td>
<td>11.1</td>
<td>38,061</td>
<td>4.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parramatta</td>
<td>6,862</td>
<td>10.7</td>
<td>997</td>
<td>1.6</td>
<td>8,517</td>
<td>13.3</td>
<td>64,084</td>
<td>8.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>West-Central</td>
<td>17,459</td>
<td>6.8</td>
<td>11,784</td>
<td>4.6</td>
<td>30,538</td>
<td>11.9</td>
<td>255,639</td>
<td>32.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GWS</td>
<td>196,963</td>
<td>25.3</td>
<td>95,697</td>
<td>12.3</td>
<td>71,854</td>
<td>9.2</td>
<td>777,908</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Beard 2011, derived from Transport Data Centre journey-to-work data 2006 and reconfigured by the author

The 2006 journey-to-work data from the Transport Data Centre (Table 2.25) shows a substantial proportion (45.9%) of West-Central’s residents commuted outside Western Sydney to work (Beard, 2011), adding to the voluminous daily cross-hauling of Sydney workers travelling in private vehicles, particularly from Auburn, Bankstown and Parramatta (Urban Research Centre, 2008). Conversely, significant proportions commuted each day from eastern Sydney into these three job-surplus LGAs, particularly Parramatta, with its higher proportion of BFBS jobs (detailed above).

Almost a quarter (24.8%) of West-Central’s labour force worked within their home LGA in 2006, 42.5% worked within the sub-region and more than half (54.1%) worked in GWS (Beard, 2011). Within the region, West-Central was the most common sub-region destination (26.1%), followed by the North-West (25.3%) and the South-West (12.3%) The three Western Sydney sub-regions accounted for 63.7% of journeys-to-work compared to only 9.2% of residents who worked in the Sydney City sub-region, comprising Sydney Inner, East, West
and South, and the 15.9% who travelled to jobs in the so-called global arc; highlighting West-Central’s importance as an employment destination (ibid).

Auburn in 2006 had the highest proportion of residents working in Sydney City (16.0%) and Fairfield the lowest (8.2%). Westmead hospital precinct and Rydalmere were important employment destinations. Train services running on five lines and a loop rail serving Sydney Olympic Park, plus a mix of private and public bus routes connecting the rail stations, all contributed to Auburn having the sub-region’s highest proportion of public transport journeys-to-work (24.7%). By 2011 Auburn had increased its journeys-to-work by public transport to 27.8%, with the majority (26.7%) travelling by train (Table 2.23).

In 2006 Bankstown had West-Central’s highest proportion of residents living and working within their LGA (28.7%). A further 13.4% travelled to work within Sydney City sub-region. The majority travelled to areas within West-Central (40.1%), with few travelling to the South-West or North-West sub-regions. By 2011 two thirds of Bankstown’s residents travelled to work by car and 16.4% used public transport (14.9% using the train and only 1.5% the bus).

Over a quarter (27.4%) of Fairfield’s 2006 population lived and worked in their LGA and 48.6% worked in the sub-region. Nearly two thirds (64.7%) worked within Western Sydney and 35.3% outside the region. Despite their low income status, Table 2.23 shows Fairfield residents in 2011 had the highest rate of car use for their journey-to-work (70.5%) and the lowest use of public transport (13.6%). Only 11.7% used the train and 1.9% the bus; highlighting the dispersed nature of the jobs available in the sub-region and the poor public transport services (see also Appendix Box A.6.1).

In 2006 only 17.1% of Holroyd’s population lived and worked in the LGA — the smallest employment self-containment in the sub-region. High proportions (13.7%) of workers travelled to Parramatta CBD and 47.3% worked in West-Central (WESTIR, 2010). While the majority of journeys-to-work were to destinations close to Holroyd LGA, relatively large numbers of people travelled further afield to Ryde and North Sydney; aided by the wider range of available transport options in those LGAs. In 2011 most of Holroyd’s residents travelled to work by car (63.1%), 17.7% travelled by train and 2.8% by bus.

Almost a quarter (24.9%) of Parramatta’s population lived and worked in the LGA in 2006. Over half (50.8%) worked in GWS and 49.2% commuted to work outside the region (13.3% travelling to work in Sydney City), while 38.6% worked in West-Central, 10.7% in the North-West. Westmead Hospital precinct,
Chapter 2: A socio-economic profile of West-Central

Smithfield/ Wetherill Park industrial area and Sydney City were all important destinations but few (1.6%) travelled to the South-West sub-region. Although the majority of trips occurred within West-Central, many travelled outside the region to North Ryde, Macquarie Business Park, North Sydney and Chatswood. Parramatta had the sub-region’s highest proportion of residents walking to work (4.0%) in 2011 and the second lowest proportion travelling by car (57.4%); a higher proportion (24.1%) used public transport (19.5% using the train and 4.5% the bus). This higher public transport use reflects Parramatta’s wider range of available public transport modes; greater integration with other parts of GWS; a high number of jobs within walking distance of residential areas and scarce, expensive parking in Parramatta CBD.

Figure 2.10: The Hume Highway Bankstown

Source: NSW Department of Planning 2007:23

A 2005 Infrastructure Report Card (Engineers Australia, 2005), pointed to congestion on city roads (Figure 2.10), problems with metropolitan rail networks, and worn out sewerage systems and inadequate stormwater infrastructure. Major transport and ageing infrastructure issues persist in West-Central, following fifty years of rapid residential and industrial growth creating a network of isolated, car-dependent home and work environments. Parts of West-Central are experiencing population loss in areas with an ageing population and declining economies. Compared with the gentrifying suburbs further east, the limited population increase occurring in the older suburbs may reflect the lack of choice for low- to middle-income earners, unable to live anywhere other than in the cheapest parts of Sydney.
Hence, a declining proportion of West-Central’s residents work in Sydney CBD, many no longer use the train for their journey-to-work and bus patronage remains very low. Congestion on the sub-region’s major roads leaves bus services competing for space on heavily trafficked roads; failing to provide an attractive quicker alternative to private car use.

2.2 The rise of West-Central’s disadvantage

By their very nature, issues of regeneration and change are dynamic and their impacts on West-Central need to be better understood. This section stresses the importance of the dynamism of urban change, describing national and metropolitan trends impacting at the local level in the sub-region. It highlights the importance of understanding both scale and place in relation to socio-economic disadvantage. Relatedly, it shows the need to address issues of housing affordability, housing market activity and the integration of employment opportunities and transport disadvantage in tandem. This need is pertinent when Australia-wide policies for housing, employment and transport respond slowly to rapid demographic, social, economic and environmental change.

Representation. The empirical material in this section flows from an important set of political initiatives where the author was directly involved. Responding to a White Paper on reforms to planning and governance in NSW in 2002, Western Sydney mayors and the WSROC and MACROC presidents issued a Mayoral Statement seeking a greater voice for councils and residents in policy development for urban growth and land supply (WSROC 2005b:iii). The statement called for government commitments that population expansion in the region would proceed in equitable and sustainable ways through funding of infrastructure, protection of the environment and diversity, expanded employment, and improved coordination of different levels of government.

A further impetus was an increased emphasis on regional planning proposed in a restructured NSW environmental planning system (known as PlanFirst, detailed in Section 5.1), which recognised that a ‘coherent regional framework is an essential element in regional advocacy and coordination’ (Department of Infrastructure, Planning and Natural Resources (DIPNR), 2003).

This political awareness at the local level coincided with a body of research commissioned by WSROC, to inform the preparation of a regional planning vision and policy framework for Western Sydney. From 2002 to 2005 WSROC and thirteen councils cooperated to prepare FutureWest: Greater Western Sydney
Chapter 2: A socio-economic profile of West-Central

regional planning and management framework (WSROC, 2005b). A number of in-depth studies listed in Box 2.1 influenced this framework.

Box 2.1: Background research for FutureWest

- Regional environmental profile. WSROC, 2003.

While independent of the metropolitan strategy process, FutureWest was presented to DIPNR which assisted in funding some of the background studies, attempting to inform the development of the 2005 metropolitan strategy from a regional perspective.

Box 2.2 lists research undertaken in more recent years, contributing to further understandings of the housing, employment and transport conditions and policies affecting West-Central, and the impediments to realising the sub-region’s growth targets. These two blocks of research guide the analyses of inequality, housing, demographic change and migration, employment, and transport which follow.

Box 2.2 Recent research on Western Sydney

- Socially sustainable urban renewal. Randolph et al., 2008.
- North-West and West-Central Sydney employment strategies. Urban Research Centre, University of Western Sydney, 2008

**Rising inequality.** Collectively, this research foregrounded the problem of socio-economic polarisation occurring across Western Sydney, alongside an increased physical obsolescence of the region’s older suburbs — those built between the 1930s and the 1960s. Gleeson and Randolph (2002a), for example, characterised Western Sydney as a place where:

Decades of under-investment of policy and fiscal resources in Western Sydney by successive State and Federal Governments have left many of the region’s cultural, social and environmental needs unmet. The legacy of this ‘undernourished development’ includes mounting social and environmental problems, including
hardening pockets of poverty and social exclusion, a dwindling and fraying public sphere, and ever-increasing ecological stress (Gleeson and Randolph, 2002a:1). Pointing to ‘newly forming pockets of disadvantage in older suburbs ... outside public housing estates’, the authors noted the lack of access to employment and life-enhancing opportunities (hospitals, parks, good schools and public transport), resulting in location disadvantage (ibid:14). Their stress on the need for attention to employment outcomes is noteworthy:

One of the greatest challenges facing Western Sydney will be to ensure that these new jobs are equitably allocated across the region's households, especially those who have missed out in the economic growth of the last decade (ibid: 6).

Gleeson and Randolph’s primary social concern was the way disadvantage was becoming entrenched in parts of the region (Figure 2.11).

**Figure 2.11: ABS SEIFA 2001**

Mapping of the Australian Bureau of Statistics’ (ABS) census-based Index of Socio-Economic Disadvantage (SEIFA as defined in Section 1.5) at the local collector district scale revealed concentrations of disadvantage in the older middle and outer suburbs, especially in west and south-west Sydney.

In 2001 severe disadvantage was not confined to the larger public housing estates, as implied in populist accounts of Western Sydney’s social condition at the time. Large tracts of Western Sydney identified as locations of acute disadvantage in fact contained low proportions of public housing, while other
suburbs with little public housing showed *multiple deprivations*, tending to be congregated in specific urban environments in West-Central’s oldest established suburbs. (Gleeson and Randolph, 2002:14). Figure 2.12 illustrates Sydney’s *disadvantage by level of public housing* (Randolph and Holloway, 2002:16).

**Figure 2.12: Sydney’s disadvantage by level of public housing 2001**

Notwithstanding these findings, research by Gethin (2007), listing Sydney’s poorest suburbs described the greatest disadvantage occurring in areas with high concentrations of social housing such as Waterloo (in south-eastern Sydney) and in Airds and Claymore (in south-western Sydney). Conclusions were then drawn that targeting disadvantaged places would not help the wider population; attributing the public housing estates with being the major cause of the problem. Undoubtedly, the transition of the 1960s NSW Housing Commission from the provision of low cost housing for blue-collar workers to welfare housing increased concentrations of certain disadvantaged people. Yet a number of West-Central’s most disadvantaged suburbs show poor correlation between low-income and public housing. Long-term demographic trends demonstrate Sydney’s increasing socio-economic divide on a broader scale, not simply confined to, or explained by areas of public housing (Randolph and Holloway, 2002 cited in Gleeson and Randolph 2002:16).
**Demographic change and migration.** The *Western Sydney social profile* (Gleeson, Holloway and Randolph, 2002) described how Western Sydney’s 1996 to 2001 population growth (7.8%) exceeded that of Sydney (6.8%), NSW (5.5%) or Australia (6.0%). With almost a third (32.7%) of the region’s population born overseas, high proportions of migrants were settling in Western Sydney. While generally the sub-region accommodated moderate income households, some localised areas contained high proportions of low income households, high unemployment levels and higher occupancy rates. These socio-economic inequalities were also paralleled by inequalities in health (WSROC, 2005b:7).

The studies demonstrated West-Central having a younger population than the metropolitan average; but the demographic profile showed signs of ageing (Gleeson, Holloway and Randolph, 2002). This trend, identified across Western Sydney and particularly in areas with great cultural diversity such as West-Central, was partly ascribed to family reunion migration, whereby elder relatives of earlier immigrants are sponsored into Australia, plus the natural ageing of the population *in situ* (WSROC, 2003a). Governments and policymakers were spotlighting the economic impacts of the large retired cohort, including the costs of providing health and social services to an older population, supplemented by the immigration of substantial numbers of retirees. However, the policy implications of decreased mobility and increased social isolation — coupled with increased housing and transport stress — remained unaddressed (WSROC, 2009c:16).

**Housing issues.** By 2001 a lack of affordable housing affected many of the region’s low income households, with an estimated 68,000 in housing stress (spending more than a third of their household income on accommodation costs), comprising 39,000 households in privately rented and 29,000 in mortgaged dwellings (Randolph and Holloway, 2003). The escalating cost of land impacted on housing affordability in both new greenfield estates and the redevelopment of former industrial brownfield areas. Long-recognised sub-regional social disadvantage in terms of income differentials, educational attainment and employment status was worsening across Sydney, afflicted by distinct combinations of social exclusion, location inaccessibility and environmental blight (Gleeson and Randolph, 2002b:102). An assessment of Fairfield’s housing stock in the early 2000s found a mix of low density fibro/brick houses and high density three storey walk-up apartments close to the town centres (Figure 2.13), with the dwelling stock in general lacking amenity and
showing signs of obsolescence (Fairfield Council, 2002 and 2003). Much of this poor quality older housing, particularly the walk-up apartments, had passed into the private rental market, with only a small proportion of people living in the social housing sector. The physical form was unpopular and only accepted by people with limited housing opportunities.

Figure 2.13: West-Central’s ageing dwelling stock

These older suburbs were subjected to intensifying pressures for change and renewal, especially where the housing occupied relatively large blocks of land (Randolph and Holloway, 2005a). Yet these private rental areas shared a number of characteristics in common with the large public housing estates in
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south-west Sydney, with a similar income profile, large populations of young families and high turnover rates (Bunker, Holloway and Randolph, 2005a).

The distinctive demographic profile of West-Central showed the older housing catering for at least five sub-groups: overseas-born people with poor English proficiency; low income earners; very young families; older retirees; and young people suffering high unemployment and low employment participation rates. Simultaneously, the urban fringe was attracting lower density development, focused on families with children; adding to Sydney’s increasing polarisation by household type (Bunker, Holloway and Randolph, 2005). Some of the original housing stock was being replaced with a disparate collection of huge McMansions, duplexes and triplexes, gun barrel villa and townhouse development and tower blocks (Randolph and Holloway, 2005:59, as illustrated in Figure 2.15 (for a discussion on the large size of Australian homes see Section 5.4).

Figure 2.15: A disparate mix of replacement housing

Since the 1980s public housing has frequently been characterised as a shelter option of last resort. While the Department of Housing adopted a policy of de-concentrating disadvantaged households and commenced renewing its public housing estates accordingly, over-concentrations of low income private renters in
suburbs where the ageing dwelling stock required upgrading continued to be ignored by housing policymakers (Fingland 2006:56). Population decline and limited piecemeal urban renewal increased concerns about West-Central’s older suburbs’ deteriorating urban character and social fabric (Ruming et al, 2007). A particular issue was local government’s incapacity to respond to the challenges of social change. Market forces, fuelled by urban consolidation pressures were creating ad hoc suburban renewal in lower value locations where gentrification had not occurred (Randolph, 2004a). Escalating land costs impacted on housing affordability and the ageing infrastructure required renewal, but land use planning appeared blind to these issues (ibid). With no control over land values, the challenge for councils was achieving urban renewal of the ageing dwelling stock and increasing job opportunities without displacing those in most need.

Employment issues. The Employment profile for Greater Western Sydney (Fagan, Dowling and Langdale, 2004) addressed key issues of regional job self-sufficiency; the importance of manufacturing; the need to develop services; labour market issues and poor access to employment; stressing increasing employment opportunities in line with population growth as a priority. The report described deepening employment differences across the Western Sydney region, due to de-industrialisation of the metropolitan labour force through a combination of job-shedding from manufacturing and slow growth in relation to other sectors. In contrast to metropolitan trends, employment in Western Sydney retained an industrial structure with limited diversification into highly skilled, knowledge-intensive and advanced service sector jobs, where most growth could otherwise be anticipated.

Figure 2.16, sourced from the Employment profile (ibid 18), illustrates the locational distribution of Sydney’s sub-groups in 2001. It shows higher than average proportions of banking, financial and business service (BFBS) employment concentrated in Sydney CBD and the north shore and above average proportions of manufacturing and low proportions of BFBS jobs in West-Central LGAs with the exception of Parramatta. This research revealed how Western Sydney was suffering an imbalance in its skills/labour force due to de-industrialisation in the labour force which is affected inter alia by changes in the global economy, changing patterns of labour mobility and advances in technology. While manufacturing remained the largest employment category in Bankstown, Fairfield and Holroyd, Auburn had a more mixed employment profile with significant jobs in retailing, wholesaling and construction. In contrast,
Parramatta’s focus had shifted from being a suburban manufacturing centre to employment in BFBS, reflecting its growing regional CBD function.

**Figure 2.16: Sydney employment profile sub-groups 2001**

![Sydney employment profile sub-groups 2001]


**Key:**
- 1 = Suburban industrial centres
- 2 = Suburban industry service centres
- 3 = Suburban service centres
- 4 = Parramatta

Although from 1996 to 2001 Western Sydney benefitted from decentralisation of employment opportunities across the metropolitan area — providing jobs to an increasing proportion of its own residents, plus large numbers travelling from other parts of Sydney — unemployment remained a significant problem, but was more geographically concentrated than previously acknowledged. In 2001 high unemployment rates were clustered in Fairfield (12.7%), Auburn (11.9%) and Bankstown (7.9%) LGAs, concentrated in the suburbs of Auburn, Granville, Cabramatta, Fairfield and Bonnyrigg in West-Central and in parts of the North-West and South-West sub-regions. Employment policies focused on self-sufficiency were failing to engage with the social and economic geography of the area.
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region and lacked spatial integration with the wider Sydney economy (Fagan and Dowling, 2005); reinforcing, among other things, the need for improved intra-regional transport links.

Fagan, Dowling and Langdale (2004) revealed how participation rates for men in full-time work declined steadily since the early 1980s, especially in West-Central. Female participation rates had also declined since 1991, with their rates remaining below the Sydney average. As previously noted, West-Central plays a crucial role in accommodating thousands of new immigrants to Australia, a role it will continue to perform. However, for more than 25 years workforce participation in migrant communities trended downwards, attributable almost entirely to a dramatic fall in participation rates of males from non-English speaking countries, in contrast with the Australian-born men and those from mainly English-speaking countries whose participation rates increased or remained stable (ABS 3416.0 Perspectives on migrants, 2007). The higher migrant participation rates in the 1970s were mainly as the consequence of the post-war migration and manufacturing boom when migrants were in the peak working ages and were easily absorbed into a labour market experiencing severe labour shortages. By 2002 however the migrant participation rate was pushed down to 10% lower than that of the Australian-born (ibid). Migrants, on average, were older than the Australian-born and industry re-structuring was resulting in a significant shift away from the manufacturing and construction industries towards the service sector (ibid).

The suburbanisation of employment and the de-industrialisation of the labour force in some locations interacted with slow growth relative to other sectors. Manufacturing job-shedding during the 1990s in Western Sydney reflected national and global changes, ‘including neo-liberal policy shifts aimed at opening the economy to global forces’ (Fagan and Dowling, 2005:72). Achieving around 70% employment self-sufficiency to cater for burgeoning population growth took decades, showing little improvement since the early 1990s (Fagan, Dowling and Langdale, 2004). Moreover, the 2005 metropolitan strategy acknowledged that employment containment was unlikely to increase significantly in line with population growth; requiring the creation of around 215,000 jobs across Western Sydney simply to maintain the employment level. Subsequently, increased dwelling targets further exacerbated the inadequate sub-regional employment targets — requiring closer to 250,000 new jobs, plus a further 100,000 jobs in eastern Sydney to cater for the 30% of residents commuting outside the region. Considerable effort by all levels of government remains essential, especially in
the context of declining manufacturing (still a major Western Sydney employer) as the source of new employment.

**Transport issues.** A Western Sydney regional state of the environment report in 2000 noted that:

> Transport was recognised in the community workshops as a major pressure on social and environmental sustainability ... Costs of transport are regarded as high in terms of time and money (Regional Integrated Monitoring Centre, UWS 2000:24).

Prior to 2004 Sydney’s public transport had been split between State Rail, Sydney Transit Authority — operating buses in the central and eastern suburbs — and a multitude of loosely co-ordinated private operators throughout GWS region. A review of bus services in NSW (Unsworth, 2004) replaced these privately-owned bus companies working within territorial boundaries with an arrangement by which the state paid a reduced number of operators for each service kilometre travelled regardless of location, with the fare returned to government. This simplified service operational planning across operational boundaries and the Department of Transport assumed responsibility for network design in an attempt to develop an integrated network (ibid). The review acknowledged that Western Sydney’s economy and the welfare of the community stood to lose if new approaches to deal with Sydney’s transport problems were not adopted.

A GWS regional transportation profile (Battelino et al., 2004a) showed 90% of all trips by residents were to destinations within the region and two-thirds of all trips were within the same LGA. Likewise, work trips were primarily to destinations within Western Sydney (70%). Commuting trips within the region were largely made by private car, with travel times 17 minutes longer on average by both car and public transport in the morning peak. A higher proportion of commuting by train than Sydney’s average occurred in some inner West-Central LGAs such as Holroyd and Parramatta. However Western Sydney displayed much lower levels of commuting by bus (2%) than the metropolitan average (6%), reflecting the region’s poor bus service levels. Travel times by public transport for non-work purposes varied, but journey times were up to 10 to 20 minutes greater than the Sydney average. Scant concern given to the suburbanisation of employment meant that rather than reducing the need for commuting, journeys were increasing and becoming more complex:

Dispersed employment with relatively small numbers of workers going to a large number of employment locations has meant it is extremely difficult to service this demand by public transport (Battelino et al., 2004b:11).
In addition, congestion on the national freight network contributed to commuting and freight transport delays (WSROC, 2005). Access to a new employment hub located on the M7 motorway (constructed in 2003 to connect the M5, M4 and M2) lacked plans for public transport provision, risking perpetuating the unsustainable reliance on the car and increasing social exclusion (Battelino et al., 2004a).

The old radial transport structure linking Western Sydney to the Sydney CBD was becoming less important, while key intra-regional travel patterns needed to be catered for. Replacement of an outdated planning model was a prerequisite for managing the parallel pressures of urban expansion and redevelopment, and for transport improvements in particular. FutureWest (WSROC, 2005b) called for: a city-region spatial structure, responding to greater self-containment and regionalisation; more efficient use of regional infrastructure, requiring metropolitan decentralisation of high-growth advanced service sector employment; access to knowledge infrastructure, social and cultural facilities; retrofitting of the intra-regional transport network; renewal of the older regional industrial and residential core areas and the development of a north/south regional employment corridor along the M7 motorway.

The wide-ranging background research discussed above demonstrated how previous metropolitan planning lacked coordination; was deficient in the provision of infrastructure; had dispersed population but not employment; and failed to adequately value the environmental and cultural qualities of Western Sydney. Such ineffective strategic planning proved unable to guide future outcomes. Hence the lack of an integrated approach to solving complex urban problems was furthering the socio-economic divide (Fingland, 2006).

**Policy integration.** Planning for the management of growth and change in Western Sydney must be values-driven and based on clearly defined goals and priorities. FutureWest (WSROC, 2005b) set out such a vision, based on the region’s aspirations and a deep understanding of the interconnected housing, employment and transport issues confronting Western Sydney at that time. Subsequently, a number of worldwide events such as the global financial crisis, a growing understanding of the impacts of climate change and the future limitations to oil supply, have all underscored the need for more effective strategic planning for Western Sydney. The costs of not effectively planning for the region are high; reinforcing inequalities across the metropolitan area and declining environmental quality. Provision of key infrastructure for expanding areas to address imbalances and backlogs is critical. Major infrastructure, such
as the expansion of the metropolitan rail network, has inter-generational benefits and governments need to play a key role in its financing and ongoing funding.

Preparation of *FutureWest* demonstrated the benefit of collaboration, using the considerable knowledge and expertise resident within the region. Bringing this collective information to bear was critical in responding to issues in a region as large and complex as Western Sydney. Local government developed a planning and management framework, seeking to inform wider debate to further refine and implement a vision for GWS.

The metropolitan strategy (Department of Planning, 2005a) envisaged urban renewal of Western Sydney’s older suburbs through urban design-led regeneration — in the absence of detailed policies, effective governance structures or government funding. This prompted local government and academic concerns that urban regeneration would be *ad hoc* and risked failing to address housing affordability issues, resulting in adverse social, economic and environmental outcomes (Ruming et al., 2007). In response, a 2008 ARC-funded linkage project, *Socially sustainable urban renewal* (City Futures Research Centre, University of New South Wales in collaboration with four local councils, Housing NSW and WSROC), extended the previous research on Western Sydney summarised above. The project questioned the reliance on the private housing market to achieve urban regeneration in four case study locations in North Auburn, Cabramatta, Bankstown town centre in West-Central plus Penrith. Confirming the vital role these older suburbs play in accommodating poorer residents, the study revealed many of the residents were Housing NSW long-term waiting list applicants, including the homeless, caravan park inhabitants and, increasingly, households de-faulting on their mortgages. Experiencing housing insecurity and limited choice in where they lived and worked these groups were territorially disadvantaged by the increasing socio-economic divide (Randolph et al., 2008).

A *North-West and West-Central Sydney employment strategies* report (Urban Research Centre, UWS, 2008) responded to the 2005 metropolitan strategy employment targets for Western Sydney. This research found that even maintaining Western Sydney’s ratio of job self-sufficiency (plateauing at approximately 64% by 2006) required 280,000 net additional jobs. In the context of ongoing population growth this translated into 61,000 net additional jobs for West-Central by 2031. This report showed that, while West-Central
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contained 322,000 jobs (representing 76 jobs per 100 working age persons) it only employed 41% of the resident workforce.

Jobs remained concentrated in manufacturing and materials-handling. Major employers were not generating extra jobs and were challenged to maintain their current employment base. In addition, inefficient industry clusters, transport bottlenecks, high car dependency, skills shortages, inadequate telecommunications infrastructure, cost pressures on households (due to high mortgages, petrol prices and tolls) and ineffective governance remained impediments to jobs growth (Urban Research Centre, UWS, 2008). The report described how jobs creating investment was invariably associated with areas receiving strong government support, characterised by high levels of amenity, efficient infrastructure and good access to reasonably efficient transport systems (e.g. Sydney Olympic Park). Unfortunately, provision for the next high amenity employment locations in Western Sydney was generally lacking (except in Parramatta CBD), with the other regional centres sorely deficient in terms of business facilities, user amenity and transport links (ibid:20).

Requiring some 191,000 new jobs in North-West and West-Central Sydney, scenario modelling for the Urban Research Centre report indicated only around 33,000 new full-time and 98,000 new part-time jobs could be created by 2031; leaving a shortfall of almost 150,000 jobs overall in Western Sydney and a 60,000 deficit in the two sub-regions. Population growth risked outstripping employment growth, thereby increasing unemployment and social disadvantage and forcing further travel to find work. The report concluded that without substantial changes in the GWS economy the jobs target was hard to achieve, especially with a satisfactory mix of full- and part-time jobs.

In 2008 WSROC held a regional conference entitled Sydney — the other city: Building a sustainable Western Sydney by 2030. This conference reinforced the view that managing the region’s growth remained a major challenge, requiring comprehensive integrated responses from all levels of government as well as the community and private sectors to build an economically, socially, culturally and environmentally sustainable region. An Agenda for sustainability and well-being for Western Sydney (WSROC, 2008e) — prepared for the conference — evolved principally from FutureWest and a GWS urban development health impact assessment project (WSROC, 2007). The agenda identified seven key interrelated issues for achieving sustainable development and the well-being of residents:
Proposing changes to regional centres, infrastructure, localities design and management, the agenda sought to broaden the sustainability focus away from individual behavioural change to making environments more liveable. Priorities included widening the mix of housing types and tenure in each local area; increasing education and employment opportunities; and improving public transport infrastructure and service levels. (WSROC, 2008e:3).

The fragmented approach to public infrastructure planning between different NSW government departments was later highlighted by A long-term public transport plan for Sydney (Christie, 2009:85) commissioned by Fairfax Limited. Over the previous decade public transport patronage increased by 30% to 40% in Melbourne, Brisbane and Perth yet, due to inadequate transport planning and a lack of investment, only 5% in Sydney (Glazebrook, 2009:1); undermining its claims to global city status and reinforcing the socio-economic divide.

In response to calls for urban regeneration of Western Sydney’s older suburbs a report on The benefits and costs of alternative growth plans for Sydney, commissioned by Planning NSW in 2010 from the Centre for International Economics, demonstrated savings could be achieved by building 70% of housing in existing areas such as West-Central and highlighted the importance of employment location and transport. Considering the potential costs of different growth scenarios in Sydney the authors noted:

... growth is about much more than urban residential development ... The location of employment is particularly important as it will influence the demand for transport ... even with employment change there are significant impediments to people moving to alternative locations closer to work to reduce transport demand. These include personal networks in current areas, costs of moving and stamp duty costs (CIE, 2010:47).

Further impediments to suburban regeneration identified included the high costs of remediating ex-industrial land; demolition costs; and infrastructure renewal including education, health and recreation provision (ibid:150). The report cautioned that by focusing on residential land, the commercial feasibility of alternative development paths remained relatively untested. Consistent with previous research a major factor highlighted in this report was the lack of an integrated policy approach:
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Limited analysis of the link between employment patterns, employment lands and the costs and benefits of alternative growth paths ... [means] more land will have to be rezoned to accommodate new dwellings in order to account for the lack of commercial feasibility in some areas (ibid: 158).

The Western Sydney economy in 2010 to 2011 was worth around $95.6 billion a year, equivalent to nearly one third of Sydney’s GRP (Department of Premier and Cabinet, 2013) — the second largest regional economy in Australia after south-east Queensland (RDA-Sydney, 2010:78) — with a population forecast to reach 2.97 million by 2036 (ibid: 79). Manufacturing accounted for $13.4 billion of Western Sydney’s GRP and 16.0% of jobs, followed by financial and insurance services ($7.8 billion), wholesale trade ($6.1 billion) and transport and logistics ($5.4 billion). Fostered by a continuing commitment to suburbanisation of employment opportunities and maintenance of employment self-sufficiency, the region still experiences an over-dependence on jobs in manufacturing, construction and transport — all areas previously considered vulnerable to long-term job-shedding, instability and casualisation (Fagan and Dowling, 2005).

Despite this body of research highlighting the growing polarisation occurring across Sydney, government planning response remained inadequate, failing to integrate the specific policy realms of housing (including urban consolidation), jobs and transport provision as discussed above. Ad hoc urban renewal was still driven by urban growth and housing market re-structuring with poor outcomes, demonstrating limited understanding of the processes driving the changes, or the problems West-Central faced. No concerted effort was made to link land-use planning with the required social interventions, or to recognise the housing and employment markets’ role in generating and maintaining the sub-region’s disadvantage.

The issues of urban disadvantage and renewal have to be understood in their political context. The following section discusses the presence of Western Sydney’s disadvantage in and around the issue of urban policy at the federal, state and local government levels, providing an entree for Chapter 3 which elaborates on the concept of social inclusion and exclusion. Chapter 4 then interrogates the nation state’s role in urban regeneration, the drivers of metropolitan growth in Australia and the differing federal and state governments’ responses to the issues. These are major policy contexts for considering the regeneration of West-Central Sydney.
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2.3 The political context

Socio-economic disadvantage in Sydney. From the early years of European settlement until the late 19th century, town planning in Australia remained largely an exercise in surveying (Freestone, 2010:10). In a presentation to UWS, Meyer (2006) noted how, in the early 20th century, competition for economic growth between the states, their capital cities and other international cities, led to infrastructure initiatives being planned and implemented through bodies such as the Royal Commission for the Improvement of Sydney and its Suburbs (1909). However, from the mid-1940s onwards a number of critiques, authored mainly by architects and planners, chronicled the decades of urban neglect manifest in inner city slums, urban blight, a lack of planned open space, deficient community facilities, shortages of appropriate housing and the uncontrolled outward spread of Sydney, particularly in Western Sydney.

Responding to the post-war housing shortage in 1943, Prime Minister Chifley appointed the Commonwealth Housing Commission, followed by the Commonwealth-State Housing Agreement (1945), directing funding to the NSW Housing Commission to build rental housing for low income families (Meyer, 2006:2). The NSW government required local councils to add town planning to their list of responsibilities, significantly strengthening local government’s role by establishing the Cumberland County Council in 1945, comprising representatives from metropolitan councils (Freestone, 2010). The County of Cumberland planning scheme for Sydney 1948 initiated an extensive slum clearance program targeting Sydney’s inner suburbs and proposed a greenbelt to contain urban growth and confine expansion to satellite towns (Winston, 1957, further critiqued in Section 5.1). But the Commonwealth’s failure to fund these satellites (despite embarking on a substantial immigration program) left NSW little option but to release greenbelt land to cope with unforeseen immigration numbers and housing demand (Meyer, 2006). Planners working in the County Council expressed increasing levels of disillusionment with the system, attributing this to council parochialism (Lang, 1976). Accordingly, the state government dissolved the County Council in 1962, replacing it in 1963 with the State Planning Authority (Gooding, 2005:4).

Urban renewal actions escalated during the 1960s through small area slum clearance programs. While housing and town planning responsibilities shifted from the federal government back to the state, the focus remained on land use planning and social problems were seldom addressed (Murphy, 2007:80). In Western Sydney, large suburban communities (virtual new towns), containing
significant amounts of public housing, lacked the necessary integration of residential, employment and transport planning and were deficient in social and physical infrastructure provision. Simultaneously, increasing household aspirations and government support for home ownership saw developers and owner/builders construct large-scale, dormitory communities in parallel with the public sector developments, firmly establishing the social polarisation of suburbia (Murphy and Watson, 1994).

In 1965 the leader of the federal Labor party, Gough Whitlam, made several speeches firmly placing urban issues on the national political agenda; and the Australian Institute of Urban Studies (AIUS) — an initiative of the (then) Royal Australian Planning Institute — in 1972 called for ‘efficient and humane alternatives to over-concentrated growth’ (Freestone, 2010:117). Significantly, *Sydney at the census: A social atlas* (Davis and Spearritt, 1974) mapped social and dwelling variables based on 1971 Census Collector District data, demonstrating the importance of socio-economic status (SES) patterns as the single most important discriminator between different parts of Sydney. At the 1972 federal election, the six electorates north of Sydney Harbour and the upper SES areas in the eastern suburbs returned Liberal Party candidates, while electorates to the south and west of the Harbour (except for Parramatta) all returned Labor. (For further discussion on the political stratification of Sydney see Section 6.7).

Although the outgoing McMahon Coalition Liberal-National Party government demonstrated some interest in national urban affairs — by creating a National Urban and Regional Development Authority — the portfolio was re-structured by the Whitlam government into the Cities Commission and given responsibility for the government’s growth centres program (Freestone, 2010:117). A greater focus on national urban policies, an emphatically re-distributive agenda and a high degree of government intervention emerged. These were coordinated by a new Department of Urban and Regional Development (DURD), with an ambitious agenda aimed at fundamental transformation of government decision-making for urban and regional development (Freestone, 2010:32).

A $330 million sewerage program and the establishment of the Land Commission Program (LCP) — changing the process of land development — left a lasting legacy for Western Sydney (ibid: 33). The Land Commissions were state-owned entities, with a remit to acquire large areas of land and develop new urban property (Davison, 2011:4), contributing positively to the planning process in addition to their regulatory statutory planning role. Such government
intervention sought better coordination of processes; a capacity to address societal needs (such as affordable housing); stabilisation or reduction in land costs and the capturing of ‘betterment’ (defined as the increase in land value accrued through the development process) for the provision of community infrastructure. With sufficient land holdings these agencies also released a steady supply of land to a fluctuating housing market (Troy, 1978), with major releases of land on the (then) urban fringe having a major impact on LGAs such as Fairfield and Bankstown, with the latter now fully urbanised.

While the NSW Planning and Environment Commission (1974 to 1979) replaced the State Planning Authority (Gooding, 2005), an over-concentration on statutory land use plans as opposed to strategic planning, exerted little influence over other government agencies. There remained a lack of analysis and ignorance of the increasing social polarisation problems in Western Sydney. The political and institutional arrangements, centralised policy formulation and the spatial congregation of safe political seats, left Western Sydney with limited political representation. Residents were unable to influence the quantity, quality or price of government-provided services (ibid).

From the mid 1970s widespread concerns were expressed about the inadequacy of infrastructure provision in new suburbs and the lack of coordination between the different service providers. A *West Project* study by the Department of Environment, Housing and Community Development (1975), together with a *Western Sydney study* (Llewelyn-Davies Kinhill et al., 1977) — funded through a 1975-6 national Area Improvement Program — examined Western Sydney’s problems, drawing attention to the close relationship between job creation, the control of land development and levels of private investment. These reports were predominantly concerned with the consistent under-provision of services and facilities; the widespread lack of coordination of the limited available services; and the diminishing resources available to local government to deal with an ongoing deterioration in conditions (Llewelyn-Davies Kinhill et al., 1977:4). The *Western Sydney study* called for action to be taken by local government at a regional scale, arguing for the establishment of a Regional Organisation of Councils as a ‘federation of the interests of the region as a whole’ (ibid:5).

With waning support following Whitlam’s dismissal in 1975, the detachment of the federal government from urban issues continued, with the Coalition governments of the late 1970s/early 1980s regarding urban development as primarily a state matter (Freestone, 2010:33) and ignoring Western Sydney’s urban regeneration needs. The various Land Commissions’ share of the
residential market nationally rose through the 1980s—their roles and responsibilities shifting according to political cycles (Gleeson and Coiacetto, 2007). During the Hawke/Keating Labor governments (1983 to 1996) the federal government again became interventionist, establishing a Green street program, providing urban design guidance on increasing densities through an Australian model code for residential development (AMCORD 1992), a Local approvals review program (LARP) and the Building better cities (BBC) program 1991-1996, designed to demonstrate ways to overcome economic, social and environmental problems resulting from urban settlement (ibid). However, while the latter established regeneration schemes in parts of Sydney, with the exception of the Merrylands to Harris Park ‘Y’ rail link, the program neglected Western Sydney’s most disadvantaged urban areas.

The Howard Coalition government (1996 to 2007) demonstrated little interest in cities and urban planning (Freestone, 2010: 34). Despite instigating an Inquiry into sustainable cities (2003 to 2005), there was little follow-up action.

As one commentator noted:

No one has overall responsibility for managing the city and this is nowhere more apparent than in relation to metropolitan planning and infrastructure provision. Planning the city is both a marginal activity in terms of its status within state governments and at the same time is contested between levels of government, usually, state and local (Gooding, 2005: 1).

By 2006, Brown and Bellamy, editors of Federalism and regionalism in Australia, pointed to a federal system in a state of flux, with dramatic shifts occurring in the power-sharing responsibilities between governments, having important implications for urban regions such as Western Sydney. One contributor wrote:

The long-term working of our federal system has tended to overlook the political and policy significance of cities and urban regions (Gleeson 2006: 72).

Quoting Troy (1978) and Parkin (1982), Gleeson noted the limited and ‘episodic, explicit attention given to the cities by Commonwealth Governments’, stressing:

This record of neglect has been justified and reinforced by political leaders, scholars and jurists who have asserted that the national government has no authority and no power to interfere in urban affairs (ibid).

Gleeson argued that the decision by the Howard government:

... to eschew urban policy commitments is not a natural or inevitable consequence of the conservative political position (Ibid: 74)

He stressed:

The chances for economic success are greatly diminished when this productivity is compromised by urban dysfunction—for example, an ineffective transport system (Ibid:74-75).

Significantly Gleeson highlighted the important role of urban policy in maintaining national cohesion, requiring:
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... well resourced and decisive interventions across a range of fronts to achieve better job-housing balances across urban sub-regions, by ... improving housing affordability and public transport services and coverage ... This would contrast very favourably with the present system, too often marked by weak or under-resourced state planning departments that leave urban management largely to state road agencies and ill-equipped local governments (ibid:77-78).

Drawing attention to the ‘interdependent forces at work within cities’ and importantly the distributive impacts of public policy in housing, transportation, public health, welfare, education, urban planning and employment, Gleeson quoted Parkin’s 1982 statement:

It is as much a question of policy orientation, policy priorities and policy organisation as of budgetary capacity (Parkin, 1982:8).

Federal policies in areas such as immigration have both positive and negative major impacts on growth in the region. Federal engagement is a critical part of effective regional planning and management, particularly in relation to West-Central’s ongoing role in accommodating recent migrants to Australia. Similarly, the role of the federal government in providing well-maintained and modern infrastructure is essential for the effective functioning of Western Sydney. Hence WSROC welcomed the 2007 Rudd Labor government’s commitment to the development of urban regions. A Council of Australian Government’s (COAG) 2009 meeting agreed to develop national criteria to re-shape the capital cities, with development of strategic, transparent plans intended to manage population and economic growth, address climate change, improve housing affordability and tackle urban congestion. A COAG Reform Council — accountable for new federal financial arrangements — added social inclusiveness to its key objectives for capital city strategic planning to meet future challenges:

... to ensure that Australian cities are globally competitive, productive, sustainable, liveable and socially inclusive and are well placed to meet future challenges and growth (COAG, 2009:20).

Subsequently, the first State of Australian Cities Report (Infrastructure Australia/Major Cities Unit, 2010) provided a platform for the federal government’s re-involvement in urban policy and planning.

2.4 Summary and conclusions

Chapter 1 commenced by outlining the five concerns that led to the the adoption of the thesis title – Social inclusion: Policy, practice, people and place, namely:

1. The concept of social inclusion as a lens through which to view the urban regeneration policy agenda, thus helping to create a more equitable society for all and leading to more effective, coordinated governance arrangements.
2. The policies adopted by governments and agencies to deal with complex issues of socio-economic disadvantage.
3. The practice of these policies.
4. The impacts of these policies and practices on the people resident in the sub-region.
5. The lessons that can be drawn for the place that is West-Central Sydney.

Chapter 2 provided the spatial and demographic context for the research; highlighting issues of ethnic diversity, population growth, unemployment and declining employment participation, transport poverty, congestion and stressed social and physical infrastructure in the sub-region. While acknowledging the influence of events at a range of scales, there remain in West-Central place-based sets of flows, messiness and lived experiences needing to be explicitly understood and addressed by policymakers. The understanding of place in West-Central is not simply a matter of exploring the physical or social differences occurring between areas, but involves insight into issues of tenure and class, social polarisation and locational disadvantage. This requires greater knowledge of different housing and employment markets, while recognising the importance of physical and social infrastructure and the impacts of governance policies contributing to social polarisation. This insight cannot be gained at the metropolitan scale, or by exploration of the differences between sub-regions, since West-Central’s suburbs are far from homogeneous. A genuine engagement with the unmitigated complexities of West-Central is seen as essential.

West-Central’s problems are neither new, nor is the knowledge of their existence. As demonstrated above, numerous reports from the 1970s onwards highlighted the issues and suggested possible courses of action to address the area’s disadvantage. Many concerned individuals and organisations in the area are working on aspects of the difficulties these older suburbs face. They in turn, look to all levels of government for support, since the problems to be tackled are substantial, encompassing a wide range of social, economic and environmental factors. While some action has been taken, the task of bringing to West-Central the opportunities equal to those enjoyed by other Sydney residents requires more sustained attention and commitment. This project is part of this broader agenda.

A description of West-Central’s rising disadvantage pointed to increasing socio-economic polarisation, an ageing population, rising inequality, unprecedented climate change, oil insecurity and globalisation; coupled with ongoing policy failure, with the issues remaining invisible to policymakers. Widening sub-
regional differentials in income, educational attainment and employment status were observed in markedly different enclaves, each with distinct combinations of social exclusion, location inaccessibility and environmental blight. The political context in which West-Central is situated also pointed to the danger of West-Central’s older suburbs becoming much more divided and polarised. Therefore the concept of social inclusion, describing the ideal situation whereby individuals are able to participate in the relevant institutions of society and share in its goods and services (Atkinson and Marlier, 2010), is a particular subject of this thesis and is used to interrogate current and possible future urban regeneration policies for the sub-region. There is certainly evidence of merit in considering social inclusion as a driver of an effective policy agenda for West-Central’s regeneration.

Mainstream urban theory acknowledges the inadequacies of taking a single position to deal with the plural and varied nature of urban life and the necessity of combining connectedness with organisation, multiplicity and change; at both the micro and macro levels. As explained above, this thesis investigates social inclusion and assesses the concept’s capacity to provide an understanding of disadvantage and to generate more effective policy. A more detailed assessment of the concept of social inclusion is now presented in Chapter 3 which examines the concepts of social inclusion and exclusion contained in the policy-related literature and provides a detailed examination of how social inclusion has arisen as a socio-spatial policy concept.
CHAPTER 3: The idea of social inclusion

Introduction

Creating a society for all is a moral obligation ... deep disparities, based on unequal distribution of wealth and/or differences in people's backgrounds reduce social mobility and ultimately exert a negative impact on growth, productivity and well-being of society as a whole. Promoting social integration and inclusion will create a society that is safer, more stable and more just, which is an essential condition for sustainable economic growth and development (Atkinson and Marlier, 2010:iii).

As noted in Chapter 1 the first of four objectives of this thesis is to mobilise social inclusion as a framework to improve understanding of the relationship between housing, employment and transport policies and governance. The reasoning behind the idea of social inclusion is encapsulated by this quotation from a United Nation’s 2010 report Analysing and measuring social inclusion in a global context. Atkinson and Marlier’s observation sets the thesis context by explaining why social inclusion is a central concept guiding social policy in many developed countries.

The term social inclusion describes the ideal situation whereby individuals can engage in relevant community institutions and share in society’s broad goods as well as specific government and NGO services. Importantly, the term often invokes the apparent converse of social exclusion. Aware of the limitations of previous policies for tackling disadvantage, the 1997 New Labour government in the UK gave social exclusion centre stage in UK government social policy, establishing a Social Exclusion Unit (SEU) to co-ordinate policies to address poverty and social inequality (Arthurson and Jacobs, 2003). Social exclusion refers to more than poverty or low income, describing what can happen when people or places suffer from a combination of problems such as unemployment, poor skills, low income, bad housing, high crime, racial prejudice or lack of transport (Social Exclusion Unit, 2004:2). These cumulative and reinforcing problems can prevent participation in mainstream activities and access to the standards of living enjoyed by the rest of society.

Australian social inclusion policy has a relationship with UK policy. Assuming power in 2007, the incoming Rudd Labor government fulfilled a pre-election commitment to addressing urban disadvantage by establishing a Social Inclusion Board within the Department of Prime Minister and Cabinet (see Section 3.2); elevating social inclusion as a key theme within social policy development,
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framing the social agenda in terms of inclusion rather than exclusion (Hulse et al., 2010:8). Hulse et al. highlighted the links between aspects of urban policy, economic participation and social cohesion.

There is a wealth of information about social inclusion and social exclusion in the literature, with varying interpretations in different countries. While these two concepts were mostly derived from social theory and notions of social justice, social exclusion became shorthand in the EU and the UK for the wide-ranging interrelated aspects of social inequality. The origin of social polarisation, underpinning social exclusion concerns lay in the interrelated complex changes in the development of global and local labour markets; the structure of welfare provision and support; fiscal constraints and demographic change.

As noted in Section 1.7, this thesis does not deal with the concept of social exclusion/inclusion from the perspective of neighbourhood or individual interactions and the creation of social capital or social cohesion by interviewing residents or community activists, but this topic has been recommended for further research in Section 7.5. Instead, the research focuses on the association between the social inclusion and exclusion concepts and housing, employment and transport policies, drawing attention to the role that both individual agency and structural factors have in determining poverty and inequality. By examining whether poor access to housing, employment and transport opportunities tends to increase social exclusion and locational disadvantage, this thesis explores if improving accessibility can increase opportunities for greater social inclusion.

Chapter 1 described how social inclusion became a central legitimising concept in the EU and elsewhere, with general government policy and academic agreement that exclusion is both unfair and damages social cohesion (Levitas, 1996). Previous chapters described how the older suburbs of West-Central Sydney have been bypassed by whole cycles of public infrastructure investment and risk becoming social and property discard areas compared to other parts of the SMR. The sub-region’s redundant skills base is demonstrated by its falling employment participation rates and ageing population, yet it is expected to to supply the conditions for social reproduction to counteract the structures and activities transmitting inequality between generations. This thesis considers how the research underpinning a social inclusion agenda is able to embrace these structural changes.

Chapter 3 reflects on the contemporary debates and urban changes framing approaches to social inclusion in cities. It traces social inclusion from the social exclusion narratives of the 1970s and 1980s, to debates about a moral
underclass and unequal employment and education access in the UK and Europe during the 1990s (Arthurson and Jacobs, 2003). The multi-dimensional social and spatial aspects of social exclusion are also emphasised. Section 3.1 starts with the nation state’s role in social outcomes. It examines the evolving role of the nation state in the UK, the strong influence of US economic policy directions and examines how the terms social exclusion and social inclusion have been mobilised to articulate governments’ approaches to dealing with poverty and disadvantage across North America, Europe, the UK and their eventual adoption in Australia. The section demonstrates how attempts to mobilise social inclusion as a policy objective required some form of intervention from a centralised power, with the most obvious territorial governance entity with appropriate powers being the nation state. Section 3.2 then reviews relevant policy-related literature across a range of disciplines, exploring how the negative dimensions of social exclusion moved to the concept of social inclusion to address increasing levels of urban decline. The section finishes by summarising four key roles for a complex, contemporary urban state that is always changing. The findings and conclusions drawn from this review are then presented in Section 3.3. Subsequently Chapter 4 examines overseas experience in urban regeneration with important lessons for housing, employment and transport policy formulation in Australia.

3.1 The role of the nation state

There are conflicting views on the role of the nation state in society, ranging from a comprehensive role in meeting peoples’ needs, to a simple protection and enforcement of individual rights and responsibilities (Tallon, 2010:131) and arguably the state is capitalist by nature. Tallon describes how taxation and fiscal policy in general are core distributional devices, while others believe that re-distribution is unethical and sometimes harmful to a nation’s economic prospects (ibid). An argument that public services should be universal is countered by the principle of provision only for those in most need (ibid). Since these tensions are always in play in advanced, democratic nations, the state’s involvement in urban regeneration necessarily depends on the prevailing political philosophy. Conservatives emphasise the importance of maintaining the stability of society as a whole. Liberals argue for protection of individual freedoms. Socialists view capitalism as exploitation and undemocratic, while social democrats (embracing the need for a mixed economy) promote the benefits of markets in fostering innovation, efficiency and choice, but recognise the need for
some state regulation and intervention (ibid). Hence sorting the nature and extent of the role of the state remains unfinished business.

Research points to modern society being characterised by the wide-ranging, multitude of state activities operating at different spatial scales (Clark and Dear, 1984:1). O’Neill, for instance, described a contemporary advanced economy as:

... a domain where a complex and heterogeneous state apparatus is engaged in constant interplay with non-state institutions and agents ... in an irresolvable contest over accumulation and distributional goals (O’Neill, 1997:257).

Similarly, Martin Jones distinguished the role of the contemporary state and its spatial responsibilities as comprising:

... a set of institutions concerned with the territorialisation of political power ... distinct and distant from say a multinational corporation, by virtue of its territorial integrity and its political legitimacy (Jones, M. 2009:409).

Therefore, in respect of urban economies and spaces, the state can be seen to perform a variety of roles in efforts to support economic growth and development; in part by seeking to regulate re-development and its effects. Importantly, because so much is at stake, the state’s performance will be contested and open to volatility. Jones noted:

... territory is not a given but something that gets constructed and institutionalised in different ways in different times and places ... State power is strategically and spatially selective and results from a continuing interaction between structures, strategies, and balance of forces operating within and beyond the state (ibid:410-411).

Jones thus sees the state as an enduring force, with patterns governing state intervention based on political and ideological rule systems, such as rights and responsibilities; the balance between public and private; and the role of non-government social partners in the policy process. He elaborates, stating:

Concerns here can include the discourses of citizenship, social inclusion/exclusion, universal versus targeted and selective service provision, and equality versus allocation through competition (ibid:410).

Importantly, then, variations in the contemporary state’s role in advanced nations come from different ideological and political positions, albeit with a common, active role for the state in mediating economic and social affairs and their territorial manifestations. This understanding has important implications for the ways social inclusion can be enacted as state policy, as discussed below. More immediately, though, the following section examines the evolution of the state from a UK perspective with consequences for urban governance, to glean insight into policies and practices relevant for West-Central Sydney.

**Evolution of the state.** In the last quarter of the 20th century UK regions, including north-west and north-east England and central Scotland, suffered significant losses in their manufacturing bases — a process mirrored in
Australia’s regions such as Greater Western Sydney. Each of these British regions, operating within a global economy, faced strong competition for regeneration investment in industry and the built form from other more privileged areas.

In the UK, the state’s role evolved in a three-phased history characterised by variations in the nature of governments’ public policy involvement, including urban regeneration programs (Tallon, 2010:128 to 129). First, during the early 19th century there was no provision for health services or unemployment benefits and little state education, leaving communities to fend for themselves. With only male property owners having the right to vote, the majority were left unrepresented. Second, from the late nineteenth to the mid twentieth century the state’s powers were extended, partly due to problems emanating from urbanisation and poor living conditions, the spread of disease and increasing social disorder — all of which carried the potential for disrupting an emergent urban-based capitalism. In this period there was growing realisation that:

... society and the economy could no longer be left to market forces and mutual aid. Some form of organised public intervention started to appear necessary (Tallon, 2010:129).

Also, severe economic depression and mass unemployment in the late 1920s and 1930s contributed to the expansion of state activity and reinforced its presence. Keynesian redistributive economic approaches to managing aggregate demand, such as by increasing public spending above tax revenues during economic slowdowns, became the accepted approach to economic management. An important report formed the basis for post-war reforms known as the welfare state (Beveridge, 1942). The period was also important in mandating state power internationally. The 1944 Bretton Woods conference established a post WWII system of exchange rate management, trade rules and bank guarantees based on Keynesian principles which, while not fully operative until 1958 in the UK, remained in place until at least the early 1970s (ibid).

In this second period, much UK policy development on urban disadvantage was strongly influenced by a raft of US legislation under the banner of the War on Poverty formally adopted by Lyndon B. Johnston in 1964 (Tallon, 2010:141). This expanded the US government’s role in education and health care, including poverty-reduction strategies. With direct links to Roosevelt’s New Deal from 1933 to 1935 and the Four Freedoms of 1941, followed by the founding of the United Nations in 1945, these strategies were assisted by the Truman government’s $13 billion Marshall Plan to rebuild Europe in 1948. This thick social contract defined an appropriate scale of government intervention to foster
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individual rights. Subsequently Clark and Dear described how these policies raised the stakes considerably in this regard:

The social contract that recognized individuals as the prime unit of society also defined a spatial hierarchy of governmental authority and community (Clark and Dear, 1984:117-118).

The modern state therefore adopted a prime position in both creating society as an entity and in supporting individual rights and welfare, by taking a fairer position within society. While the arch-monetarist economist Milton Friedman in the US and the neo-liberalist market economist Frederick Hayek in the UK both argued against an interventionist role for the state (Harvey, 2005:20), Keynes’s supporters successfully advocated the best way to fight poverty was through government spending and economic growth (Pacione, 2005). From 1950 to the mid 1970s, the UK operated under a broad social democratic consensus of support for a welfare state, with political disagreement mostly over detail rather than fundamental principles. The welfare state grew continuously in the post-war decades, with government expenditure climbing to nearly 50% of the UK’s GDP by the mid 1970s (Tallon, 2010:130).

The third phase of state involvement in the UK economy and elsewhere started to falter in the 1970s and was violently fractured by the election of the Thatcher Conservative government in 1979. This led to scaled-down public services, weakened controls over business activity, de-nationalised industries, privatised utilities and shifted the taxation burden of the rich and raised social control efforts through the police and the criminal justice systems. Borrowing terminology and policy from the US, Thatcher introduced welfare-to-work, to deal with the escalating unemployment occurring in Britain throughout the 1970s and 1980s. Levitas (1996) questioned two underlying philosophical premises of the welfare-to-work strategy: first, that paid work, within a profoundly unequal labour market, could necessarily be a pathway to social inclusion since conservatives were not interested in social inclusion; and, second, that paid work represented the primary obligation for all those of working age, a view that discounts the value of community and voluntary activities and the unpaid work of reproduction and care carried out in the home, still mainly by women. Johnstone and Whitehead described the uncomfortable:

... marriage of the large-scale anti-poverty programmes of the post-war social democratic state, with the economic imperatives of Thatcherite neo-liberal urban policy (Johnstone and Whitehead (eds.) 2004:9).

Thus the state concentrated its economic management role on creating conditions for successful accumulation, especially by controlling inflation and directly supporting private capital (Jones and Evans, 2008:9-10). Under the
banner of neo-liberalism (discussed below), Thatcher stripped back worker and social rights built up through the welfare state during the post-war period (Finn, Atkinson and Crawford, 2007:6). Many programs previously the preserve of government, were shifted to the private sector, with public services purchased through competitive, marketised processes and value for money in public spending (an anti-welfare stance) being the preferred managerial imperative (Gough, Eisenschitz and McCulloch, 2006). Commentators described the changes as a shift from government to governance (Tallon, 2010:132) and the arrival of a fully fledged neo-liberal state (Peck and Tickell, 2002). The notion of governance is now considered.

Governance. Governance is not necessarily a new concept. In 1991, for instance, the World Bank defined governance as:

... the manner in which power is exercised in the management of a country’s economic and social resources and development (World Bank, 1991:1).

In Australia, Gleeson and Randolph defined governance as:

... more than simply the political and administrative supervision of the region ... [it] extends to include the multi-layered and frequently overlapping policy and fiscal commitments of local, regional, state and federal governments (Gleeson and Randolph, 2002:1).

Hence uncertainty around the notion of governance may arise from the vagueness of the targeted territorial space and a process rather than a territorial concept. More recently, academics use the term to indicate a profound change in the state’s role:

... from direct government control of the economy and society via hierarchical bureaucracies (government) towards more indirect control via diverse non-governmental organisations. It represents a broader approach to urban management and is often associated with the declining power of local government (Pacione 2005:670).

Jones and Evans (2008:32) highlighted Jessop’s (1994) description of governance as the ‘hollowing out of the state’ when unelected agencies and the private sector assumed a greater role in urban regeneration and the general economy. The governance of urban areas encompassing the public, private, voluntary and community sectors — characterised by both Harvey (1989) and Healey (2010:55) as the ‘1960s approach’ to urban management — was superseded in the 1970s and 1980s, with neo-liberal concerns about individual entitlements to private property overriding calls for social democratic rights. The 1970s recessions; contraction of manufacturing industry in many of the UK’s urban centres; and erosion of the economic base of managerial governance; invited in entrepreneurialism as a new form of urban governance. Entrepreneurialism, which sits comfortably with tendencies to neo-liberalism,
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was defined as ‘a perspective on urban development that views the city as a product that needs to be marketed’ (Pacione, 2005:669). As such, it was criticised as being the hallmark of an ideological shift away from the notion of public service to an acceptance of social and spatial inequalities as being inevitable (Tallon, 2010).

In respect to urban planning, Gleeson and Low (2000) defined governance as the combined outcome of institutional decision-making by the public, private, community and NGO sectors, and therefore something not necessarily steeped in any particular ideological belief. In turn, planning was seen as an activity embedded within urban governance. Gleeson and Low argued:

... planning is both a domain of urban governance — that part of governance concerned with the provision of services to a city — and an approach to urban governance which seeks effective, equitable and democratic steering of state apparatus for the benefits of citizens (Gleeson and Low, 2000:4-5).

Hence any changes in government processes need to be considered in the context of the nation state’s re-structuring of power, reflected in changes in public policy and urban governance. A move away from managerialism and entrepreneurialism and a focus on competition and marketing has major implications for urban planning practices, just as they affect governance broadly defined. Not surprisingly, the organisation of governance became a hotly debated topic in urban social science (Kubler, 2005:5) and with neo-liberalism in ascendancy, planning’s responsibility was recast in favour of the market (Tallon, 2010:128).

**Neo-liberalism.** This section examines how the Blair (1997 to 2007) and Brown (2007 to 2010) governments in the UK and the Howard government (1996 to 2007) in Australia willingly embraced the neo-liberal agenda’s emphasis on self-reliance and entrepreneurship. As introduced above, the term neo-liberalism refers to how transformations in state regulatory regimes across the capitalist world since the 1970s facilitated radical change within processes of capital accumulation. In particular, neo-liberalism loosened or dismantled the various institutional constraints upon markets, increased the hyper-exploitation of workers and bolstered the discretionary power of private capital (Roy, 2009:824, citing the work of Brenner and Theodore, 2002). The 1973 Pinochet military coup in Chile and restructuring of the US economy in line with the Chicago School’s economic theories were identified as hallmark events in the first phase of neo-liberalism (Harvey, 2005:7). Harvey highlighted management of the New York fiscal crisis in 1973 as crucial in consolidating neo-liberal policies, confining the role of government to creating good business environments, rather than
looking to the needs and well-being of the wider population. As Labonte stressed:


Neo-liberalism portrayed the welfare state as expensive, wasteful, nationally-centralist and dictatorial, ‘sapping individual’s enterprise ... and limiting their choice’ (Gough, Eisenschitz and McCulloch, 2006:2). Moreover, the cultural theorist Stuart Hall (2011:706) described neo-liberalist casting of the state’s role as being not to govern society, interfere in individual rights to dispose of private property, regulate a free-market economy or interfere in wealth creation. Under neo-liberalism, state-led social engineering must never prevail over private and corporate interests or free-market mechanisms, or try to ameliorate capitalism’s propensity to create inequality. The welfare state was characterised as ‘do-gooding’, utopian sentimentality, undermining the nation’s moral fibre, eroding personal responsibility and the duty of the poor to work. Although in response, Gough, Eisenschitz and McCulloch, 2006: 183 noted:

Yet the lacunae of neo-liberalism have weakened not just the position of the poor but capital accumulation as a whole...The failures of neo-liberalism for the poor are thus congruent with, and integral to, its wider failures.

Describing a shift from social to private responsibility for overcoming poverty, these authors concluded that neo-liberal reforms worsened public services for the poor and further stigmatised them (ibid: 104-105). Cities became institutional laboratories for neo-liberal experiments such as enterprise and empowerment zones, local tax abatements, urban development corporations, public-private partnerships and property development schemes (see Gough, Eisenschitz and McCulloch, 2006:169-185). Neo-liberalism propelled a belief that poverty could be overcome by economic growth, generated by better resource allocation through market mechanisms and the unleashing of private enterprise. Freeing labour markets would ensure that the working-age poor would find employment and providing the poor accepted the market's verdict of their worth poverty would thereby wither away. Yet the reverse actually occurred: poverty increased massively, especially for people permanently on (deteriorating) state benefits, while unemployment soared and low-paid, insecure jobs multiplied (ibid:2). Three policy turns in the UK — the Third Way, devolution and the Big Society — each of which has been identified as having some degree of neo-liberalist presence or tendency, are now examined.
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*The Third Way.* The neo-liberal ideas adopted in Britain in the 1980s moved towards a more collaborative discourse when, in 1997, New Labour attempted to bring together the market and the state under a public policy approach termed a Third Way (Giddens, 1998 and 2000). Peck and Tickell (2002:389) suggested the reformist impulse behind Third Way planning was a subtle form of neo-liberalism, masking government retreat from its social services provision function. However Giddens (1998), the key academic proponent and political advisor to Blair, argued 'Third Way thinking was a break from, not merely a more subtle form of, neo-liberalism' (Jackson, 2009:406). Giddens suggested that social polarisation, caused in part by market deregulation, implied 'the need for revival of sub-national and metropolitan planning that is both competitive and socially inclusive’ (Jackson, 2009:405). The Giddens approach stressed:

> Governments should seek to create macro-economic stability, promote investment in education and infrastructure, contain inequality and guarantee opportunities for self-realization (Giddens, 2000:164).

Calling for a rejection of both welfare state entitlements and the self-help doctrines of the neo-liberals, Giddens advocated governance policies crossing the traditional state-versus-market divide, encouraging public and private agency partnerships (Jackson, 2011:1). According to Begg (2003), Giddens’ construct of the Third Way was re-emerging in government policy debates across the world. Examining a range of views from government, non-government and community organisations, Begg found varying degrees of knowledge of the construct and curtailment of its use in favour of maintaining government at all costs; stressing that ‘traditional forms of social critique find no home in the Third Way’ (Begg, 2003:iii).

Continuing the neo-liberal tradition, social exclusion policies focused on a *moral underclass* discourse, blaming individuals for their circumstances and aiming to deter welfare dependence (Jones, 2011:95). Anti-Social Behaviour Orders’ (ASBOs) — introduced in the UK in 1998, targeting poor public behaviour by those not conforming to normal society’s rules and regulations — warranted criticism for being without ‘strong and principled justification’ and ‘distracting attention from the government’s law and order policy failure’ (Ashworth, 2004:263). The UK Third Way policies sought to balance the imperatives of a globalised economy with the need to address social exclusion. Byrne (2005:1) argued that New Labour’s anti-exclusion policies actually contributed to ‘an excluding post-industrial capitalism based on poor work for many and insecurity for most’ and that the Third Way was:
Conversely, Byrne described how the Third Way was founded on ‘the use of state power to regulate economic systems so that they do not challenge social goals’ (ibid:35).

**Devolution.** A further significant UK governance development was the issue of devolution. Since the late 1990s New Labour’s urban policies focused directly on England, with many policy areas devolved to administrations in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland (Tallon, 2010). Yet, while the new Scottish Parliament accepted the mandate for planning, transport, housing and education, the urban policy emphasis remained on social exclusion. An injection of EU and Westminster funds assisted Scottish regeneration policies, spurring government efforts to reduce child poverty by integrating joined up approaches to tackling social disadvantage. Nevertheless, the five biggest areas of public spending across the UK in 2006/7 were social protection (38%), health (16%), education (12%), defence (7%), public order and safety (5%); leaving a paltry 0.1% for urban policies (Tallon, 2010:131).

**Increasing polarisation.** Despite instigating a range of high profile reforms to reduce poverty and social exclusion, New Labour struggled to achieve a more equal society. Dorling (2010:119, 2011:38) observed that, following the promotion of economic competitiveness, spatial divergence between the north and the south became more evident; not only between fast-growing south-east England and a few major cities, but also within cities and regions. Dorling concluded that the trends towards increasing geographical inequalities in wealth — started under the Thatcher government — intensified under New Labour.

Other publications that are highly relevant to studies of urban policies and social inclusion in the UK include Imrie and Raco (2003; 2007), Cochrane (2007) and Porter and Shaw (2009). Imrie and Raco (2003) assessed New Labour’s approach to the revitalisation of cities by placing a greater emphasis on the participation of communities to spearhead urban change. They pointed to some inherent policy contradictions between rhetorical strategies and the lived reality. Through the use of case study examples of community-led urban policy, the need for strategic, multi-led partnerships is emphasised. Raco (2007) explores how, over time, policy-makers in the UK utilised state powers and regulations to create more sustainable communities. An examination of urban policies since the 1960s by Cochrane (2007) covered a broad range of issues that have helped define urban issues in different places, including race, economic regeneration and competitiveness. The benefits of regeneration, particularly in areas that
have experienced sustained disinvestment, are described by Porter and Shaw (2009). The latter argued that, while regeneration is sometimes considered to be a euphemism for gentrification, it is not necessarily the case, since regeneration only becomes gentrification when displacement occurs (ibid:3).

**Big Society.** Highlighting the paradox of the contribution made by the seemingly opposed regimes of Thatcherism and New Labour, Hall (2011:705) described the debt-fuelled boom, leading to the 2007 to 2010 banking crisis and the election of the Cameron Conservative-Liberal-Democratic coalition, as 'another unresolved rupture of that epoch which we can define as the long march of the Neo-liberal Revolution'. Cameron implemented a range of policy changes, drawing on the Third Way's commitment to a smaller state and an expanded role for the community sector (Whelan, 2012:5). The ideology underlying *Big Society* in the UK — part of the legislative program of the coalition — is described by Whelan as echoing Thatcher's relentless rejection of the welfare state and welfare dependence. However, Whelan noted:

> Unlike Thatcher who remained committed to a strong state in order to reinforce market mechanisms, Cameron has advocated a transfer of risk and responsibility to citizens, a stance that has been described as anti-state (Whelan, 2012:10).

However, the Cameron Coalition government subsequently reversed the rhetoric of inclusion and abandoned the ideology of a Big Society — further highlighting the political obstacles to pursuing a social inclusion agenda.

In the UK, state funding siphoned to the private sector targets those dependent on the state for public services, while cushioning the rich. With support for the vulnerable whittled away in an attempt to break welfare dependency, ironically the emerging picture is of increasing social exclusion. The following section now considers the role of the nation state in governance issues in Australia.

**The nation state in Australia.** While Australian Liberal (conservative) governments of the late 1970s and 1980 ‘regarded urban development as primarily a state matter’ (Freestone, 2010:33), Labor administrations (1983 to 1996 and 2007 to 2013) intervened more (Section 2.3). While neo-liberal thinking penetrated Australia from overseas it was in a very contextual way. For example, a Keating government White Paper (Australian Government, 2004), emphasised first, a reliance on private sector economic growth; second, new approaches to state assistance to the unemployed; and third, the promotion of regional development (O’Neill, 1996). In effect, redistribution mechanisms were appended to the strategy of international competitiveness pursued by governments during the 1980s. According to O’Neill:
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... the state is involved inherently in the distributional outcomes of production and consumption (O'Neill, 1996:409).

While the Keating reforms included modest urban renewal measures — notably the Building Better Cities (BBC) program (outlined in Section 2.3) — an incoming conservative administration in 1996 abolished what was left of the program:

... and so ended altogether the federal government’s hitherto desultory attempts to reanimate a national spatial policy framework (Gleeson and Low, 2000:92).

The Property Council of Australia (2002) called for national support of cities as ‘key engines of economic and cultural opportunity in a challenging global environment’ (Gleeson, 2006:77), but the Howard government (1996 to 2007) remained reluctant to intervene in the re-shaping of urban governance.

As discussed above, with many variations, neo-liberalism is not a single system and not all capitalisms are neo-liberal: its exponents combine and modify other nation’s models, leading to changing spatialities focused at different geographic scales and involve policy transfer (Peck, 2011). During three decades of economic change the nation state in developed western democracies played a central role in the operation of markets and changing accumulation processes, albeit with dramatic shifts in the qualitative nature of that role. O’Neill and Fagan (2006:204) reflected upon the emergence of Australia’s particular variety of neo-liberalism, suggesting contradictions inherent in adherence to a neo-liberal reform agenda in the name of globalisation with: first, a political imperative to retain sovereignty over national security, including tightening border protection; and second, multi-scaled political processes, including clashes with state governments grappling with regional and local impacts of change. Geographic scales, constructed contingently by social and political agents, contribute in fundamental ways to the power and direction of economic reform. Despite powerful re-scaling at both global and local levels over thirty years, there was no evidence of a diminished role for the nation state in Australia (O’Neill and Fagan, 2006). O’Neill and Weller (2013) elaborate on this argument, describing how the nation state has played a central role of in the creation and operation of markets, having:

... managed an uneven process of marketisation with nearly always unpredictable results... and sometimes create new tensions (O’Neill and Weller, 2013: abstract in press).

The authors stress that Australia’s development in the 20th century was also a distributional project:

... informed by Keynesian ideas ... predicated on the three pillars of controlled migration, protectionism and centralised wage determination (ibid:5).
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Certainly, there are rival explanations of and perspectives on neo-liberalism to describe Australia’s development trajectory. One perspective — new regionalism — emphasised the role of network-based schemes of cooperation for area-wide governance; echoing a conceptual shift in thinking about the ways in which the nation state could and should steer society, with governance through negotiation, rather than through hierarchy or the market (Kubler, 2005:10).

That said, recent federal and NSW governments of both political persuasions are by no means isolated from the global neo-liberal ideology, viewing government’s role through the lens of an economic rationalist approach to urban management and social policy and placing economic outcomes ahead of social outcomes.

**Metropolitan governance.** The nature of metropolitan governance in Australia is the subject of long-running disputes between two intellectual traditions: the metropolitan reform tradition — advocating institutional consolidation; and the public choice approach — arguing for fragmentation and local autonomy (Kubler, 2005:5). Kubler (2005:5 and 35) presented a pessimistic view of the chances of developing strong metropolitan governance capacity in Sydney, citing unresolved tensions between the three levels of government, high geo-political fragmentation and a conceptual incoherence in the elaboration of the policies contained in the 2005 Metropolitan Strategy (see Sections 5.1 and 6.7). Kubler (2005:7) argued that ‘the goal’ should be to ‘make the existing system of joint decision-making more effective rather than trying to replace it’.

In 2007 an incoming Rudd federal Labor government established a Ministry of Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development and Local Government supported by a Building Australia Infrastructure Fund, giving the federal government a more proactive role in urban development. A statutory body, Infrastructure Australia assisted by a Major Cities Unit, advised governments, investors and owners on national current and future needs; financing mechanisms for infrastructure investment, pricing and regulation; and the efficiency of delivery, operation and use of national infrastructure networks. While a State of Australian Cities Report (2010) found major cities performed relatively well in terms of quality-of-life, nevertheless significant challenges remained, including population and demographic change, transport congestion, living affordability, infrastructure development, productivity growth, climate change and ecological sustainability (Infrastructure Australia/Major Cities Unit, 2010). Past outward urban expansion, leading to increasing distance between residential and employment areas, was described as resulting in greater car use,
higher transport costs, more vulnerability to oil price rises and loss of agricultural land or habitat. The report cautioned:

[Traffic] Congestion, the bane of urban dwellers, if not addressed, will continue to grow as a serious negative (ibid:2).

Subsequently a Council of Australian Government (COAG) Reform Council report highlighted:

... the efficient and effective planning of our cities and towns is vital to productivity and investment ... (COAG, 2011:2).

Stressing the importance of infrastructure and the need for a more strategic approach to infrastructure planning and financing, COAG argued for requiring, \textit{inter alia}:

... more emphasis on public transport to combat congestion and address social inclusion by integrating transport planning with land use decisions (ibid).

A COAG expert advisory panel singled out three areas inadequately addressed by governments: first, \textit{demographic change} — with implications for the nature, distribution and diversity of the housing stock, labour market participation and for transport and other public services; second, \textit{housing affordability} — required an ‘evidence-based’ and ‘collaborative response’ from governments; and third, \textit{spatial inclusion for labour market participation} — needed better analysis and understanding (ibid, 2011). The COAG panel cautioned that consistency across national criteria did not guarantee successful policy outcomes and that governments should improve and progressively monitor policy outcomes to achieve fully successful implementation. A 2012 media release by Infrastructure Australia’s chair, welcomed the COAG Reform Council’s report findings, noting:

The report’s implicit criticism of the governments’ frameworks for investment and innovation in capital cities, particularly as they relate to economics and arrangements for private investment is ‘spot on’ ... This leads Infrastructure Australia to the view ... that the infrastructure dimensions of our metropolitan plans are often undeliverable ... the integration of transport and land use ... has been sadly underdone (Eddington, 2012).

Eddington concluded:

... these initiatives demonstrate a refreshing awareness that the traditional view from Canberra that cities are something for the states and territories to deal with is no longer sustainable (ibid).

\textbf{Key themes.} A fourfold body of insights into the role of the nation state can be identified from work across a range of human geography, planning and sociology disciplines. First, the nation state is portrayed as performing key multiple roles as a multi-scalar, complex and heterogeneous apparatus. Second, inseparable from the economy and daily life but in a troubled way, nation states are attempting to balance the seemingly irresolvable needs of successful economies with sustainable societies. Third, states are entangled in a territorial play-out of
power-laden disputes over economic and social outcomes, with urban decline and regeneration inevitably critiqued as realms of national performance. Fourth, the power of the state is never fully established and is always contested; hence it appears that existing nation state operations are complex, messy and forever shifting. These are essential lessons for the exploration of the role of the nation state throughout this thesis. In particular, empirical analysis of the West-Central Sydney planning sub-region shows the processes underpinning these insights playing out through local structures and the performance of local agencies.

Section 3.1 discussed the role and historical development of the nation state in dealing with issues of poverty, when a lack of resources prevented people from accessing the goods and activities essential to their well-being, showing that many overseas efforts have failed to produce an enduring solution to these urban deprivation problems. The term governance captures the ill-defined shift in the role of government and key insights emerged when socio-economic disadvantage started to be explored through the lens of a social exclusion and inclusion agenda, since the nation state still plays a key role in addressing urban issues, floundering more on incompetence rather than ideological differences.

Section 3.2 now explores the development of the social inclusion concept across the key jurisdictions of housing, employment, transport and governance in the EU, North America and the UK.

### 3.2 Social exclusion and social inclusion

Having briefly assessed the different nation states’ roles, an assessment is made here of the conditions and policies which could lead to more effective social inclusion. These insights are then used to discuss policies for urban regeneration in Australia in Chapter 4. Hence the following discussion establishes the prime reasoning behind the central positioning of the idea of social inclusion in this thesis.

**The concepts of social exclusion and inclusion.** An historical overview of social inequality can be introduced in a number of ways. For example, in the 1890s the French sociologist Emile Durkheim described the importance of access to social networks and support to a person’s prospects for good health, well-being and survival (Levitas, 1996). Drawing on Durkheim a century later, Levitas argued that:

> ... the concept of social exclusion, originally developed to describe the manifold consequences of poverty and inequality, has become embedded as a crucial element within a new hegemonic discourse.

Levitas described the social exclusion discourse as fundamentally Durkheimian:
... because it treats social divisions which are endemic to capitalism as resulting from an abnormal breakdown in the social cohesion which should be maintained by the division of labour (Levitas, 1996:5).

Despite her previous criticisms, in a paper to a social inclusion research conference she stressed:

The idea of social inclusion is now the central concept of social policy in Europe and elsewhere (Levitas, 2003:5)

As noted in Section 1.7, the term social exclusion emerged in France in the mid 1970s in the context of individuals being unable to access welfare entitlements (Arthurson and Jacobs, 2003:i). Labonte described how social movements’ concerns in the 1960s and 1970s drew governments’ attention to community concepts (such as community empowerment and community capacity), with social concepts (including social capital and social cohesion) to deal with the impersonal structures of mass society. In so doing, Labonte (2004) recognised the importance of ‘named categories’ as strategic devices to advance progressive social policy:

The continuous re-labelling of roughly similar phenomena may be a necessary stratagem to attract attention to the economic and power inequalities that arise from undisciplined markets (Labonte, 2004:115).

Considering social cohesion a desirable objective, Labonte (2004:119) argued it may or may not emerge from the elimination of poverty: ‘social exclusion and social inclusion do not equal social integration’. He pointed to an inherent paradox in the social exclusion arguments, noting:

People are excluded from these benefits ... because they are poor. But people are poor because they lack these benefits ... because capital and state structures allow wealth to accumulate unequally, and powerful others benefit directly and immediately from this (Labonte, 2004:117).

He cautioned that:

... social inclusion or social integration tends to adapt people to the needs of markets, rather than regulate markets to the needs of people (ibid:119).

Furthermore Labonte convincingly argued:

Our concern, then, should not be with the groups or conditions that are excluded, but with the socio-economic rules and political powers that create excluded groups and conditions, and the social groups who benefit from this (ibid:120).

Labonte then argued that the use of social over community concepts had the advantage of directing attention to higher-order political systems, with the twinned concepts of social inclusion and social exclusion wielded by health practitioners, researchers and policymakers, representing a ‘conceptual sophistication over social capital and social cohesion’ (ibid:115). Certainly, social cohesion can be described as a factor in fostering equilibrium in society and
signalling the integration of economic, social, political and cultural factors (Inter-American Development Bank, 2006). Nevertheless Labonte (2004) cautioned that, like their many conceptual predecessors, there are risks in adopting social cohesion and social inclusion terms, without critically examining the premises underpinning them.

Levitas (2003) spoke about the concept of social inclusion as being either ideological or utopian, arguing that ideologies tend to sustain the status quo rather than attempting to transform it. According to Levitas, utopia is an analytical tool which helps to expose inconsistencies, contradictions and hidden assumptions. Levitas argued that the metaphor of social inclusion, often used for political consequences, could be used for more transformative purposes by envisioning a better world.

Tackling social exclusion is fundamentally about addressing two types of social injustice — economic injustice and cultural injustice (Morrison, 2008). Morrison distinguished between the former, which includes exploitation, marginalisation and deprivation/poverty and the latter, concerned with misrepresentation and disrespect. She stressed that both the economic and cultural aspects of injustice are inextricably connected. While poverty is defined as ‘the condition of having little or no wealth or material possessions’ (Oxford English Dictionary) it can be exacerbated by cultural and social aspects including gender, class, status and ethnicity.

Labonte’s European analysis parallels developments in Britain where, from the 1970s and 1980s, neo-liberal thinking asserted that poverty could be overcome by economic growth, better resource allocation and the unleashing of private enterprise. Since the 1970s, UK poverty and unemployment issues have been considered seemingly intractable problems. Finn, Atkinson and Crawford (2007) adopted the terminology of ‘wicked problems’ (coined by Rittel and Webber, 1973) when a series of problems/issues such as poverty and unemployment, despite the best efforts of government, appeared almost impossible to resolve. They traced the conceptualisations of poverty and unemployment in different ways over time, from the social pathological approach — wherein the poor were deemed responsible for their own problems — to the structural approach in which they were the victims of wider forces, or a combination of both. Contemporaneously, they showed how 19th century terms such as the deserving and undeserving poor, including the derogatory term underclass, are echoed in late twentieth-century politics. Conservatives have been able to mobilise poverty and unemployment as reasons for attacks on so-called welfare dependency...
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(Finn, Atkinson and Crawford, 2007:1), echoing Labonte’s observations cited above (Labonte, 2004:117).

Gough, Eisenschitz and McCulloch (2006:xi) demonstrated similarities in social exclusion approaches in advanced capitalist countries, through widening the focus to examine the creation of poverty and social exclusion by economic, social, cultural and political processes in space. Highlighting the complexity of the problem, they stated social exclusion is not just caused by a lack of money, but ‘a whole set of qualitative problems’, all contributing to social isolation becoming a key issue (ibid:1). These authors described a wide variety of other forms of exclusion operating at the individual, household or community level. Exclusion was considered in terms of housing, employment, access to welfare services, social attachments and communal solidarities which could be transient, endemic or permanent. Importantly, transport disadvantage was recognised as a factor in generating social exclusion, particularly if it prevented participation in employment, education or recreation opportunities — limiting individuals’ abilities to realise their full potential (ibid:120).

Syrett and North stressed:

Persistence of poverty, social inequality and social exclusion spatially concentrated in certain localities and neighbourhoods is a longstanding and prominent feature of urban landscapes. While largely tolerated and ignored on a daily basis, it comes into political focus during periods of social unrest. The shift towards a globalised economy has also entrenched the concentrations of urban deprivation.

Economic development in disadvantaged neighbourhoods needs to be rooted in an understanding of the different elements of human, physical, financial and social capital.... and the interrelationship between them, both in the immediate area and more widely (Syrett and North, 2008:90).

The following section traces the development of the concepts of social exclusion and inclusion in North America, the EU and the UK, providing valuable lessons for the West-Central Sydney sub-region.

Social capital. In the US context the political scientist Robert Putnam argued for better understanding of the specific relationship between inequality and social capital and it also occurs in the work of Pierre Bourdieu, the French 20th century sociologist, anthropologist and philosopher, who was concerned with the dynamics of power in society. Social capital was first coined by the American philosopher Jane Jacobs in the 1970s. Putnam (2000) then popularised the concept, defining social capital as connections among individuals, social networks and the norms of reciprocity and trustworthiness that arise from them. Interest in social capital stemmed from a 1960s desire to address area-based deprivation through community involvement — partly triggered by increasing
urban unrest and racial tensions — and further stimulated by growing criticisms of the welfare state’s limitations. Despite its popular and often uncritical use, Putnam’s concept of social capital has been deservedly challenged. Many claim the idea represents a somewhat idyllic view of the past. In the UK, Kearns (2003) demonstrated the confused definition of social capital, while Minton criticised its vague empirical basis:

The ... biggest flaw with the concept of social capital — the role of people who do not know each other.... is this question of trust between strangers that Jane Jacobs was so concerned with. Putnam calls this ‘bridging capital’, [claiming] the trust between groups who are similar will strengthen ‘bridging capital’, but there is no evidence of this (Minton, 2009:173).

Yet the term, often now associated with better government, improved health, reduced crime and economic growth and consequently, is viewed by politicians as having the potential to regenerate urban communities.

In Australia, social capital has been widely used and theorised, the essence of the term being good quality social relations and a resource for collective action, which may lead to a broad range of outcomes, of varying social scale (Stone, 2003:13-16). Thompson (2007:207) defined social capital as ‘mutual trust between individuals in a community’. Quoting Edwards (2004:6-9), Thompson (2007:208) described how planners developing social capital aimed to foster social participation and attachment in different aspects of community and shared life; increase opportunities for engagement with formal and informal networks and services; and instil a set of shared social values and positive social relationships. She identified several barriers to fostering social capital: racial discrimination; a lack of social acceptance; legal impediments; and long-term social, cultural and economic problems. Thompson described how critics of social capital argued that, despite ameliorating the ‘alienating effects of capitalism, it nevertheless operates within the capitalist framework’ (Gibson and Cameron, 2005:151). Yet, as Thompson argued, social capital draws on community capacity that:

... enable it [social capital] to address social problems, manage its own physical, cultural and social environment, and improve its general quality of life (Thompson, 2007:208).

Hence advocates of the creation of social capital concerns with social participation, social inclusion and social cohesion extended individual responsibilities to an ethic of caring for others. Furthermore as Murphy (2007:156) argued:

... the maintenance of social cohesion is nevertheless important for economic growth because people will desert places where tensions are high.
As in Putnam’s America, linking the social with the economic gives the idea of social capital wider popularity. The following section now discusses the further development of the concepts of social exclusion and inclusion.

**Social exclusion and inclusion in North America.** In a widely reported study of the effects of inequality on society in the US, the authors noted:

> ... governments may spend, either to prevent social problems or, where income differences have widened, to deal with the consequences (Wilkinson and Pickett, 2009:177).

They continued:

> Rather than challenging the causal role of inequality in increasing health and social problems, if governments understood the consequences of widening income differences they would be keener to prevent them (ibid:191).

In their work unfairness, inequality and the rejection of cooperation were all defined as forms of exclusion (ibid:212). Hence inequality has its own negative social consequences.

Growing concerns about increasing inequality prompted Stanford University in 2011 to examine family income at the neighbourhood level across 117 metropolitan areas in the US, questioning whether income segregation impeded social mobility (Logan, 2011). A US2010 report found only 44% of US families living in middle income neighbourhoods in 2007 compared to 65% in 1970 (ibid). The report demonstrated the changing US income structure — in part due to the middle class dropping down the income ladder, while the wealthier received a larger share of the pie — with fewer in the middle. Children in poor neighbourhoods had limited access to good quality schools, child-care, support networks or the potential role models of economically stable neighbours. This highlights America’s two-tiered polarised society, with lower income groups living more disadvantaged, fundamentally different lives from the affluent. While US poverty in the 1960s was largely confined to inner city neighbourhoods and isolated rural areas, today it is concentrated in the suburbs of major metropolitan areas, with infrastructure failing to keep pace with population changes, leaving a weak economy and limited resources at all levels of governance (Kneebone and Berube, 2013).

In summary, recent policy approaches to dealing with issues of US urban disadvantage focused primarily on minority groups suffering extreme poverty, with limited policy discourse on social exclusion. But by a policy over-emphasis on the outcomes rather than the causes of disadvantage, the US socio-economic divide continues to increase. The anti-poverty infrastructure — built over several decades — failed to fit with the changing geography of disadvantage, now concentrated in US suburbs (Kneebone and Berube, 2013). These are important
considerations for formulating policies to address social exclusion in the older suburbs of Australia’s major cities.

**Social exclusion and inclusion in Europe.** In contrast to the US, social exclusion is a key component of social policy and politics across most of contemporary Europe (Byrne, 2005), frequently mobilised in response to the types of socio-economic change responsible for increasingly segregated cities (Gleeson and Randolph, 2002). In the EU in the mid 1990s, the opposite of social exclusion intervention was an assumption that social integration could be achieved through paid work, envisioning the excluded as workless or at risk of becoming so. This approach glossed over the ways in which paid work may fail to prevent or even extend exclusion, through poor pay, part-time work or long antisocial hours, and militating against other forms of social participation (Levitas, 1996:5).

Writing in 1997, Oyen pointed to the contradictions in the concepts of social exclusion and inclusion, stressing that neither was analytical but introduced for political reasons. Originally launched in the EU’s *Targeted social research program* to tackle poverty, politicians considered this program too politically loaded, opting instead for the terms social exclusion and inclusion (Oyen, 1997: 63). Oyen argued that social exclusion/inclusion is not a dichotomy and has many dimensions: questioning whether it is exclusion from civic society, the labour market, political life, voting, university education or access to hospitals which is in focus (ibid: 64). She stressed that exclusion from these different arenas is generated through social and territorial processes, which are not one and the same. In a sense acknowledging this complexity, by the late 1990s references to social exclusion became accepted parlance in EU and UK government policies (Tallon, 2010:14).

Following summits in Lisbon and Nice in 2000 and 2001, the EU called for *National action plans for social inclusion*, described by Levitas (2003:5) as reflecting the EU’s strategy ‘against social exclusion’. Levitas noted the UK, like other countries, simply re-packaged its existing *Opportunity for all* reports produced since 1999. Levitas stressed that, while social inclusion was not necessarily the obverse of social exclusion, this widening of EU social policy represented a necessary starting point (ibid:6). Then in 2012 the European Public Health Alliance (EPHA) — a network of NGOs and non-profit public health organisations — called for improvements in the quality of employment, pointing to low participation of the vulnerable, including women, the disabled and the most deprived; the need for support for better work/life balances; and restraint
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in the easing of social protection and health and safety standards. The Alliance pinpointed how harsh austerity measures were undermining the value of economic opportunities. By adding to unemployment — particularly youth job insecurity — poverty influences social exclusion, in a circular, reinforcing manner. Similarly, a Benchmarking working Europe 2012 report by the European Trade Union Institute (ETUI) confirmed growing social inequalities across all EU member states, focusing on:

... what we see as one of the root causes of the great recession, namely the issue of inequalities going far beyond income inequality (ETUI, 2012:4).

Declaring the solution lay not simply in economic growth but required redistribution and de-concentration of wealth, the report concluded:

... inequality should be at the heart of all concerns about the future of the European Union (ibid).

Pointing to the extent of inequality, a Eurostat (2012:27) publication — Income and living conditions in Europe — revealed 17% of the 2008 EU population risked poverty, 8% lived in conditions of severe material deprivation and 9% of those of working age lived in households with poor labour force participation rates. This equated to 7 million people — or one in four Europeans affected by all three of these criteria— living below the poverty line at risk of social exclusion. In contrast to the US, EU politicians accepted social infrastructure and regional support as a form of public investment, placing greater emphasis on the role of paid work as a vehicle for promoting social integration and poverty reduction; and recognising the multi-dimensional issues of disadvantage.

Oyen (1997) argued that in Scandinavia the welfare state remained a major instrument for preventing social exclusion, based on a strong ideology promoting inclusion, equality, justice and sharing of resources. More recently, McGrew (2010 quoting Walby 2009) described ‘multiple complex inequalities in OECD countries’ leading to UK social policymakers looking to Scandinavian welfare models in attempts to maintain an open economy by advancing fairness and justice at home and abroad (McGrew, 2010:21). However, the 2010 Conservative-Liberal Democratic government has radically altered this policy approach.

Social exclusion and inclusion in the UK. The 1997 Blair government acknowledged the need for intervention to reverse downward spirals of socio-economic decline, by moving away from conceptions of poverty to those of social exclusion — framing the issue as one of integrating distinctly disadvantaged populations into mainstream society — with a concerted effort to promote social inclusion. An underlying premise was that the welfare state no longer functioned
effectively, but required extensive modernisation to meet present-day needs. To achieve this, numerous work and welfare policies were introduced (Cook et al., 2001:13), their central tenet being to insert people into employment, based upon the belief that employment equals social inclusion and unemployment equates with social exclusion.

New Labour argued that poverty was caused by the detachment of poorer people from the community, requiring life-changing behaviours, access to waged employment, community participation and self-involvement in politics, through a cultural and economic transformation (Gough, Eisenschitz and McCulloch, 2006:1). There was recognition that a set of qualitative problems—poor housing, educational failure and a lack of participation—was caused, not just by poverty, but by social isolation. Redistribution of income to the poor was simply not enough (ibid:2). It was presumed that although society may be unequal, equality of opportunity and high social mobility meant that unequal rewards could be seen as fair and justified by the trickle-down effect (ibid:170) (discussed in Section 4.3).

The UK notion of social exclusion described how, in a free market economy, some people inevitably suffered disadvantage which was not entirely their fault. While the 1990s social exclusion strategy had the hallmarks of neo-liberalism, it sought a more effective strategic response through:

... soft, spatially dispersed and differentiated forms of intervention. Like neo-liberalism it rejects the ‘monolithic’ universalist welfare state, but seeks to amend some manifest failings of the neo-liberal project (Gough, Eisenschitz and McCulloch, 2006:3).

Society’s primary division was viewed by New Labour as small groups of marginalised outsiders versus the included majority, exposing the absurdities of this kind of meritocracy demonstrated by successive UK governments, previously highlighted in the ‘dystopian’ model by Michael Young’ in 1958 (Levitas, 2003:3). Section 3.1 described how New Labour established a Social Exclusion Unit (SEU) in 1998, focusing social exclusion on ‘joined-up solutions to joined-up problems’ (www.socialexclusionunit.gov.uk). Finn, Atkinson and Crawford (2007:13) argued a SEU report presented a ‘remarkably frank recognition of past failures’:

The absence of effective national policies to deal with the structural causes of decline; a tendency to parachute solutions in from outside, rather than engaging local communities; and too much emphasis on physical renewal instead of better opportunities for local people. Above all, a joined up problem has never been addressed in a joined up way ... At the neighbourhood level, there has been no one in charge of pulling together (Social Exclusion Unit, 1998:9).
Responding to such criticisms, the Blair government sought to develop a new, integrated approach to social exclusion. Attempting to tackle the worst housing estates more comprehensively, the SEU involved all agencies, recognising the multiplicity and interactions of the problems, such as unemployment linked to limited educational attainment, truancy, petty crime and poor estate image. Hence the multi-dimensional premises underpinning social exclusion and inclusion approaches were embraced. A multi-million pound UK government program launched in 2002 called Housing market renewal pathfinder, intended to reverse areas of housing abandonment in northern England by 2010 (detailed in Section 4.3), also followed the social exclusion agenda (Tallon, 2010). The SEU examined the link between social exclusion, transport and the location of services, particularly access to those opportunities most affecting life-chances, such as work, education and healthcare. Researchers distinguished between wide exclusion — large numbers of people excluded; concentrated exclusion — in specific spatial locations; and deep exclusion — multiple and overlapping processes (Miliband, D. 2006; Hulse et al., 2010).

In any event, and despite the UK government’s focus, the National Social Inclusion Program — a four-year program overseeing the implementation of the cross-government Mental health and social exclusion, 2004 report — closed in March 2009. While New Labour’s approach to social exclusion undoubtedly addressed some of the inherent weaknesses of the policies inherited from previous administrations, particularly by moving away from property and economic-dominated approaches, nevertheless the social exclusion policies offered:

... little in the way of ideas how to alleviate it effectively or to monitor the impacts of policy on the lives of residents affected (Ruming, 2006:92).

Hence the policies demonstrated limited capacity to deliver lasting social inclusion.

In summary, the ‘social exclusion’ narratives of the 1970s and 1980s described the manifold consequences of poverty and inequality and moved on to debates about a moral underclass and unequal education and employment access in the UK and the EU during the 1990s; but this led to disappointing outcomes for redistribution in general. Equality means not just redistribution but equal opportunities, pointing to the need for more holistic and radical social reform and greater understanding of the links between disparate policies.

**Social exclusion and inclusion in Australia.** Research, undertaken in the period 1970s to the early 1990s, into the fate of Australian urban policies and
attempts at policy coordination in the past, emphasised how land use zoning documents were having limited impacts on the patterns of urban growth (Painter, 1984; Fincher, 1991; 1999; McLoughlin, 1992; Mowbray, 1994 and Huxley, 2000). McLoughlin (1992) in particular pointed to how cities were being shaped by private sector power-plays, with planning failing to direct urban form, or consolidate centres and was leading to socially regressive outcomes with some areas favoured over others. He judged that the most successful results were occurring at the neighbourhood level by the protection of middle-class residential areas. A fuller examination of this previous body of research to further highlight the political and administrative hurdles and social power struggles is recommended in Section 7.5.

By the end of the 1990s, while social exclusion became shorthand in Europe and the UK for the wide-ranging interrelated aspects of social inequality, the term had not been widely adopted in Australia. Randolph and Judd (2000) described social exclusion as developing from established concepts of social deprivation and poverty, coming to mean more than just the material aspects of disadvantage. Randolph and Judd argued that the origin of social polarisation, underpinning social exclusion concerns, lay in the interrelated changes in the development of global and local labour markets; the structure of welfare provision and support; fiscal constraints; and demographic change.

In Australia, housing was positioned as a central variable in neighbourhood exclusion; especially public housing (Randolph, Ruming and Murray, 2009). Growing concerns related to localised poverty and housing stress demonstrated social exclusion increasingly related to the failure of the housing market to provide affordable housing. Randolph and Judd (2000:91) stressed ‘access to life-chances and non-material attributes and values’ implied the need for a more complex policy prescription for tackling social exclusion; calling for a framework for understanding the interconnectedness of disadvantaged peoples’ problems and an integrated, holistic policy response. While low-market sites were not abandoned as in many UK, US and European cities, the older suburbs of Western Sydney still housed large and growing numbers of the socially and economically disadvantaged (Gleeson and Low, 2000:53). Yet such social exclusion was largely ignored by policymakers.

Australian researchers used social exclusion references to draw attention to housing policy limitations and the strengths of the concept:

... social exclusion is inadequate when merely used to describe pockets of poverty and disadvantage rather than to present a set of ideas about social phenomena and the processes leading to disadvantage. Social exclusion’s main value is at the
level of implementation ... [and] can be used to endorse housing policies that seek to adopt a multi-agency or ‘joined up’ government approach in which problems are not tackled in isolation but addressed at the source (Arthurs and Jacobs, 2003:ii).

Commenting on the lack of private rental housing affordability, Wood, Forbes and Gibb (2003:263) similarly highlighted the complexity of inequality:

By adding to the speculative element in the cycles of economic boom and bust, greater inequality shifts our attention from the pressing environmental and social problems and makes us worry about unemployment, insecurity, and how to get the economy moving again. Reducing inequality would not only make the economic system more stable, it would also make a major contribution to social and environmental sustainability.

The housing focus aside, social exclusion was increasingly used to frame a broad range of social and territorial issues. Coupled with locational disadvantage, academics acknowledged social exclusion as a ‘place-based phenomena’, since deprived areas suffering a lack of services could compound residents’ vulnerability to exclusion (Randolph and Murray, 2005:52).

Collaboration between WSROC, four Western Sydney Councils, DIPNR and the Ministry for the Arts had previously provided guidelines for developing better public places, highlighting cultural differences in the use of open space. For example, in Auburn:

The men meet on the streets, at the barbers or in cafes. There is nowhere for women to meet. The congested footpath space does not allow for meaningful encounters or places to rest (WSROC, 2003:23).

This study resulted in urban design changes to make the public spaces more inclusive. However, none of these social inclusion initiatives would have occurred without the collaboration of disparate design professionals and numerous governance agencies, in consultation with existing residents, yet there still remains a general reluctance to foster such cooperation among professionals and agencies.

Demonstrating awareness of the principles of social exclusion and inclusion, a House of Representatives Sustainable Cities (2005) report gave bipartisan support to urban policy being a federal responsibility, detailing issues contributing to a social inclusion agenda:

... the cost of poorly managed urban development is significant: neighbourhoods that face special barriers to employment and training may result in successive generations trapped into welfare dependency. Per capita health costs are likely to rise in poorly planned urban areas where active transport options are minimal due to planning, safety or distance barriers (Australian Government, 2005:28).

Then, a federal Labor opposition discussion paper on urban development, housing and local government noted the Howard government’s failure to engage with urban issues, pinpointing the closure of the Building Better Cities (BBC)
program (Section 2.3) and the absence of a national affordable housing strategy; leading to increasing socio-economic polarisation (Carr, 2005). In this context comments made in 2006 by Prime Minister Howard to the National Press Club are noteworthy:

In the 21st century, managing our social cohesion will remain the highest test of the Australian achievement. It demands the best Australian ideals of tolerance and decency, as well as the best Australian traditions of realism and of balance (Howard, 2006).

This fleeting political volte-face, following almost a decade of public policy concerns elsewhere with social capital, social inclusion/exclusion or community capacity, was in marked contrast to the 1980s to mid 1990s period when consumer choice and sovereignty, competition, competitive tendering, commercialisation and market efficiency provided the lexicon of the public policy debate (Hulse and Stone, 2006:5). This latter group of terminology, derived from economic rationalism and public choice theories of new public sector management, permeated housing, health, education, law enforcement, family and urban and regional development policies throughout the Howard era (1996 to 2007). Hulse and Saugeres (2009) contrasted Howard’s view with the multi-dimensions of housing insecurity experienced by low income renters, including instability, lack of personal control, limited privacy and poor supportive community connections. Subsequent research stressed how Australia ‘draws upon and extends UK experience’ in policy development to assist the long-term disadvantaged, highlighting the links between aspects of urban policy, economic participation and social cohesion (Hulse et al., 2010:1).

In Australia, the greatest commitment to social inclusion to inform social policy came with the Rudd, then Gillard federal governments first elected in 2007. These Labor governments focused on people’s participation in the labour force and released a policy on social inclusion described as:

... a vision for a more socially inclusive society having the opportunity to participate fully in our society (Australian Government, 2008)

In 2010 the Social Inclusion Board (2008) agreed on development of a major project to provide ‘advice on governance models that work best for locational approaches to address disadvantage’ (Social Inclusion Board, 2010:5).

Reviewing the literature on social inclusion Hulse et al (2010) noted how, following the UK initiative, the Australian Social Inclusion Board (2008) emphasised social inclusion through workforce participation. In contrast, the European Commission linked the term to an inadequate consideration of social rights (Morrison, 2008). A Social Inclusion Board report (2010) argued that the public service should be more flexible and adopt more decentralised ways of
working and be more engaged with citizens in order to tackle the complex array of problems of entrenched disadvantage. In contrast however, the NSW government showed limited complementary interest in the social inclusion agenda.

The Social Inclusion Board concentrated on locational and intergenerational disadvantage, examining effective public policy avenues for overcoming these persistent problems (Vinson, 2007:33). The Board’s indicators focused on social distress, health, community safety, economic and education factors but omitted consideration of transport disadvantage. Lacking definition and a clear theoretical basis for the concept of social inclusion — with the ‘included’ treated as ‘passive objects of policy’ rather than ‘active participants in society’ — the approach was criticised for resembling ‘social citizenship’ without the crucial focus on participation as a ‘right’ (Buckmaster and Thomas (2009:11).

The 2007 Labor government acknowledged that poverty and social exclusion were key causes of homelessness across developed nations. A New directions for affordable housing 2007 and a 2008 Green Paper on homelessness entitled Which way home? started to address the issues. However in 2011, ministerial responsibility for social inclusion was transferred to the Minister for Health and Ageing, while the housing portfolio was subsumed into the Department of Families, Housing, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs; viewed by many as lowering the social inclusion and housing policy profiles and their effectiveness (see Section 5.5).

The Abbott Liberal-coalition government elected in 2013, with its firm commitment to the neo-liberal policy environment, reviewed in Section 3.1, immediately abolished both the Social Inclusion Board and the social inclusion office in the federal bureaucracy, archiving its website.

To summarise, social exclusion is as much about a lack of power and social integration and participation as about a lack of access to resources (Edwards, 2001). It is now widely acknowledged that poverty and decline are not confined to an individual’s circumstances and responsibility, but result from a combination of the social structures in which the disadvantaged are located, their local level connections and community interactions. While the US policy emphasis was on social processes, contrasting with the economic focus adopted in both the UK and the EU, in Australia governments concentrated on the deep exclusion experienced in social housing estates, ignoring the housing stress suffered by lower income private rental households in the older suburbs of areas like West-Central Sydney.
Criticisms of the social exclusion and inclusion concepts. Since the 1970s emergence of social exclusion and inclusion concepts, criticisms of the validity of the use of the terms have emerged. Levitas (1996) argued that the UK emphasis on inclusion was on opportunities for people to climb out of poverty, not the abolition of poverty itself. Inclusion does not necessarily imply a redistributive agenda, although social exclusion was being viewed as a consequence of poverty at that time. Subsequently Levitas (2003) pointed to the danger of the inclusion/exclusion metaphor evoking a dichotomous image of society in which there are insiders and outsiders, viewing only the very marginal as the problem. In the UK inequalities were deemed to be the outcome of individual attributes, whether innate or acquired (ibid:7). Yet, as in Australia (see Section 6.7) the powers of local government in the UK to help eliminate inequality were constrained by funding. Also, an emphasis on the local tended to pass the buck of responsibility, given the lack of centralised government redistribution policies.

Cook et al. (2001) questioned whether access to part-time work — the fastest growing employment category in the UK — was an effective pathway to social inclusion. They argued for adopting a range of contemporary social inclusion policies, such as strong community support structures, to address the forms of exclusion, not limiting social exclusion to economic exclusion. While economic exclusion is undeniably a major cause of social exclusion, social policy under New Labour paid limited attention to more informal mechanisms for increasing social inclusion (ibid).

Turok (2004) considered social cohesion a nebulous concept, while generally signifying concern that society was becoming more unequal and divided, which threatened collective cohesion. Conversely, inclusion suggested some degree of social solidarity and possibly redistribution to limit inequalities in income and access to jobs (ibid:18). Turok provided further insights:

Narrower social and economic disparities may give people greater security, hope for the future and better personal relationships. The extent of upward mobility is also important, since some inequality may be more acceptable if individuals have good prospects of improvement in the future. Long-term or recurrent poverty or unemployment with low expectations of progress is an important feature of social exclusion (Turok, 2004:19).

Prior to the global financial crisis (GFC) and following a period when major cities were perceived to be in decline, an urban renaissance seemed to be taking place. However Buck et al (2005) provided a trenchant criticism of what they termed a New Conventional Wisdom which dominated academic and policy debates on 21st century urban issues. Considering whether cities mattered more or less in a globalising world, these authors questioned the possibility of defining...
a successful city and the value of contributions made through the related concepts of economic competitiveness, social cohesion and governance. They argued the excluded still remained socially connected in at least three ways: first, exclusion was generated by linked processes of social and economic change. Second, there remained significant mobility in individual circumstances over time and exclusion was not generally a lifetime phenomenon, although it may have severe long-term consequences on life chances. Third, the excluded were not necessarily shut out of social networks which might include the non-excluded who could assist in providing links for gaining employment (Buck et al., 2005:54).

Efforts to politicise and spatialise the debate on exclusion described social exclusion as misleading; it played down the importance of income and material resources; it failed to prevent inequality; and suggested disadvantage was socially created (Gough, Eisenschitz and McCulloch, 2006). Conversely, they argued:

... it is precisely normal society which creates social exclusion. ... [and] ... avoids confronting the question of justice (ibid:4).

New Labour positioned local community involvement in bottom-up social exclusion policy initiatives as essential. Yet this assumed disadvantaged communities had the democratic capacity to participate in urban policy projects. The onus was placed on the community as subordinate partners to government bodies for solving social exclusion, but fostered criticisms of a lack of community involvement, knowledge and skills (Morrison, 2008), blaming the victims for their plight and thereby deflecting attention from the broader structural issues responsible for inequality and marginalisation. Morrison (2008:5) criticised the British social exclusion discourse for prioritising political/economic aspects of exclusion over social justice concerns, to the detriment of addressing social exclusion overall. Writing on the links between globalisation, UK poverty and welfare, McGrew (2010:15) described the wide array of policy networks (including think tanks, public-private partnerships and NGOs) involved in policy consultation as ‘somewhat opaque’, but nevertheless had political influence and shaped public perceptions of the social policy agenda. McGrew claimed global governance often reinforced tendencies towards fragmentation rather than ‘joined up’ governance.

Australian researchers and policymakers, debating social exclusion and inclusion issues, challenged comparisons being made across regions or nations, when income, housing and social participation standards were so variable (Arthurson
and Jacobs, 2003). Academics stressed the conflicting social science paradigms underling social exclusion, in general concluding the concept was imprecise and added little to debates about poverty and inequality (ibid). Conversely, politicians used the term to justify public expenditure programs intended to enhance paid employment opportunities. Arthurson and Jacobs (2004) cited seminal research by sociologist Peter Townsend (1979:32) which defined and measured the multi-dimensional aspects of disadvantage. Arthurson and Jacobs (2004) warned that the convergence of social housing and social exclusion risked stigmatising poorer areas, since social exclusion was labelling the symptoms rather than contributing towards policy solutions:

Social disadvantage cannot be cured simply by bringing people back into the system by making them conform, because social exclusion adds nothing to the processes underlying inequality that has not already been said (Arthurson and Jacobs, 2003:9).

In the UN report, Atkinson and Marlier (2010) demonstrated the irony of how adopting social indicators of poverty and social exclusion risked policymakers contributing to an individual’s or a group’s sense of powerlessness. With some socio-economically disadvantaged groups disproportionally represented over others, people should not be treated as homogeneous when assessing the extent of individual deprivation. For instance, they noted that one disabled person’s circumstances are independent from other similarly or differently disabled people; parents and children may well experience varying forms of social exclusion; and experiencing unemployment in areas where unemployment is rare differs from being situated among an unemployed majority. Significantly, Atkinson and Marlier (2010:13) concluded groups most at risk of poverty and exclusion lack empowerment.

**Why social exclusion and inclusion is a valuable approach.** Despite differing views on the importance of the social inclusion and exclusion agenda, expressed in the UK, the EU and Australia, these phenomena are now recognised as indicating complex inter-group dynamics (Tallon, 2010). Voruba (2000) noted how the exclusion/inclusion distinction marked an important innovation within social research, providing a multi-dimensional dynamic approach for the analysis of disadvantage. Voruba observed that social sciences no longer saw some groups as ‘victims’ but rather as ‘actors’ coping with given circumstances and considering whether the actors themselves perceived inclusion and exclusion as good or bad.

Levitas (2003) described how, despite not simply being the obverse of social exclusion, adopting the concept of social inclusion under a redistributive
Chapter 3: The idea of social inclusion

discourse was a starting point, since social exclusion can result from poverty, hence raising benefit levels to reduce poverty is crucial (ibid).

Commins provided an important overview noting:

Thus, social exclusion has a broader and more comprehensive meaning than poverty. It can be a cause as well as a consequence of income poverty and material deprivation. It refers to the dynamic processes of being shut out, partially or fully, from any or all of several systems which influence the economic and social integration of people into their society. It points to 'systems failure' rather than to individual failings as causes of social exclusion (Commins, 2004:68).

Also, Reimer stressed the value of the approach for effective policy development through the emphasis on process:

By focusing on the process of social exclusion and inclusion we identify more direct policy relevant implications than levels or standards of poverty. It is the processes by which people become poor that are amenable to effective policies and programmes rather than the identification of the poor themselves. In addition, these perspectives force policymakers to recognize the complexity of exclusion processes, thus avoiding the single focused solutions that had been so ineffective in the past (Reimer, 2004:89).

The UK literature on social exclusion has particular resonance for Australia by suggesting that housing policies tackling area-based deprivation in social housing estates are insufficient and need to embrace other policy areas including education, employment, health and welfare, together with transport and infrastructure issues (Arthurson, 2003). The social exclusion policy not only confronted poverty but also broader issues of disadvantage. Buck et al. (2005:54) described how the policy implied agency:

... since exclusion is something that is done to people, allowing us in principle at least to move away from 'blaming the victim' and examine processes of closure and discrimination.

Importantly, the causal mechanisms stemming from housing, employment and transport policies were considered in tandem.

Currently, social exclusion is considered in the non-economic and relational aspects of capability, such as capacity building, trust and social capital; reflecting a more people-centred approach to social policy. Furthermore, social inclusion is multi-dimensional and dynamic, not static and spatial in nature, with a focus on community as well as individual and family resources (Smyth, Reddel and Jones, 2004:603). According to these authors a social inclusion approach can lead to a more personalised, participatory welfare state, concerned with principles of social cohesion, sharing and integration. Hence poverty — increasingly framed in terms of capacity to participate in society — is directly linked to social inclusion, with poverty-proofing and social impact assessment playing an important role in this context (Atkinson and Marlier, 2010:1).
3.3 Summary and conclusions

Social inclusion is not just an abstraction, its achievement is important in today’s political climate. In many countries, there are powerless groups (including ethnic communities, refugees and minorities) suffering poverty and social exclusion; there are regions that have been left behind by economic progress; and there are barriers to social mobility (Atkinson and Marlier, 2010:3).

Nowadays the social inclusion focus examines how poverty and social exclusion is created by economic, social, cultural and political processes in space. Social exclusion is not just caused by a lack of money, but a whole set of qualitative problems, all contributing to social isolation becoming a key issue, with a wide variety of other forms of exclusion operating at the individual, household or community level. Exclusion is considered in terms of housing, employment, access to welfare services, social attachments and communal solidarities which could be transient, endemic or permanent. Importantly, transport disadvantage is now recognised as a factor in generating social exclusion; particularly if it prevents participation in employment, education or recreation opportunities — limiting individuals’ abilities to realise their full potential.

The rhetoric of joined up solutions recognised the need to address complex issues of disadvantage from a multiplicity of sources. Captured under this umbrella term, usually by centralised government, this required a whole-of-government, cross-departmental approach. The concept of place was identified as the mechanism for joined-up policy: both Britain and Australia identified the most deprived neighbourhoods as recipients of an array of social exclusion policies (Morrison, 2008). While social inclusion remains a contested term in both academic and policy literature, it is both significant and volatile, since as Gidley et al. (2010:6) correctly argued, ‘there is a spectrum of ideological positions underlying theory, policy and practice’.

Drawing on international examples to examine the effectiveness of government policy interventions to reduce social inequality, Section 3.1 presented a three-phased history of increasing government interest in urban policies: starting in the 19th century with the role of the nation state; followed by post-war urban regeneration initiatives focused on area-based projects; which were then swept aside by UK conservative governments from 1979 to 1991. During the 1980s an emphasis on local entrepreneurialism, driven by a top-down neo-liberal political-economic orthodoxy, resulted in a commitment to property-led regeneration involving public-private partnerships. New Labour’s late 1990s ‘Third Way’ attempts were criticised for failing to provide enduring solutions to disadvantage.
Governments in western democracies were shown to be promoting competitiveness between districts, cities and regions within a global economy, which is adding to increasing socio-economic polarisation. This research drew attention to how fiscally prudent nation states had reduced welfare entitlement and dismantled redistributive urban and regional policies in favour of neo-liberal initiatives, technological innovation, labour market flexibility and organic growth.

Prior to the change of government in 2010 ‘social exclusion’ was widely used in the UK and Europe across education, sociology, psychology, politics and economic disciplines. People are considered excluded, not just because they are currently unemployed, but because they have limited future prospects and lack voice, power and representation. Hence social exclusion goes beyond traditional views of poverty and deprivation and considers the complex causes and consequences of disadvantage. Conversely, social inclusion combats poverty and social exclusion by bringing people into mainstream society as opposed to being outside. While criticised by some academics as just another attempt to deal with poverty and inequality, addressing social and economic issues in tandem and focusing on areas not just individuals, places a greater emphasis on equity.

However, the UK Social Exclusion Unit did not define the difference between social exclusion as an academic explanatory concept and its political deployment in justifying new forms of policy intervention. In contrast, the EU embraced a social inclusion agenda concentrating intervention measures on the role of paid work as a vehicle for social integration. In other words, EU policies for poverty reduction centred on issues of employability, whereas in the UK the focus remained on social exclusion of residents in deprived neighbourhoods and regeneration of run-down urban areas (Tallon, 2010:88).

New Labour attempted to deal with social exclusion under the guise of social inclusion through the Third Way. Yet researchers and policymakers realised that judicial UK, US and EU interventions were failing to produce enduring solutions to disadvantage. Academics coined the term governance to capture inter alia the uncertain and ill-defined shifts in the nation state’s role in dealing with the urban regeneration of ageing suburbs. Contrasting with the Keynesian welfare states of the post-war era — emphasising equalisation of wealth, population and infrastructure across national territories — governments in western democracies then promoted competitiveness between districts, cities and regions positioned within global economies. Applying the political rhetoric of fiscal prudence, nation states actively reduced welfare entitlements and redistributive urban and
regional policies, favouring neo-liberal initiatives, technological innovation, labour market flexibility and organic growth.

Social research now distinguishes between social exclusion and inclusion, providing a visible, dynamic and multi-dimensional approach to the analysis of disadvantage. Individuals are no longer seen as victims but as actors coping with both inclusion and exclusion, often simultaneously. The lack of an integrated approach to solving complex urban problems contributes to regional poverty and decline. Hence, due to the ambivalence of the agenda, a single set of causes should not be implied. Broadly-speaking, areas of inclusion and exclusion relate to demographic factors (including socio-economic factors, culture, linguistic group, religion, ethnicity, geography, age and gender) and status (such as homelessness, unemployment, and a lack of empowerment and location disadvantage). Alongside affordable housing, economic resources and employment, there is clearly a need to consider health, education and transport accessibility, together with justice, well-being, mobility and social and political participation when developing social inclusion policies.

Social inclusion is a multi-factor framework superior to other simpler, often one-dimensional approaches around ‘poverty’ or ‘social disadvantage’. Use of the concept can help to take a more integrated approach to intersections between housing markets, labour markets, transport services and other social infrastructure in specific places. Social inclusion is more than an aspiration for a modern city. The presence of social equity and justice is now considered a prime ingredient of an economically successful city, and a prerequisite for a city’s long term social and environmental sustainability. This thesis underscores the importance of policies for social inclusion and their role in effective urban planning. The social exclusion and inclusion concepts contributed to understandings of poverty and disadvantage and spatial planning, with a differing emphasis across jurisdictions in the US, the EU and the UK.

The cooption of the concept of social exclusion and inclusion by neo-liberal agendas offered the option to rehabilitate the concepts by cutting through the definitional vagueness and outright political spin adopted from the 1980s to the mid 1990s in Australia. Hence, social inclusion could be used as a framing concept, instead of the more commonly-used concepts such as social disadvantage. Chapter 3 established the argument that metropolitan policies and local programs need to be based on an understanding of the multiple aspects of social exclusion and be framed and coordinated with the aims of promoting spatial, economic and social inclusion. In West-Central, policy coordination
focusing on social inclusion could have beneficial outcomes in reducing the social exclusion of residents. A more concerted agenda would address equality in terms of equal opportunities, embrace a holistic approach to social reform and the framing of policies that remain compassionate to disadvantage. Such an agenda would also nurture social diversity and tolerance to minorities. It would be mindful of the links between housing, employment and transport policies as underpinning greater community sustainability, well-being and health. And rather than being an action to correct a residual social problem, a social inclusion agenda could act as the driver of urban renewal. These lessons of the causes and consequences of social exclusion demonstrate the value in adopting the social inclusion agenda in considering the nation state’s role in urban regeneration to improve the social, economic and physical condition of areas undergoing transition and decline, now examined in Chapter 4.
CHAPTER 4: The urban regeneration context

Introduction

This thesis seeks to elevate urban regeneration as a research and policy concern and define it more strongly by marrying it to the concept of social inclusion. Hence an important objective is to identify the conditions and policies contributing to greater social inclusion and diminished social exclusion at a sub-regional scale, in order to inform the development of urban regeneration policies for West-Central Sydney. The term urban regeneration (from ‘re-birth’ in Latin), in use since the 1980s, is defined as:

... a comprehensive and integrated vision and action which leads to the resolution of urban problems and seeks to bring about a lasting improvement in the economic, physical, social and environmental conditions of an area that has been subject to change (Roberts, 2000:17).

By nature regeneration is interventionist, straddling the public, private and community sectors. It involves considerable changes in institutional structures over time in response to different economic, social, environmental and political circumstances. While presenting a means of mobilising collective efforts, urban regeneration helps determine policies and actions to improve urban conditions and institutional structures (Roberts, 2000:22).

Chapter 3 discussed the development and evolution of the role of the nation state, with social exclusion concerns advancing the concept of social inclusion in the EU, the UK and, more recently, in Australia. A discussion on the important role played by the nation state in dealing with disadvantage was followed by an assessment of the conditions and lessons for more effective social inclusion policies and whether the concept of social inclusion could act as a driver to assist regeneration of West-Central’s older suburbs.

Since government-led urban regeneration is relatively new in Australia, since the late 1980s, compared to North American, EU and UK experiences of the 1970s, heuristic case studies are utilised to examine the capacity for interventionist policies to deliver improved social outcomes. Focusing on policies and practices aimed at increasing social inclusion and improving property and neighbourhood value without displacing those in most need, this chapter demonstrates how the concept has been operationalised, while stressing the importance of addressing
Chapter 4: The urban regeneration context

the empirical relationship between housing, employment and transport policy jurisdictions in the lives of individuals and communities.

Section 4.1 provides a brief overview of overseas regeneration and compares a selection of North American and European advanced cities’ experiences. Section 4.2 offers more detail on British urban regeneration lessons, drawing particularly upon in-depth research from Glasgow University’s Department of Urban Studies. As one of the largest UK urban research centres — investigating housing renewal, labour markets, governance and urban policies — evidence from Central Scotland proved particularly relevant for policy development in West-Central Sydney, a similarly complex sub-region affected by de-industrialisation and struggling to achieve urban regeneration. A history of housing, employment and transport issues in West-Central Sydney demonstrates the need for more concerted government intervention in urban regeneration.

Section 4.3 examines the limitations of the neo-liberal economic reliance on the trickle-down effect and the meaning of competitiveness when applied to cities, following which Section 4.4 discusses a sixfold range of best practices drawn from the overseas experience, namely the importance of:

1. Combining both people- and place-based mechanisms.
2. Ensuring macro- and micro-level interventions.
3. Aligning multi-level government policies and interventions to produce positive outcomes at the neighbourhood level.
4. Developing genuine community empowerment at appropriate levels.
5. Creating partnerships between the public, private and community sectors.
6. Assuring long-term programs are well resourced.

Section 4.5 outlines Australian government approaches to urban regeneration and the impediments to effective land agency involvement. Section 4.6 discusses the value of social mix policies to help address the social exclusion arguments presented in Chapter 3. This leaves Chapters 5 and 6 to critique NSW policy directions and their impacts on the West-Central sub-region.

4.1 Urban regeneration in North America and Europe.

North American experience. As Canada’s third largest city, with a 2006 population of 578,041 and a metropolitan region exceeding 2.1 million people, Vancouver, like GWS, is extremely ethnically and linguistically diverse; with 52% of residents not speaking English as their first language (Kelly, 2010b:9). Valued
for its high amenity and liveability, since the late 1950s the city’s urban plans emphasised high-rise residential development as opposed to sprawl and, more recently, ‘ecodensity’ (to reduce the ecological footprint) through rapid transit as opposed to freeway systems. In the 1980s Vancouver directed 80% of its growth to already urbanised areas located along the city’s transit corridors and regional town centres; demonstrating strong engagement with its communities, NGOs, civic groups and business interests. However, Vancouver’s increasing popularity as a place to live — becoming Canada’s most expensive housing market — means homelessness is increasing, adding to rather than reducing the socio-economic divide (Kelly, 2005b).

Growing rapidly from a population of 4.3 million in 1996 to 5.1 million in 2006 Toronto is a similarly ethnically diverse city, with 43% of its population from a non English-speaking background. While manufacturing has been replaced, the city maintains its service industries and provides more affordable housing than Vancouver. Local government amalgamation in the last decade led to the first regional approach to managing land use in thirty years, greater coordination in decision-making and regional-scale transport management — together overcoming previous investment hurdles posed by having three tiers of government (Kelly, 2010b:14) and pointing to the importance of governance practices.

Compared to Australia, the US has a long history of urban renewal, but provides little analysis of program evaluation (Ruming, 2006:84). Until the early 1960s US public housing received low levels of government funding and was socially segregated. The patterns of segregation often meant more affluent residents left public housing neighbourhoods — a term coined white flight — contributing to concentrations of poverty. During the 1960s US banks redlined maps, signalling those areas where they would not provide mortgage finance (typically inner-city black neighbourhoods, usually defined by their ethnicity) regardless of geography (Brugmann, 2009:259). Although legally prohibited in the US, the spatial bias of the Boston Federal Reserve Bank’s refusal of credit to minority or low income groups, causing them to seek finance from high cost sources, was leading to a downward spiral of debt stress and poverty following widespread discriminatory lending practices (Cohen-Cole, 2008).

However, a national public housing program in the US reveals some housing policy lessons for Australia. A Homeownership and Opportunity for People Everywhere (HOPE VI) program — beginning in 1992 and legally recognised in 1998 — a major initiative run by the Federal Department of Housing and Urban
Chapter 4: The urban regeneration context

Development (HUD), is revitalising the worst areas of public housing into mixed-income developments (Popkin et al., 2004:1). By June 2010, 254 HOPE VI competitive revitalisation grants, involving more than $6.1 billion in housing assistance, were awarded to 132 housing authorities. Over 15 years 96,200 public housing units were demolished and replaced with 107,800 new or renovated dwellings, with over half (53%) designated affordable for lowest income households. With 80% of funds targeted for physical improvements, the program emphasised rehabilitation, reconfiguration and demolition, plus development of additional low income and market-rent housing, adding to the social mix (ABT Associates, 1996; Gilderbloom, Brazley and Pan, 2005). HOPE VI demonstrates the importance of long-term, well resourced programs and the widening of housing policies to increase social mix.

Significantly, initial efforts in HOPE VI concentrated on strong market areas, followed by building into areas of weakness, rather than vice versa. This suggests a need for re-evaluation of worst first policies with further consideration of neighbourhood tipping points, since preventative methods are often more cost-effective in the longer term. As well, social planning objectives sought to make public housing residents self-sufficient. The program was positioned as a partnership between HUD, public housing agencies, local government, the private sector, non-profit organisations and residents (Ruming, 2006:82), illustrating the value of cooperative working arrangements.

Scattered-site housing in the US was providing an alternative to previous concentrations of poverty associated with high density public housing units. Yet since one-for-one replacement of the old housing stock was not required, a net loss of housing occurred and some local authorities were criticised for using the program to evict the poor in favour of gentrification, which generated greater income for the cities, rather than dealing with need (Ruming, 2006:84).

While HOPE VI is a national regeneration program, state variations are also illuminating. Portland Oregon is the only directly elected regional government in the US. A Portland Development Commission — a semi-public agency — plays a major role in downtown areas, with strong land use planning controls, providing housing and economic development programs, expanding and diversifying the city’s economy. Often presented as the antithesis of Los Angeles-type urban sprawl, Portland is pursuing urban consolidation (in US terms smart growth) and, commendably, consistently involves its residents in decision-making (Kelly, 2010b:19).
Generally speaking, the North American approach to renewal provided limited lessons for West-Central in terms of housing policies (Ruming, 2006:7). Nevertheless agency cooperation, community participation and social mix initiatives were addressed and several recent US research reports have since drawn attention to the links between social inclusion, employment and transport issues. The first, *Missed opportunity: Transit and jobs in metropolitan America* for the Brookings Institute cautioned:

As states and regions strive to put Americans back to work, policymakers should be careful not to sever the transportation lifelines between workers and jobs (Tomer et al., 2011:22).

The report called for improved access to jobs and co-ordination of land use strategies, economic development and housing policies with transit decisions, since rapid growth of low-density suburbia had resulted in 40% of metropolitan Americans living in exurban areas — defined as a region or settlement outside a city, usually beyond its suburbs, often inhabited by wealthy families (ibid:3). Decentralisation of employment, leaving only one in five jobs in America’s downtown urban core areas, presented a challenge for metropolitan job access, particularly for the working poor. Several causes were identified: first, the out-of-date hubs and spokes transit systems in some cities — previously serving the older denser cores well — proved inadequate for outer suburban areas. Second, decentralised low density development often isolated residential areas from commercial uses. Third, a spatial mismatch cut off some inner-city workers from suburban job opportunities, while low-moderate income workers spent increasing proportions of their incomes on cars. The report concluded:

As policymakers, business and local leaders, and the general public grapple with 21st century challenges of achieving economic growth and prosperity, understanding how well workers can access jobs by transit is critically important (ibid:4).

In analysing Detroit’s poor 50% labour force participation rate, Gallagher and Seidel (2012) pointed to ongoing failures to address the lack of job skills, an over-emphasis on manufacturing, high dropout rates and the city’s dysfunctional bus system. Improving access to suburban jobs for low skilled workers without cars, they said, required better regional public transport options.

*The Urban Future of Work* 2011 report (Crescimano et al., 2011) — examined how denser, more urban workplaces could strengthen the San Francisco Bay area’s economic competitiveness, since high unemployment rates and slow employment growth continued to threaten the local economy, with once successful sectors now in decline. Despite acknowledging that new technology allows working remotely, the report reinforced the importance of the office in
fostering collaboration, innovation and competitiveness. Criticising attempts to limit housing sprawl that ignored job location, the report stressed the benefits of locating jobs near transit nodes and cited many economic, environmental and spatial benefits over transit-oriented housing (ibid:25-27). These three reports highlight the increasing mismatch between where poorer people live, where they work and their limited public transport options — a situation echoed in West-Central Sydney. This research provides important insights for Australia’s major cities, particularly Sydney, struggling with similar transport issues.

**Urban regeneration in Europe.** Generally speaking, European regeneration is characterised as catering for middle-class real-estate and consumption-goods markets, not poorer and/or immigrant populations (Musterd and Ostendorf 2008). Urban renewal policies in the Netherlands have a long history of tackling both smaller scale (neighbourhood) and larger scale (city) issues by addressing physical, social and economic questions together (ibid:78). Giving greater attention to social cohesion and integration than elsewhere in the EU, *social mix* was promoted as the solution for a lack of social cohesion in the targeted neighbourhoods (see Section 4.6).

Healey (2006:37-76) presented an informative case study of Amsterdam’s approach to urban development. The City Council was at the leading edge of planning innovation. A culturally diverse city, Amsterdam stood out for the strength and continuity of its urban planning capacity, providing a salutary lesson for Australia. During the 1960s the urban planning emphasis was on Rotterdam and developing Schipol airport as a major regional employment node. There remained a close link between planned development projects and the allocation of implementation resources, particularly at the national level (Healey, 2006).

However, urban protests against the commercial centre as the urban core in the early 1970s, favoured mixed-use neighbourhoods, reduction in road space, retention of the historical fabric and space for diverse lifestyles (ibid). This represented a move away from Amsterdam’s large-scale development projects to urban renewal. By 1978 Amsterdam was in industrial decline with big waterfront industries badly hit. Waves of immigration from Surinam, Turkey and Morocco caused the more affluent to leave the city and inner city areas became home to the poorest and the focus of urban problems. In the 1980s economic interest promoted the dynamic western area as the key to national economic strength, with an emphasis placed on logistics, commerce and finance as
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opposed to manufacturing (ibid) (resonating with issues of Sydney’s ‘global arc’ later discussed in Section 5.1). Focusing on renewing cities and reviving the inner core areas, by the late 1980s the policy shifted to more privately developed housing for owner-occupation in the city centre, thus weakening the City Council’s role as a land owner and developer. While a formal, directly elected regional organisation was proposed to take over strategic planning, transport, housing allocation, economic and environmental policy from the municipalities in metropolitan areas, this never eventuated.

In the 1990s Amsterdam City Council was faced with substantial growth of the urban area into a wider metropolitan region. The early 1990s saw more involvement of the private sector, but coordination problems arose due to separation of urban regeneration activities from physical planning. The plan, rather than shaping investment, was considered a rolling policy mechanism, consolidating and legitimating project proposals and, as national investment unravelled, the planning tradition came under challenge, with the Council no longer able to capture urban development value. From 1996 to 2005 there appeared to be emerging tensions between the need for one, or several strategies, and a shortening of planning horizons from 2030 to 2010.

**Key insights.** Despite substantial US public expenditure in the worst neighbourhoods aiming to achieve physical renewal and improve social capital, the long-term benefits appear limited. Collectively the North American examples highlight the complexity and inter-connectivity of social exclusion issues; requiring consideration of land use decisions affecting housing location and employment accessibility in tandem. Stressing the importance of widening regional transport options to improve low employment participation rates, selective North American city experiences reinforce the need for further Australian research into the assumptions underpinning urban consolidation objectives. Such research would support the logic of increasing higher density employment at transit nodes, as opposed to increasing residential densities, as an overall more effective urban policy solution.

Other attempts at urban regeneration in Europe pointed to risks of increasing rather than decreasing socio-economic disadvantage among poor communities, whereas the Amsterdam case study demonstrates a mature system resulting from coordinated public investment and working through consensus. More robust solutions evolved when a greater emphasis on equity, social and economic issues widened social mix and focused on the problems of areas rather than individuals. The EU experience emphasised the importance of access to paid
work to reduce poverty, embracing the concepts of social exclusion and inclusion, and needing to align multi-level policies and interventions at the neighbourhood level; with a genuine commitment to community participation.

In contrast, the UK had a strong emphasis on addressing social exclusion through urban regeneration, particularly in marginalised communities. Section 4.2 now demonstrates the substantial public sector support necessitated for urban regeneration, without which private sector investment is unlikely to occur. These are important considerations for urban regeneration in Australia.

### 4.2 Urban regeneration in the UK.

From 1945 until the mid 1960s UK government spending on urban areas focused on post-war reconstruction (Tallon, 2010). An extensive range of public services, based on need rather than ability to pay, were mainly concentrated in health care, education, income support, age and disability pensions, housing and social services (Arthurson and Jacobs, 2003). These were paid for by higher taxes imposed on wealthier households and by cyclical government debt. Thus, in the late 1940s the state played a major role through direct public development and ownership of key industries such as energy, post, telecommunications, railways and water supply and some coal, steel and shipbuilding. Applying controls on private companies to realign their actions with wider social aspirations, this included the system of town and country planning to address concerns about unrestricted urban growth and ribbon development (Tallon, 2010:32). In the post-war period extensive slum clearance, town centre redevelopment policies and a New Towns Program aimed to provide better places in which to live and work (ibid); all examples of state intervention seeking better economic and social outcomes.

A body of research emerging from the UK draws on this extensive experience, since regeneration has been on the urban policy agenda for decades, involving national policies to influence the social, economic and physical development of cities, focusing on economic development, competitiveness and tackling social disadvantage and exclusion (Tallon, 2010:3). A major geographic dimension of economic decline in the UK in the past thirty years is an increasing social and spatial polarisation, visible in inner suburban and inner city areas and peripheral local authority estates. This was attributed to a number of processes:

... related principally and traditionally to divisions related to employment, social status and ethnicity, but also to variables such as age, gender, sexuality and able-bodiedness (Pacione, 1997 cited in Tallon 2010:13).
This shows how employment opportunities are segmented by these factors which control access to work.

Importantly, Tallon also stressed:

Underlying the different language and different concepts is a long-standing tension—whether people are poor through no fault of their own (due to the system) or whether they are responsible in some way (original sin) (Tallon, 2010:14).

Despite being subjected to countless urban regeneration programs, many UK regions in the 1980s continued to lag behind the national economy in terms of dilapidated housing, poor quality social services and locational disadvantage—although the decline of some neighbourhoods was often masked by the use of city-regional averages (Section 1.8). Criticisms levelled against the UK policy approach included the need for better understanding of the processes of decline (Lichfield, 1992:19) and the ‘short-term, fragmented, ad hoc and project-based nature of the interventions’ (Hausner (1993: 526). As Lucas and Fuller stressed:

The regeneration of deprived areas is ... one of the key instances where the joint delivery of social, environmental and economic objectives could really make a difference (Lucas and Fuller, 2002: 1).

Following devolution under New Labour, many areas of UK urban policy are administered separately in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland, although the general thrust of urban policies remains broadly similar (Turok, 2004). Social inclusion and exclusion concepts, universal versus targeted selective service provision and equality discourses, all contributed to the formulation of urban regeneration policies (Tallon, 2010).

**Housing issues.** Housing played a leading role across the UK throughout the 1950s and 1960s through the renewal of cities’ physical fabric to support sustainable lifestyles.

**Inner area concerns.** By the late 1960s, in line with the US War on Poverty (discussed in 3.1), UK politicians acknowledged the existence of extensive areas of urban deprivation and poverty. A deep recession increased concerns about the economic and political obstacles to tackling the multiple causes of inner area decline. A 1970s program of rehabilitation of older housing—including conversion of tenure into housing association rental—adopted a pragmatic approach, combining demolition and rehabilitation, involving both public sector and private housing. Key reports—*Shelter Neighbourhood Action Project in Granby, Liverpool* (1973) and three *Inner Areas Studies* for Birmingham, Lambeth and Liverpool (Department of the Environment, 1977)—called for greater support for communities experiencing long periods of decline and decay;
Chapter 4: The urban regeneration context

since pockets of poverty and increasing racial problems grew from 1965 to 1975:

The Inner Area Studies ascribed the root cause of deprivation to basic poverty. Low personal incomes were caused by inadequate social security benefits for disadvantaged groups, as well as by rising unemployment due to changes in local and national labour markets. In other words, there was a resounding rejection of the social pathology approach to understanding urban poverty (Tallon, 2010:39).

Collectively, these studies called for integrating separate elements of physical, economic and social policy, through greater community participation and state decentralisation. A 1978 Inner Urban Areas Act, mainstreaming urban policy, highlighted regional disadvantage (Tallon, 2010:40). The problems besetting UK cities, resulting from global economic re-structuring defined in a Costs of Community Change report required a national response. The report stressed:

These declining areas have little chance of being regenerated again. There is so little mobile industry at present that successful policy is no more than a utopian dream... Until policies are implemented which seriously challenge the rights of industry and capital to move freely about the country ... without regard for the welfare of workers and existing communities — who end up carrying the costs ... the problems and inequalities generated by uneven capitalist development will persist (Community Development Program, 1978).

A growing unease about the extensive urban deprivation, led Townsend (1979) to refer to the ‘rediscovery of poverty’, while Michael Young, amongst others, argued that slum redevelopment programs were disrupting rather than replacing communities (Tallon, 2010: 141). The process of uneven development, with formerly prosperous areas becoming derelict, coupled with much-vaunted gentrification and regeneration of previously deprived neighbourhoods, was graphically described by Harvey (1985). Harvey later argued that, rather than spending millions on purposeless ‘flagship’ buildings, the money should be diverted into training and education schemes, enabling the disadvantaged to obtain better jobs, noting how convention centres and art galleries are enjoyed more by wealthy visitors than locally disadvantaged populations (Harvey, 1989).

Throughout the 1980s while London, Bristol and Southampton were recovering population, the political, economic, inherently spatial re-structuring of the Thatcher era left other urban areas as ‘islands of decline in a sea of prosperity’ (Atkinson, 2003 cited in Tallon, 2010:65). Local government was increasingly marginalised as the property development industry assumed a key role in regeneration (Turok, 1992:376). Criticising this 1980s over-reliance on property-led regeneration by conservative governments, Turok concluded it was no panacea for economic regeneration and deficient as the main focus of urban policy. Atkinson (2004) described how regeneration schemes spurred private sector investment and inflated house prices by assuming receipt of generous
public payments when compulsory purchase and demolition of existing housing occurred. Atkinson found that whether or not displacement occurred, gentrification was viewed as a ‘negative neighbourhood process’ (Lees, Slater and Wyly, 2008:221). Ignoring human resource issues — such as education and training; and the underlying competitiveness of production; and requiring investment in essential infrastructure; urban regeneration was further hampered by the collapse of the property market in the late 1980s (Turok, 1992:376). Imrie and Thomas (1992) argued that public money was, in effect, subsidising private property development and neglecting local needs.

During the early 1990s the allocation of urban regeneration funding moved to a competitive bidding process, with centralised government attempting to stimulate innovation within deprived areas (Tallon, 2010: 66). From the late 1990s national policies influencing regeneration of UK cities concentrated on economic development, competitiveness and tackling social disadvantage and exclusion together (Tallon, 2010). A key problem for New Labour in 1997 was ensuring excluded communities benefitted from urban regeneration, since previous policies did little to tackle social exclusion or empower local communities (Syrett and North, 2008:2). The UK government funded a major five-year research program called CITIES: Competitiveness and cohesion to investigate these issues further (Jones, P. and Evans, 2008:55). Academic and government recognition of the links between social exclusion, community cohesion and spatial concentrations of disadvantage gave rise to numerous policy initiatives (Cook et al., 2001:13, Syrett and North, 2008). Area-based Initiatives (ABIs), identified in the National Strategy for Neighbourhood Renewal and the New Deal for Communities (Social Exclusion Unit, 2001), became central to the social exclusion agenda (Tallon, 2010:84). ABIs established partnerships between government agencies, the private sector, the community and different public bodies, to provide access to wider expertise, sensitive to local needs and flexibility in the delivery of local schemes. From a housing perspective, the context for UK concern with social exclusion, regeneration and citizenship participation, moved policy away from replacing the large post-war inner city slums with new council housing towards a program of rehabilitation or demolition of older housing after 1970 (Goodland, 1999:2). Yet poor areas remained and new areas of deprivation emerged (Syrett and North, 2008).

A central strategic policy concern for New Labour — in areas badly affected by de-industrialisation processes — was maintaining place-based regeneration interventions, in a context of wider social and economic processes and change,
set both nationally and internationally (Pacione, 2005). Financial incentives still favoured suburban growth and greenfield development, fuelling urban decline in the inner cities and driving even further exodus, (Power, 2001: 736). Syrett and North (2008) argued that ABIs at best had only marginal impacts, concluding that the renewal focus should not be on ‘place’ per-se, since only in limited instances was urban decline localised in character. Tending to require more than local action for a solution, ABIs risked making a locality responsible for its economic problems, while absolving national governments from taking action (ibid). Displacement impacted on access to affordable housing, jobs, service provision and community participation and provided no solutions to the cycles of decline; affecting both housing and labour markets and leading to withdrawal of private sector services and increased pressures on the public sector (Syrett and North, 2008).

Employment issues. Urban policy under New Labour from 1997 concentrated on short-term economic development, yet the problems needed long-term action to address social and environmental issues. A transition from industrial to post-industrial capitalism occurred through de-industrialisation of the labour force and a rise in the information economy, in the absence of macro-political engagement in the process as a whole (Byrne, 2005:153). Overwhelming emphasis was placed on paid employment as the solution to social exclusion. In 1999 nine UK Regional Development Agencies (RDAs) were charged with creating jobs, reclaiming land, assisting business start-ups and investing (mainly in the deprived areas of their regions); enabled by site-assembly and compulsory purchase powers (Tallon, 2010:93).

A loss of manufacturing in the north-west, the midlands, old industrial parts of suburban London, and particularly north-east England, was not countered by provision of alternative jobs, and re-trainees were depleting their savings (Tochtermann and Clayton, 2011). In these disadvantaged UK regions a jobs shortfall, including the offer of part-time, low-paid, insecure work, or requiring higher level skills, with weak informal networks, was compounded by increasing long-term unemployment. This all pointed to the importance of recruitment practices. A lack of educational qualifications, work-related skills problems and restricted social networks was leading to increased dependence on a mix of casual jobs, the informal economy and welfare benefits. Other institutional factors including a lack of affordable transport and childcare provision presented further barriers to accessing employment. Sheffield, one of England’s largest regional cities, with a population of 534,500 in 2008, is an example of an area
undergoing industrial re-structuring, developing new economic niches but facing substantial challenges requiring national policy support. Despite establishing an Urban Regeneration Company (URC) — a partnership between Sheffield Hallam University and Sheffield City Council, responding to industrial change (Tallon, 2010:94) — the city remained vulnerable to long-term unemployment, exacerbated by public service cuts, low social cohesion (but not open conflict) and high levels of business insolvency (Centre for Cities, 2009).

Undoubtedly, entering employment provides the most effective route out of poverty. Yet low income disadvantaged neighbourhoods play a structural role in the wider urban economy, through the production and reproduction of low cost labour and the provision of cheaper services to residents and businesses (Syrett and North, 2008). These authors concluded that small-scale, labour-intensive initiatives worked best and should be mainstreamed, calling for a re-think of economic policy, including its model of labour markets, its mix of empirical evidence and its policy analysis. However, Syrett and North’s research lacked analysis of how poor areas function under capitalism, with a propensity for those gaining secure employment to move away, leaving behind entrenched locations of disadvantage. This is an important consideration for the older suburbs of West-Central Sydney, reflecting a similar process (see Section 2.2 and Chapter 6).

Transport issues. UK experience highlighted the problems cities face when poorer people are displaced. During the 1970s London Transport, becoming concerned at the shortage of public transport service workers, reviewed its surplus land holdings with a view to realising any latent development potential for housing provision. Twenty five years later, research for the Chancellor of the Exchequer demonstrated the UK risked severe economic disadvantage compared to Europe, if essential workers were forced to leave the major cities, (summarised in Box 4.1). Hence the lever prompting UK politicians to address the housing affordability issue was the loss of key workers — an important consideration for West-Central, where the crucial connections between unaffordable housing, low employment participation and inadequate public transport are persistently ignored, exacerbating social exclusion by restricting participation in key activities (see Chapter 6).
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Costs for individuals and communities</th>
<th>Cost for the State</th>
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<tr>
<td>Cutting people off from services that others take for granted.</td>
<td>Increases welfare benefits, national health,</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>education and social services expenditure.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Leading to poor health, learning and employment outcomes.</td>
<td>Hampering the delivery of key Government welfare policies.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Links to crime, anti-social behaviour and loss of community cohesion</td>
<td>Adding to security costs.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: derived by the author from the Social Exclusion Unit, 2001

The Social Exclusion Unit argued transport spending in the UK — insufficiently tied to outcomes such as improved journey times, accessible vehicles, punctuality or customer satisfaction — was too fragmented. Lacking joined-up transport resources to improve accessibility, the distribution of government transport funding up to 1998 generally benefitted higher income earners (Lucas, 2003). Subsequently, UK Department of Transport policy guidelines emphasised measures to improve accessibility and promote social inclusion but resulted in no notable outcomes (Lucas, 2006).

Similarly, Dorling stressed the importance of adequate transport infrastructure, noting how in the UK:

> The extent to which a group of people might be suffering from [traffic] congestion depends on their local population densities, but also, and more importantly, on how well they have arranged their infrastructure to allow them to move about (Dorling, 2011:74).

Pinpointing the connection between housing, employment and transport accessibility Dorling concluded:

> ... the main reason for our overuse of roads is ... too many of us now live too far from where we work, from where we study and from where we shop — and ... insist on driving between all these places ... It is the income and wealth inequality between those who clean the offices at night and those that work in them by day that results in employees living across so large an area of London ... necessitating so many long commutes (ibid:81-82).

These findings reinforce the importance of making connections between urban transport, infrastructure and location disadvantage issues in West-Central; requiring the alignment of multi-government policies and interventions at the neighbourhood level (see Chapter 6). Section 4.3 now provides a commentary on the effectiveness of the nation state’s directions in urban regeneration.
4.3 The results of interventions

Turok (2005) identified three distinct strands to contemporary urban regeneration in the UK intended by New Labour to bring about change. First, it embraced multiple objectives and activities, cutting across central government’s main functional responsibilities. Second, it usually involved varied partnerships among different stakeholders. Third, regeneration dimensions were interconnected — economic, social and cultural, physical, environmental and governance-related in nature.

Prior to the global financial crisis (GFC) in 2008, urban regeneration in the UK was generally confined to waterfront schemes or gentrifying neighbourhoods. With housing, labour markets and educational achievement in cities such as Cambridge, Reading and Manchester assessed as performing reasonably well, the ‘urban renaissance’ agenda was judged to be achieving some regeneration success (Jones, P. and Evans, 2008; Tallon, 2010). Yet despite receiving considerable funding, cities such as Liverpool fared badly, with urban regeneration demonstrating an uneven distribution of benefits (Jones, P. and Evans, 2008:82). Reacting to negative media stereotyping of certain areas, from 2007 writers drew attention to the increasing socio-economic disadvantage and social stigma stemming from poor housing policies as outlined in Box 4.2.

Box 4.2 Residents’ perspectives of life in UK council housing estates

In Estates: An intimate history Hanley described growing up near Birmingham (in one of the largest council estates in Europe) in the form of a social history, memoir and mild polemic. In her view:

... these estates ... remained as economically and socially isolated from mainstream society as when they were built proved that the garden-city model could only work if council housing ... was linked to an infrastructure that guaranteed jobs and good schooling (Hanley, 2007:81).

Hanley concluded that such estates ‘offended homeowners because they housed large numbers of poor people, and did so visibly’ (ibid). The short-term thinking of governments, whose votes relied on quick solutions to problems ((ibid:51), led to the Labour government building around a million (often prefabricated) homes in its first five years in power following WWII. Hanley claimed that:

... governments and councils have treated housing as a problem that needed to be fixed quickly, rather than a fundamental part of a healthy, equal society. If it had had the same status as the NHS or the education system it would have had to be wholly nationalized as they were (ibid:213) ... the gap between the highest and lowest incomes in the country reached its narrowest in 1979, the same year in which the largest proportion of the population lived in local-authority housing (ibid:214).
Hanley neatly summed up Thatcher’s ‘right-to-buy’ scheme as:

... an obscene situation in which local authorities — their housing stock declining as demand is rising — pay buy-to-let property investors the full market rental rate for homes which once belonged to them, in order to house people who cannot afford to pay for it (Hanley, 2007:225).

A trenchant exposure of class-hatred in Britain — *Chavs: The demonisation of the working class* — highlighted a reducing role for government in housing provision:

As the 1970s drew to a close ... more than two in five of us lived in council housing. Today the figure is nearer one in ten, with tenants of housing associations and co-operatives representing half as many again (Jones, O. 2011:34).

In *Ground control: Fear and happiness in the 21st century*, Minton quoted Disraeli’s 1845 description of:

... ‘two nations’ who are as ‘ignorant of each other’s habits, thoughts and feelings as if they were dwellers in different zones, or inhabitants of different planets’ (Minton, 2009:8).

Minton stressed that rather than helping those in most need they were entirely ignored ‘creating a segregated and disconnected patchwork’; displacing the original community, property price rises ensured new homes remained unaffordable for locals forced to move further east; entrenching poverty as well as wealth (ibid).

Numerous criticisms were levelled at housing market renewal *Pathfinder* schemes (the 2002 multi-million government initiative referred to in Section 3.2), since encouraging middle income residents to move to regeneration areas displaced poorer populations through the ‘gentrification’ process (Section 4.5). Significant policy challenges remained; including maintaining housing market momentum within regenerated areas, while sustaining those neighbourhoods reliant on large, vulnerable investments from private landlords. Nevin, (2010) estimated that there were more than 123,000 poor residents trapped in streets filled with demolished or boarded-up houses following cancellation of an £8.3 billion housing renewal Pathfinder project. Following the global recession and reduced public sector expenditure, the Housing and Neighbourhoods Monitor questioned the financial capacity for improving adjoining industrial estates and smaller urban centres (Joseph Rowntree Foundation, 2009). Implementing new urban policies, simultaneously government funds were cut from other city projects. On coming to power, the Cameron Coalition government scrapped lifetime council tenancy agreements, leaving only the most needy eligible for five, or at most ten year agreements, with council estates becoming ‘nothing more than transit camps for the deprived’ (Jones, O. 2011:209) — a salutary warning for the inherent paradoxes in recent Housing NSW allocation policies (see Section 5.5).
Britain in 2010 returned to levels of inequality not experienced for eighty years, with the income share of the richest 1% almost back to 1920s levels. Geographical inequalities in health were as polarised as in the 1930s and voting approached 1918 levels of spatial segregation (Dorling, 2010:176), mirroring local concerns that such inequality is shown by the increasing socio-economic polarisation happening across Sydney (Gleeson and Randolph, 2002a). Rising service sector employment in Britain was not fully compensating for the loss of manufacturing jobs, with geographic forces determining an uneven regional dimension (Coe and Jones, 2010). Emerging issues included poor definitions of job loss; the limited scale of the response; and fragmented policies with no coordinated long-term strategic approach. Tallon noted how:

... urban regeneration does not happen in isolation from wider changes affecting cities and their relationship with each other...[But] it looks more impressive if a government appears to be doing a great deal to address urban problems that have proved intractable or insoluble (Tallon, 2010:31).

Similarly critical, Whelan and Stone (2012) argued the 'precariat' were lacking paid holidays, sick leave, subsidised training, a worthwhile pension to look forward to and no state benefits and described the UK as the fourth most unequal country in the OECD. Citing the disingenuous assumption that a 'see-saw’ effect — whereby pushing government down, businesses and community groups will automatically rise up — Whelan and Stone rejected the primacy of the private sector superiority argument.

The following section points to an erroneous political reliance on the trickle-down effect whereby wealth generated by economic development was assumed to assist the poor through job creation.

**Limitations of the trickle-down effect.** Several researchers (including Healey et al., 1992; Oatley, 1995) described successive governments’ approaches to the problems of poverty and disadvantage on area-based geographical terms as a problem of place. Tallon argued against this conception:

... as the focus is on symptoms rather than causes, which are to be found in the processes leading to de-industrialisation, unemployment, poverty, social exclusion and growing inequalities ... urban regeneration in the 1980s relied heavily on policy instruments that aimed to attract the private sector to invest in property in run-down urban areas on the assumption that this would ... trickle down to deprived communities (Tallon, 2010: 62-63).

Demonstrating close links between economic and urban governance theories, such as the multiplier effect and agglomeration economies, the ‘trickle-down effect’ justified development of new private estates, such as the London Docklands development (Jones and Evans, 2008:59; Tallon 2010:125 and 160).
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Minton (2009) described how Thatcherite notions believed that, since profitable ventures pull in high rents and service charges, they transform places by increasing their own and surrounding property values, attracting so much wealth that it flows from gated properties to the surrounding poor. Dorling provided further commentary on this misguided thinking noting that:

> There was more faith in the ‘trickle-down’ in the United States than in Britain... and it became patently obvious by... the start of the 1990s that the ‘trickle-down’ wasn’t trickling down.....What’s happening in Britain is that the rich are actually getting richer, the average is getting slightly poorer and the people who are poor are doing much, much worse than they were two or three years ago, because a whole set of things are being taken away from them (interview on ABC television 4/10/11).

The UK Cameron Coalition government is still characterised in numerous media releases as cutting back on public spending, assuming private investment will inevitably grow — ignoring the ever-widening gap between the rich and the poor, or the consequences of de-industrialisation for specific places — persistently moaning about a loss of community spirit, while remaining deaf to local communities’ fears for future generations. Yet research for the Tax Justice Network revealed £21 trillion in assets being lost annually to global tax havens having a major impact on estimates of inequality of wealth and income (Henry, 2012). Henry quoted the UNHDR chief statistician’s response that both the very wealthy and the very poor tend to be under-represented in mainstream inequality calculations — further proof of the masking of socio-economic disadvantage discussed in Chapter 2.

Jones, P. and Evans (2008:58) showed how regeneration could be recast as competition between cities, in response to a shift of manufacturing overseas and a desire to generate middle and higher income jobs, an issue now explored further.

**Urban competitiveness.** Cities are generally considered competitive if they offer cheap places to do business and contain a mix of attributes attractive to key industries (Jones and Evans, 2008:55). Yet Begg (2002) argued that most competitive places were not necessarily those with the lowest costs, but where rising living standards for residents and the workforce led to both social and economic regeneration.

In Glasgow, in the immediate post-WWII period, urban renewal through metropolitan planning resulted in development of suburban public housing estates and new towns. However, by the mid-1970s Glasgow still retained some of the most disadvantaged neighbourhoods in Britain (Gibb, 1983). Drawing on 20-year longitudinal research on Central Scotland, Turok emphasised the
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relationship between economic prosperity and social cohesion in cities, investigating the necessity for some degree of social disparity to reward economic initiative and risk. Posing the question of whether inequality makes economic growth less secure by threatening disorder, Turok described how localities face:

... unavoidable choices about the focus and balance of development strategies, especially in the context of stretched resources, a more sceptical public and more diffuse powers and responsibilities (Turok 2004:13).

Turok stressed the importance of identifying major assets facilitating or frustrating economic performance — physical infrastructure, housing and social institutions — and the negative influences of deprived neighbourhoods on citizen participation and labour markets. Turok showed the striking contrasts between Glasgow and Edinburgh — located only 72 kms apart — in historic economic performance and social conditions. Centred in a region of almost 1.2 million people, Glasgow, the third largest city in the UK, has a long history of urban regeneration through increasing economic investment and job opportunities. Yet Glasgow’s city authorities in the early 1980s inherited substantial legacies of derelict land, out-dated skills and a more welfare-dependent population. From 1986 Glasgow embarked on extensive area-based economic development through eight Local Development Companies, yet by 2004 Glasgow’s 61% employment participation rate remained the lowest in the UK, with a widening gap between the prosperous and the poor (ibid:15).

As Jones, O. stressed:

Glasgow is a particularly striking example of how the de-industrialisation of Britain has left continuing — but disguised — mass unemployment in its wake (Jones, O. 2011:199).

Glasgow contained some of the most serious social and environmental problems in Britain while conversely, an economic turnaround from the mid 1990 to mid 2000 period in Edinburgh led to tighter labour markets and labour shortages (Turok, 2004). Clearly central government’s role was pivotal in protecting Glasgow and Edinburgh residents from extreme social inequalities and the cumulative processes of decline arising from economic shifts and systematic disparities in resources between areas. This required a degree of redistribution, counter-cyclical support and promotion of both cohesion and competitiveness. Often equated with levels of prosperity, with high average incomes/low unemployment a prominent goal, Competitiveness was not an end in itself, but a means of increasing development by determining the sources and causes of prosperity (ibid:14). An over-emphasis on international trade and competition between city authorities, concealed important diversities within cities and the
uneven consequences of competitive success for different social groups, and lacked direct incentives and resources to promote economic growth by re-investing in their business infrastructure. Turok concluded:

... sustained competitiveness depends on a balance being maintained between the key variables of employment, housing, transport and skills. This does not appear to happen sufficiently smoothly or automatically through self-adjustment by property or labour market mechanisms ... Co-ordinated action on the part of local organisations (strategic capacity) is also important, backed by the powers and resources of central government (Turok 2004: 18).

In summary, in contrast to the Keynesian post-war welfare state's emphasis on equalisation of wealth, population and infrastructure across national territories, governments in Western democracies from the 1990s promoted competitiveness between districts, cities and regions, positioned within global economies. Employment formed a crucial link between competitiveness and cohesion; demonstrating how local labour market adjustment through migration, commuting and re-skilling, may affect social cohesion. From the mid 1980s the labour force was considered an important urban asset, demonstrated in areas suffering labour shortages. Rather than comparing rates of GDP/employee, an increased emphasis on employment participation rates in the 1990s provided a significant indicator of social and economic inclusion, since simply raising productivity was no panacea for ensuring city prosperity, especially if it meant shedding labour. These are important findings for West-Central, in light of the ever-increasing socio-economic divide occurring across Sydney.

For regional planning purposes, the markets in which cities compete should be defined in terms of spatial scale (regional/national/international) and type of commodity (products/services/resources such as finances, or labour). Also a fragmented and under-funded system for providing serviced land and infrastructure failed to deliver sustainable or integrated developments, increased car dependency and the dislocation between jobs and housing, while poor transport planning created serious congestion (Turok 2004). These are valuable insights for strategic planning in Sydney.

### 4.4 Urban regeneration principles

Important questions arising from Turok's research are whether area effects of spatial concentrations of poverty worsen people's life chances and if place exacerbates social exclusion. In the 1990s, people in poor stigmatised areas with localised social networks, had limited knowledge of and links to job opportunities, increasing their vulnerability to unemployment (Kintrea and Atkinson, 2001). Neighbourhood effects were considered independent and
separate from social and economic behaviour arising from where they lived. Poorer neighbourhoods tended to have a stronger sense of community, mutual aid and bonds between family, friends and neighbours than mixed neighbourhoods; although the pattern was not clear-cut (Turok 2004:20). This echoed Kintrea and Atkinson’s (2001) findings that being poor in a disadvantaged area may be preferable to being poor in a more affluent area, due to adversity and the tarnishing impacts of stigma.

Cohesion at the neighbourhood scale may co-exist with segregation at the city scale, calling into question whether market-led development promoted segregated rather than balanced or integrated neighbourhoods. Kintrea and Atkinson (2001) recommended that linking transport planning with urban regeneration and desegregating deprived urban areas, created a more spatially integrated society, but may lead to less social cohesion at the neighbourhood level. Arguably, this presumption supports the notion of social mix (see Section 4.6). In contrast, Australian planners and developers make limited attempts to introduce diversity into suburbia through affordable housing, atypical dwelling types or different demographic groups. Yet overseas experience indicated using public subsidies to lever private development into poorer, mono-culture estates can provide some stability when middle income households remain attached to the area. While little social mixing occurred, existing residents benefitted through improvements to the area’s image and environment (Turok, 2004).

Turok’s research showed residents in poor neighbourhoods tended to distrust political institutions more than people in mixed neighbourhoods, displaying little civic engagement (ibid). Yet public authorities could engender more positive attitudes by providing genuine opportunities for participation, leading to tangible improvements in neighbourhood conditions. Limited spatial mobility, leading to isolated, introspective and parochial attitudes, often undermined stability and diversity. Out-migration of the most skilled — fracturing social networks —, contributed towards low estems and limited expectations among remaining residents. Better housing, schools and other amenities helped to retain upwardly mobile residents (Kintrea and Atkinson, 2001).

Turok’s research strongly supported the causal relationship between economic performance and social conditions, especially through labour markets. Sustained de-industrialisation resulted in severe losses of manual jobs, higher unemployment, inactivity and selective out-migration. Lacking jobs and declining household incomes, low income communities became more stressed; contributing *inter alia* to family breakdowns, poorer educational performance,
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Homelessness and increased debt (Bailey, Turok and Atkinson, 1999). Widening income inequalities also increased neighbourhood segregation, since even in Edinburgh’s poorest areas; poverty appeared less entrenched than in Glasgow.

Development corporations. Tallon (2010) considered the role of UK Urban Development Corporations (UDC), describing a greater willingness by some, such as Bristol UDC, to consult with local businesses, land and property interests, rather than communities and councils, noting:

There is little doubt that a single-purpose body concentrating on a narrowly defined area, unencumbered by the diverse range of local authority responsibilities and negating local democratic responsibility, can achieve things very quickly by virtue of single-mindedness (Tallon, 2010:57).

Moreover Tallon also highlighted some weaknesses that were ‘operational in nature related to particular policies or programs’ while others were more ‘strategic’ (citing Turok, 2005), identifying six spheres of failure of urban policy as indicated in Box 4.3.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Box 4.3: Failures of urban policy</th>
<th>Argument against</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Lack of clarity and purpose.</td>
<td>ABIs are unable to realistically tackle the multiple problems of society.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Excessive central government control.</td>
<td>‘One-size-fits all’ leave little potential for flexibility.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Poor co-ordination and coherence.</td>
<td>A lack of horizontal coordination across departments.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Implementing one-dimensional urban policies.</td>
<td>The problems are multi-dimensional.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dealing with neighbourhood as an isolated unit.</td>
<td>Insufficient understanding of wider housing and employment markets.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Failure in realising community potential.</td>
<td>Tendency for community burnout.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Adapted from Tallon, 2010:265-266

Further obstacles arose from the tokenistic approach to forming partnerships, adding to difficulties in overcoming entrenched disadvantage (Box 4.4).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Box 4.4: Tokenism in forming partnerships.</th>
<th>Arguments against</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Short-term ‘quick fixes’.</td>
<td>Incapable of producing sustainable change.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Investing too quickly.</td>
<td>Beyond the capacity of the community to fully participate.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Public narratives of disadvantaged locations.</td>
<td>Entrenching the problem by overly identifying areas as ‘dysfunctional’ and a labelling of the community as the ‘other’.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interventions which merely displace the problem.</td>
<td>May add to housing stress.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gentrification.</td>
<td>Requires protection to avoid displacement of lower income households providing an ongoing supply of affordable housing specifically for this group.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Adapted from Tallon, 2010:265-266
Regeneration policies and devolution of power to the UK regions were criticised for confusion about whether they were aimed at the neighbourhood itself, its communities and citizens, or a mixture of both (Byrne, 2005; Finn, Atkinson and Crawford, 2007). Jones, P. and Evans (2008) cited instances of regulatory failures across regions resulting from the continual reinvention of policy initiatives; although devolution provided more regionally-specific policy directions, assisted by EU funding stimulating growth and jobs at both a regional and local level. Box 4.5 now summarises emerging best practice principles (adapted from Tallon, 2010).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Box 4.5: Best practice principles</th>
<th>Arguments in favour</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Combining both people- and place-based mechanisms.</td>
<td>Treating either physical regeneration or people-based programs in isolation were found to be insufficient to bring about change, but should occur simultaneously and be well-resourced.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ensuring macro- and micro-level interventions</td>
<td>Addressing issues such as dilapidated housing and poor quality social services as well as linking areas of disadvantage to the wider area in which they sit.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aligning multi-level government policies and interventions to produce positive outcomes at the neighbourhood level</td>
<td>Helps to ensure local beneficial outcomes.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Genuine community empowerment at appropriate levels.</td>
<td>Starting small and gradually building the community’s capacity to participate, plus flexibility to adjust programs according to need.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Partnership between the public, private and community sectors.</td>
<td>Bringing together the three sectors to leverage finance for the public good, while still providing profits for the private sector, informed by knowledge of the local context.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Long-term, well resourced programs</td>
<td>Essential for a sustainable outcome.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Adapted from Tallon, 2010

These six important principles for combining both people and place-based mechanisms with interventions at both a macro and micro level; the alignment of multi-level government policies; the empowerment of communities; the importance of partnerships and long-term programs; all reinforce the value of adopting a social inclusion agenda to embrace the links between housing, employment and transport policies discussed in Chapter 3.

This social inclusion-led concept is now contrasted with Australia’s current approach to urban regeneration.
4.5 Urban regeneration in Australia

Australian metropolitan plans over thirty years (outlined in Chapter 5), advocating curtailing the outward expansion of cities by concentrating growth within existing urban boundaries and building at higher residential densities, have met with little success (McLoughlin, 1992; Gleeson and Low, 2000; Davison, 2011). Research, undertaken in the period 1970s to the early 1990s, into the fate of Australian urban policies and attempts at policy coordination in the past, emphasised how land use zoning documents were having limited impacts on the patterns of urban growth (Painter, 1984; Fincher, 1991; 1999; McLoughlin, 1992; Mowbray, 1994 and Huxley, 2000). McLoughlin (1992) in particular pointed to how cities were being shaped by private sector power-plays, with planning failing to direct urban form, or consolidate centres and was leading to socially regressive outcomes with some areas favoured over others. He judged that the most successful results were occurring at the neighbourhood level by the protection of middle-class residential areas.

Local government in Australia is charged with the responsibilities of sustainable management of social, environmental and economic resources at the local scale; due to growing concerns about increasingly unsustainable pressure on the global environment. From the 2000s onwards local government moved towards an Ecologically Sustainable Development (ESD) focus. In addition to its strong natural environment focus, ESD is also concerned with the total health of society, requiring genuine and sustainable improvements to environmental, economic and social capital — the triple bottom line. Metropolitan strategies for Australia’s five largest cities all called for a triple bottom line approach to sustainable development (Freestone (2010:167). Yet notwithstanding 1960s and 1970s urban renewal projects part-funded by the Commonwealth government, regeneration of Australia’s older suburbs to date have received little policy engagement. Regeneration was limited to the redevelopment of industrial or commercial sites in mid- to high-value areas, gentrification in Sydney’s inner city, or large-scale redevelopment of public housing estates (Ruming et al., 2007).

As Section 1.3 found, local neighbourhood disadvantage is often attributed to Housing NSW’s problems in managing the concentrations of socially marginalised populations in large public housing estates. A major shift in housing policy since the 1990s moved the emphasis away from construction of new dwellings to improving existing assets and tenancy management, since a deteriorating and
inappropriate housing stock was leading to stigmatised estates and serious social problems (Randolph and Judd, 2000). However, academic research demonstrated that social disadvantage was not necessarily tenure-dependent and, while increased targeting of public housing to those in greatest need led to concentrations in public housing estates, equally disadvantaged communities lived in poor quality private sector rental housing, lacking security, many paying unaffordable rents (Randolph and Holloway 2002 and 2004; Randolph 2008c) (see Sections 1.3 and 5.4). Arthurson (2002) pointed to the loss of public housing stock; the impacts of relocation on existing communities; the movement of disadvantaged tenants; rather than tackling the source of the problems and failures to clarify the community regeneration objectives.

Housing policies generally ignore the existing private housing stock, despite the private sector’s primary role in the provision of low-cost housing. Randolph (2006) described how West-Central’s older suburbs — lacking centralised planning direction for decades — offer a housing market generally unappealing to private developer interests with little likelihood of delivering a profit. While partly due to individual owner responsibilities, previous market responses through gentrification fuelled the loss of affordable housing for lower income groups (Atkinson and Wulff, 2009).

From 2000 onwards the notion of place management advocated by some academics and practitioners responded to a perceived lack of coherence and coordination of governments programs, all purporting to be ‘serving the same place’. This concept was coupled with a call for the ‘breaking-down of silos’ and ‘joined-up governance’ (Smyth et al., 2004). Yet, as demonstrated, the overseas urban regeneration experience showed the necessity for much broader government engagement in economic activity in cities. Regeneration will not occur simply through recognition in state plans, but needs support from interest rate settings, land ownership policies, available finance, taxation and appropriate funding mechanisms (Bunker and Holloway, 2006; Bunker, 2008). Australian policymakers are now starting to reflect the wider international acceptance and emphasis placed on addressing social exclusion and related concerns for urban regeneration (Randolph, Ruming and Murray, 2009).

Section 2.3 described the mid-1970s Land Commission Program (LCP) giving government a threefold positive role in the planning process (Davison, 2011). First, it allowed change to be shaped in a coordinated manner. Second, it addressed societal needs such as housing affordability, design quality and open space provision. Third, it stabilised the costs of residential land by capturing
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**betterment.** Hence the strength of the LCP was in the development of a more efficient and fairer land market, achieving higher quality development outcomes (Gleeson and Coiacetto, 2007). The current role of urban regeneration agencies is now explored further.

**Urban regeneration agencies.** Despite diminishing financial and ideological support since 1975, land agencies still remain in Australia’s states and territories, although their roles and responsibilities diverge in line with political cycles, making important differences apparent in their roles (Davison, 2011). Existing land agencies’ priorities were re-focused and new bodies established in the Northern Territory, ACT and Queensland in the last fifteen years, and more recently in Victoria, Western Australia and NSW, as outlined below.

The 1936 the *South Australian Land Trust* (SAHT) was pivotal in the industrialisation of the state, developing the first major rental housing scheme; making Adelaide the most ‘planned’ of all Australian cities outside Canberra since the war (Sandercock, 1976:53). Currently the *Land Management Corporation* (LMC) controls a significant portfolio of state government assets, through disposal of surplus government land, assembling parcels to facilitate urban renewal and seeking adequate provision of residential and industrial land to maintain a competitive advantage (Davison, 2011). Involved in large-scale renewal of public housing, the LMC redevelops inner-city areas, providing a greater public/private housing mix and requiring 15% of dwellings built on government land to be affordable (10% market affordable and 5% for high-needs housing).

Established in 2007, the Queensland *Urban Land Development Authority* (ULDA) utilises state government-declared sites, provides infrastructure and acts as a statutory planning authority financially independent from government (Davison, 2011). Contrasting with other states, the ULDA is able to re-invest its dividends as it chooses and is not required to deliver profits to Queensland Treasury. Lacking compulsory acquisition powers, nevertheless it is required to provide affordable housing outcomes for all of its sites, principally through inclusionary zoning — targeting 10% of all dwellings to be adaptable for use by people with disabilities. In 2011 the ULDA redefined ‘low to moderate incomes’ in line with the National Rental Affordability Scheme (NRAS) eligibility thresholds; exploring new ways to provide more affordable housing through shared-equity products, supporting the creation of housing company models and targeting sales to low and moderate income households.
Places Victoria facilitates large-scale urban renewal in established urban areas and promotes housing affordability, diversity and best practice urban design (Victorian Government, 2011). Similarly, Landcorp in Western Australia undertakes urban renewal often on complex sites; assembles land for development, master-plans and provides essential infrastructure for housing delivered by the private sector (Davison, 2011).

Reactivating land banking in 1976, NSW formed a state land development agency — Landcom — attempting intervention to stabilise the supply and price of land and provision of affordable housing. However, by the mid 1990s, the prevailing neo-liberal philosophy considered land banking an inefficient means of rationalising the land market and coordinating urban fringe development, unnecessarily tying up public resources and limiting private-sector market opportunities. NSW Treasury directed Landcom to divest itself of its peripheral land and acquire land in the inner-city to assist private sector investment (McGuirk and O’Neill, 2002:306). Both Landcom and Landcorp had affordable housing targets (ranging between 7.5% and 15% of total units) for households earning up to $80,000 a year. Landcom, in partnership with Housing NSW since 2002, coordinated the redevelopment of some 1,000 public housing dwellings in south-west Sydney to provide a greater tenure mix; producing housing diversity guidelines to assist private developers deliver more affordable products (Landcom, 2010).

Frustrated at the lack of progress in urban regeneration in NSW, a Property Council submission by the lobby group of private land developers in a 2009 submission to the state government called for the creation of an Urban Renewal Commission to help manage Sydney’s future growth, claiming that urban renewal:

1. Ensures that existing urban environments can evolve to meet the needs of a growing and changing population. It is the lifeline that guarantees our cities are continually revitalised.

2. Is about accommodating growth, creating better places for new and existing communities, and improving the sustainability of our cities by making better use of underutilised land and infrastructure and promoting the use of public transport.

3. Can be undertaken on a large or small scale depending on the residential and employment growth that is needed, the capacity of the existing infrastructure and community expectations (Morrison, 2009: 1).

Pointing to 2005 government forecasts indicating Sydney’s population increase of 1.1 million by 2031, requiring over 500,000 new jobs and 640,000 new dwellings at a rate of 25,000 per year and close to 19,000 in existing urban areas (NSW Planning 2005:7), the report highlighted that only 13,703 dwellings were approved in Sydney from 2008 to 2009 (quoting ABS Building Approvals...
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Australia, NSW SLA datacube 2008-2009), placing the burden of housing production on regeneration of older areas. Regeneration barriers identified included: a lack of commitment to urban renewal; little community awareness; confused governance structures; challenging economics; out-of-date planning frameworks; poor infrastructure planning and funding; unrealistic standards and problematic site amalgamation issues (Morrison, 2009:6). Describing how 75% of all SMR dwelling production in the previous 10 years was delivered in established areas, with 40% occurring in major sites (potentially delivering 50 or more dwellings), the Property Council cautioned that these ‘low hanging fruit are disappearing fast’ (ibid:5). Claiming the major sites identified could deliver only 25% of Sydney’s infill needs to 2031, the submission called for identification of further potential sites with transit-orientated developments (TODs) ‘kick started’ to fulfill the plan’s objectives to deliver the 60% to 70% of new residential growth in existing urban areas required by the Metropolitan Strategy 2005:134 (ibid).

In reaction, in 2010 the NSW Labor government established a Sydney Metropolitan Development Agency (SMDA) to ‘drive future transit-oriented development and urban renewal’, with a mandate to work with transport and planning departments to identify renewal precincts; deliver overarching precinct plans; coordinate transport and infrastructure planning, levy infrastructure contributions and enter into planning agreements; borrow and manage funds and partner with public agencies and private entities when necessary (Minister for Planning media release, 2010). Working across government, local councils and the private sector, the Authority’s initial mandate was to redevelop two large parcels of land owned by Housing NSW — hence the agency was not saddled with the complex issues of fragmented ownership or strata titling (Section 6.2).

In 2012 the incoming NSW coalition government established another agency — UrbanGrowth NSW — to integrate and refocus Landcom and the SMDA as a key driver of the government’s approach to housing delivery. Claiming to be the biggest reform since the 1976 NSW Land Commission, this new agency is to ‘drive further investment into the NSW economy, particularly the housing market’ by coordinating urban renewal in strategic and complex sites — initially in the SMR, expanding to regional areas over time (NSW Government Media Release, 2012). In addition, a 2013 Urban Activation Precincts Program was established to facilitate the supply of housing and associated employment in key precincts, by injecting $50 million of funds to local councils to build essential
infrastructure. However, the NSW governments’ continual failure to deliver on its urban strategies and its tendency to create ad hoc new agencies rather than attempting to solve demonstrable problems in the older suburbs is critiqued in Chapter 5.

**Betterment.** As noted in 1.4, the Whitlam government attempted to pursue a UK New Town Corporation model, retrieving the land betterment from development to pay for facilities, rather than delivering windfall profits to the landowner as currently happens in Australia. Here rapid price escalation occurs as landowners take advantage of the betterment of their property from new adjacent development. However, betterment is seen as a form of public subsidy and not favoured in today’s political climate. NSW Treasury restrictions on land banking, such as those imposed on Landcom (see Section 6.7 on this issue), prevent the capture of the substantial increase in land value resulting from up-zoning, previously deemed sufficient to fund front-end infrastructure costs and helping to reduce financial difficulties. While through private funding the state is relieved of its responsibility for the provision of urban infrastructure paid for by the whole community, arguably the level of government responsible for designating areas as recipients of major growth should bear some accountability for the ensuing development outcomes. Yet, when the state provides the infrastructure, it is criticised for taking on an unreasonable burden that the private sector piggybacks off.

**Challenges for urban regeneration.** Recent research describes the re-focusing of the role of urban land agencies away from the production of low cost peripheral land towards the coordination of major urban renewal projects; despite agencies being hampered by their commercial focus and lack of financial autonomy (Davison, 2011). Although promoted as a cost-saving measure through greater utilisation of existing infrastructure (Foster, 2006), a broadening research literature points to favouring more compact cities on both environmental and social grounds, to reduce high car dependency and energy use, protect agricultural land and provide more vibrant cities (Davison, 2011). With targets to deliver up to 70% of new dwellings within existing boundaries, the NSW government identified suitable regeneration sites — although the emphasis remained on renewal of large public housing estates and under-utilised industrial areas to deliver physical, social and economic objectives (Arthurson, 2002; Lilley, 2005), continuing to severely understate the scale of the interventions required.
Barriers arise due to negative cash flows for most of a project’s duration: late imposition of developer contributions (requiring land developers to pay monetary contributions and/or dedicate land to assist funding the increasing demand for public amenities/services generated by such development); and lengthy development approval processes; all adding to costs (Rowley and Phibbs, 2012:29). Also, banks are reluctant to finance small development companies inexperienced in delivering multi-unit apartments. This leads to a lack of competition and a current lending climate requiring pre-sales to cover around 80% of debt funding net of GST and sales costs (ibid:58).

Successful redevelopment requires control over reasonably sized parcels of land, yet few remain undeveloped in West-Central. When land acquisition is fragmented or delayed, the risks of rapid price escalation are substantial due to the strong potential for holding-out initial land parcels (Fingland, 1994). Opportunities for significant savings in infrastructure provision require careful planning and understanding of the basic economies of scale. Typically developers of large-scale projects, or councils attempting to address service backlogs, are forced to delay provision until sufficient new residents are in place to provide the appropriate level of development contributions revenue. Also, since commercial facilities generally follow population growth, this can militate against the development of attractive mixed-use centres, further limiting housing demand. In the absence of government guarantees to cover these costs, the private sector is reluctant to commit funds due to the market’s perception of risk. Prior to the use of PPPs front-end costs were funded with long-term debt subsidised via low interest rates and/or the use of lengthy debt-service free periods, with an operational cash-flow turning positive within a short period, say, five years, allowing accumulation of a reserve account (ibid).

Renovations and knockdown-rebuild (KDR). The Metropolitan Development Program Report (2008 to 2009) mapped dwelling completions by sub-region from 1998/99 to 2007/08; indicating sites plotted according to ‘1, 2-10 and up to 101+ additional dwellings’ (NSW Department of Planning, 2010: 107). This ignored the increases in ‘knockdown-rebuilds’ (KDR) and home extensions that comprise a substantial proportion of Development Applications (DAs) in the older suburbs and replace but do not expand the dwelling stock. More individual owner/occupiers are now renovating or replacing their dwellings and reinvesting in West-Central’s older neighbourhoods. HIA data indicates KDR accounted for upwards of 30% of housing starts from 2007 to 2008, suggesting around 10,000 in NSW per year (Pinnegar, Freestone and Randolph, 2010:207). A survey of 30
Sydney LGAs from 2005 to 2009 demonstrated over 6,500 DAs being lodged for KDR (ibid). The MDP report’s claim that ‘84% of dwelling production was in existing urban areas’ implied a higher rate of additional dwelling production than actually occurred in West-Central, pointing to inherent risks in adopting metropolitan-wide averages when formulating housing policy.

**Gentrification.** Perhaps the greatest difficulty is achieving urban regeneration in areas suffering socio-economic disadvantage without displacing those in most need. Increased densification policies are often ill-informed about households’ varying circumstances, risking socially regressive outcomes and impaired social sustainability (Randolph and Freestone, 2008). Focusing on numerical targets for the provision of dwellings and jobs ignores the link between disparate housing, employment and transport policies, leaving governments struggling to deal with the resulting social problems. Later sections demonstrate how by tackling in tandem the issues of affordable housing, limited employment prospects and location disadvantage in specific locations, governments could alleviate the increasing socio-economic polarisation and reduce the overall costs to taxpayers.

International experience shows that gentrification, while providing major net gains in higher income, non-family and professional households, is coupled with a loss of low income families, households without an employed adult or those in lower status jobs (Smith, N. 1986; Smith, N. and Zukin, 2010). An in-depth analysis of gentrification issues, described a bohemian mix of writers, artists, designers and students as pioneers often inhabiting, invigorating and reinventing run-down neighbourhoods and displacing original residents (Lees, Slater and Wyly (2008). Eventually the neighbourhoods became so desirable this demographic was priced out of the market and moved away. Community building projects attempt to defy this displacement. However, displacement also occurs when people move following departure of friends and family, leaving gaps in their mutual support systems, often affecting high proportions of the elderly, the poorest female-headed households and blue-collar occupational groups. Furthermore new-build areas of housing investment for high income households — while technically not displacing lower income groups — are specifically designed to exclude them (Atkinson and Wulff, 2009:14).

**Affordability issues.** Actively pursued urban consolidation policies are reducing low cost housing opportunities. Even in nations with a strong tradition requiring affordable housing provision, the contribution of affordable housing to the dwelling stock is relatively modest, since complex issues affect the availability of land for residential development (WSROC, 2008c). Growth is not brought about
solely by urban land development — other factors outside local control include: interest rates; changing demographic characteristics such as household formation rates; a deteriorating dwelling stock; the demand for alternative forms of housing; the need for more jobs and improved provision of transport infrastructure. These interrelated influences impact significantly on West-Central where rapid population growth lacked support of crucial infrastructure. Unless all Sydney LGAs offer affordable housing, the current socio-spatial polarisation tendencies will be further reinforced, requiring governments to secure access to land for affordable housing developments, while maintaining social mix and diversity in the older suburbs.

Often the three tiers of government and different agencies have conflicting perspectives on affordability issues. Local government may welcome increasing property taxes or particular social milieus; state social housing providers — aware of increasing need — lack adequate resource allocations; and federal departments struggle to address issues of homelessness and declining employment participation rates. NGOs highlight community friction and loss of affordable housing, while appreciating the benefits of physical revitalisation. Social problems can be evacuated through the improvement of neighbourhoods, with some commentators citing this as evidence that gentrification has positive impacts, despite further disguising social polarisation (Atkinson and Wulff, 2009:8).

The challenge for the older West-Central suburbs is capturing the social and physical investment of gentrification processes while preventing the hardship imposed by displacement that ‘un-home’ less well-off residents (Atkinson and Wulff, 2011). While gentrification may increase investment in an area’s dwelling stock, sudden flows of money and people — displacing lower income and vulnerable residents — can result in social and economic impacts as communities are priced out of locations, journey-to-work times are increased and insecure renters face eviction or market dislocation. Ironically, such displacement of community members is occurring in the context of ‘community development’ (Atkinson and Wulff, 2011:9).

Critics such as Shaw (2005; 2008) and Davison (2011) pointed to the links between renewal and ‘policy-led gentrification’ seeking to attract investment into problem areas identified by government. Increasing owner-occupation and de-concentration of public housing resulted in an overall loss in public housing stock, dislocation of some public housing tenants and fragmentation of social
networks, further complicating strategies to address disadvantage (Arthurson, 2002; 2008). Such spatial effects of rental housing policies and their locally-specific impacts needed further consideration, including requiring provision of adequate social services (Mee, 2002:337-351). Moreover, Searle (2003:9) criticised the loss of industrial sites for small business premises and lower skilled employment opportunities. Atkinson (2004) highlighted the negative consequences for economically disadvantaged groups, since increasingly unaffordable housing, homelessness and business displacement, led to community conflict.

**Densification.** A body of Randolph’s research since 2000 has pointed to the social and environmental consequences of the over-emphasis on provision of small one and two bedroom apartments, leading to concentrations of young professional couples and empty-nesters in the inner city and consigning young families with children to the suburbs. Bunker and Holloway (2006) argued increasing higher density housing in areas already suffering a backlog of facilities and services was especially problematic. Many commentators, including Troy (1996), Searle (2004) and Bunker, Holloway and Randolph (2005), questioned the capacity of cities to accommodate higher densities without substantial physical and social infrastructure improvements. Collectively these authors highlighted the paucity of attractive redevelopment sites, finding little evidence that people aspire to alternatives to the detached suburban house. Media reports and submissions to local government regularly highlighted local opposition to change based on concerns about increased traffic congestion, decreased property values, reduced privacy and amenity and alterations in suburban character (Davison, 2011).

In summary, urban regeneration poses significant challenges including: addressing gentrification issues; protecting existing industrial uses; producing more appropriate dwellings and retaining and/or providing more social housing. Other essential initiatives include: restricting the types of development on renewal sites and greater use of leasehold rather than freehold title; presenting opportunities for ‘existing residents or businesses to remain in place while redevelopment occurs around them’ (Davison, 2011:4 citing Gurran and Milligan, 2008). Yet currently land agencies utilise few of these strategies. Affordable housing targets remain ‘aspirational’ with no guarantee that:

... affordable housing delivered through the market will actually be purchased by low-moderate income earners, rather than investors’ (Davison, 2011:6).
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Commercial imperatives imposed by Treasury militate against gifting sites to social housing providers or selling them below market value, which perversely cut across Landcom’s social and environmental objectives (see Section 6.7). Only in Queensland — where the ULDA can reinvest the value uplift from a renewal site to bring it on line, preferencing social and environmental considerations over financial outcomes by cross-subsidising development — are these initiatives working: ineffective land agencies in other states lack such crucial powers. Further challenges include incremental infill development cumulatively overloading older stressed infrastructure; fragmented ownership of land and site-related constraints. Demographic changes in society, frequently highlighted in the affordable housing debate, point to the need to develop a more diverse range of housing and a greater social mix to ensure all new developments cater for a variety of socio-economic groups at different stages in their life cycles.

Section 4.6 now defines social mix and points to some successful outcomes arising from the, albeit limited, use of a social mix agenda in Sydney. Two examples of previous attempts to achieving the social mix agenda in Western Sydney are presented as case studies in Boxes A.6.2 and A.6.3 in Appendix 6.

4.6 The importance of social mix

Shelter NSW defined social mix as:

... a mixing of people in a given space (country, region, city, neighbourhood, housing estate) on the basis of different social classes or socio-economic statuses; social categories (ethnicity, disability); stages in their lifecycles or household or family types (Johnston, 2002:4).

The concept of social mix is not new in urban planning discourses, informing British and Australian new town planning policies since the 1940s (Sarkissian, Forsythe and Heine, 1990; Arthurson, 2008). Gaining currency in recent years, it provides links between addressing social exclusion and urban regeneration by creating mixed communities in social housing estates rather than building new towns. Achieved primarily in the US through the Federal HOPE VI program (Section 4.1) which aims to reduce housing density through demolition and re-build programs, in contrast in Australia, the concept aims to maintain or increase housing density through the redevelopment process (Darcy, 2010a). Housing NSW’s social mix strategy involves breaking up large public housing estates by selling part of the land for private sector redevelopment while retaining or buying back a portion for public housing.
In NSW, the core components of a sustainable community are defined as ‘social cohesion, a functioning economy, a robust environment and sound infrastructure’ (NSW Department of Local Government, 2006:9). A 2008 paper presented at a Social Inclusion Conference in Melbourne noted:

... the communities identified as the most vulnerable to change, in terms of income levels, labour force engagement and the presence of disadvantaged residents are social housing estates and areas of concentrated low income private rental housing. Substantial amounts of public and private sector funding are being spent on regenerating disadvantaged ... neighbourhoods with high concentrations of social housing ... [and] also a focus on changing the social mix. (Arthurson, 2008:4).

Arthurson described social mix as:

The socio-economic variance of residents within a particular spatially delineated area, such as the neighbourhood, that is the balance of the mix of middle-income and low-income residents (ibid).

She described the ideals set for social mix:

... are about the necessity for propinquity between poor and better-off residents ... [and] restricted to the scale of the neighbourhood (ibid).

She considered social mix an ‘ambiguous concept’, often interchanged with tenure mix, although changing tenure mix does not necessarily result in the desired changes to social mix (ibid: 5). Cheshire (2007) in a report to the Joseph Rowntree Foundation challenged the belief that mixed communities are effective in overcoming deprivation and social exclusion.

Previous research cautioned that social mix limitations are threefold:

1. Mere physical proximity of dwellings will not necessarily encourage people of different values, backgrounds, lifestyles and socio-economic levels to interact in a meaningful way.

2. The mixture which will occur on any site will be between people — not dwellings.

3. Some neighbours do not act in an appropriate way at all times — some negative human behaviour is to be expected in any neighbourhood be it private or public (Sarkissian, Forsythe and Heine, 1990:18).

Often social mix is associated with redistribution, non-economic socio-cultural diversity and sometimes both. Homogeneity can be viewed as a problem in gated communities, as well as considered a source of disempowerment of poor or ethnic minorities, affecting social diversity and inclusion when structural and systemic factors deny social equity.

Randolph et al. (2004) described how the benefits of social mix flowing from diversification — including promotion of greater social interaction, better community balance, overcoming place-based stigma and improved educational
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and job opportunities — are assumed to lead to the sustainability of renewal/regeneration initiatives. However, these authors found that evidence that tenure diversification and greater social mix leading to greater social cohesion is inconclusive. Rather they point to disrupted social networks arising from the redevelopment process and call into question an uncritical acceptance of the social mix orthodoxy, due to difficulties in fostering social contact between public housing tenants and homeowners; the risks of increasing rather than reducing class differences; and increased management problems (Stubbs, Randolph and Judd, 2005; Arthurson, 2008).

Arthurson (2008:4) noted:

> While the debate about a socially excluded underclass has been contentious, it has contributed to the stigmatisation of areas in which social housing is concentrated

She described how social housing tenants experience

> ... increased difficulty in gaining employment due to negative perceptions of particular areas and lack of role models in terms of employment participation and educational achievement.

These debates prompted ‘renewed interest by urban and social planners and housing policy makers in the idea of 'social mix' (ibid).

Levitas (2003; 2005) described how focusing on social housing distracted attention from the problems facing many low income owner-occupiers and the complex mix of tenures and socio-economic, ethnic and gender relations to be found in many urban areas, and ignored underlying economic and social problems. Morris, Jamieson and Patulny (2012) examined social mix outcomes in public housing estates overseas, finding little evidence of reductions in tenants’ disadvantage, but usually leading to physical improvements. They concluded that when social mix evolves ‘organically’ over time, it is more likely to bring positive outcomes; while conversely, when introduced through deliberate government intervention, with inadequate tenant consultation, social mix usually could severely disrupt residents’ lives. Notwithstanding these concerns, a case study of Wattle Grove in south-west Sydney (Appendix 6 Box A.6.2) demonstrates some improvements achieved in this once disadvantaged suburb, through pursuit of a social mix agenda.

In West-Central, a joint initiative between Housing NSW and Fairfield Council in the late 1990s, sought to ‘improve the quality of life in Cabramatta without displacing those in most need or dislocating social networks’ (NSW Department of Housing, 2001). Cabramatta CBD was a stigmatised area with high concentrations of poor quality multi-unit flats built mainly in the 1970s, and
attracted concerns due to its physical form, distinctive demographic and unsafe reputation. Improving the housing stock required investment by private owners, risking driving up rents and further disadvantaging or displacing the low income private renters. This initiative identified the complex regeneration issues needing to be dealt with, cementing a sound working relationship between Fairfield Council and Housing NSW and contributing to the Bonnyrigg Living Communities 2004 project (Appendix 6, Box A.6.3).

Three important themes emerge from the research discussed here: the need to scrutinise the scale at which social mix is implemented; the potential for greater collaboration through urban regeneration focused on social inclusion; and the impact of lifestyle in determining levels of social interaction in mixed income neighbourhoods. Overall, the literature suggests that there is little social interaction between residents in mixed tenure neighbourhoods, but greater likelihood between those with similar socio-economic characteristics. Generally, casual interaction is fostered where rental housing is spatially integrated and home buyers/owners have connections in the neighbourhood (such as children attending local schools). When low income tenants are relocated, some maintain ties with their previous residential neighbourhoods (such as attending church), but many activities still take place outside the neighbourhood. These findings highlight the need for more effective monitoring of policy outcomes.

### 4.7 Summary and conclusions

This chapter focused on international lessons for Australia from housing, employment and transport policies aimed at achieving greater social inclusion through the regeneration process. While Gleeson and Low (2000:53) contended that urban challenges in Australia do not equate with US, UK or EU experiences, they stressed that ignoring the need for urban regeneration helped entrench Sydney’s areas of dislocation and social exclusion.

From 1979 to 1997 UK governments downplayed social priorities in the interests of economic success. They adopted the view that efficient markets, driven by self-interest and underpinned by basic infrastructure investment, would expand the size of the economy and assumed that benefits would filter through society via increased numbers of jobs and rising incomes, recognising individual talent, effort and investment. Conversely, social commentators raised concerns about the lack of social integration, increasing economic instability and volatility, which required consideration of social justice and economic success together. On coming to power in 1997, New Labour adopted a place-centred approach to fostering community and social cohesion and social exclusion was framed in
response to a series of race riots in the northern towns of Burnley, Oldham and Bradford in 2001. Neighbourhood renewal in the UK highlighted limited job prospects, high crime levels, education under-achievement, poor health and housing, but overlooked neighbourhood social and environmental problems. Also, economic factors, population growth and decline in post-heavy-industrial areas, migration, immigration and demographic shifts were important considerations. A lack of transport accessibility to services was exacerbating social exclusion, disproportionately affecting vulnerable communities. While some individuals benefitted from regeneration initiatives, the physical fabric of cities remained poor and the upwardly mobile moved out; adding to social and economic decline. In contrast to the post-war emphasis on equality, global economic competitiveness between districts, cities and regions is now promoted. But the trickle-down approach, involving growth of any kind to deliver jobs and a higher overall living standard, cannot be relied on. A broadened economic base would provide sustainable incomes for more residents, while generating resources to fund public services.

Policies to reduce poverty and exclusion that help to improve quality-of-life should be promoted, not just on social justice grounds, but because they support economic growth. Employment creation, incorporating inactive working-age people into the workforce, has wide-ranging social and economic benefits flowing to individuals and the community. Local economic strategies should promote industrial diversity rather than narrow specialisation (such as knowledge-intensive services); reflecting the latent strengths of cities. Wider employment opportunities require catering for the diverse social structure and skills composition of populations in different locations.

UK research indicates ABIs need careful design, clarifying what can be achieved locally through better coordination of national-level interventions, adding to mainstream policies and market mechanisms, not substituting for them. Social and economic initiatives should be elevated from the local/sub-regional/regional level to an overarching national policy framework, but are militated against by a lack of integration, complex, fragmented and changing governance systems, poor inter-government relationships and power inequalities within partnerships. Administrative boundaries can undermine a city’s territorial identity by promoting unproductive competition for resources, population and jobs between core and surrounding authorities. Unnecessary duplication of facilities adds to costs, exacerbates difficulties in recognising both interdependence and complementary roles (such as employment centres or dormitory suburbs) and
inhibits strategic planning and decision-making across functional city-regions. Clearly, these economic, social and environmental considerations need balancing for sub-regions such as West-Central Sydney.

With obvious similarities with North America, Australia’s economy is more resilient, having greater buoyancy in housing markets and issues of race, municipal resourcing and suburban sprawl are less contentious. Research in the US focuses primarily on minority groups suffering poverty; failing to tackle the displacement of poor households from gentrifying neighbourhoods, which is of particular concern in this thesis. UK studies provide strong evidence that poor public transport presents a significant barrier to participation in work, education and access to facilities and services for the socially disadvantaged. Physical assets are an important, often neglected, influence on city competitiveness (Turok, 2004:24). An effective supply of land — required for both economic and residential uses, with a high quality public realm, roads, rail and air services — supports rather than frustrates economic development. Ageing infrastructure in older areas is generally more congested and fragmented patterns of land ownership makes regeneration a complicated and conflict-laden process, due to diverse stakeholder interests. These are important messages for both national and local policymakers in Australia, following a long period when investment in physical infrastructure, derelict land and public transport services was downplayed by governments favouring governance, skills and social capital issues.

Urban regeneration appears to have increased physical and social fragmentation in many overseas countries, with gentrification causing socially unsustainable involuntary displacement. Glasgow’s experience exemplifies a city-region with numerous local authority jurisdictions, requiring strategic thinking and cross-boundary co-operation and collaborative structures relevant for West-Central Sydney. Governments in developed countries are now more risk averse. Prior to the GFC, changes occurring in some UK cities such as Birmingham, Manchester and Newcastle, saw failing economies starting to be turned around by progressive organisations delivering proactive visionary strategies, providing leadership and a focus on strategic objectives; not an over-emphasis on process (as currently occurs in Sydney). Re-aligned local government departments, budgets and staffing, started to achieve stronger regional growth but required new sustainable urban management skills. However the budgetary austerity of the UK government’s response to fiscal constraints has placed urban
regeneration programs at risk, with many poorer people suffering displacement and no provision for affordable housing.

Characterised as a political strategy, urban regeneration uses a raft of planning regulations and policies to encourage private sector developer investment in run-down and derelict urban areas. The UK case studies demonstrate how previously the state played a dominant role in regeneration, rather than being merely one actor within a network of involved parties. In line with neo-liberal adherence to urban policies, the UK government is clearly retreating from its role in urban regeneration once again. But in order to improve peoples’ quality-of-life, urban regeneration has a key role in increasing social inclusion, which requires working at the most local scale, rather than seeking unrealistic massive structural changes to urban forms.

This thesis has not attempted to provide an in-depth account of every theme covered, but draws together key ideas and examples cross-cutting the subject. Other publications that should be consulted that are highly relevant to studies of urban policies and social inclusion in the UK include Imrie and Raco (2003; 2007), Cochrane (2007) and Porter and Shaw (2009).

Australian governments’ commitments to financing and staging of development are critical for success. New residents should not be expected to pay for local services that are not delivered. If localism is to succeed then it is poor policy to allow agencies to use funding sourced from new developments to address existing backlogs, especially since the credibility of the user-pays principle relies on transparent transactions. Because local plans are linked to developer contribution levies, sub-regional plans for regeneration should include similar measures, formalising mutual obligations between different levels of government. In recognition of some of these issues the NSW Growth Centres Commission had the remit to:

... ensure new development proceeds with infrastructure and services planned, funded and linked to the sequence of land release (NSW Department of Planning, 2005:26).

Yet the infrastructure backlog in developed areas was not addressed.

Significant cost advantages can be gained by proper planning and management of the development process. However, the local authority-based planning system in NSW is not equipped to undertake regeneration ventures: it requires new thinking and a different approach. It is asking too much of the present system, which is regulatory rather than entrepreneurial in nature, to expect conventional land-use zoning tools and small-scale development companies to come close to
achieving high quality community and neighbourhood regeneration. Section 4.6 argued that each residential area should contain a mix of house types, tenures, styles and layouts, to enable different household groups to find accommodation suiting their lifestyles. Yet policymakers in Australia fail to grasp that a wider housing and tenure mix is both socially and economically more sustainable, since it reduces the need for constantly changing the provision of age-specific services and facilities. Nevertheless, the successful implementation of social mix policies requires close monitoring to allow for continual adjustments to be made.

This chapter has demonstrated how urban regeneration is the over-arching framework for this thesis — a benchmark against which to mobilise the social inclusion framework mentioned in objective 1.

Chapter 5 now considers the developing NSW approach to social inclusion and urban regeneration, as encapsulated in a range of strategic documents dating from 1948 to the present day. In line with the narrative strategy introduced in the Chapter 1 the following two chapters discuss how the issues are represented in housing, employment and transport policies and governance practice, leading to either increased or diminished social exclusion, exploring questions of housing affordability, labour market performance and transport accessibility. Drawing extensively from the targeted interview findings, commencing at the regional scale in Chapter 5 the key issues for West-Central Sydney are described in Chapter 6.
Chapter 4: The urban regeneration context
CHAPTER 5: NSW approaches to urban regeneration

Introduction

A great deal of discussion over recent years has highlighted the failures of the prevailing approach to developing Sydney, in which the present planning system is essentially driven by a combination of market forces and government policies seeking to facilitate, control and regulate private development by various means. Many commentators, including Murphy and Watson (1997), Gleson and Low (2000:49) and WSROC (2008e), have highlighted an increasing disparity between the ‘two Sydneys’—a divide barely mentioned in the metropolitan strategies, despite recent acknowledgement of housing affordability issues and the need to integrate development of employment opportunities with housing market activity.

Chapter 5 therefore specifically interrogates four key planning issues: housing provision (including urban consolidation issues), jobs provision, transport provision and infrastructure investment, pinpointing the implications for urban governance at the regional scale, which are elaborated upon in Section 6.7. Commencing with discussion of the issues arising from current strategic plans, this chapter demonstrates the inability of successive governments to manage urban development. It critiques some erroneous planning assumptions and the paradox present in the separation of the territorial relationship between housing, employment and transport policies. Later sections examine the effectiveness of policy interventions in Sydney, drawing on insightful commentaries from senior professionals and regional representatives and my personal experience of working in Western Sydney.

Section 5.1 briefly reviews post-war metropolitan strategies for Sydney, focusing on:

1. The failure to consider the social impacts of planning policies on existing West-Central residents.
2. The neglect of the sub-region’s urban regeneration needs in favour of the urban dynamics and growth in more privileged locations.
3. The disconnection between the ‘city of cities’ planning objective and a continuing over-emphasis on access to the Sydney CBD.
4. The fragmentation of government agency and departmental objectives and responsibilities.
5. The lack of community consultation and ongoing monitoring.
The following three sections are not intended to present a detailed historical perspective of Sydney’s strategic and sectoral plans — since this has been covered extensively by others, including McLoughlin and Huxley (1986), Thompson (2007) and Freestone (2010). However, analysis of the impacts on the Western Sydney region necessitated recovering and critiquing some of the histories in respect of housing, employment and transport policy issues, subsequently analysed in Sections in 5.5 to 5.7.

Chapter 6 reflects upon the specific implications for urban regeneration policies for West-Central, their effectiveness and the importance of infrastructure investment and governance structures.

5.1 A critique of metropolitan plans for Sydney

In NSW, three types of statutory plans are produced under the Environmental Planning & Assessment (EP&A) Act 1979 — SEPPs (state environmental planning policies), REPs (regional environmental plans and LEPs (local environmental plans): few SEPPs provide strategic guidance for the production of locally-specific policies in LEPs and non-statutory development control plans (Williams, 2007:97).

From 1948 onwards, unreliable population forecasts and the need for more effective urban growth management resulted in episodic attempts at strategic metropolitan planning with varying degrees of relevance. These planning efforts were undertaken in a fragmented way by a range of state agencies with frequent changes made to their departmental identity (Box 5.1) rather than their roles and functions. As Chapter 1 noted, rapid population growth since WWII has consistently left strategic plans for Sydney dealing with issues of residential expansion, unaffordable housing, inequitable access to services and infrastructure, poor employment distribution, increasing socio-economic polarisation and threatened environmental quality.
Box 5.1: Metropolitan plans for Sydney *

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Plan</th>
<th>NSW government agency</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1948-1951</td>
<td>The County of Cumberland Planning Scheme</td>
<td>Cumberland County Council</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1988</td>
<td>Sydney into its Third Century</td>
<td>Department of Environment and Planning</td>
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<tr>
<td>1993</td>
<td>Sydney’s Future</td>
<td>Department of Planning</td>
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<tr>
<td>1995</td>
<td>Cities for the 21st Century</td>
<td>Department of Planning</td>
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<td>1998</td>
<td>Shaping Our Cities and Shaping Western Sydney</td>
<td>Department of Urban Affairs and Planning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2005</td>
<td>A City of Cities: A plan for Sydney’s future</td>
<td>Department of Planning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2006</td>
<td>Metropolitan Strategy Sub-regional Employment Profile</td>
<td>SGS Economics and Planning for the Department of Planning</td>
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<tr>
<td>2007</td>
<td>Employment lands for Sydney: Action plan</td>
<td>Department of Planning</td>
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<tr>
<td>2007</td>
<td>West-Central draft Sub-regional Strategy</td>
<td>Department of Planning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2010</td>
<td>Metropolitan Plan for Sydney 2036</td>
<td>Department of Planning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2011</td>
<td>Implementing the Metropolitan Plan — Planning principles for industrial lands</td>
<td>Department of Planning and Infrastructure</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2012</td>
<td>Employment Land Development Program report on the West-Central sub-region</td>
<td>Department of Planning and Infrastructure</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Metropolitan strategies are highlighted to distinguish them from subsequent updates and sub-plans

The County of Cumberland Planning Scheme (1948 and gazetted in 1951) — the original plan guiding Sydney’s growth from a population of 1.6 million in 1948, adding an extra 550,000 people over the following 25 to 30 years — is described as a ‘classically modernist and interventionist plan, framed by a strong spatial vision’ (McGuirk, 2005:62). A relevant overview, provided by Winston (1957), stressed the importance of cooperation between the various authorities.

Implementation depended not on the planning authority, but on transport, water, sewerage and electricity utilities (ibid). Winston claimed the inability of these numerous agencies to conform to the Scheme left its cost effectiveness in doubt, due
to a tendency for NSW governments to attempt to control all the structural aspirations of the city with no means of ensuring such conformity. In his analysis of the trend towards centralised control of local government activities Winston noted the habit of NSW governments to:

....try and control — not only in general but in detail — nearly every developmental activity in the State.

**Figure 5.1: The County of Cumberland Planning Scheme 1948**

Source: Abercrombie 2008:27
As a result:

When the sheer weight of details to be attended to makes central administration impossible, responsibilities are thrust upon local municipalities or shires, often without adequate financial assistance. ... [It] could certainly have been a better and more radical plan; but then it would have had little hope of being carried out under a system of representative government where so many shades of opinion have their influence on public policy (Winston, 1957:29).

Between 1948 and 1968 Sydney’s population grew by 1 million, doubling the Cumberland Plan’s predicted population. Following a review of the Plan’s ineffectiveness, the Cumberland County Council was dissolved in 1963 (Freestone, 2010: 146) and replaced by the State Planning Authority of NSW, effectively leaving metropolitan planning in limbo until 1968. The *Sydney Region Outline Plan: 1970-2000* (State Planning Authority, 1968) established a broad strategy for population distribution, location of employment, recreation and tertiary education; plus a regional transport and communications structure.

**Figure 5.2: Sydney Region Outline Plan (SROP)**

Source: State Planning Authority NSW 1968:113
This plan predicted Sydney needed to accommodate an additional 2.75 million people over the period 1970 to 2000. While the 1948 plan targeted Sydney’s inner suburbs for slum clearance, twenty years later the impetus for most of the fringe development was in the form of growth corridors and new self-contained centres. By 1966 the outer areas, containing 60% of the population, provided only 39% of regional employment. SROP proposed taking Sydney to a population of 5.5 million by the year 2000, requiring 350,000 extra manufacturing jobs and 950,000 jobs in other services.

The plan called for improved employment distribution to reduce work journeys. Emphasis was placed on expanding industrial and commercial employment opportunities along the rail system; the development of new cities containing a wide range of jobs; and the need to locate employment close to homes in areas of population growth. Contrasting with later plans, SROP discussed the importance of understanding the growth of economic activities in Sydney:

[The plan] is concerned with the spatial distribution of employment because it is this which largely influences the movement of goods, and with the peak journey-to-work movements which form the single biggest planning problem in metropolitan Sydney in this age of the motor vehicle (SROP, 1968:27).

As McGuirk and O'Neill (2002:305) noted:

The growth nodes matched the relocation of many manufacturing plants from increasingly obsolete and cramped, high-cost inner city industrial areas to greenfield sites close to a manufacturing force in the rapidly expanding suburban areas ... [An] extensive freeway system was planned to facilitate this increasingly car-dependent form of urban development.

This interventionist approach sought to control the release of residential land and contain speculation. While acknowledging Sydney CBD’s national/state/regional centre role, the plan attempted to steer future commercial growth into a limited number of major centres as counter magnets to the CBD. This far-sighted approach stressed:

The biggest single urban problem in the region is the great and increasing concentration of employment in the metropolitan city centre (SROP, 68:17).

Emphasising accessibility not just mobility, the plan called for integrated land use/transport planning, linking higher-order commercial and cultural centres, industrial and recreation areas and importantly, advocating the development of a rapid transit system to reduce the need to develop extensive freeways.

Despite the intention for SROP to provide the planning framework until the year 2000, by 1986 Sydney’s population had risen to 3.4 million; household size had decreased (half the households comprised only one or two people); and the number of all daily transport journeys doubled. Parramatta strengthened its role as a district centre, but land shortages and spiralling prices remained endemic (McGuirk and
O’Neill, 2002:308). From 1970 to 1985 Sydney lost 178,000 manufacturing jobs – a decline continuing to 1991 – but also benefitted from globalisation, with banking, financial and business services (BFBS) employment growing from 9.5% to 15.4% from 1981 to 1991 contributing a further 7.8% between 1986 and 1991 (Fagan, 2000). These fundamental economic changes to the SROP necessitated the development of a new metropolitan strategy.

**Figure 5.3: Sydney into its Third Century**

Searle (2002) described *Sydney into its Third Century* (1988) as the first strategy to incorporate an explicit employment component. In the intervening twenty years between plans, just over a half of the SMR employment had located outside the major centres, industrial zones and special use areas. By designating further sub-
regional centres this plan started to assist the self-containment of Western Sydney, but there was limited intervention in employment distribution.

Updating the 1988 strategy, *Sydney’s Future* (1993) cautioned that, despite the Western Sydney resident workforce growing by a third from 1981 to 1990, jobs grew by less than a fifth. Complaining that ‘Jobs are not evenly spread within Sydney’, the solution was to ‘increase housing opportunities in locations close to jobs and accessible to transport systems’, requiring better integration of services into the urban planning system (Department of Planning, 1993:12).

Some thirty five years after Winston (1957) criticised the reluctance of senior departmental representatives to make commitments when important decisions were being arrived at, the *Human Services and Physical Services Release Area Management Committees*, established for the Rouse Hill Development Area (RHDA) in North-West Sydney, attempted to prepare service delivery plans, indicative costs and set timetables for provision, but encountered similar problems in obtaining long-term work programs and infrastructure commitments from government agencies. A 1994 submission on the *Financing of Infrastructure for the RHDA* also highlighted:

> There has been sustained criticism of major urban developments in the past due to the failure of social infrastructure in particular, to keep pace with the rapid growth of housing (Fingland, 1994:3).

Strategic planning remained disconnected from the budget process and urban regeneration issues were entirely ignored.

*Cities for the 21st Century* (1995:4), attempted to ‘represent a whole of government approach to integrated urban management’, arguing that ‘the process of strategic planning as important as the end result’. Seeking greater certainty through a plan which was ‘dynamic and responsive to change’ there remained little coordination between urban infrastructure, commercial land developments and Western Sydney employment targets (McGuirk and O’Neill, 2002). Market forces allowed business parks to be located outside the designated suburban centres (Fagan and Dowling, 2005).
A newly established Ministry of Urban Infrastructure Management (MUIM) in 1996 aimed to specify the total infrastructure needs of the SMR over the medium term. MUIM’s 1998 plan identified alternatives to government agency provision, in the context of a National Competition Policy — introduced by the Keating government in the 1990s — attempting to limit anti-competitive behaviour between firms and
government (Smith and Scott, 2006:30). The plan noted that the government would consider a five-year funding program for public transport as part of an integrated transport plan to be released late in 1998 and listed projects supported by cost benefit studies and socio-economic analysis, many of which had already been completed. Yet strategic planning involves the identification of actions, not a constant re-examination of the problem. Despite acknowledging unemployment and regional imbalances, the plan proffered few solutions, simply reiterating that an ‘integrated approach to planning and implementation of transport infrastructure is needed’ (Fingland, 2003). MUIM was later described as:

... a failed experiment in this area, with coordination eventually going to the Premier's Department: in this case coordination became ruled by political rather than planning priorities (Murphy, 2007:157).

WSROC attempted to identify common goals and priorities for Western Sydney to assist joint advocacy to federal and state governments on the region’s issues (Gooding, 2005). A 1996 ‘Team West’ regional conference produced a regional agenda developed by twelve key regional participants (ibid:6). In response a Minister for Western Sydney was appointed and subsequently the next strategy, produced by the renamed Department of Urban Affairs and Planning (DUAP), incorporated much of the ‘Team West’ agenda’s recommendations (ibid).

*Shaping Sydney and Shaping Western Sydney* (1998) contained an overview of the various components of government responsibilities still undertaken by a range of agencies. Yet the ‘key outcomes, priorities and actions’ contained in these documents still failed to set out how they would achieve their stated objectives, or a program for their commitment.

In 2001 the NSW Government attempted planning reform through *PlanFirst*, a radical planning scheme initiated by the a reconstituted Department of Infrastructure, Planning and Natural Resources (DIPNR), which signalled acceptance of the essential need for higher level coordination for managing Sydney’s growth (Murphy, 2007). DIPNR was an ambitious attempt to overcome departmental ‘silos’, coordinate land use planning strategies with budgetary and implementation commitments and streamline the approval process. Attempting to create a specifically regional approach to planning, *PlanFirst* proposed dividing NSW into 16 regions, each with a separate plan. However, responding to wide-ranging criticisms from local councils objecting to being sidelined in the process — being confined to implementing plans determined by a higher sphere of government at the expense of local community concerns — and coupled with the development industry wanting to restrict *PlanFirst’s* scope:
The then planning minister established a taskforce to review PlanFirst ...[that] recommended scrapping the regional forums and the systematic roll-out of regional strategies (Gooding, 2005:16-5).

Hence an opportunity for spatial planning reform was lost and the barriers to undertaking regional planning remained.

Adopting recommendation from a series of ministerial taskforces in 2003, the NSW government heralded a shift away from the development of place-based, community-driven local plans (responding to unique local characteristics), towards standardised LEPs; adopting a mandated structure and content intended to provide State-wide consistency and simplify the statutory planning process. Throughout this period Western Sydney councils protested against this highly rigid approach, claiming that it constrained their ability to develop the strategic planning frameworks sought by their communities, ignored local conditions and limited their ability to integrate LEPs into wider sustainability planning frameworks. Such constant policy changes resulted in significant costs to councils and intensified poor working relationships with the state.

Local governments expressed concern that the housing demand in Western Sydney was over-estimated. Population projections by ABS (2001) predicted an increase for GWS of 1.1 million people by 2031 or 2.1% per year. Previous research for WSROC demonstrated that from 1996 to 2001, the GWS region’s population grew by 30.3% or 1.7% per year (Randolph and Holloway, 2003:63). Importantly, this growth was not due to relocation from eastern to western Sydney, but was generated primarily by natural increase and movement within the region, plus overseas immigration, and the maximum overall SMR growth never exceeded 760 people per week (ibid).

Ignoring these 2003 research findings for GWS, DIPNR stated:

The government is planning for growth of up to 1,000 people a week and the trend to fewer people in each house means an additional 23,500 homes will be needed each year (DIPNR, media release 2004).

In 2004 the government released 27,000 hectares of land for further urban development, with 30% located at the urban fringe and the remainder in the established area (DIPNR, 2004). A Growth Centres Commission was established to oversee the estimated $7.8 billion infrastructure required (75% to be funded through developer contributions with the balance provided by government) and a new SEPP to ‘ensure the outcomes are achieved’. Despite 2005 amendments to the 1979 EP&A Act to regulate council-negotiated agreements for affordable housing, the government acknowledged that voluntary planning agreements generally only assisted large-scale, staged developments with long timeframes and developer interest in delivering public infrastructure — inapplicable in West-Central’s fragmented housing market. Notwithstanding these major government growth commitments, DIPNR was broken up in 2005:
... with considerable doubt about how much intra-agency coordination there was between formerly separate departments, thus showing how difficult it is to come up with strong institutional arrangements for planning (Murphy, 2007:157).

While the Growth Centres Commission was intended to ‘ensure’ that development in the North-West and South-West growth centres ‘proceeds with infrastructure and services planned, funded and linked to the sequence of land release’ (Department of Planning, 2005:261), this effectively placed responsibility for these two major urban release areas under centralised government control (Williams, P. 2007:39). Whilst improving the coordination between land release and infrastructure provision, this further reduced local government’s role in planning and limited local community consultation and participation. This focus on the growth centres also exacerbated the imbalance in infrastructure investment and social and economic polarisation along spatial lines between West-Central’s older suburbs and the new release areas, since the costs of new housing at the urban fringe precluded low income residents.

Following the demise of PlanFirst and DIPNR, development of another metropolitan strategy was commenced. To cater for the projected metropolitan population increase of 1.1 million people by 2031 (NSW Department of Planning, 2005:3), City of Cities: A Plan for Sydney’s Future (2005) proposed the development of over 640,000 additional dwellings, with 450,000 (70%) new dwellings to be built on ‘brownfield’ sites as attached dwellings concentrated around centres and corridors which would require extensive urban renewal of the older suburbs. Three cities in GWS — Parramatta, Liverpool and Penrith — were designated as regional cities intended to provide a focus for cultural, shopping and business services (ibid:81). The plan targeted 95,500 new dwellings and 61,000 net additional jobs in West-Central by 2031 (ibid:5).

Acknowledging that the SMR was too large and complex an area to resolve all the planning issues at the local level, the strategy divided Sydney into ten sub-regions (ibid:81). Western Sydney was divided into three sub-regions: North-West, West-Central and South-West Sydney, prompting criticisms from an influential planning commentator over how the boundaries were drawn:

There is considerable confusion regarding the sub-regions which make up Sydney with many government departments using different regions which are often quite alien to the form of Sydney as shaped by the 1968 SROP (Meyer, 2006:9).
The 2005 strategy described a global economic corridor (coining the metaphor *global arc* as depicted in Figure 5.6) extending from the airport, through the Sydney CBD north-west to Macquarie Park and containing concentrations of information and communications technology, finance and business services and health and education facilities. Positioning Western Sydney as a suburban economy — driven by growing...
Chapter 5: NSW strategic plans and their limitations

population demands and reliant on continuing decentralisation and the establishment of manufacturing, commercial, warehousing, storage and distribution operations — the region was expected to provide about three-quarters of the expected jobs growth in the absence of the essential supporting physical and social infrastructure (Bunker and Holloway, 2006:6).

Research underpinning the 2005 Metropolitan Strategy sharpened the need to develop an Employment Lands Development Program (ELDP). SGS Economics and Planning (2006:147) described employment trends in the SMR, reiterated the long-repeated aspirations for Parramatta as the second CBD and characterised West-Central as the second largest employment sub-region specialising in manufacturing and wholesaling. An Employment Lands for Sydney report attempted job creation by releasing ‘greenfield’ lands and ‘encouraging’ regeneration of brownfield sites through improved efficiency of zoning and coordinated employment lands development (Department of Planning, 2007a:15).

Late in 2007 three draft sub-regional strategies for Western Sydney were released for comment (Department of Planning, 2007a), prompting considerable local government concern in respect of their strategic planning objectives. West-Central in particular suffered from a lack infrastructure to service the needs of the existing population and the targeted growth risked exacerbating these deficiencies. The following section summarises Western Sydney councils’ key issues in the areas of housing, employment, transport and environmental constraints.

Sub-regional strategy limitations. Containing little analysis of the interrelationship between the three GWS sub-regions and the SMR, Parramatta’s importance as Sydney’s second CBD, or how the sub-regions might intersect with the so-called ‘economic corridor’, the sub-regional strategies remained silent about West-Central’s lack of housing affordability, poor employment and education participation rates and long-standing infrastructure deficit, lacking inter- and intra-regional public transport connections.
Despite acknowledging sub-regional variations, each sub-region was treated as an island, providing no demographic analysis or description of distinct features, issues or challenges (WSROC 2008b). Described by local government as limited vehicles to distribute dwelling and employment numbers, the sub-regional strategies lacked assessment of the urban capacity of the areas to cope with the expected growth, ignoring the impacts on existing residents. As a WSROC submission stressed:

The sub-regional strategies ... demonstrate little understanding of the development process and lack the governance arrangements required to ensure the necessary cooperation between the line agencies to deliver on the strategy’s objectives. At best they represent a statement of intent ... to ensure that new LEPs conform to the planning objectives set out in the Metropolitan and sub-regional strategies (WSROC, 2008b:4).

Providing limited detail on how revitalisation could be achieved, West-Central’s older ageing suburbs were treated simply as recipients of urban consolidation through
increased density. This was in marked contrast to the emphasis on urban dynamics and growth in privileged locations such as the ‘global arc’. Bunker criticised this approach, noting:

Apart from the neglect of social impacts ... the strategy displays little consideration of how the urban renewal process works and whether the anticipated increase in dwellings and population will actually take place (Bunker, 2008:12).

The social consequences are assumed to be beneficial trickle down effects in terms of ‘fairness’ in better proximity to jobs and services (ibid:46).

The plan ... assumes one population and housing projection for the city to the year 2031, distributes the jobs and residents by sub-region accordingly and constructs a sub-regional planning process to make sure these totals can be accommodated. There is little flexibility in it despite the intentions of monitoring and revision (ibid:56).

A 2010 Metropolitan Strategy Review Discussion Paper, noted the importance of specialised centres and the need to ‘reduce economic disadvantage and health inequity’ (Department of Planning, 2010a), but ignored the import link between tertiary education precincts and improved employment opportunities, or the role of public transport in addressing regional impediments to accessing work. While including worthwhile goals to ‘develop the local economy and boost employment’, public transport’s crucial role in providing more equitable access was not addressed.

**Recent metropolitan strategies.** Continuing to upwardly revise targets, the Metropolitan Plan for Sydney 2036 — Sydney’s eighth growth strategy since 1945 — updated the earlier forecasts, indicating an increase of 1.7 million people (Department of Planning, 2010b). The strategy targeted 770,000 new dwellings and required 760,000 additional jobs to support the anticipated population growth (at an annual average rise of 56,560 people per year), with half of these jobs to be located in Western Sydney (NSW Planning, 2010c:5). West-Central was designated an important area for urban renewal and was now expected to accommodate 213,000 people in 96,000 dwellings by 2036. In tandem the new job targets were increased to 98,000 net. Acknowledging jobs growth in the region could not rely solely on the current economic structure, the plan voiced support for specialisation, the formation of new businesses and employment related to population growth in areas such as health, education, social services and construction; but provided no guidance on how this was expected to occur.

Following a government change from Labor to a Liberal Coalition in 2010, a draft paper Implementing the Metropolitan Plan — Planning Principles for Industrial Lands sought to:

... provide guidance for local councils and business on planning to ensure stocks of industrial land are available to meet current and future demands across Sydney (NSW Government, 2011).
Regional concerns pointed to the persistent lack of monitoring of employment generation and jobs growth, suggesting they lagged behind the 2036 targets, due to low intensity land uses for logistics and warehousing developing along the M7 and an historically low (205 hectare) take-up of industrial land across the SMR in 2009. Furthermore, a failure to integrate industrial land planning with supporting infrastructure inhibited the expansion of industrial land supply. WSROC (2011:4) called for retention of strategic industrial lands; a renewed emphasis on transitioning older areas to generate higher job-creating land uses; and investigation into additional employment land for Western Sydney.

An Employment Land Development Program report recommended annual monitoring of the take-up and analysis of longer-term demands for employment lands; a rolling program for land release rezoning and servicing; and investigation into opportunities for regeneration of precincts with development potential (Department of Planning and Infrastructure, 2012a). The report highlighted how dispersal of large warehousing activities, increasing demand for smaller industrial units and high land costs, was making employment transitions uneconomic.

**Key issues.** Murphy (2007) described the purposes of metropolitan planning as firstly, to provide a public policy framework guiding local council planning decisions, with an emphasis on wider metropolitan interests; and secondly, to ensure:

... that the government agencies and private firms that provide urban infrastructure and develop land ... coordinate their actions to support an overarching vision of metropolitan development ... (and) to ensure that cities are spatially structured to maximise their economic productivity and social cohesiveness ... [But] just because a metropolitan strategy ordains certain government actions, these will not necessarily occur ((Murphy, 2007:141 and 157).

The domestic migration trend identified since 1996 persisted, with 2011 census results showing in 2010 some 20,249 more people left Sydney for other parts of Australia than moved to Sydney from within Australia — the largest domestic outmigration of all the major cities (Infrastructure Australia/Major Cities Unit, 2013:1). Clearly the complex migration patterns of arrivals and departures should inform planning policies for diverse sub-regions like West-Central. A high proportion of growth resulting predominantly from natural increase creates less immediate dwelling demands than when significant numbers of households arrive from interstate or overseas: a birth does not necessarily prompt the need for a household to move and departures vacate homes that can be re-occupied. Overestimating dwelling demand can have serious implications, limiting state and local government’s ability to fund the the services and facilities required to support the population increase, particularly in West-Central’s older suburbs.
Chapter 5: NSW strategic plans and their limitations

Successive metropolitan strategies have paid scant regard to the need for physical renewal or the need to address the social changes occurring in Sydney’s older established middle ring suburbs. The strategies have demonstrated little understanding of how links between housing, employment and transport policies affect social exclusion, and poor appreciation of the policy changes needed for urban regeneration. Urban disadvantage in Sydney is not confined to pockets in the inner city or in public housing estates, but is increasingly manifest across low-income, private-rental areas characterised by run-down housing, limited job and education opportunities and inadequate transport services.

The Metropolitan strategies — the key NSW government documents guiding development over the next 25 years — should have contained actions for this growth to occur in a logical and sustainable manner. Not strategically focused, they relied instead on infrastructure already built or previous commitments — many subsequently withdrawn in November 2008. Containing general statements and outlining no timeframe for delivery, many of the proposals required unfunded additional research. In 2008 Bunker and Searle highlighted how few of Sydney’s metropolitan plans and strategies had reached fruition due to their reliance on implementation by agencies other than the Department of Planning. Section 5.2 now summarises the key features of the government narrative from 1998 to 2012; briefly critiquing the implications of ten sectoral plans produced by different NSW agencies over that period.

5.2 NSW sectoral plans from 1998

Examining the lack of collaboration and coordination exhibited between the agencies responsible and the interrelationship between the policy areas, Section 5.2 considers the successes and implementation failures of the metropolitan strategy objectives in respect of the social inclusion agenda discussed in Chapter 3; describing the proliferation of other plans, identified in Box 5.2, that also sought to address the SMR’s issues.
The objectives of these plans in relation to their impact on the planning process are now discussed.

An ambitious strategy — *Action for Transport 2010* (Department of Transport, 1998) — attempted integration of land use and transportation policies, providing a longer-term commitment to achieving strategic outcomes not prejudiced by short-term political timeframes. Acknowledging poor public transport services in Western Sydney, it committed government to provision of new rail services, light rail, bus-only T-Ways (unconventionally funded through the annual urban roads budget) and cross-regional bus connections. Claiming to redress the imbalance in the road and public transport system, it predicted the creation of 28,000 construction jobs and, unusually, NSW Treasury approval of $300 million per annum on new rail projects alone. Unfortunately, very little of the substance of this plan apart from roads including the Sydney M7 orbital, was delivered (Christie, 2010:9). Only two and a half of the seven T-Ways and a handful of the cross-regional bus routes were completed, with many Western Sydney projects, including a crucial Parramatta-Epping Rail Link, cancelled or deferred.

The *Integrating Land Use and Transport Policy Package* (2001) represented a rare coordinated effort in which the NSW planning and transport departments and the roads authority produced guidelines for improving transport choice and reducing car use. Five years later an *Urban transport statement: Responding to the challenge of travel within and across Sydney* (Department of Premier and Cabinet, 2006) outlined the government’s approach to the Metropolitan Rail Expansion Program, defined 18

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Plan</th>
<th>NSW Government agency</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1998</td>
<td><em>Action for Transport 2010: an integrated transport plan for Sydney</em></td>
<td>Department of Transport</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2001</td>
<td><em>Integrating Land Use and Transport Policy Package, Sydney: Improving Transport Choice</em></td>
<td>Department of Urban Affairs and Planning, the RTA and the Department of Transport</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2006</td>
<td><em>Urban transport statement: Responding to the challenge of travel within and across Sydney</em></td>
<td>Department of Premier</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2006</td>
<td><em>Draft State Plan and State Plan summary</em></td>
<td>Department of Premier and Cabinet (DP&amp;C)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2006</td>
<td><em>State Infrastructure Strategy 2008/9</em></td>
<td>Department of Treasury</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2011</td>
<td><em>NSW 2021: A plan to make NSW number one</em></td>
<td>Department of Premier and Cabinet</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2012</td>
<td><em>Sydney’s Rail Future: Modernising Sydney’s Trains</em></td>
<td>Transport for NSW</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2012</td>
<td><em>Draft NSW Long-Term Transport Master Plan: A new approach to transport planning</em></td>
<td>Transport for NSW</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2012</td>
<td><em>State Infrastructure Strategy 2012–2032</em></td>
<td>Infrastructure NSW</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Chapter 5: NSW strategic plans and their limitations

transport corridors and established the potential for a ‘metro-style’ mass transit system and ‘bringing forward’ the North-West Rail Link (NWRL) by two years.

The first draft of the NSW State Plan (DP&C, 2006a) started to address disadvantage, implementation and monitoring and adopted triple bottom line reporting (WSROC, 2006b), however, it still failed to provide solutions to social exclusion. Labelling target groups as the problem distracted attention from the deep and disabling structures in which these disadvantaged groups were situated, including the lack of affordable housing, suitable jobs and adequate public transport and ignoring the distributional nature inherent in the economic process while reinforcing negative stereotypes of poorer people. In this regard, academics such as Bacchi (2006) described how governments appear to approach change by defining narrow limits, protecting specific interests and stigmatising those deemed responsible for the problem. Policy responses are then presented as benevolent, generous and compassionate — all reinforcing a lack of empowerment among the socially excluded and disguising the nature of economic growth and change.

A 2006 State Plan Summary noted Sydney’s increasing socio-economic divide, the links between poor public transport and the costs of location disadvantage, social isolation, high car dependency and increasing oil vulnerability for a poorer population; but did not address the needs for more equitable health outcomes, improved school completion rates and greater tertiary education participation in Western Sydney. Over-emphasising Sydney CBD, this DP&C summary ignored the region’s poor inter- and intra-regional transport connections, limiting access to knowledge infrastructure, social and cultural facilities and hampering the evolution of the regional economic structure. This required more metropolitan dispersal of high growth service sector and ‘new economy’ jobs to enhance social capital, improving skills and access to education opportunities.

The State Infrastructure Strategy (Department of Treasury, 2006) outlined the investment needed to implement the 2005 strategy; detailed budget commitments on a four-year budget cycle; and linked regional plans with the infrastructure financed by a combination of revenues, user charges, public-private partnerships and, unusually, debt. Reiterating some previously announced public transport projects, that had committed funds for land acquisition for the North-West and South-West rail links, the strategy only identified projects involving local government funding or public-private partnerships.

In November 2008 a mini-budget cut or deferred substantial proportions of the planned transport infrastructure — diverting funds away from Western Sydney where the existing needs and proposed growth were greatest. Instead $1.8 billion was
allocated to a Sydney CBD Metro system — for an area comparatively well served by public transport. Also $150 million allocated for the purchase of 100 buses to ‘offset the scrapping of the North-West Metro’, heralded a return to an over-emphasis on road transport and failed to grasp the enormity of the transport problems facing Western Sydney (WSROC, 2009:26).

Following the 2010 government change, NSW 2021: A Plan To Make NSW Number One (D&PC, 2011) was intended to guide policy and budget decision-making, based around five strategies: to ‘rebuild the economy’; ‘return quality services’; ‘renovate infrastructure’; ‘strengthen the local environment and infrastructure’ and ‘restore accountability to government.’

In 2012 three further infrastructure plans — Sydney’s Rail Future: Modernising Sydney’s Trains, a NSW Long-Term Transport Master Plan by Transport for NSW, plus a State Infrastructure Strategy 2012 to 2032 by Infrastructure NSW were released. Claiming to be NSW’s first integrated transport strategy the Long-Term Master Plan considered land use, transport planning, freight and passenger transport movements together (Department of Transport, 2012b). While social inclusion was not identified as an objective, the plan acknowledged ‘good access to transport can help address social exclusion’ and stressed the importance of links to jobs in the ‘global arc’ (ibid, 2012:36). Improved service frequencies and bus priority measures for emerging centres were flagged and a 33km West Connex major road project was intended to improve capacity on the M4/M5 corridors by linking Western Sydney to ‘international gateways and key business centres’. New transport connections for the Western Sydney Employment Area were apparently to occur through ‘embedding public transport services and reducing car dependency’ (ibid, 2012:5) but it remained unclear where these were to be built or how this was to be achieved.

A twenty-year State Infrastructure Strategy (Infrastructure NSW 2012) revealed markedly different approaches to transport planning emerging from the Commonwealth and NSW governments (see Sections 2.2 and 5.7). The former argued for planning to commence for a second Sydney airport but was spurned by a state favouring expansion of Canberra airport and high-speed rail links. Abandoning the Parramatta-Epping rail link, despite offers of $2.6 billion of federal funding, NSW committed to a $1.6 billion light-rail link in the CBD and a second Sydney Harbour rail crossing, persistently maintaining Sydney’s uneven spatial distribution of support for sub-regional social and economic needs. West-Central still lacked government commitment or specific budgets to pay for new infrastructure in the older established suburbs, which contributed to major difficulties in accessing services and employment, over-reliance on cars and increasing social and economic polarisation.
This critique of NSW strategies in respect of metropolitan growth highlighted the fragmented and uncoordinated nature of government agency actions, ignoring the integrated territorial relationship between housing, employment and transport policies. What is striking in retrospect is how many of these metropolitan planning challenges and urban regeneration issues, documented in a litany of plans developed since 1948 and updated with increasing frequency in recent years, remain unresolved to this day. Further entrenching areas of disadvantage, these responses reinforce the east/west divide and the increasing socio-economic polarisation across the SMR. Section 5.3 now considers how land use planning limitations are contributing to these issues.

5.3 The limitations of land use planning

... when a city already exists — when it comes equipped with a complex history and an existing population ... paying attention to the here-and-now of a city and the day-to-day lives of people living there was as important as developing a vision for how citizens might someday live in the city that a plan foretold... In any neighbourhood where economic growth is unlikely, new land uses are equally unlikely and therefore city planning has to be less concerned with imagining a far-off future than with figuring out what will improve citizens' lives while they are living there (Ford, abstract 2010).

Often these complex urban policy issues are compounded by unrealistic expectations about what planning can and cannot achieve. As the 19\textsuperscript{th} century Spanish philosopher George Santayana stressed 'Those who do not learn from history are condemned to repeat it' (Santayana, 1905).

In the 1970s, UK strategic plans were monitored for their robustness — an ability not to be readily damaged or weakened — and thereby promoting a pragmatic approach linking practice and theory. Discussing UK town planning techniques in 1974, Margaret Roberts wrote:

Land use planning cannot produce a short journey to work because it cannot produce work, or a sufficient income for people to pay for a home, or, in itself, suitable sizes and types of houses. It may play a hand in providing a shopping centre, but cannot ensure it contains shops, or, if it does, that they succeed, nor can it see that people have a car to get to them ... [Therefore] land use planning does not have powers to do many of the things it is aiming at (Roberts 1974:9).

Two years later Sandercock observed inequality, city planning and income distribution in Australia, with urban planning failing to achieve re-distribution; perpetuating the socio-economic divide. She pointed to the political, economic and social causes and manifestations existing in cities, noting:

While town planning ideas encompassed ... very broad aims, it has never been within the power of the town planning techniques of zoning and subdivision control to achieve this breadth of intention (Sandercock (1976:2).

Attributing this to the planner's lack of control over a fundamental resource — land — Sandercock stressed that, apart from Stretton's 1970 work on the shift in resources from the poor to the rich in cities, little empirical research was undertaken into the
Chapter 5: NSW strategic plans and their limitations

equity or distributional aspects of large cities, or how city planning could attempt to tackle the problems. Such limited town planning understandings remain unresolved.

Thirty years ago town planning was defined by many teachers as the ‘allocator of scarce resources’ (namely land, capital and expenditure on the built environment and services offered to the community), requiring an understanding of redistribution processes through an emphasis on equality, the elimination of poverty and deprivation; relying on judgement, based on societal values and a system of arbitration between conflicting claims (Roberts, 1974; Sandercock, 1976).

Sandercock demonstrated how the divergent outcomes of planning practice (due to contextual, environmental and technological constraints, combined with conflicting interests) and frustrated efforts to improve the physical environment — not realising the redistributive possibilities of city planning — left the eventual planning process outcomes disappointingly divergent from the planner's conceptions.

Healey (1998) described times in UK planning history when the focus was not confined to physical planning but on conflict management and place-making, with the hope this would lead to effective spatial, socially-inclusive planning: but she found a stark gap between planning rhetoric and practice. It appears little has changed in NSW. While planning for social inclusion may be an important personal and professional concern given some prominence in strategic documents, for most NSW planners it is not a priority. Current legislation limits planning’s role to making spatial development plans and regulating private property rights to safeguard and promote wider political policy objectives, while ignoring increasing calls for place-based planning and management. Local government ‘statutory’ planners are confined to plan-making or enforcement; with much strategic planning contracted out to consultants. This limited distinction in duties is less apparent in North America or the UK as demonstrated in Sections 4.1 and 4.3. In statutory planning, greater fairness is rarely considered. While council reports air environmental and transport issues, social issues are generally ignored or seen to be difficult to consider in statutory requirements. Recent wide-ranging reviews of the *EP&A Act 1979* seek to reflect the social, cultural, environmental and economic changes occurring since it was written. This requires balancing planning for place and people, not just numbers, plus greater alignment with other, often contradictory, legislation.

Jackson (2011:2) describes how previously social planning — an emerging sub-profession situated between physical planning and community development — began to find favour in Australia when a Social Planning Convenors Group (2003) called for the promotion of equitable access for all socio-economic and cultural groups to employment, housing and other critical social infrastructure. Yet little has progressed, with Fincher and
Chapter 5: NSW strategic plans and their limitations

Iveson (2008:6) citing Gleeson and Randolph’s (2001:3) description of how social planning:

... remains rather weakly developed, intellectually and professionally, with a focus on process and participation rather than the causes of social disadvantage and its remedies.

As Schönwandt (2008:43) convincingly argues, community consultation exercises frequently confuse group agreement on an issue with the truth; irrespective of whether or not the group is representative of community views. Often this leads to a collective blindness — because participants are keen to ensure that social relationships are not jeopardised — rather than actions based on facts. Common tendencies to overestimate the effectiveness of planned interventions — the illusion of control — overlook after- and side-effects of planning measures; unconsciously covering up what is unknown; making results hard to assess, often misinterpreting failures as success and limits monitoring of planning intervention outcomes (ibid).

More recently Healey (2010: ix) described planning as an encompassing process of ‘developing and improving the places where we live and work’. Yet since the early 20th century the term is qualified as city, urban and regional or spatial planning, remaining compartmentalised into land use planning, environmental planning, transport planning, social planning and cultural planning.

Clearly planning policies should not be seen to be an end in themselves but a statement of objectives that should be monitored for their effectiveness. No one would suggest this is easy, given the complexity of the processes, the strength of the forces that shape uncontrolled development, but planning policies need to be focused on clear outcomes and their performance more carefully monitored than has been the case to date, limiting their ability to respond to change. O’Connor (2012) noted how Victoria lacks State Government coordination of planning actions and budgetary allocations. A similar criticism can be levelled in Sydney, with its blinkered focus on the CBD for employment even more problematic, given its off-centre location and geographic constraints.

Recent metropolitan strategies continue to stress the importance of West-Central’s strategic centres and corridors for accommodating more growth, neglecting the social impacts of urban consolidation policies on the sub-region’s residents. The following section is not intended to develop an argument about the development of centres but reflects upon appropriate 21st century planning principles for Sydney and, as in the remainder of this thesis, incorporates comments from the seventeen face-to-face interviews conducted with key informants who provided important insights into a range of topics.
5.4 Centres policy issues

Given the geographical constraints of the Sydney basin and ongoing pressures for population growth, arguably the SMR can only develop sustainably by agglomerating intensive uses, services and facilities in centres as a focus for community life and a collecting point for public transport; hence this section discusses centres policy issues. *Centres Policy*, in various guises, featured in Sydney’s urban planning strategies since 1948 and ‘strategic centres ... will continue to be the focus of economic development within the sub-regions’ (NSW Planning, 2007:60). Previous research (outlined in Section 2.2) pointed to the significant jobs growth needed to retain sub-regional employment containment; with a failure to improve upon the limited 18% of new employment located in major centres since 1996.

WSROC (2005) argued that metropolitan strategies should more actively discourage dispersal of employment. While some service sector jobs decentralised to GWS centres, in 2001 only 37% of employment was located in designated centres (Fagan, Dowling and Langdale, 2004) and these jobs were not generally accessed by public transport, with a growing reliance on private motor vehicles for the journey-to-work, leading to an increasing mismatch between where people lived and where they worked (Battelino, Smith and Stone PPM, 2004b). Prior to 2005 there were limited attempts to provide the necessary infrastructure or employment land in West-Central’s centres. An over-emphasis on urban consolidation policies focused on increasing the density of *dwellings* rather than *employment* at urban transit nodes, lacked appreciation of how concentrating jobs at transit nodes assists long-term economic development, by providing more quality-of-life opportunities (shopping, entertainment, restaurants and public spaces) with higher numbers of people supporting these amenities (as discussed in Section 4.1).

Metropolitan plans continually classify centres according to their retail function and proximity to public transport (particularly railway stations) and ignore the location of key activities (hospitals, schools, tertiary education, government services, entertainment facilities, commercial and industrial areas) dispersed across Western Sydney. Retail is not an isolated activity but depends on the fortunes of the centres in which it located, hence the need to boost employment growth by concentrating highly skilled jobs and activity in centres together with residential uses, helping to increase land values enough to enable greater commercial density.
In the period 2001 to 2006 the North-West and South-West sub-regions experienced a higher (12%) rate of jobs growth compared to West-Central (9.3%), although off a smaller base. While the Norwest Business Park (Figure 5.8) established from 1993, successfully created jobs, Norwest now suffers from significant road traffic congestion and the lack of public transport provision is contrary to the centres policy. As one senior government transport bureaucrat lamented:

> You go there now it’s not a small city it’s a big city ... ‘Why did that happen?’ Planning still bleats on about having a ‘Centres Policy’ which is so ineffective ... It would mean something if they said ‘Norwest Business Park is the centre in that area.’... But they say ‘No, Blacktown’s the centre’. Well it’s not ... Despite having a policy saying we favour employment occurring in areas where you have good public transport, the absolute opposite happens (SGI06)¹.

However, not all stakeholders shared the same concern, as exemplified by views emanating from the development industry’s Urban Taskforce lobby group:

> Expressly linking job-rich development opportunities exclusively to the quality of local public transport denies regional communities the chance to respond to the rare ... opportunities for significant job-creating office development ... The presence of public transport should not be a pre-requisite for new business parks, retail development or other services (Urban Taskforce, 2010:8).

This approach ignores the fundamental need to improve public transport to campus-type developments since, while purporting to criticise the implementation failures of

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¹ Responses from face-to-face interviews are indicated by SGI = state government interviewee, LGI = local government interviewee, MPI = minister in the previous state government, DII = development industry interviewee and NGI = non-government interviewee.
the Metropolitan Strategy, the Taskforce perversely argued for preserving the highly car dependent dysfunctional status quo.

**Table 5.1: Sydney’s strategic centres employment 2006**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Region/location</th>
<th>Number of jobs</th>
<th>% of centres</th>
<th>% of region’s jobs in centres</th>
<th>% of total employment</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Eastern Sydney</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sydney CBD</td>
<td>230,049</td>
<td>32.2</td>
<td>20.3</td>
<td>13.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other centres</td>
<td>333,538</td>
<td>46.7</td>
<td>29.4</td>
<td>19.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Centres total</td>
<td>563,587</td>
<td>78.9</td>
<td>49.7</td>
<td>32.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not in centres</td>
<td>571,142</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>50.3</td>
<td>33.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total jobs</strong></td>
<td><strong>1,134,729</strong></td>
<td>-</td>
<td><strong>100.0</strong></td>
<td><strong>65.6</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Western Sydney</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parramatta</td>
<td>34,234</td>
<td>4.8</td>
<td>5.7</td>
<td>2.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other centres</td>
<td>116,675</td>
<td>16.3</td>
<td>19.6</td>
<td>6.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Centres total</td>
<td>150,909</td>
<td>21.1</td>
<td>25.3</td>
<td>8.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not in centres</td>
<td>445,063</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>74.7</td>
<td>25.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total jobs</strong></td>
<td><strong>595,972</strong></td>
<td>-</td>
<td><strong>100.0</strong></td>
<td><strong>34.4</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Gooding Davies consultants 2009:3 based on TDC data 2008

Table 5.1 shows eastern Sydney, with the majority of employment (65.6%), had 49.7% of its jobs located in 20 centres, with over 230,000 employed in the CBD alone, representing 12.0% of all SMR employment. In Western Sydney employment was more dispersed, with a quarter (25.3%) of the region’s jobs in Transport Data Centre (TDC)-defined centres and no one centre dominated. Parramatta — the region’s biggest employment centre — accounted for only 5.7% of Western Sydney jobs, with 19.6% of the Western Sydney jobs located in other centres and almost three quarters of jobs (74.7%) not located in centres (Gooding Davies consultants, 2009).(See also McLoughlin, 1992 on this issue).

Bureau of Transport Statistics (2008a; 2008b) data revealed Western Sydney had only moderate levels of employment self-containment (West-Central 43%, South-West 45% and North-West 50%). While West-Central had 1.2 jobs per resident worker, which was quite high in Sydney’s open labour market, its moderate employment self-containment suggested it was a significant supplier of jobs for residents in adjoining sub-regions. In 2011 West-Central also maintained the highest unemployment rate in the SMR (8.0%) — reaching 9.7% in Fairfield and 7.0% in Parramatta LGAs — compared to the 5.7% metropolitan average. Hence, despite
displaying reasonable levels of employment self-sufficiency, the sub-regions’ resident workers are still experiencing difficulties in finding employment.

Many submissions to a *Draft Centres Policy* argued against maintaining the CBD focus, calling for better access to employment and facilities; more effective cross-city links between major sub-centres; and reduced long-distance commuting. The draft provided no indication of how the Centres Policy would influence other state agencies or drive the priorities of rail and bus planning via the State Plan (WSROC, 2009a:5). Furthermore, councils have limited experience in assessing major town centre developments since they occur so infrequently. While Planning and Infrastructure NSW focus on improving residential design, they provide only limited advice on how to achieve civic centre improvements. Yet a strong system of well designed mixed-use centres could help to increase local employment, serve a variety of purposes within a single trip and reduce car dependency by locating both residential and employment development close to public transport. People are more willing to purchase higher density housing in developments adjoining major facilities and public transport services (WSROC, 2009a:6). Economic sustainability depends on the efficient use of capital and resources, therefore grouping uses together with supporting infrastructure would assist this aim (Sections 5.5 to 5.7).

Limited capacity for growth within activity centres, leading to an increase in *bulky goods retailing* divorced from established centres (often in industrial areas) as opposed to adjoining core centre activities, is a vexatious issue (WSROC, 2009:9). Requirements for large floor plates, low rents and substantial parking provision, consumes large areas of land, limits manufacturing expansion opportunities in favour of outer locations and increases high car use. Business parks, seeking a full-service environment providing hotels, entertainment, sporting and leisure facilities i.e. mixed use campuses, are seeking 5,000-10,000 m² tenancies. They also require elevator access, smart technology cabling and climate control within the building fabric: but in West-Central few large sites in single ownership are available. Despite the need for good quality public transport infrastructure — an important catalyst for promoting growth of local employment opportunities — business parks such as Norwest remain highly car dependent (WSROC, 2009a:12).

One interviewee with ministerial experience in a variety of relevant portfolios proffered some insights into the role of centres in developing the local economy:

> One of the weaknesses of Western Sydney is (its) fairly weak centres … [Some] are very disconnected … [with] no street life or local economy [and] … haven’t really achieved strong urban densities in their cores … More interesting places might at least

---

2 Merchandising of cumbersome items usually from warehouse-style buildings
slow ... the moving out of young graduates from Western Sydney ... What
governments first need to do is to civilise the environment of the town centres ... I
think this is a poorly understood area of public policy ... you need to get a street
economy going (MPI16).

Commendably, commitment by Fairfield Council to the physical and social
improvements of its centres is focusing on urban design improvements and
promoting greater inclusiveness for different user groups. As the Fairfield Council
interviewee noted:

> We've got a Centres Improvement Program ... So all of these centres, which were all
getting a bit old and tired, are regenerating ... I have found that really interesting, to
come here before the physical change in the town centre pattern ... that's one I've
been most impressed about that doesn't get a lot of kudos, I don't think, for the wider
benefit (LGI03).

This section has highlighted numerous factors contributing to the ineffectiveness of
successive centres policies reiterated over several decades. In summary, the failure
to locate jobs in strategic centres or discourage the dispersal of new employment
across Western Sydney led to a loss of accessible employment land except by car,
with congruent public transport servicing difficulties. An over-emphasis on increasing
dwelling densities rather than jobs and the importance ascribed to the retail function
of centres, without furthering development of cultural and educational facilities or
service-sector job opportunities, added to West-Central’s locational disadvantage.
While strategic plans placed emphasis on employment self-sufficiency, the
downward-trending employment participation rates in the sub-region were ignored
by government agencies and departments. Finally, an inability to cope effectively
with the region’s transition from its industrial past to cater for emerging employment
growth sectors seeking larger sites in limited supply in West-Central, all contributed
to the poor performance of the region’s centres.

The following Sections 5.5 to 5.7 provide a distillation of the issues and paradoxes
experienced in Greater Western Sydney arising from the separation of housing,
employment, transport and infrastructure policies outlined above and the views of
regional stakeholders. Subsequently Chapter 6 draws explicitly from the interview
findings to highlight the specific housing, employment, transport and governance
policy implications for the West-Central sub-region.
5.5 Housing provision and urban consolidation

Together with centres policies, successive metropolitan strategies for Sydney have focused on the need for urban consolidation with a particular emphasis placed on the role of housing and increasing dwelling densities across the SMR. Certainly housing occupies a very important place in peoples’ lives. Since the 1950s large increases in value for home owners in Western Sydney brought financial security to some who previously could not have known or expected it. The combination of emotional interest and commitment makes housing a unique commodity (National Housing Strategy, 1991a).

Australian homes now have the largest average floor area in the world (243 m² in 2011 — an increase from 160 m² in 1986 (Johanson, 2011). But large dwellings do not necessarily reflect households’ need for space and are often under-occupied. New housing developments are no longer marketed as communities; the emphasis is more focused on lifestyle. Australian housing is not just considered a home: it provides an investment, a pension, a savings scheme, an income generator and sometimes even a liability. Yet housing policy and practice seem not to reflect these perceptions (Fingland, 2011b).

From the 1960s to the 1990s median home prices in Australia were between three to four times average annual household incomes, rising to seven to eight times in the following decade (Yates, 2007). Since the late 1990s, housing affordability has worsened considerably in the traditionally more affordable LGAs in Western Sydney (Australian Government, 2008b). The following sections therefore discuss how the issues of housing affordability, homelessness and urban consolidation are becoming particularly acute in some West-Central suburbs.

Affordability. Housing affordability is a key economic consideration and must be viewed in the context of reasonable housing costs in relation to residents’ incomes and those seeking to move there. Housing affordability is defined as:

- Housing that is affordable for lower to middle-income households, when housing costs are low enough to enable the household to meet other basic, long-term living costs ...
- Housing costs should be less than 30% of the household income for occupants in the bottom 40% of household incomes (Australian Government, 2008:88).

The erosion of housing affordability affecting many Western Sydney households for the last two decades is well documented (Darcy et al., 2000; Yates, 2005; WSROC 2008c). Previously, relatively affordable housing attracted low-income households and young families to the region. Yet by 2007 the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) highlighted that 387,876 or 10.9% of NSW households incurred housing costs above the benchmark 30% of their household income and many payed more than 50%. In NSW 59.4% of households experiencing housing stress were located in
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Sydney. This applied especially to private renters and relatively recent purchasers (ibid).

Research for the Australian Housing and Research Institute (AHURI) had suggested that affordability is not a short-term cyclical problem but that the ‘deposit gap’ for full-time workers on average earnings has been trending upwards for almost four decades, notwithstanding changes in real estate prices. Issues identified included an increase in job insecurity and loss of predictable incomes affecting the ability to commit to repayments; negative gearing; more demand for living in inner city areas; and an increase in renting for longer periods. The research concluded that such longer-term issues pointed to the need to look beyond simply expediting the release of more land and improving assessment processes. (Yates et al. 2007).

A Senate Committee report on Housing Affordability nominated the GWS region as having specific problems due to the pronounced increase and subsequent fall in house prices since 2006 and limited housing diversity compared with other areas, noting:

The suburbs of western Sydney are a striking microcosm of the housing affordability crisis nationally. They are highly geared, on relatively low incomes, and are disproportionately represented among those areas suffering mortgage stress and falling behind in home loan repayments (Australian Government, 2008:136).

The region’s land releases have always lacked supporting infrastructure, services and employment opportunities and have failed to provide a sufficient range of housing choice. Addressing the Committee an AHURI representative revealed the complexity of the problem:

The problem now is the attraction of land in the inner and middle suburbs of our cities because of the high amenity that they offer vis-a-vis the outer urban areas and ... a growing perception of the long-term problems of petrol prices and the lack of public transport in these areas. Releasing land ... is going to do nothing to alleviate the intensity of demand in those areas where the house prices are the greatest ... Another way of tackling the affordability problem is to improve the quality of amenity in affordable areas (Burke, 2008:75).

As the Committee report noted ‘a supply-side response cannot ignore demand’ (ibid).

Between 2000 and 2009 there was a 4.8% decrease in the supply of public housing in NSW (representing 5,943 fewer dwellings) and in June 2009, 47,413 applicants were on the waiting list for public housing (Shelter NSW, 2010). By 2012 only 10% of the private rental stock across NSW was affordable for very low-income earners and 55,186 applicants were on the state’s waiting list for social housing (Shelter NSW, 2012). In 2011 a report by Australians for Affordable Housing (comprising 60 community housing groups) demonstrated rents rose nationally at twice the rate of inflation and increased house prices meant first home buyers stayed longer in the rental market, competing for properties and pushing up rental prices.
According to COAG (2012) NSW housing affordability shows no sign of improvement. Rental affordability is declining, with 47.6% of NSW low-income private renters estimated to be in rental stress, despite receiving rent assistance and 44.9% of NSW mortgagees suffering housing stress, compared to 41.7% and 37.4% respectively nationally (ibid). A HIA-Commonwealth Bank Affordability report (December 2011 quarter) highlighted an 8.3% increase in prices over the corresponding period in 2010, with Sydney remaining the least affordable of all Australian capital cities. Median weekly rents and mortgage repayments compared unfavourably with national figures, with key workers facing house prices 8.3 times their annual earnings in Sydney.

**NSW response to affordability issues.** While much of the housing affordability debate focuses on the NSW governments’ failure to release more urban fringe land or find redevelopment sites, these arguments ignore the different housing sub-markets operating within suburbs, LGAs and across Sydney. Developing housing in one sub-region does not automatically substitute for housing in another (Randolph and Holloway, 2003). Since new housing development contributes only around 2% to the entire housing stock in Australia at any one time, simply zoning more land for development will not resolve the overall housing affordability problem (WSROC, 2008c:14).

Currently in NSW there is no mechanism for local governments to require affordable housing provision. Neither the EP&A Act nor the LEP template includes provisions for local government to enforce affordable housing. The only affordable housing provisions have been included in LEPs by individual councils on a voluntary basis. Councils are left to argue for the provision of affordable housing through voluntary planning agreements negotiated with developers (Section 6.1). SEPP 10 — for the retention of low-cost rental accommodation — only applies a brake on the loss of existing flats and boarding houses available for rent. The closure of caravan parks, a lack of appropriate housing for people with disabilities and gentrification policies all contributed to the loss of affordable housing for West-Central’s low-income households. A particular problem lies in the lack of alternative affordable rental housing housing providers compared to countries such as the UK, particularly since the function of public housing is now solely the provision of ‘welfare’ housing (Jacobs et al., 2010:21).

A study into *Models of sustainable and affordable housing for local government* described Parramatta Council’s ongoing commitment to the provision of affordable housing (Urban Research Centre, UWS, 2008:21). In 2003 Parramatta Council gave qualified support for development of an *Affordability Strategy*; although some
nominated sites were later judged unviable. The draft *Affordability Strategy* (Parramatta Council, 2003) envisaged local government making significant financial contributions through deferred payments on land, interest-free loans and further incentives, but this was considered well beyond the financial capacity of the other GWS LGAs and raised significant cost-shifting concerns (Section 6.7).

**Public housing’s role.** Rising house prices and dwindling social housing provision, insufficient to meet burgeoning social needs, are increasing private rental pressures. Public housing is acknowledged to provide benefits for low-income tenants, including greater security and stability in children’s education (Mee, 2002). Yet from 1996 to 2006 Western Sydney lost 3,334 social housing units and approvals for new public housing plunged to a quarter-of-a-century low (WSROC, 2008d:10). Moreover, recent policy changes limit housing support for two years after which, if households are appearing to cope, they cease to remain Housing NSW clients. Yet, as one Senior NGO executive interviewee stressed, these tenants’ ability to cope is dependent on this support (NGI13). Clearly Housing NSW has a major allocation issue, trying to trade-off acquiring new stock with improving the amenity and condition of existing dwellings, which results in lengthening waiting times for tenants, more restrictive segmented allocation procedures and rationing of dwellings to low-income households in extreme stress (Milligan et al., 2004).

Under the 2007 federal Labor government’s *Nation-Building Economic Stimulus Plan* (NBESP) initiative to deal with the economic consequences of the GFC, Housing NSW, working in close cooperation with other agencies, delivered 4,400 new properties, or 75% of its NBESP target by the end of 2010. However, one senior bureaucrat responsible for community development and renewal expressed frustration over maintaining such an increase:

> We only did it because we got $2 billion dollars worth of funds. It was a really successful process — time-constrained, had to get ourselves well organised ... to identify the land opportunities ... lots of redevelopment ... So it was a fabulous opportunity and a learning opportunity for the agency. Based on past experience they probably ... will just let it die. What they should do is set themselves a really ambitious re-development target and keep going (SGI07).

This respondent argued for expanding the eligibility criteria to provide more affordable housing for those in most need:

> The NBESP only built public housing ... now we should build both private and public housing and probably some affordable housing as well — certainly we have got all the expertise. The problem is the capital to do it (SGI07).

In 2010 Housing NSW was split between the Departments of Finance and Services and Community Services, leaving no Minister with overall social housing responsibility. This raised further concerns:
Part of that move is to get better productivity out of the assets ... [but] the government has got to invest some capital ... You can continue to flog off the assets, but that will result in the reduction in the social housing stock, because now the money that you make out of these projects doesn't pay for the replacement housing, anywhere (SGI07).

He also pointed to a general consensus that traditional public housing programs struggle to supply sufficient affordable housing for moderate-income earners.

Concerns are now being raised about the growing proportion of households who are ineligible for public housing, but are unable to afford to purchase in locations convenient to their workplace (Yates et al., 2005). Housing-related poverty is strongly concentrated in private tenancies in Australia, with about two fifths of private tenants trapped into renting for ten or more years (Randolph, 2008). Rental housing is no longer simply a point in transition towards home ownership. Not surprisingly, NGO interviewees demonstrated strong support for partnering with the community housing sector, arguing that developing a new rental supply model required expertise not necessarily held within government. Federal government responses since 2010 were criticised by the non-government sector and housing affordability schemes were viewed as ineffective policies to address the systematic problems facing the public housing sector. One NGO principal policy officer described how the National Rental Affordable Housing Scheme (NRAHS):

... has seen private developers moving into the business of affordable rental housing [but], that’s made a very small impact ... The Commonwealth’s attitude since the last election to that scheme ... has been abysmal. It’s changed the policy settings; cut the funding .... it’s a shambles with no further incentives being announced for the future. NRAHS was part of that — important for the community housing sector, who are providing in bulk for rental housing and then getting some players from full profit developers in partnership ... The public sector on the whole is not producing that sort of housing, they are doing something quite different (NGI14).

Clearly, given the scale of the problem, governments should investigate alternative models of affordable housing provision, not rely solely on a small-scale community housing sector to solve these issues. An effective not-for-profit sector can only be grown by being underpinned by adequate public subsidies, regulation and leverage by private investment (Jacobs et al., 2010:40).

The following section now discusses the growing problems of homelessness in the sub-region, a system of entrenched causal factors, with 2011 census data confirming a 17.3% national increase in homelessness since 2006.

**Homelessness.** The 2008 Senate Committee inquiry noted:

In a wealthy country like Australia, no citizens should be forced into homelessness. A reasonable standard of housing should be available for all. (Australian Government, 2008:21)
A lack of comprehensive data on homelessness was subsequently highlighted in a 2009 inquiry into *Homelessness and Low-Cost Rental Accommodation*. Little is known about how many people discharged from institutions become homeless or how many have been living on the streets for more than 20 years. Also a third group — the *marginally housed*, such as people living for a time in caravan parks, crisis shelters or squatting — are hard to find and count and are not operationally specified in the Census (WSROC, 2009d). NSW contained over a quarter (26.1%) of Australia’s homeless in 2006 (ABS catalogue number 2050.0) and in West-Central a shortage of affordable housing, low incomes and immigration laws, suggests that homelessness may increase. WSROC (2009d) pointed to Darcy and Laker’s (2001) research that demonstrated how Parramatta had become a focus for homeless people by providing support services lacking elsewhere in Western Sydney. But traditional models of supported accommodation provision required updating to address the increasing demands. WSROC also cited research by Robinson (2003) that highlighted increasing homelessness and squatting in Parramatta CBD, due to high concentrations of people released from correctional services and those with mental disorders and how the over-representation of women with disabilities amongst the homeless was often overlooked. A 2010 Parramatta Council survey found 81 rough sleepers and a further 285 secondary homeless in the city, compared to around 100 in 2003 (Darcy et al., 2010).

**Housing careers, dwelling type and mix.** The *National Housing Strategy*, 1991, highlighted growing proportions of smaller households (single parent families, lone persons and childless couples) progressively complicating the development of a standard household history, previously characterised as a *family* market comprising two parents and their children. Yet the residential development industry continued to supply housing tailored to the needs of the family market, reducing housing options for non-family households. Nevertheless, significant life-cycle events, including marriage, childbirth and household dissolution, still left many households aspiring to own their homes (Baum and Wulff, 2001:7, 11). Burgess and Skeltys (1992) coined the term *housing careers*, recognising that housing needs, expectations and available resources are not static, but generally involve moves between tenure and sub-markets.

Currently parts of West-Central suffer from a lack of choice of dwelling type and tenure, with affordability issues resulting for many households living in housing inappropriate for their needs, as further demonstrated in Section 6.2. In West-Central misguided urban consolidation policies — based mainly on concentrating small, 2-bedroom apartments into centres and transport corridors lacking urban
amenity and poor accessibility — continue to ignore job shortages and are further reinforcing the sub-region’s socio-economic divide.

While replacing separate houses on large lots with multi-unit apartments, townhouses and villas may help stabilise population loss in West-Central’s older run-down suburbs, reliance on the housing market is unlikely to lead to significant population increases. High quality urban design, early provision of supporting facilities and services and an emphasis on the traditional features of detached housing — privacy, private open space, Torrens title and security — is essential (Shire of Baulkham Hills, 1995). Reducing under-occupancy of the dwelling stock by increasing accessibility and choice for first-time buyers and empty-nesters, may free up some of the cheaper stock (for both rental and purchase) for larger family households, but is not guaranteed. Nowadays there is a strong propensity for older, established households to move to larger dwellings, buoyed by ongoing wealth accumulation rather than space requirements (Fingland, 2010).

High density, inner city areas undoubtedly offer many attractions for those who can afford to live there. As the Housing NSW respondent explained:

> I live in ... the most dense bit of Australia and it’s a wonderful place to live ... I’ve got cafes, restaurants, a bus service and a train service 10 minutes away... What price did we have to pay for that ... we had to go to 10 storeys ... I think this strange resistance to density is just a real problem. I know some of it is about poor design. Admittedly there aren't that many families where I live ... but they are increasing in numbers (SGI07).

Agreeing that access to social, cultural and recreational facilities is a significant compensation, he stressed:

> I don’t have a car and I don’t need one ... we build too low a density and therefore you don’t get the street life ... the good cafes and you haven’t concentrated enough to get the activity (SGI07).

A transport focus on mobility meant losing accessibility, making it difficult to create good places:

> Before the car we built places like this [Potts Point], because people had to walk ... or cycle. But as soon as we got the car we allowed ourselves to just expand our cities endlessly [losing] this ability to create great communities ... My local Member, says he gets no complaints from constituents about congestion, here [it] is interpreted as 'lively street life'... All the complaints about congestion come from suburban areas where the car dominates (SGI07).

Recently Australian commentators suggested that radical changes to suburban lifestyles were unnecessary, requiring densities around 17 dwellings/net hectare and a conscious attempt to build better public transport into neighbourhood design. In particular, Mees stressed:

> ... we don’t need impossible increases in density to provide viable alternatives to the car. The relative attractiveness of competing urban transport modes seems to influence mode choice much more than differences in density and the notion that ...
even 30 residents per hectare is a minimum density below which public transport cannot be provided is unsupported by evidence ... [Densities] as low as 12 people per hectare would be sufficient to support an unsubsidised rail service supported by feeder buses, provided the railway serves a strong centre with a significant share of the region’s jobs and activity (Mees, 2009:11),

He challenged the longstanding belief that low urban densities resulted in high car dependency and poor public transport use (Appendix A.3), further reinforcing the argument for integrating policies and for greater concentrations of employment, not just housing, in centres.

The following section now examines the housing issues arising from the NSW planning approach to urban consolidation.

**Urban consolidation.** High density living, intensification of uses and concentrating homes and jobs growth in suburban centres located on railway lines continue to feature as important metropolitan planning principles in all of Australia’s major cities. Most low density residential development is expensive in terms of energy consumption and capital expenditure for the distribution of services. Detached housing on large individual lots is criticised for increasing land consumption and travel distance to work and other facilities, resulting in high petrol consumption and greater public utility needs. As noted in Section 5.1 the 2010 Metropolitan Strategy designated West-Central as an important renewal area requiring the development of 96,000 new dwellings by 2036. However, policy problems can be created by a lack of understanding of the connection between dwelling density and urban form (Appendix A.3). When NSW fixed upon a density target of 15 dwellings per hectare in the early 1990s, this dramatically doubled the density of West-Central’s traditional suburbs, significantly changing the urban form and proved to be controversial.

The origins of current urban consolidation policy appear to lie in the fiscal crisis of state and federal governments, such as relieving the cost burden of services infrastructure imposed on governments (Troy, 1996). Urban consolidation policies are based on a number of assumptions summarised in Box 5.3:
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**Box 5.3: Urban consolidation propositions**

1. Higher density housing consumes less land and physical infrastructure and should cost less.
2. Densification will occur without any economic changes to make higher density housing more attractive to buyers and developers.
3. Intensive development of established areas will be cheaper than development on the periphery.
4. Consolidation will provide affordable housing without increasing the cost or negative consequences.

Source: Fingland, 2011:17

Although containing some elements of truth, these propositions have been challenged on a number of grounds. Considerable confusion exists around the impact of an urban consolidation policy, partly because of complex urban structure issues but more particularly because of conflicting opinion on what can be achieved, how it is understood and what are its priorities. The re-tooling of cities requires major transport infrastructure investment and substantial rebuilding of urban landscapes.

The NSW government directs local councils to formulate urban consolidation strategies based simply on dwelling numbers, not on how many people can be housed in a given area (Appendix A.4). Previous analysis of the relationship between densities and total land demand demonstrated that higher net residential densities in a high growth context contributed very little to the restraint of sprawl (McLoughlin, 1992), because more people could only be accommodated by lowering other ‘quality-of-life factors’ such as schools and open space standards (Appendix A.3). Nowadays the ‘urban fringe’ provides a combination of increasingly large dwellings on reduced sized lots, together with apartments located close to centres (Fingland, 2002 and 2003). While the increased building density is very apparent, these areas do not necessarily house more people. If the objective is saving residential land, major changes in residential density and urban form are only achieving modest savings in city size and the cost of infrastructure (Fingland, 2011:18).

Randolph (2010) described how urban consolidation policies had failed to deliver the dwelling numbers forecast in recent metropolitan strategies, doubting whether 60% to 70% of new flats (570,000 units) can be produced by renewal/infll in areas such as West-Central by 2035. Urban consolidation does not necessarily produce more affordable housing, because medium and high-density developments are generally not cheaper to produce per unit. There are considerable difficulties in reducing the costs of multi-unit construction operating under different financing arrangements, requiring complex and expensive methods of construction intrinsic to that form of development. Furthermore, the current price differential between multi-unit and
detached dwellings is insufficient to encourage potential downsizers to move into smaller accommodation.

Often the terms *medium* and *high-density* housing evoke images of mediocre housing solutions, with neighbouring landowners believing their privacy, visual amenity and their area’s character are at stake and showing little appreciation of connections between density variations and urban form. Nevertheless, higher density housing provides an alternative to detached houses and, since many of these dwellings are rented, adds to West-Central’s limited rental stock produced by a taxation and loans scheme geared to the two-bedroom apartment ‘investment property’ market. While there is nothing intrinsically good or bad about any particular residential density, it is important that a balance is achieved in West-Central’s urban regeneration between accessibility to jobs, facilities and services, the economic use of land, public transport operations, construction costs, privacy, and provision of public and private open space, market demands and environmental capacity (Fingland, 2011a).

Despite strong arguments for densification favouring proximity leading to business agglomeration, reduced infrastructure and transportation costs, Australian research is now pointing to social segregation by household type leading to regressive outcomes such as over-concentrations of socio-economic disadvantage, with social sustainability inadequately addressed (Easthope and Judd, 2010). Policy attention, drawn to increasing proportions of lone person and childless couple households, supported urban consolidation planning policies and promoted provision of small 2-bedroom apartments (ibid). However, as demonstrated in Section 2.1, West-Central contains higher proportions of families with children and fewer small households than the SMR average. Moreover, a notable rise in multi-generation households in Australia’s major cities meant one in five of the 2006 population lived in households comprising two or more generations of related adults aged 18 plus (ABS, 2011) and 13.2% aged 15-44 years were classified as non-dependent offspring (Liu and Easthope, 2012:1,7). This research demonstrated that 23.6% of Sydney’s households in 2006 were multi-generational, which was attributed to ‘deeply embedded ... traditional practice ... especially among East Asian and Middle Eastern cultures’ (ibid:4), raising questions about the impacts of multi-generational households in the culturally diverse West-Central sub-region. Although gradually decreasing in size, multi-generation households tend to occupy the larger detached owner-occupied dwellings (ABS, 2008) and comprise an important component of the knockdown-rebuild (KDR) market, a particular feature of urban regeneration in West-Central (Pinnegar, Freestone and Randolph, 2010:206, discussed in Section 6.2).
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Greater housing choice is starting to occur through the promotion of small-lot, two-story housing, but needs high quality urban design and timely provision of supporting facilities and services. Urban consolidation policies should still pursue policies concentrating a diversity of housing in accessible locations but should place greater emphasis on employment development around public transport nodes in well-designed, mixed use centres as demonstrated in Section 4.1 and now discussed further.

5.6 Jobs provision

During the past 15 years metropolitan planning strategies... have done little to address the spatial distribution of either employment or labour market equity within the metropolis. In the fast-growing outer western suburbs, the government has focused on attracting business investment to increase the stock of local jobs and to improve employment ‘self-sufficiency’ — a dominantly neo-liberal policy framework (Fagan and Dowling, 2005: 71).

Since the mid 1980s the dispersal of employment, the de-industrialisation of the labour force and declining manufacturing as the source of new employment in some West-Central locations, interacted with slow growth relative to other sectors (Fagan, Dowling and Langdale, 2004). Manufacturing job-shedding during the 1990s in Western Sydney reflected national and global changes; ‘including neo-liberal policy shifts aimed at opening the economy to global forces’ (Fagan and Dowling, 2005:72).

The 2008 North-West and West-Central Sydney Employment Strategies report argued that supplying appropriate local jobs is the single most important step in producing a sustainable, liveable city, but market forces alone were not sufficient. Attention to the geographical competencies attracting investors — good quality infrastructure and urban structures building efficiencies into business and everyday life — was essential (Urban Research Centre, 2008). Yet innovation, entrepreneurship and hard work in Western Sydney were frustrated by choked roads, inefficient freight movements, poorly serviced and inaccessible employment lands and inadequate public transport. Furthermore, little consideration was given to integrating small, home-based enterprises into local economies (ibid:78). Western Sydney was failing to develop its economy, with no state agency accountable for delivery. The difficulty in maintaining or increasing jobs was hampered by adoption of the ‘global arc’ as the driver of Sydney’s economy, whereas it was simply a particular representation privileging certain economic segments over others.

The Employment Strategies report highlighted:

... the inseparable importance of infrastructure, urban structure and territorial competence in driving the regional composition that underpins jobs growth (Urban Research Centre, 2008:35).
Inevitably, population growth is paralleled with jobs growth in the service, construction, retailing and distribution industries, but innovation and specialisation are equally important and Western Sydney has been ‘extraordinarily deficient in developing new enterprises’ (ibid:36). Modelling for the Employment Strategies report demonstrated limited, even negative, jobs growth from manufacturing, the likelihood of jobs in the sales and distribution sectors being part-time and casual rather than permanent and careers-based and poor prospects for attracting value-adding, high-skilled jobs due to Western Sydney’s economic composition.

Access Economics (2010) described how, consistent with developed western nations, over the last decade NSW had shifted away from manufacturing towards a more service-orientated economy, relying increasingly on finance, insurance, professional scientific and technical industries, which presents a considerable advantage for areas in the ‘global arc’. In Western Sydney however, the decreasing share of manufacturing caused concern and was seen as requiring an emphasis on improving higher education outcomes, up-skilling the workforce and optimising workforce participation rates, since conditions were far from globally competitive. Suffering a severe infrastructure provision deficit, the region’s employment base reflected this neglect, needing a major turnaround to encourage new investment. To reinforce the regional centres, greater government investment in public transport, arterial roads and quality civic places and amenities was necessary, plus strategic partnerships between stakeholders, organisations and government agencies, working together to ‘re-engineer Western Sydney’ (Urban Research Centre, 2008:30). In a presentation to an Economic and Employment Development Forum, O’Neill cautioned that:

… the global economic corridor should not be assumed as a given; it is neither a natural occurrence nor an inevitable success story; we actually know very little about it; and there are many misconceptions about its composition and potential future growth pathways (O’Neill, 2010).

Pointing to the need to prepare new sites, removing the perception of a ‘global east’ and a ‘local west’ for the ‘further development of Sydney as a successful, sustainable global city region’, O’Neill called for greater support for the regional cities through public investment, civic improvements, connected transport systems, high rates of enterprise formation and diversified employment opportunities. Most importantly he stressed:

A successful economy in the 21st century is simultaneously a successful living environment, a sustainable natural environment and a place of enriched cultural diversity (O’Neill, 2010)
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Box 5.4 Measures to improve economic development

1. Monitoring of the Sydney economy to determine sectoral shifts and an appropriate response.
2. Developing successful and transferrable models and best practice case studies for joined-up government approaches to development and management of local economic spaces.
3. Improving management of employment lands, better directed infrastructure, raising of job densities and diversification of composition and an ending of redevelopment of industrial and commercial lands for residential uses.
4. Viewing urban renewal as an economic development and not just a residential development activity.
5. Collating ‘dashboard’ metrics to advise on economic outcomes on a territorial basis, with clearly defined targets and milestones for economic development and job creation written into metropolitan plans.


Drawing attention to the need to:

… embrace the character of Sydney as a global city region rather than as a displaced CBD with distant connections to a global city network … Adopting this broader perspective positions the urban region as an integrated income and wealth generator, recognising how the skills base of its labour market and infrastructure connections will underpin the success of a global city region. Requiring a regenerative growth pathway, involving intensification of both internal links and connections with other global city regions (such as in east and south-east Asia) and strong governance and regulatory regimes; providing a range of space-specific assets enhancing economic and job outcomes with jobs growth outcomes matching ‘population growth targets’ (ibid).

Five interrelated measures for assisting improved economic development and job outcomes were identified by participants at the 2010 employment forum as shown in Box 5.4. Hence, O’Neill emphasised monitoring, joined up governance, collaboration and effective data collection as integral for the development of future metropolitan strategies, to avoid repeating past mistakes.

Hurdles to developing the economic profile. Jackson (2011) described how even reformist governments in Melbourne, Toronto and Glasgow struggled to reconcile developer and landowner interest which was resulting in erratic development. Reliance on the land use planning system to provide jobs without addressing the underlying issues, risks maintaining the status quo. Two senior bureaucrats, located in North Parramatta, tasked with developing regional employment opportunities and assisting small business services, captured the well-founded complex interrelationship between the range of infrastructure, planning, transport and housing issues:

When we were working towards attracting new jobs or new businesses … the constant feedback … was ‘We wouldn’t move a lot of our executive staff or our high profile corporate staff out here, there’s not enough infrastructure or executive housing. We would certainly consider moving our back-office staff, or our lower grade type of centres.’ I think there’s this wrong perception that Western Sydney has lower skilled people … who are not capable of doing higher order jobs — self-perpetuating (SGI11).

The 2005 Metropolitan Strategy was noticeably silent about provision and maintenance of social infrastructure in urban regeneration sites in the sub-region. In
contrast reasonably detailed social infrastructure plans were presented for the North-West and South-West Growth Centres, largely funded through developer contributions, with a 25%/75% funding mix, whereby private contributions were to pay for the bulk of social infrastructure capital costs. Yet the recurrent funding mechanisms — often a much larger cost component of social infrastructure — were not identified; thus reinforcing the gap between the planning and delivery phases. An emphasis on providing social infrastructure in a timely manner, attempting to avoid the delivery deficits of the past, anticipated that the location and funding of social facilities and services would occur through the sub-regional planning process (NSW Government, 2005). In stark contrast no parallel commitment was given to addressing the infrastructure backlogs and the demands generated by population growth through densification in West-Central,. As the two interviewees concerned with attracting new investment claimed, there is nothing to attract middle managers and their families to move there, with the sub-region’s infrastructure deficit impeding development of the economic profile. The limited cultural facilities presented a further hurdle:

... it doesn’t have the local culture as well — the cafe culture and ...arts and theatre ... so we are lagging a bit there. And its only daylight stuff. I think it’s hard having universities [located] outside city centres as well. That makes a huge difference, something that you get in Europe (SGI12).

This further reinforced the view that governments do not consider social infrastructure an essential form of public investment.

Previous collaboration between WSROC, four Western Sydney Councils, DIPNR and the Ministry for the Arts delivered guidelines for improving public places and highlighted cultural differences in the use of open space. For example in Auburn:

The men meet on the streets, at the barbers or in cafes. There is nowhere for women to meet. The congested footpath space does not allow for meaningful encounters or places to rest (WSROC, 2003b: 23).

The study resulted in urban design changes to make the public spaces more inclusive. However, none of these social inclusion initiatives would have occurred without the collaboration of disparate design professionals and numerous governance agencies in consultation with existing residents. Yet attitudes to fostering such cooperation among other agencies remain reluctant to change.

Strategic partnerships seeking to attract more companies and encourage business development in the region appeared to be languishing:

It’s like it’s resting on its laurels. I think we were a lot more proactive 10 years ago ... [contributing] to the problems we are experiencing now (SGI11).

Fagan and Dowling (2005:80) considered measures to increase the region’s share of knowledge-based industries as probably ‘unrealistic over the next decade’, pointing
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to the location advantage and primacy given to Sydney CBD; competition between
to the location advantage and primacy given to Sydney CBD; competition between
inner suburban and northern areas; and emerging global cities in the Asia-Pacific
region. As one development industry director stressed:

The Western Sydney labour force lacks specialised graduate employees, but frankly,
Parramatta is Parramatta. It’s probably done well to get as big as it has. People don’t
go ‘Do you want to operate in Sydney or Parramatta?’ It’s Sydney, or Singapore, or
Melbourne. It’s a totally different order (DII17).

Improving access to jobs in knowledge-intensive business services in more favoured
locations is therefore crucial for up-skilling the region’s workforce and attracting
more higher order jobs into the sub-region. In West-Central, the older employment
areas located in centres and/or adjacent to the railway lines but account for a
declining share of jobs, with many firms moving to low density car-dependent
locations. While some urban release areas show rising employment participation
rates, many older West-Central suburbs have not experienced increases in their
employed resident base (Urban Research Centre, 2008). Ironically, an over-emphasis
on increasing *dwelling* densities at urban transit nodes, rather than *job*
densities, encouraged low-income households to move to areas with more affordable
accommodation, only to experience low employment prospects (FACS, 2003). Further
promotion of these urban consolidation policies, based simply on job numbers, little
considering whether the jobs are full-time or part-time, is reprehensible. Increasing
socio-economic polarisation contributes to difficulties in supplying local market needs
for lower-cost labour, leading to a loss of socially diverse neighbourhoods and adding
to the social and economic costs of displacement (Atkinson et al, 2011). Recognition
of the potential for local people to engage in the labour market, the importance of
skills to make things, teamwork and pride in achievement, are being replaced by call-
centre jobs.

The Urban Research Centre 2008 report described companies reducing costs by
expanding virtual interactions, shifting to lower-cost locations, downsizing,
outsourcing and/or increasing the percentage of mobile workers (without a desk at
work). Population growth ensures a wider pool of labour skills in outer areas and
assists start-up businesses. Yet emerging dominant firms in many cases provide
fewer jobs, with surviving manufacturers moving to more advanced methods,
requiring higher skills utilising specialised production equipment; further
disadvantaging sub-regional job opportunities. A tension between the goals of
expanding employment but reducing jobs sprawl is compounded by a shortage of
large sites, high land prices and poor transport accessibility, limiting manufacturing
expansion in West-Central in favour of locations along the newly developed M7
motorway corridor. Yet greater understanding of the economic benefits of proximity
— the sharing of ideas and information through provision of more jobs in dense,
walkable urban settings near public transport nodes — can help stimulate economic growth. Workplaces can evolve into collaborative places, including spaces for recreation, entertainment and relaxation that are mixed rather than single-use campus environments.

As a recent Grattan Institute report stresses:

One vital factor is the relation of jobs relative to housing and relative to other jobs. Moving some jobs out of the city centre can reduce the time we spend commuting. This only works if jobs are located close to public transport, but it has been successful in Singapore, Stockholm and Tokyo and has been adopted as policy in Perth and Brisbane (Kelly, 2012:18).

Section 5.7 now examines the importance of transport provision and infrastructure investment in West-Central Sydney.

5.7 Transport provision and infrastructure investment

A lack of employment opportunities and the presence or absence of infrastructure (particularly public transport provision) directly affects the health and well-being of households (National Housing Strategy Paper No. 2, (1991b). Amin and Thrift (2002:2) stressed the importance of transport infrastructure, noting that cities could not exist without:

... the network of motorways, airports and above all metro lines that constitutes Paris just as much as the picturesque crust of masonry, the buildings of Haussmann and his predecessors (citing Sudjic, 1992:296).

Conversely transport infrastructure can cause profoundly negative effects, including community severance, social dislocation and adverse environmental impacts. Yet European and North American examples discussed in Chapter 4 demonstrated land use changes, coupled with rapid transit systems, increased economic capacity and environmental sustainability; with mode change proving more acceptable when transport systems were integrated seamlessly. Chapter 4 described how the fastest growth in the UK was occurring in former new towns, which benefitted from investment in business infrastructure, housing supply and good transport systems.

This supports a wider point [how] ... traditional ‘hard’ assets [support] ... urban growth and revitalization, including the supply of serviced land and property for economic and residential uses, and efficient internal and external transport connections (Buck et al., 2005:268).

The 2008 Employment Strategies report argued that the successful composition of Western Sydney’s regional economy depended on the quality of its infrastructure and that, in the absence of appropriate infrastructure, Sydney’s planning visions were unlikely to be achieved (Urban Research Centre, 2008:63). Given the extent and expense of the new physical infrastructure required to support the North-West and South-West Growth Centres and the population pressures on West-Central, coupled
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with its continuing infrastructure deficit, doubts are cast on the state’s ability to ensure the ‘fair access to jobs, services and lifestyle opportunities’ across the SMR, or the ‘protection of the environment’ (NSW Department of Planning, 2005:3) that was the (then) Premier’s vision.

While focused on the importance of ‘hard’ infrastructure (including roads, railways, communication networks and buildings), the provision of ‘soft’ infrastructure (services and facilities) is an equally important but often neglected aspect of urban development in Australia. Hence the social development aspects of urban regeneration need further consideration (as argued in Section 4.5), since physical proposals often carry with them social implications, requiring the development of appropriate governance frameworks. The following section therefore discusses the role of both physical and social infrastructure in promoting social inclusion policies.

**Accessibility.** Transport costs in most Australian household budgets constitute the third largest expenditure item after housing and food; consuming on average 14.8% of household income in Sydney (ABS, 2005) and contributing to transport stress in areas of high car dependency in the sub-region. Urban sprawl left sections of the West-Central community (such as mothers with young children, school children, people with a disability and the elderly) reliant on poor public transport, which requires improvement. As the Grattan Institute recently argued:

> Investment to expand and upgrade urban public transport would enhance mobility and social connection, particularly for those who cannot drive or afford a car. Given the long lead times for infrastructure development and the commitment of governments to balanced budgets, there is little prospect of a transformation of existing networks in the short terms. [However] ... it is ... worth trialling ... measures ... [to]) improve the public transport experience at relatively low cost (Kelly, 2012:59).

Hence the role public transport plays in advancing social inclusion is starting to be acknowledged. Generally speaking, policy development appears oblivious to the mismatch between where people live and where they work. In West-Central the older employment areas, located in centres and/or adjacent to the railway lines, account for a declining share of jobs, with many firms moving to low density car-dependent locations.

**Rising oil prices.** A sudden increase in oil prices in 2007 and 2008, coupled with rising global warming concerns, highlighted the need for a more sustainable transport system for Western Sydney (WSROC, 2009:12). Dodson and Sipe (2005; 2008) assessed the resilience of Sydney’s urban communities in the face of increased fuel prices, identifying West-Central and outer suburbs as the most vulnerable to the impacts of rising oil prices, as illustrated in Figure 5.9.
Further research showed that inequitable distribution of public transport services across Sydney is not simply an east/west divide (Hurni, 2006:97). Hurni demonstrated how poor public transport provision has a disproportionately adverse affect on lower-income households, reducing their labour market participation and increasing the transport costs burden for West-Central’s residents.

**Figure 5.9: Oil vulnerability index for Sydney**

Source: Dodson and Sipe, 2005. Areas of high oil vulnerability have the highest scores on the index.

Hurni measured transport accessibility/disadvantage by 800 metre proximity to a public transport mode with a medium mid-peak 30 minute service level. She identified transport disadvantage in Census collector districts comprising over half (53.8%) of Sydney and just over a third of residents (34.4% or 1.2 million people). With 58.2% of the transport disadvantaged located in Western Sydney (700,000 people), the needs of the poor, older people and those with a disability were identified amongst the groups most at risk of social exclusion.

Governments and policy-makers drew attention to the economic impacts of a large retired workforce, including the costs of providing health and social services to older people and the spatial impacts of immigration of substantial numbers of retirees; yet the policy implications of decreased mobility and increased social isolation remain largely unaddressed. While government social policies focus on *ageing in place* the region’s car dependence and inadequate public transport provision is often overlooked (WSROC, 2009:16). Life-maintenance issues (access to food, clothing and
medical care) are stressed, but social interaction, contributions to community life, recreation, cultural and religious participation needs are ignored (ibid). Preserving mobility is essential for West-Central’s ageing population, providing a range of benefits — the travel itself, the psychological benefits, independence, exercise and community involvement. As shown in Section 3.2, the UK Social Exclusion Unit demonstrated how an absence of good transport options increases social exclusion; hence the move towards accessibility planning in the UK should be replicated in the GWS region.

All governments, even in developed nations, struggle to deal with urban service backlogs and ever-increasing demands for service quantity and quality improvements in areas of low socio-economic status at times of growing social polarisation. Yet in West-Central responses are stymied, not only by budget deficits, but by fragmented program and policy initiatives. Short-term political timeframes, over-centralised decision-making — unaware of the sub-region’s needs —, a lack of strategic planning and a deepening distrust between the public, private and voluntary sectors in NSW, act against collaboration to solve the problems. Strongly resisting changing the status quo, vested interests actively discourage risk-taking and there is a considerable time lag for incorporation of new ideas into public policy. Yet the UK experience (Sections 4.4 and 4.3) provided an important lesson for West-Central, with the UK Centre for Cities (2011) calling for greater collaboration to integrate transport provision; cross departmental working; and stronger links between local and central government to overcome barriers to work.

Infrastructure investment. From 1995 onwards private sector investment of around $11 billion in NSW infrastructure — later aided through a 2001 Working with Government policy (NSW Treasury, 2001) — included nationally significant projects such as part-funding of the $1.5 billion M7 orbital, the Eastern Distributor, the Lane Cove Tunnel and the Bonnyrigg Living Communities project. During this period NSW governments gave preference to public-private-partnerships for the provision of infrastructure using a Build/Own/Operate/Transfer (BOOT) system, whereby the private sector bears the risk of financing, constructing and operating the infrastructure and retaining the profit until public sector ownership is returned at contract completion. The, with the state often agrees on minimum guaranteed returns, or legislates to prevent competition (Ruming, 2005). The main drawback is that private investors rarely seek to maximise public good outcomes, which is to the detriment of areas of socio-economic disadvantage such as West-Central.

Since the 1930s, the rail network in Western Sydney has been supplemented with only 14 kms of new rail lines despite a quadrupling of the population, comparing
poorly with major investments in the Eastern Suburbs Railway, the Airport Rail Link and the Chatswood to Epping Rail Link in eastern Sydney (WSROC, 2009:13). To address this imbalance, key initiatives in the *NSW 2010 Transport Plan* included upgrades to the western rail corridor, new services to the North-West and South-West growth centres and further roll-out of the strategic bus network (Department of Transport 2010). Nevertheless, many households started questioning the economics of ‘cheap’ housing on the urban fringe due to increasing transport costs and lengthy daily commuting times (Burke, 2008:75). Without significantly enhanced public transport infrastructure, families are reluctant to move to the growth centres — increasing pressures on West-Central’s older suburbs (ibid).

While planning for the two Growth Centres depended on significant investment in rail and other infrastructure to support the large population growth, no commitment was made for West-Central. Little attention was paid to expanding rail services to the burgeoning suburbs divorced from the rail system in Western Sydney or providing more effective local bus service connections.

Prior to the 2007 election, the NSW government made almost 150 specific commitments to Western Sydney, including construction of the South-West and North-West Rail Links. Community expectations were raised further by reiteration of the focus on the South-West Rail link and replacement of the North-West Rail Link in 2008 with a North-West Metro. Yet by late 2008 the re-elected Labor government withdrew support for these critical transport investments (WSROC, 2009). However, a change from Labor to a Liberal- Coalition government in 2010 reactivated the rail proposals for the north-west and south-west and these are now under construction. However, West-Central’s rail needs were not addressed.

West-Central has a long history of transport operational and patronage problems and limited access to public transport. There has been little integration between the rail and the private bus networks servicing the sub-region, with the latter having to use a poorly connected and congested road system. The use of local buses as feeders to the high capacity rail systems is underdeveloped and, in many instances is under-used. Christie (2010) noted:

> As with most aspects of public transport in Sydney, buses are an area of under-investment and disorganised planning (Christie, 2010:304).

Government bus services were being cut or eliminated altogether and, in addition:

> Nowhere in the ... *Service Planning Guidelines* ... will you find any mention of the need for bus services to connect with each other to form a complete network (ibid:307).

Christie’s report recommended significant improvements in bus service frequencies in the older suburbs in Western Sydney (ibid:319), in opposition to a NSW Treasury
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directive to Transport NSW that service kilometres should not be increased, except where ‘greenfield’ growth areas were being added (ibid:306), which ‘entrenches a strong bias against middle and outer areas, especially Western Sydney’ (Christie, 2010:262). Welcoming the creation of a major transport coordination agency, Christie called for greater government departmental cooperation and cautioned that the dominance of Treasury with its ‘long history of antagonism to public transport improvements’ needed to be overcome (ibid:86). Rapid population growth and the failure to concentrate jobs in centres (discussed above) added to the transport task. Widely spread finite resources resulted in low bus frequencies and proved inappropriate for high demand travel. The Christie report also stressed the need for provision of services in low patronage areas to address ‘social inclusion’ (ibid: 25, 97, 321).

A particularly revealing insight into NSW Treasury’s involvement impeding development of an adequate public transport system came from one senior transport bureaucrat who stressed:

“There’s a fundamental thing about transport which differs from other government services ... [It is] the way Treasury and governments think of transport as being ... a business run by government, which should ... be run by the private sector ... They talk about a subsidy for public transport ... whereas they don’t talk about how much they subsidise schools and hospitals ... Treasury ... have really thought of transport as being a loss-making business which they would rather close down or hand over to the private sector ... That thinking changes entirely the level of service you might provide ... The attitude with a lot of transport operators, as well as Treasury, is that public transport should pay its own way (SGI06).

This respondent pointed to the negative outcomes emanating from this stance adopted in the UK where:

... you end up with peak period services and ... competition that would tend to cannibalise itself and ... have no off-peak services at all (because no off-peak service anywhere in the world covers its cost). So that is a fundamental issue about transport that differs from other public services (SG106).

The interviewee pointed to a Treasury mindset focusing on handling peak traffic flows — generating a higher revenue ratio than the off-peak — demonstrated a cost-cutting obsession rather than an attempt to improve services.

Public transport funding attracts a direct user fee, but roads are funded by a combination of registration fees, government grants, local rates and developer charges (Christie, 2010:80). Furthermore, Treasury’s separation of the roads budget from public transport funding created some misconceptions as this respondent explained:

... there’s a myth around that the RTA has too much planning power and makes its own decisions. The RTA never had any planning powers and all decisions were either made by the Minister or the government... The roads budget was always separate and under the control of the Minister of Roads. So Treasury, having allocated the funds ... had very little involvement ... on the way those funds were spent (SGI06).
Yet recent research argues that private cars receive hidden subsidies:

While public transport subsidies are relatively visible to policy makers ... the hidden costs for car-based urban transport ... (air pollution, accidents, greenhouse gas emissions and wasteful land use) are less so. This helps explain why public transport provision in countries such as the US and Australia remains politically difficult (Glazebrook, 2011: 18).

This lack of an integrated approach to transport funding and policy development remains a major impediment to developing an adequate public transport system in Sydney. While transforming existing networks is a costly long-term task, some immediate improvements could include further increasing bus priority on city roads; re-orientating schedules to meet social needs; mapping the mismatch between public transport needs and supply; spreading peak hour traffic to stagger commuting and reduce rush hour crowding; and decentralising employment from Sydney CBD to suburban public transport hubs. While incurring significant transport investment, these suggested improvements could prove more socially inclusive, cost-effective and easier to implement than attempting to re-engineer the urban form and character of West-Central’s older suburbs.

**Integrated plans.** A disconnection remains between the 2010 Metropolitan Plan’s objectives for developing a *City of Cities* and the NSW 2010 Transport Plan’s focus on peak transport travel to the Sydney CBD. Doubtless Sydney’s historic and environmental qualities will ensure that higher-order businesses will stay in the CBD, but governments appear nervous about committing to developing the regional cities; despite demonstrable evidence of success in establishing the legal precinct in Parramatta. Ingenuous claims that the 2010 Metropolitan Plan integrated land use and transport planning are disputed in respect of the Treasury directives to Transport NSW discussed above and the continuing CBD transport focus and are likely to result in a ‘business as usual’ approach to infrastructure provision. NSW governments have a recent history of committing to major infrastructure expenditure, only to withdraw support when the funding allocation appears insufficient to address years of under-investment. This has negative social and economic consequences:

... an urban form that produces congestion pressures, delays, capacity constraints, higher energy costs and other inefficiencies can substantially erode the economic advantages of undertaking business activities (WSROC, 2005:22).

The *Employment Strategy* advocated approval of previously proposed rail links, improved arterial roads, enhanced infrastructure for new employment areas and stronger links between businesses and higher education to encourage innovation (Urban Research Centre, 2008:21). In 2012, the incoming NSW Coalition government confirmed its intention to build the North-West and South-West rail lines (while still omitting the Parramatta to Epping link). It committed $757 million initially
while allocating a further $148 million to station and transport interchange access improvements across the SMR and strategic bus corridor extensions to the regional centres and new growth areas (Transport for NSW, 2012:195).

As Australia’s pre-eminent global city Sydney must operate efficiently and competitively in a sustainable and equitable manner. Yet fragmented government responsibilities ensured two nationally significant land use/transportation issues with potentially serious impacts for Western Sydney communities — freight movements and airport infrastructure — were considered separately by the federal department of Infrastructure and Transport and reflected marked political differences over transport investment between the Commonwealth and the NSW governments.

A second airport for Sydney. Metropolitan strategies remained silent about the proposed second airport’s importance in Sydney’s urban structure. This has seriously impacted on the plans for the Growth Centres, the Western Sydney employment lands, the plans for the future of Bankstown and Richmond airports and development in Fairfield’s rural/residential areas — a classic example of planning blight resulting from uncertainty and conflicting government policy directions. Writing in the Architecture Bulletin in March/April 2008, Meyer and Simpson debated the case for Sydney’s second airport (see Appendix A.5). Airports are important drivers of economic activity and major determinants of the spatial structure of cities (Meyer, 2008). Simpson (2008) argued that the provision of jobs and economic opportunities arising from airport infrastructure could act as a fundamental driver of urban regeneration (Simpson, 2008).

The senior transport bureaucrat interviewee described clearly conflicting views as to areas of responsibility between the different levels of government:

At the State level they say: ‘The airport is entirely up to the federal department we have no say whatsoever. Whenever we try to have a say they ignore the State and say ‘We can do what we like, we are the Commonwealth; and there’s Macquarie Bank saying ‘We can do what we like because we act on behalf of the Commonwealth’’ (SGI06).

This respondent also offered an important insight into why such strategic transport issues are considered in isolation:

Departments think of their role as a regulator.... So if you are regulating the aviation industry you ought to be regulating the freight industry, but you are looking at different operators and different vehicles ... (The) Federal Department of Transport and Industry and Infrastructure — their role is to regulate the aviation industry to ensure safety — [not considering] how do we improve efficiency of the freight logistics chain that happens to pass through an airport (SGI06).

Such intransigence is hardly conducive to the development of sustainable metropolitan plans: it impacts significantly on some disadvantaged communities and highlights conflicting policies and the governance issues for West-Central explored
further in Section 6.6. A further example of fragmented government responsibilities is also demonstrated in the approach to rail freight transport policies.

The Southern Sydney Freight Line (SSFL). As both an important destination and a major source region for freight serving internal markets, the SMR, Australia and overseas, Western Sydney experiences conflicts between managing road-based freight transport and increasing car use. Efforts to improve the efficiency and cost-effectiveness of rail freight services along the Melbourne-Sydney-Brisbane corridor led the ARTC to construct the SSFL for the independent operation of freight and passenger services. While the principle of shifting freight from road-based transport onto the rail network is sound, the macro benefits have unacceptable downsides for residents living along the corridor in West-Central’s centres targeted for urban consolidation. As demonstrated below, the SSFL adversely impacts upon parts of the sub-region, undermining previous efforts and resources invested by Fairfield Council and the state to address Cabramatta’s significant socio-economic issues. Historically, the railway created an east/west division of the town centre, with the SSFL now further contributing to community severance, loss of amenity, changes to the road, cycleway and bus networks and accessibility, parking and noise impacts and exposing Cabramatta’s community and Chester Hill and Regents Park residents in Bankstown LGA to detrimental impacts. Twenty-four hour freight movements (up to 60 per day), and trains exceeding one and a half kilometres in length, are causing unremitting disturbance. Notwithstanding these concerns (flagged since 2006), the 2010 Metropolitan Plan still targeted Cabramatta, Chester Hill and Regents Park centres for residential growth through urban consolidation — aiming to ‘balance social, liveability, fairness and environmental protection objectives’ (ibid:238) — treating such detrimental social and environmental rail impacts as secondary considerations, despite strong regional opposition.

The SSFL exemplifies how, by ignoring local concerns, major transport projects, contribute to the constant start/stop of major projects and fuels community cynicism about governments’ capacities to deliver on their land use/transport promises, whatever their political persuasion. Ideally, Sydney’s second airport and the Southern Sydney Freight Line (SSFL) should have been integral to a comprehensive process addressing all of Australia’s economic and land transport needs, emphasising support for public transport.

Social infrastructure refers to a wide range of services and facilities that meet local level needs for education, health, culture, recreation, social interaction and community development. It plays a key role in the development of social capital or community capacity, providing resources and the opportunity for social interaction,
cooperation and the development of 'ownership' of place or a 'sense of community' (WSROC 2005a). Studies of cities worldwide furnish ample evidence that resident well-being is affected not just their particular household circumstances but by both their immediate surroundings and the quality of the physical and social environment shared with others (WSROC, 2005b:37). A survey of *Who Cares About Western Sydney* (Urban Frontiers Program, UWS and the Planning Research Centre, Sydney University, 2001), demonstrated that, while 59% of Western Sydney respondents considered their suburbs had improved since 1996, one third thought their suburbs had declined, citing crime and safety, rising population density, a worsening employment situation, increasing traffic congestion and poor quality public transport as contributory factors. Hence, in the most socially and economically disadvantaged parts of Western Sydney, the sense of an area's decline could be the most strongly felt deprivation of all (Randolph, Pang and Hall 2001; Fingland, 2006:55).

As the findings of the 2004 *Year of the Built Environment* Western Sydney regional seminars stressed:

> While the ‘big ticket’ infrastructure items are pivotal and the achievement of environmental sustainability principles critical, social sustainability presents itself as a key issue in the renewal of older areas. How ‘neighbourhood’ is formed and what structural changes and building forms are required to support better neighbourhoods is the central issue (WSROC, 2005:3).

Community development comprises five components: public participation, social planning, program investigations, monitoring and evaluation (South Australian Land Trust, 1988). Social facilities provision — an element of community development — are generally easy to assess, through direct estimates of need based on population size and distribution assumptions. However, social processes are more difficult, since resource allocation and organisation are subjected to prevailing political ideologies and priorities. While generally not disputing the need for a school or health facilities, heated political debates are generated over the extent of residents’ influence on the direction of policy development.

Many surveys describe suburban difficulties due to inaccessibility of employment and community facilities. Yet the social costs of inadequate social infrastructure are harder to quantify than some of the environmental and economic costs of poor physical infrastructure. New households moving into unfamiliar areas, with large mortgages, high rents and elevated indebtedness can suffer costs in terms of family breakdown, illness and drug dependence. These events are often tipping points for financially stressed households, which are not just borne by individuals, but passed on to the whole community. Such difficulties can be aggravated by the relative isolation of new residents (particularly immigrants) from support mechanisms,
including existing family and friends; since newcomers, by and large, are strangers
to each other (Llewelyn-Davies Kinhill, 1976).

Developer contributions levied for social facilities and services provision in greenfield
areas demonstrate a clear nexus between the needs of incoming and established
populations. By contrast, in West-Central, forecasting timing and scale of
redevelopment is more problematic. Maintenance cannot be levied for, Crown
developments are exempt and collection costs often outweigh the logic of developing
contribution plans. Cross-boundary issues (such as drainage catchment areas) can
create cost disadvantages and councils face additional burdens of replacing ageing
infrastructure without asset replacement funds. Also the current stop-go approach to
provision of urban infrastructure militates against strategic planning; since housing
investment needs to be planned over periods of at least 5 years.

With a limited stock of social infrastructure, Western Sydney lacks equity of regional
provision, suffering poor access and inadequate services for the disadvantaged and
special needs groups. By assigning human services such low priority, communities in
both new and re-developing areas function neither effectively nor efficiently, yet this
issue attracts little attention from either a town planning or an urban financing and
management perspective, which is attributable to a range of factors. Social
infrastructure often involves lower initial capital costs and often no resources are
allocated to assess the capacity of the existing services. Expenditure programs tend
to prioritise social infrastructure after physical infrastructure and the location of social
facilities is often less site-specific than a road or a sewage treatment plant.
Significant recurrent costs can prevent or delay social facilities provision and, most
importantly, the costs of inadequate services are often harder to quantify (Fingland,

From a social inclusion perspective, the lifecycle needs of single people, childless
couples, families, people with a disability, the aged and people from different cultural
backgrounds should be catered for across Sydney. Ideally, any West-Central
household, irrespective of size and composition, should be able to find suitable
accommodation in terms of dwelling type and access to employment, services and
facilities, with culturally-specific needs catered for. In addition to being socially more
equitable, a more socially inclusive strategy helps reduce peak demand for age-
specific services (such as child care, schools and aged facilities) (Fingland, 2003).

An important insight into the low patterns of public expenditure in West-Central and
why social infrastructure expenditure is not considered a form of public investment
came from a community sector senior CEO who highlighted:
... the investment is very much about the economic, there is very little investment in people really. So we in the community sector will often say we know that if you invest in early intervention you save a lot of money in the long run, but it hasn’t been a dominant basis of economics ... I think sexism is huge — women will look after the soft stuff and men the hard stuff...

If your economy is focused on getting the most money, progressing business where you are going to grow, then the global impact of factories moving overseas ... [results in] the loss of all those low paid jobs that a lot of migrants in particular work in (NGI13).

Noting the specific difficulties experienced by immigrant women working in the sub-region she stressed:

... the aged and child care sectors ... are almost entirely staffed by migrant women. They are low paid jobs and they find it hard to attract staff, so we are developing an underclass of employment. One of the groups we work with represents textile piece-workers ... so many really marginalised people working very hard in their own homes, invisible, low paid, [with] very poor English and very little resourcing (NGI13).

Another NGO respondent pointed to resource allocation issues:

... it is quite hard for us in some cases ... to work out how resources are allocated ... It’s just like a series of historical decisions have been made and are now decades on..... I was astounded when Community Services got a $10M or so extra [for Community Builders], when they went through a whole lot of schemes which completely ignored where growth is happening... their allocation of extra resources was nil (NGI15).

These important insights further reinforce the need for greater investment in West-Central’s social infrastructure.

The ex-politician alluded to the important role of the federal government’s immigration policies:

[Knowing] where refugees move, people with extra needs in their lives for education and ... other sorts of supports ... moving into a few neighbourhoods, very quickly, I don’t think there is a strong understanding of that. Having a job is really important. Allowing refugees to come here who are already quite disadvantaged and not understand why some groups have high unemployment rates — I think that’s a problem.

There is a bit of ... a trend as people become successful to move out of these neighbourhoods, so they don’t retain talent ... capital ... capacity (whether it’s educational ... bright kids, committed parents) ... It’s like a downward spiral — an area becomes unattractive ... migrants [are] moving out because other migrants are moving in (MPI16).

Western Sydney communities comprise a diversity of interests and cultures, linked by common characteristics such as kinship, ethnicity, age, class and religion and share a common physical geography. Councils are attempting to build social capital, developing arts facilities to address the backlog of cultural infrastructure provision through networks of specialised leisure, sporting, cultural, education and economic opportunities. But West-Central contains only one social history museum, a heritage centre and the Parramatta Riverside Theatre. Otherwise the major performance venues are licensed clubs providing live entertainment and a range of social activities. Further development of the social networks for West-Central’s culturally
diverse communities would provide vital assistance to the settlement process, helping to build cross-cultural understanding (WSROC 2005a).

In 2009 a COAG Reform Council communiqué stated that all metropolitan plans ‘will need to show how they address social inclusion criteria by 2012’. Subsequently a review of Capital City Planning Systems defined national criteria for capital city strategic planning, including, *inter alia*:

... in strategic planning for Sydney, demographic change, social inclusion, and health, liveability and community well-being were the least convincingly dealt with (COAG, 2012: vi, viii).

Such indictment of the effectiveness of Sydney’s metropolitan planning and governance, given the body of research available from overseas and within Australia, illustrates the importance of adopting the concepts of social inclusion and exclusion.

Earlier sections discussed how inadequate planning and governance factors are leading to the current physical and social infrastructure deficit in Western Sydney. Section 5.8 now summarises these findings, arguing this requires a re-examination of urban regeneration policies in the areas of housing, employment and transport, to reflect radical lifestyle changes.

### 5.8 Summary and conclusions

Vision without action is a daydream; action without vision is a nightmare (wise old Japanese saying).

Previous metropolitan strategies have paid scant regard to the need for physical renewal or the need to address the social changes occurring in Sydney’s older established middle ring suburbs. The strategies have demonstrated little understanding of how links between housing, employment and transport policies affect social exclusion, and poor appreciation of the policy changes needed for urban regeneration. Urban disadvantage in Sydney is not confined to pockets in the inner city or in public housing estates, but is increasingly manifest across low-income, private-rental areas characterised by run-down housing, limited job and education opportunities and inadequate transport services.

Sydney’s metropolitan plans since 1948 have suffered ongoing limitations including: first, no provision for financing the public works; second, no conformity by other agencies responsible for providing the infrastructure; and third, failed attempts by centralised government to control all development activity, leaving local government to pick up the pieces without adequate financial assistance. The 1968 plan was criticised for not being strategic in its intent and lacking the ability to change over time; leading to land speculation and planning blight. Subsequent plans omitted to provide adequate implementation strategies, with social infrastructure in particular —
including public transport provision — failing to keep pace with rapid housing growth. A series of institutional innovations — such as the establishment of MUIM in 1996 and DIPNR in 2002 — proved unsuccessful and were soon abandoned. Ongoing urban consolidation objectives were criticised for:

1. Achieving a very small population increase despite greatly increased densities
2. Inappropriate housing mixes unable to meet dwelling targets out of kilter with housing demand
3. Increasing costs per m² of floorspace
4. Growing spatial separation of residential and employment areas
5. Increasing lengths of journeys-to-work and traffic congestion
6. Environmental costs arising from greater ground cover and increased flooding.

Section 5.5 demonstrated how a planning ideology adopted in all of Australia’s major cities, is attempting to concentrate apartments in town centre locations, but which implies social segregation by household type becoming a dominant feature of the future metropolitan structure. In already disadvantaged areas this policy should be re-thought to avoid socially regressive outcomes. Urban consolidation policies are often based on misguided assumptions of surplus capacity in suburbia and government perceptions that developer levies at the urban fringe are an impost driving up house prices. Until the outcomes of urban consolidation policies are monitored and adjustments made, public cynicism into the approach will remain.

Higher density development and additional population in the middle suburbs puts pressure on the existing deteriorating infrastructure which may require upgrading. The blanket application of urban consolidation policies causes confusion, partly because of complex urban structure issues affecting densification, but more particularly due to conflicting opinions about what it can achieve and what its priorities really are. This is compounded by insufficient analysis of urban land use and infrastructure data to inform urban consolidation and cost-saving strategies, with a limited consensus about terms and methodology. Concerns remain that urban regeneration results in a loss of affordable housing with no guarantee that redeveloped housing will return to the rental market. Previously, when governments built facilities, planning and trunk infrastructure coordination received a high priority, but transformation of key state agencies into wholly or partially privatised entities, has fostered the development of portfolio-centred interest groups.

Giving little consideration to the serious impacts of social exclusion and lacking a human dimension, these strategies failed to address the older suburbs’ problems. By ignoring alternatives to long-established policies and providing only a limited response to the most obvious difficulties, the metropolitan plans overlooked the bulk of available information about cities and their populations. Projections of dwellings,
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jobs and infrastructure needs were presented on the erroneous assumption that current trends would continue in a linear fashion over unrealistic planning horizons, providing limited examination of the information’s accuracy and unsubstantiated estimates about delivery timeframes. The numerous metropolitan strategies and transport plans failed to deliver the necessary infrastructure to cater for West-Central’s population growth, causing major difficulties in accessing services and employment, high car dependency and increasing socio-economic polarisation along spatial lines. The many dimensions of socio-economic disadvantage rarely resulted from one single factor but were contributed to by the limited attempts at solving the sub-region’s complex, interrelated urban problems.

Planning in NSW is a fragmented, ad-hoc process undertaken by a range of agencies with different agendas; often operating in isolation. When issues become too difficult for the responsible agency there is a tendency to create further ad hoc authorities, rather than reforming existing government institutions. Whenever problems are identified, the solution appears to be to produce another plan. Yet statutory planning rarely has the goal of creating well-designed cities. Local plans are often difficult to navigate, lack vision and their outcomes are generally unclear. These shortcomings are compounded in LGAs where a proliferation of development controls plans (DCPs) applies to separate aspects of the process. Few DCPs involve effective community consultation or express a desired character for an area. The planning ordinances under the Local Government and the EP&A Acts relate principally to the processes leading to development, rather than the quality and design of the resulting physical form.

Many metropolitan strategies have conflicting priorities, are vague on specific commitments and have a limited strategic focus; failing to gain support from other agencies, the community or even the organisation undertaking the plan. A tendency to avoid monitoring of newly implemented plans leads to a loss of public faith in the planning system. The reluctance by successive NSW governments to invest in urban infrastructure leaves a gap between planning rhetoric and service delivery, and etiolated plan-making is largely marginalised from the budget-setting process, captured by NSW Treasury and the more powerful state agencies. Commentators argue that:

As a result NSW has been over-planned in terms of the number of plans but severely under-planned in terms of deliverable results such as infrastructure investment or greater sustainability (WSROC, 2006b:1).

While some sporadic activity at the regional level appeared in Shaping Sydney and Shaping Western Sydney (Department of Urban affairs and Planning, 1998), followed
Chapter 5: NSW strategic plans and their limitations

by greater emphasis placed on regional planning in the 2005 and 2010 plans, these strategies sit alongside a host of other, often contradictory documents.

Drawing upon detailed and multi-disciplinary research, analysis and contemporary urban management thinking, *FutureWest* (WSROC, 2005b) attempted to build sustainable development principles into the metropolitan strategy process by reviving some of the lost arts of physical planning. The research evidence pointed to community stress (comprising housing stress through lack of choice and affordability, coupled with transport stress due to commuting times, road tolls, costs and lack of public transport options), leading to an increase in socio-economic polarisation. *FutureWest* recognised that the delivery of good quality urban areas could not be accomplished simply through plan preparation and regulation but required improved urban management planning skills. Significant benefits were demonstrated from collaborative working, using the considerable knowledge and expertise resident within the region. In particular, more sophisticated strategies for major employment growth and regional concentration across the SMR required involvement of all levels of government to address gaps in economic performance and a segmented labour force. Inter-regional initiatives were needed to establish partnerships between the public and private sectors to improve service provision, employment access and the physical amenity of run-down areas including commercial centres.

The 2005 *City of Cities* metropolitan strategy provided a logical framework for a global city region, but lacked crucial government commitments to essential infrastructure and civic amenity. The remaining challenge for West-Central Sydney to assist residents to achieve the full benefits of community life by addressing issues such as low incomes, high unemployment, inadequate housing and transport, and the negative media stereotyping which compounds social exclusion. When urban consolidation fails to incorporate sufficient affordable housing there can be far-reaching social consequences, with low- to moderate-income households dispersed from areas undergoing gentrification, leading to the constant turnover and loss of population in the sub-region’s older suburbs. While the major urban consolidation objective is to reduce the need to release further residential land, major density increases and changes in urban form are only achieving modest savings in city size and infrastructure costs.

Attracting or retaining middle income households plus their spending power, is considered a prerequisite to providing diversity in West-Central’s older suburbs and creating the critical mass essential for delivering preventative and curative neighbourhood policies. Yet selling social housing properties on the open market with the aim of attracting higher income households can cause community displacement
and destruction of local support networks — all contentious issues. Current debates focus on whether the past needs-based welfare approaches to urban renewal is sufficiently robust. De-concentrating poverty and reducing social, economic and health inequalities seem preferable, but require changing to a mindset of prevention rather than cure.

Many interviewees highlighted the spatial blindness of existing policies to West-Central’s issues and the ongoing failure to deal with the cumulative impacts of the poor quality housing stock, high unemployment, car dependency and the ad hoc physical change described in Chapter 1. There was general agreement that the centres policies had failed by allowing jobs dispersal and campus-type developments divorced from existing public transport provision. The over-emphasis on increasing dwelling densities at the expense of jobs; the need for centres improvement programs; the erosion of housing affordability and accessibility, emerged as key issues. Despite strong support for partnering between agencies and the success of the NBESP, respondents strongly criticised the lack of a sustainable on-going process. They argued that repressive control from a neo-liberal Treasury obsessed with minimising government involvement and increasing cost-cutting was at the expense of sub-regional improvements. Departmental ‘silos’, lacking integration and confined to regulatory functions and blame-shifting, also emerged as significant impediments to urban regeneration.

Initiation of a series of planning reforms reinforced the importance of developing a strategic, integrated long-term vision for Sydney, underpinned by a systematic implementation program capable of withstanding the challenges of government changes. While the NSW government envisaged this would occur through a Metropolitan Plan Delivery Group, reporting annually to Cabinet, an increasingly complex, confusing and expanding mix of agencies, departments and advisory bodies still leaves the issue of overall responsibility for infrastructure planning and delivery open to question. As Thompson concluded:

Neo-liberalism remains a powerful force in Australian governance and seems set to continue presenting various challenges to planning. Among these are deregulation, state government intervention in local affairs, and the growing role of the private sector in planning ... It demands of planners a new role ... as facilitators rather than 'all-knowing experts' ... they must hear competing demands and balance the needs of conflicting stakeholders (Thompson, 2007:333).
Chapter 6 now examines how the government policies and practices outlined above impact upon West-Central’s residents and the failures of an over-centralised policy approach in such a complex sub-region; drawing lessons for achieving improved social inclusion and urban regeneration outcomes in relation to housing and employment issues, urban transport needs, locational disadvantage and governance.
CHAPTER 6: Key concerns for West-Central Sydney

Introduction

This chapter presents a critique of how the strategic studies, policies and urban regeneration practice detailed in Chapter 5, impact upon West-Central Sydney. Drawing together the interrelationship between three facets of urban life which underpin this thesis — housing, jobs and transport — the chapter highlights successive government failures to address the sub-region’s complex problems, demonstrating once again the need for a social inclusion agenda to address exclusion and locational disadvantage. While recognised for its cultural diversity, other factors characterise the West-Central community. The sub-region’s issues are complex, enduring and, for specific groups, require better understanding. The area is targeted for major population growth with significant housing, employment and transport implications. No longer representing the urban fringe, West-Central still suffers from inadequate human services provision and high population turnover. In such socially and economically disadvantaged areas health and well-being issues are exacerbated.

Modification of the human habitat by car dependence and urbanisation is compounded by mass consumerism, the social anomalies of inequalities, changing demographics and environmental degradation (WSROC, 2005b:82). In this context mechanisms for public interventions are lacking, resulting in major planning deficits. The regeneration of West-Central’s older suburbs which contain predominantly detached homes on relatively large private allotments at a nominal net density of 8 to 10 dwellings/hectare, presents a major challenge. Plans to provide 50% to 70% of Sydney’s new housing in established areas through strategic infill in the next 20 to 30 years (Department of Planning 2010:11) are not based on proven research into successful renewal of suburbia (National Housing Supply Council, 2010).

More broadly, Gleeson (2006;2010) points to the social and ecological threats to Australian cities following decades of neo-liberal reform, globalisation, and cultural changes and highlights the need for more concerted, proactive efforts to tackle the challenges facing the ageing middle suburbs. Hence, for West-Central the social impacts of urban regeneration processes, on both the current residents and an incoming population, are likely to provide the greatest governance challenge for the sub-region for years to come.
Chapter 6: Key concerns for West-Central Sydney

Like the preceding chapter, the following Sections engage with the significant contributions made by the interviewees, demonstrating numerous shared concerns about the impediments to urban regeneration; the need for a more holistic approach to social reform; and the importance of recognising the interrelationships between separate policy areas to achieve greater social inclusion.

6.1 Socio-economic disadvantage in West-Central Sydney

As introduced in Chapter 1, this thesis uses the ABS census-based Index of Socio-Economic Disadvantage (SEIFA) as a proxy for socio-economic status at the suburb level within the sub-region. The SEIFA Index, (defined in Section 1.5), produced following the 1971 census and reformulated in 1986, demonstrates little change occurring in the sub-region’s disadvantaged areas. The challenge for West-Central’s councils remains how to achieve regeneration of the ageing dwelling stock and increase employment participation in these older suburbs, without displacing or further marginalising their most disadvantaged residents.

Figure 6.1 illustrates the concentrations of disadvantage located in West-Central’s older suburbs adjacent to the railway lines, covering most of Auburn LGA (except for the newer suburbs of Newington and Wentworth Point), northern Bankstown, eastern Fairfield and the southern suburbs of Holroyd and Parramatta. Revealing a higher proportion of migrants compared to the SMR, West-Central’s concentrated areas of disadvantage reinforce Sydney’s socio-economic polarisation, with many West-Central residents possessing poor English-speaking skills and experiencing low employment and tertiary education participation rates.

In 2006 the West-Central Sydney sub-region scored 935.1 on the ABS SEIFA Index, with 37 of its 91 suburbs (40.7%) scoring below this sub-regional average. As described in Section 1.3, in contrast to the inner city, the most extensive areas of disadvantage in West-Central have little public housing (Randolph and Holloway, 2004). Section 2.2 demonstrated a distinct and unpopular physical urban form these areas accommodate poorer households with limited opportunities and at risk of being socially stigmatised. These older suburbs are losing their more upwardly mobile populations to the new urban fringe areas, leaving behind a much more diverse housing market and greater concentrations of social problems (Bunker, Holloway and Randolph, 2005).
The next section now examines the nature of the disadvantage experienced in these older suburbs, within each of the sub-region’s five LGAs.

**Disadvantaged suburbs.** In 2006 the ABS identified Auburn North, Auburn, Auburn South, Berala and Regents Park suburbs as areas of most disadvantage, scoring below the West-Central average of 935.1 at that time (Auburn Council, 2011). In 2011 the LGA as a whole and these five suburbs plus Lidcombe South/Rookwood scored below the sub-regional average of 926.6 on the SEIFA Index and 21.4% of Auburn’s households were in the lowest income quartile (earning less than $614 per week in 2011).

Since 1991, Villawood, in Bankstown LGA, has remained the most disadvantaged suburb in Sydney, scoring only 660.9 in 2006 and 663.7 in 2011. Given the suburb incorporates an Immigration Detention Centre, a substantial proportion of Villawood’s residents (57.4%) were in rented social housing in 2011, compared to a 9.7% LGA average. A further ten of Bankstown’s nineteen suburbs (predominantly located in the north-east of the LGA and in its CBD) scored below the sub-region’s average. The Council reported more families crowding into the home units being developed in
Bankstown’s centres, risking overcrowding and intensifying demand for more parks, recreational facilities and community services (Bankstown City Council, 2009).

**Figure 6.2: SEIFA for Fairfield LGA 2006**

Since 1991 Fairfield has remained the SMR’s most disadvantaged LGA (with a SEIFA score of 876.1 in 2006 and 854.0 in 2011) and eighteen suburbs recorded below the sub-regional average — primarily concentrated in the east of the city, located adjacent to the railway line stretching from Cabramatta to Yennora (Figure 6.2). As the Fairfield strategic planning manager noted:

... the areas with the lowest SEIFA score are generally the areas containing old three-storey walk-ups ... people in the greatest disadvantage in ... the lowest amenity in the LGA ... The reality is that those are the people who probably don't have a lot of choice. Anecdotally, those areas have relatively high occupancy rates, so we have people who can't afford [to live there] and older people in inappropriate housing for their needs (LGI03).

As Section 2.1 noted, many of Fairfield’s oldest, run-down suburbs lost population between 1986 and 2001 and are left accommodating some of the most disadvantaged urban communities in Australia (Fairfield Council, 2003:2.1). This population loss exposed these older suburbs as targets for urban consolidation. Yet later land use planning attempts to encourage population growth, by upzoning to allow multi-storey apartment developments in Fairfield’s centres, failed to address the population decline due to limited market demand for this type of accommodation in the area (LGI02).
Holroyd LGA scored 972.4 overall in 2006 and 965.6 in 2011, yet three suburbs — Merrylands, Guildford/Yennora and Merrylands West — scored below West-Central’s SEIFA averages in 2011, reflecting little change in their makeup since 2006. Council’s strategic planning manager attributed this lack of improvement in part to Guildford centre’s locational disadvantage:

The area suffers from being separated by the railway line with the centre on one side poorly accessed by the over-bridge, so most people tend to shop in Merrylands or Fairfield once in their cars... Some people cross the line to walk to the shops for more minor needs. The Guildford centre therefore tends to act just as a neighbourhood centre (LGI04).

As Section 5.7 noted, community severance caused by railway lines can increase poor accessibility.

Parramatta LGA’s five southernmost suburbs scored below the sub-regional SEIFA average in 2006, with South Granville/Chester Hill, Guildford, Granville/Clyde, Merrylands and Harris Park demonstrating little change by 2011. Parramatta Council’s group manager confirmed the southern area’s particular disadvantage including long-term unemployment:

They’ve also got a much higher concentration of public housing. We are a city probably in three different parts ... [the area has] much more in common with some of the areas around Auburn and Holroyd than it does with Epping or Winston Hills [suburbs located to the north of the LGA] (LGI05).

Polarisation was increasing, with Parramatta’s eastern suburbs of Dundas and Rosehill/Camellia also classified as areas of relative socio-economic disadvantage in 2011.

Despite Parramatta’s ongoing commitment to a Housing Affordability Strategy (Section 5.5), the Council’s attempts to regenerate the southern area failed, with low land values presenting a particular problem:

NSW Planning ... is very focused on land up-zoning, land value and perhaps not enough on broader outcomes... You have this area of great disadvantage in Parramatta in that southern part ... and the land values there are quite low. We’ve tried to do some of our own developments ... and we can’t make it financially stack up... [While], we are not displacing anyone ... at the same time there is no incentive to improve the area (LGI05).

Although water, sewerage and transport infrastructure was considered by the interviewee to be adequate, the high concentrations of public housing tenants (27.2%) meant South Granville’s social issues were viewed as presenting the greatest problem:

... the Department of Housing has concentrated so much public housing in one location, you almost need to take the suburb apart, move some of the public housing out ... to change some of those things ... It’s more to do with the social infrastructure and the social fabric of those areas ... [and] support for people ... (LGI05).
These findings highlight the persistent socio-economic disadvantage manifest in West-Central’s older suburbs. Section 6.2 now examines West-Central’s housing market; the complexity and diversity of housing demand; the links between socio-economic status and affordability; and the collapse of the role of state housing in the provision of housing for lower income households.

### 6.2 Housing issues

Chapter 1 characterised West-Central Sydney as sandwiched between high-value gentrified inner suburbs and an increasingly expensive ‘aspirational’ urban fringe. Section 2.2 described the loss of West-Central’s middle income households, leaving behind the poor and those with no choice, with many residents trapped in private rental accommodation. Furthermore, narrowing the focus of social housing to an option of last resort has contributed to spatial social polarisation, restricting the development of both social capital and economic development. Many remnant households’ incomes are too low to afford the limited choice of dwellings available, either for sale or rent, and while developers seek to reduce the costs of their products to suit the market, the area’s locational disadvantage still makes it expensive to live there due to a range of factors including employment and transport issues (Section 6.5).

While West-Central’s sites comprise the lower end of the housing market and are generally considered more affordable than other parts of the SMR, research by Randolph (2006) revealed this did not mean they were affordable for the poorer households who live there. Whilst arguably low interest rates make housing more affordable, in reality the increased borrowing capacity for low income households is capitalised back into higher prices in the housing market (Randolph, Holloway and Murray, 2004; Rowley and Phibbs, 2012). In addition, negative gearing\(^3\), whereby households borrow to invest in property made available for rent, adds to housing demand and drives up prices.

**Housing targets.** At a macro level, the housing targets in strategic plans for the sub-region appear illogical. West-Central’s housing markets differ markedly from those in the North-West and South-West sub-regions which contain vast new release areas. Except for Sydney Olympic Park, little potential exists in West-Central for greenfield development, while most brownfield sites have already been re-developed. As Holroyd’s strategic planning manager commented:

\(^3\) A form of financial leverage whereby an investor borrows money but the gross income generated is less than owning/managing the investment and these losses are tax-deductable.
Chapter 6: Key concerns for West-Central Sydney

The older areas have had quite a bit of infill and most of the areas zoned for apartments have now been developed. Pemulwuy has been developing mostly for families — the demand assumed for apartments did not occur, so the area was developed for small-lot integrated housing (LGI04).

Hence not enough dwellings were produced to meet the dwelling targets.

Yet the 2005 strategy envisaged an additional 95,500 dwellings to be provided in West-Central by 2036, or 3,820 per year on average (Table 6.1). Given the high proportions of the sub-region’s applications for ad hoc KDR replacement housing (Section 4.5), these dwelling targets are questionable.

**Table 6.1: West-Central dwelling targets 2006 to 2031**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>LGA/sub-region</th>
<th>DoP expected population growth to 2031</th>
<th>Dwelling target 2006 to 2031</th>
<th>Extra dwellings per year to 2031</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Fairfield</td>
<td>1,956</td>
<td>24,000</td>
<td>960</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bankstown</td>
<td>28,963</td>
<td>22,000</td>
<td>880</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parramatta</td>
<td>33,322</td>
<td>21,000</td>
<td>840</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Auburn plus Sydney Olympic Park</td>
<td>43,336</td>
<td>17,000</td>
<td>680</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Holroyd</td>
<td>19,728</td>
<td>11,500</td>
<td>460</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>West-Central sub-region</strong></td>
<td><strong>127,305</strong></td>
<td><strong>95,500</strong></td>
<td><strong>3,820</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South-West Growth Centre</td>
<td></td>
<td>100,000</td>
<td>4,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>North-West Growth Centre</td>
<td></td>
<td>60,000</td>
<td>2,400</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sydney City (City of Sydney LGA)</td>
<td></td>
<td>55,000</td>
<td>2,200</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


Research conducted on socially sustainable urban renewal (described in Section 2.2) showed most of West-Central’s housing market is facilitated by a number of small-scale local building firms undertaking regeneration on a site-by-site basis (Ruming et al., 2007:693 and 702). Assuming that 3,820 dwellings per year up to 2031 could be constructed by West-Central’s small-scale developers is an ambitious target.

Moreover, the limited number of development companies geared to producing large masterplanned estates are expected to produce 4,000 dwellings in the South-West and 2,400 dwellings in the North-West growth centres annually. This capacity constraint risks delivery of the quantum of new development targeted for Western Sydney. Previously, NSW’s incapacity to provide the professional skills, labour, or the construction materials required for the Sydney Olympics, led to developer complaints of commensurate high cost increases and slowing development rates becoming a
Chapter 6: Key concerns for West-Central Sydney

major issue prior to the 2000 Games. Clearly, Sydney’s building industry’s ability to deliver on these dwelling targets requires further detailed examination.

Interviewees from both Auburn and Bankstown Councils described a local preference for dual occupancies, villas and townhouses, as opposed to apartments, citing the attractions of more living space, gardens and low-rise housing aspirations. Moreover, low-rise medium density schemes are perceived by small investors to present fewer development and financial risks, as opposed to the large-scale apartment developments sought by government housing policies. The difficulty of meeting the targets and addressing rising disadvantage are further compounded by Councils’ inability to control the timing of development (Section 5.7) and consequently, the receipt of developer contribution income to help finance the infrastructure needed to support population growth. This diminishes the sub-region’s basic level of services and facilities and hence the demand for new housing drops.

An example of government insensitivity to local development possibilities is the METRIX web-based calculator planning tool, developed by NSW Planning in 2006 to identify the dwelling completions required in Sydney’s larger centres to achieve 25 net dwellings per hectare. Requiring zoning changes permitting development of more home units in centres, and prohibiting dual occupancies and villas in certain new residential zones, the tool ignored demographic and development trends, natural hazards (including flooding, topography) infrastructure issues and community needs. The tool was consequently rejected by Western Sydney Councils. (Appendix 4 provides an alternative approach to dwelling demand forecasting).

Under the draft West-Central Sub-regional Strategy (Department of Planning, 2007:84), Fairfield and Bankstown Councils were expected to increase their dwelling numbers by 24,000 and 22,000 respectively by 2031 — making these two LGAs the sixth and seventh highest new dwelling contributors of the 42 in the SMR (Bankstown Council, 2009). Despite claiming the dwelling targets were based on ABS population projections refined by the NSW Transport Data Centre, there appeared little correlation between the two, since the Planning Department’s 2005 population projections for Fairfield anticipated insignificant growth over the next 25 years (1.1% overall or 0.04% per annum) and a modest population growth rate for Bankstown of 0.6% per annum, compared with neighbouring Auburn (2.2%). Consequently Bankstown Council adopted the lower Metropolitan Development Program’s 2007 forecasts, based on historic and projected dwelling production rates of 700 dwellings per year from 2007 to 2012, dropping to 500 per annum from 2012 to 2017 (ibid: 100). The draft 2007 West-Central Sub-regional Strategy assumed that additional
dwelling demand in Fairfield would result from increases in lone person households and couples without children, driving demand for small units (WSROC, 2008b:7). However, as Table 2.10 demonstrated, Fairfield consistently maintains higher than average occupancy rates — further evidence of the unreliability and inappropriateness of the dwelling targets.

**Socio-economic status and affordability** The 2005 Metropolitan Strategy treated affordable housing as an urban capacity by-numbers exercise, ignoring ample evidence of market failure over the years to maintain housing affordability. Notwithstanding a NSW *First Home Owners Grant* and low interest rates, young people experienced purchasing difficulties, as rising house prices and rent increases outstripped growth in West-Central’s increasingly insecure and part-time employment opportunities (Randolph and Holloway, 2005a; Urban Research Centre, 2008). Between 2001 and 2006, Holroyd, Auburn, Bankstown and Fairfield LGAs experienced the greatest decline in housing affordability in the SMR, compared to relatively affordability improvements for residents in the wealthier eastern and northern LGAs, where incomes rose more quickly than house prices (Randolph, 2008c).

The lack of affordability in the traditionally cheaper West-Central suburbs challenges the assumption that buyers, priced out of locations in the inner city, will move to West-Central, given the decreasing price differentials (WSROC, 2008c:2). In fact more West-Central families are falling behind on their mortgage repayments and rental affordability is worsening compared to other parts of Sydney (WSROC, 2007a). Landcom research in 2008 identified unmet demand for appropriate affordable housing in the Fairfield/Liverpool area equivalent to 8,000 low to moderate income households. For the city as a whole, this shortage compounded the accommodation problem for low-paid key workers (Yates et al., 2005). According to a Bankwest *Key Worker Affordability Report, 2011* no suburb in West-Central contained median house prices affordable for any key worker occupation (facing house prices more than five times their earnings in 84% of Sydney’s LGAs in 2010 — an increase from 77% in 2009).

There is also the question of housing suitability. Fairfield, Auburn and Bankstown LGAs consistently accommodate a higher proportion of larger households than the SMR average (Table 2.10). In 2011 Fairfield’s average household size was 3.23 ppd, compared to the metropolitan average of 2.69. Table 2.11 showed high proportions of households in Auburn and Bankstown LGAs comprised families with children in 2011; with notably 61.1% of Fairfield’s households containing children and only 15.1% comprising lone person households, compared with 45.6% and 21.5% respectively in the SMR. This prompted council concerns that planning policies,
offering high density flats in central locations as the only affordable housing option, were unlikely to be appropriate for many low to medium income family households in West-Central. This failure of the market in respect to the types of dwellings supplied was a further issue for the Fairfield Council strategic planning manager:

There’s a real chicken and egg issue around the mix of housing, in that the market is convinced that that’s what makes them the most money... In our DCP ... we set a really low benchmark for having 1 bedroom and 3 bedroom units in each development, just to make sure in every development there was something other than a 2 bedroom unit, but the developers wouldn’t bite. And ... the Councillors... are not committed to it to the point that ... they will say 'No'. (LG103).

Such Council reluctance to enforce a wider range of dwelling choice may be contributing to the concentrations of disadvantage within Fairfield LGA.

Generational disadvantage is also increasing in West-Central, compounded by failures in the housing market. House price inflation, supported by favourable taxation encouraging over-investment in certain housing types; disincentives to trading down (Section 2.1), and an absolute lack of appropriate housing; reinforce the strong upward trend in house prices in a circular process. Wealth is now concentrated in the over-40s home-owner age groups. Currently, relatively few older people in Sydney are in housing stress, usually because they have paid off their mortgage on the family home. However, as Section 2.1 demonstrated, West-Central’s ageing demographic profile shows increasing proportions of those aged over 50. More Australians now in their late 40s, 50s and 60s are still paying off a mortgage than people of the same age a decade ago. Should this trend continue future generations will enter into old age with mortgage debts: this is an important issue for low income households in West-Central, since a home — usually a household’s principal asset — underpins financial security in retirement.

A consequence of home ownership difficulties is that rental stress remains a serious problem, especially in West-Central’s older suburbs. In 2011 almost a quarter (23.5%) of the sub-region’s private rental households were paying more than $400 per week in rent, with rent-to-income ratios precluding the level of savings required to move to home purchase. The lack of resources and the price structure in different locations in West-Central, may well restrict some household’s ability to move anywhere, whatever their circumstances. Yet yields from rents are insufficient to drive investment in the private rental sector, with vacancy rates for private rental dwellings in the SMR in August 2010 around 1.3%. The problem of rental prices outstripping incomes in West-Central has thus led to a decline in availability of affordable rental properties.
Employment uncertainty, limited access to home loan finance and poor design variety options, together increase demand, force up rents. In particular, the prospect of buying a home for the more marginalised in West-Central (the poor, the unemployed and sole parent families) is very low; with Sydney’s post-GFC housing boom impacting severely on these groups. As the Parramatta Council outcomes manager noted:

... in this low market context, without intervention I don’t see how[buying a home] happens. For any developer it's a numbers game, possibly why the Affordable Housing SEPP became a bit of a carrot ... a density bonus ... How is that sustainable? We are just going to have this huge blip of extra affordable housing then it's all going to disappear at the same time (LGI05).

These comments also echoed other WSROC Councils’ concerns voiced in committee meetings, about the lack of mechanisms to ensure that any savings would be passed on to the purchaser or alternatively, the risks of windfall gains accruing only to initial purchasers, failing to provide a sustainable solution to the affordability issue.

From the early 1970s onwards rapid gentrification of rental stock concentrations occurred in Sydney’s inner city. Colonised by higher income households buying into central locations, tenures shifted from private rental to owner-occupation, reflecting changing class values. However, unlike inner city renewal, in West-Central’s lower value locations gentrification is not the driving force of regeneration (Randolph, 2006b). These suburbs fail to attract the limited pool of gentrifyers attracted to the facilities, services and range of infrastructure offered in the Sydney CBD. Hence the limited renewal that is taking place is through densification of the housing stock without much dispersal of existing households. However, since gentrification is not an option, the urban regeneration of West-Central is likely to be a high-risk, more protracted and long-term process.

**Knockdown-rebuild (KDR) issues.** While the ‘fibro belt’ with reasonably sized blocks of land in West-Central traditionally provided a lower price entry point to Sydney’s housing market, the sub-region’s ageing dwelling stock with poor amenity has passed into a low-return private rental market, with little incentive for regular repairs or upgrades. In response, KDR replacement housing activity by owner-occupiers is increasing in West-Central’s older suburbs, especially in Fairfield, Auburn, Bankstown and Parramatta LGAs. Collectively these four LGAs received 1,478 DAs or 21.6% of the total SMR applications for KDR from 2004 to 2008 (Wiesal et al., 2011). Re-building in existing suburbs clearly benefits local households, utilising existing infrastructure and preserving accessibility and amenity advantages. Conversely, while assisting regeneration, KDR also impedes urban consolidation. Reflecting on the potential for market-led renewal of these older suburbs, Pinnegar, Freestone and Randolph (2010) highlighted the possible socially and environmentally
negative consequences of low-density re-development through the cumulative loss of relatively affordable dwellings and green space, when oversized dwellings occupy most of the lot.

Such \textit{ad hoc} urban renewal delivered through KDR development also raised concerns for Fairfield Council’s strategic planning manager who described how it was discouraging regeneration:

\begin{quote}
[Council] should be trying to stop the fragmentation so that one day when that land is redeveloped ... within walking distance of Cabramatta ... we should set the rules. (LGI03).
\end{quote}

Clearly he disagreed with Planning NSW’s insistence that separate dwelling houses are permitted with consent in high-density residential zones in town centres. Piecemeal redevelopment also diminishes opportunities afforded through prefabrication, good quality replicable designs, public open space upgrades and district-wide sustainable infrastructure (such as rainwater collection, stormwater filtration and waste management). These advantages are rarely able to be delivered through dual occupancies and never through KDR developments.

\textbf{Economies of scale.} The lack of financial viability, affordability and good quality design options in West-Central need further consideration. Failing to view urban regeneration from a precinct perspective, the application of standardised planning requirements (for parking, open space, building heights and setbacks) restricts diversity in dwelling types. Perversely, the development industry claims to be responding to local market demand, while in reality it offers limited choice.

The consistently higher costs per square metre of multi-unit housing is due, not only to higher construction costs, but also the standards of layout, site finishes and landscaping required by Council building codes — necessitated to improve the amenity of higher density housing, but adding to costs. Also the larger development companies, benefitting from discounts from bulk orders, are relying on considerable economies through mass production of a common product. But these cost-saving measures are not generally available for West-Central’s predominantly small-scale local builders. Further obstacles impeding urban regeneration as now discussed.

\textbf{Regeneration obstacles.} Strata-titling legislation, the need for site amalgamation, high land costs, the loss of easy-to-build sites, scarce development finance and planning complexities, are hampering West-Central’s regeneration. Limited price differentials between new higher density units and separate dwellings in lower density areas preclude development industry interest in urban regeneration (Randolph, 2006b; Ruming et al., 2007:701). Furthermore, environmental hurdles, including asbestos removal from existing dwellings, acid sulphate soils, urban
salinity, run-off and erosion issues, all add to building costs and cannot be dismissed. With limited greenfield land available, further redevelopment of West-Central relies on consolidating properties based on the current lot patterns and replacing the older housing stock.

Strata titling legislation is a major impediment to urban regeneration (Randolph, 2008a:6), because demolition of existing buildings is reliant on securing agreement to sell from 85% to 100% of owners (Rowley and Phibbs, 2012:22). Developers fear these owners can cause delays, due to inflated price expectations. However these strata titling impediments appeared of less concern for one Planning NSW manager dealing with urban regeneration, who stated:

... it is an issue and it isn't an issue. Because there are other areas in the sub-region where there is potential to renew and there aren't strata barriers.

She also failed to grasp the hurdles Councils face in amalgamating blocks of land, noting:

There’s available land, you could amalgamate bigger sites ... buying from one person, not a whole strata body. So it’s also a perceived barrier ... but it may become more so ... but it’s not an official direction (SGI09).

Fragmented property ownership and councils’ inability to acquire and consolidate properties at realistic prices, all present significant hurdles to urban consolidation and reduce opportunities to amalgamate sites for decades to come (Bankstown Council, 2009:17). Notwithstanding, the Planning NSW respondent downplayed the impediments to aggregating and preparing land for construction, once more shifting the responsibility:

... Councils can also indicate ... some suggested lot amalgamation patterns that could happen ... so it is less of a barrier... We are relying on the market but I don’t think government can start to do everything on that front either ... There are going to be a lot of places where 2 or 3 sites amalgamated together is going to get quite a nice increase in density ... I think with more guidance, and if Councils have time to find these areas, sets of controls for that might make them a bit more confident (SGI09).

These comments expose Planning NSW’s unrealistic reliance on the private market and the poorly resourced local government sector to provide affordable housing.

High land costs mean that in order to maximise profits, construction standards are poor since the market cannot tolerate higher prices, and limited consideration is given to good quality design or environmental performance. Few West-Central Councils employ architects or planners skilled in the design and assessment of higher density or affordable housing and, as the Landcom interviewee stressed:

The problem is that most planners don’t understand the concept of [financial] viability. So they say ‘you are getting higher density so that must be good and you must be making a lot of money’ (DII17).
Chapter 6: Key concerns for West-Central Sydney

Moreover, the Landcom respondent highlighted considerable cost variations between similar apartments being built across Sydney. Whereas eastern Sydney units were selling at between $8,000 to $10,000/m²:

... in [West-Central]... you are probably lucky to get $3,500/m², yet the cost of them is much the same... The challenge is to get ones that are not just regarded as future slums ... Who do we partner with?... It’s got to be with the people who are actually going to make things work ... a standard that you are happy to let people live in. It’s an issue for us and it’s something we haven’t progressed further, although it is in our Corporate Plan for this year (DII17).

Hence it is the significant cost variations reflecting land values in privileged locations and the low incomes of the sub-region’s households which are the overriding issues, not construction costs. However, the Planning NSW manager acknowledged the lack of economic feasibility as an urban regeneration obstacle in West-Central describing:

... in certain parts of Sydney ... you can buy an individual house for a lot less than the developers want to sell the new apartments for ... so there is no incentive [to build]... That's not to say it won't become more so in the future ... as Parramatta city centre grows, as other areas simply don't have ... more renewal capacity ... But at the moment that's a fairly significant barrier (SGI09).

As the Landcom representative stated, the scale of development also compounds the issue:

... there is always a problem in trying to do high density development ... What we are looking for is re-inventing the terrace house, going back to first principles in designing it — light, air, and cross ventilation ... trying to get it on a Torrens Title lot, but also organising it so that you don't have to build five of them ... so the developer is [not] up for $2 million (DII17).

The value of agency cooperation was also highlighted by Landcom:

... fragmented ownership means that, One, you haven't got the major developers and Two they haven't got big enough holdings that justify them doing the enabling infrastructure ... So there's nothing much happening and so that's another role that potentially (our agency) could do. But it would require some policy shifts. And there is no reason why that couldn't apply in your area [West-Central] as well (DII17).

Chapter 7 provides further discussion of the opportunities presented for collaboration between local government and urban regeneration agencies to address the complex issues impeding urban regeneration of the sub-region’s older suburbs.

In summary, the private rental sector could contribute more to the supply of new affordable homes, but requires changes to planning and fiscal policies. With no coordinated government policy to increase the supply of privately rented homes, affordable housing targets appear in jeopardy. Compared to the UK, very low institutional investment (such as through superannuation funds) is made in private rental housing in Australia (Berry et al., 2004), with little if any in West-Central, where landlords are small-scale, part-time investors, lacking advice on where the greatest need exists and for what type of product. While governments continue to have ambitious policies to both increase owner-occupation and provide more
affordable housing, a growing proportion of West-Central’s households is unable to access either.

As the Housing NSW respondent stressed (Section 5.5) rather than accepting the collapse of the State Housing Authority’s role in providing for low to moderate income households, government intervention should target public and private rental and more affordable housing. With a diminishing social housing stock, affordable private rental housing could offer a safety net for the homeless and asylum seekers and, most importantly, could bridge the availability gap for increasing proportions of intermediate households ineligible for social housing but unable to aspire to home ownership. A continuing failure to provide affordable housing will have important repercussions for those in later life, when access to equity in the form of housing wealth becomes an important component determining quality-of-life standards.

Currently, insecure tenancies, poor-quality stock and overcrowding are becoming more commonplace in West-Central’s most deprived neighborhoods, driving the exodus of the more upwardly mobile households. The remaining intermediate households are the most at risk of disengagement from the labour force and require better access to training and job opportunities. Expansion of affordable housing supply, plus provision of a reasonable share of social housing, greater housing choice in well-connected suburbs and more flexibility to move closer to employment opportunities, would encourage regeneration and help to tackle the emerging issues of inequitable access and jobs shortages in the sub-region now discussed in Section 6.3.

6.3 Employment Issues

This Section starts by examining the desire to increase employment opportunities for West-Central’s residents. It pinpoints the sub-region’s entrenched labour force issues resulting from: a loss of traditional jobs in the older industrial core suburbs; growth in the number of lower-skilled and poorly educated residents; decreasing parcels of vacant employment land; and disconnected infrastructure. The Section describes how parts of West-Central experience some of the highest unemployment in NSW, coupled with very low labour force participation rates. While councils are attempting to attract more employment into the sub-region, the job targets appear unrealistic, due to West-Central’s constructed spatial disadvantages.

Unemployment. As Section 2.1 demonstrated, unemployment remains a significant problem in West-Central where it is more geographically concentrated compared to Western Sydney’s other two sub-regions; exacerbated by declining employment participation trends. Section 5.6 pointed to the sub-region’s older suburbs accounting
for a declining share of jobs in the SMR, with public housing residents and poorer private rental tenants so often locked into areas where jobs used to be, rather than linked to where the jobs are to be found.

**English proficiency.** Section 2.1 highlighted the marked differences in English-proficiency between West-Central’s residents and the metropolitan average, with 13.4% of the sub-region’s population experiencing English language difficulties. Section 2.2 described the downward trend in migrant participation in the Australian workforce over the past 25 years, attributable in part to the increasing proportions of migrants lacking English skills. As Sydney’s most culturally and linguistically diverse sub-region, this lack of English proficiency skills presents a major employment challenge. While immigration policies, rising unemployment and the 1990-91 recession all played their part, many ongoing factors are pushing down employment participation in West-Central, risking even further decline, as now discussed.

**Employment lands.** West-Central contains a significant proportion of the SMR employment lands in three employment areas (Figures 6.4 and 6.8):

- Camellia, Rydalmere, Silverwater/Auburn/Clyde
- Milperra, Condell Park
- Wetherill Park, Smithfield, Yennora, Fairfield East, Villawood.

However, most of these areas are fully built-out, leaving few vacant sites and requiring regeneration of old industrial sites lacking modern infrastructure. Wetherill Park employment area — consigned in the metropolitan strategy (2010:44) to a freight industry cluster role — suffered a major jobs loss (-13%) from 2001 to 2006 (NSW Transport Data Centre, 2008).

**Table 6.2: West-Central’s jobs growth in strategic centres 2001 to 2006**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strategic centres</th>
<th>2001</th>
<th>2006</th>
<th>2001-2006 increase</th>
<th>2001-2006 increase %</th>
<th>Annual growth %</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Parramatta</strong></td>
<td>40,800</td>
<td>43,200</td>
<td>2,400</td>
<td>5.9</td>
<td>1.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Specialised centres</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Olympic Park/Rhodes</td>
<td>10,400</td>
<td>16,800</td>
<td>6,400</td>
<td>61.5</td>
<td>12.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Westmead</td>
<td>13,500</td>
<td>13,900</td>
<td>400</td>
<td>3.0</td>
<td>0.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bankstown</td>
<td>16,300</td>
<td>16,100</td>
<td>-200</td>
<td>-1.2</td>
<td>-0.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Major centres</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bankstown</td>
<td>10,100</td>
<td>9,600</td>
<td>-500</td>
<td>-5.0</td>
<td>-1.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Strategic centres total</strong></td>
<td>91,100</td>
<td>99,600</td>
<td>8,500</td>
<td>9.3</td>
<td>1.9</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Adapted from Department of Planning and Infrastructure 2010:135
The loss of traditional jobs in West-Central’s older industrial sites presents a major challenge for the sub-region. Details of the jobs growth in the sub-region’s strategic centres from 2001 to 2006 is shown in Table 6.2.

**Figure 6.3: Bankstown city centre**

From 2001 to 2006 jobs in Parramatta and Westmead strategic centres increased by 5.9% and 3.0% respectively, while Bankstown Airport/Milperra and Bankstown CBD experienced a 1.2% and 5% respective jobs loss. Sydney Olympic Park recorded strong growth, but generally in West-Central the transit-orientated employment areas such as Bankstown city centre (Figure 6.3) accounted for a declining share of jobs (-5.0%). Not only is the West-Central workforce poorly represented in the central Sydney labour market, most of the jobs held by West-Central residents are dispersed across Western Sydney. Hence creation of accessible new employment opportunities to support the anticipated population growth remains a high priority.

Greater integration is needed between residential and non-residential development to increase the potential for more localised home-to-work travel and increase the accessibility of employment, training and community facilities. This requires provision of economically efficient and environmentally sustainable infrastructure, but is unlikely to occur in the absence of cooperative planning for integrated urban development processes.

**Employment targets.** Section 2.2 described research that casts doubts as to the sub-region’s capacity to deliver on the 2005 Metropolitan Strategy job targets (Urban Research Centre, 2008). Notwithstanding, Planning NSW (2010:133) subsequently increased the targeted net jobs growth to 98,000 new jobs by 2036, a 30.0% increase from the 2006 target. West-Central now has the highest employment targeted growth rate of any established SMR sub-region, including Sydney City (Table 6.3).
Table 6.3: Sub-regional employment targets 2006 to 2036

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sydney City</td>
<td>429,000</td>
<td>543,000</td>
<td>114,000</td>
<td>27.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>East</td>
<td>136,000</td>
<td>167,000</td>
<td>31,000</td>
<td>23.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South</td>
<td>193,000</td>
<td>245,000</td>
<td>52,000</td>
<td>27.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inner West</td>
<td>99,000</td>
<td>124,000</td>
<td>25,000</td>
<td>25.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inner North</td>
<td>99,000</td>
<td>300,000</td>
<td>62,000</td>
<td>26.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>North</td>
<td>83,000</td>
<td>98,000</td>
<td>15,000</td>
<td>18.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>North East</td>
<td>89,000</td>
<td>112,000</td>
<td>23,000</td>
<td>26.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>West-Central</td>
<td>322,000</td>
<td>420,000</td>
<td>98,000</td>
<td>30.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>North-West</td>
<td>266,000</td>
<td>411,000</td>
<td>145,000</td>
<td>55.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South-West</td>
<td>133,000</td>
<td>274,000</td>
<td>141,000</td>
<td>106.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GWS total</td>
<td>721,000</td>
<td>1,105,000</td>
<td>384,000</td>
<td>53.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total SMR*</td>
<td>1,988,000</td>
<td>2,694,000</td>
<td>706,000</td>
<td>35.5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Department of Planning 2010:133 (excluding the Central Coast sub-region)

Table 6.4: Job forecasts for West-Central strategic centres

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>West-Central’s strategic centres</th>
<th>2006 base employment</th>
<th>2036 employment</th>
<th>2006-2036 increase</th>
<th>2006-2036 %</th>
<th>Annual growth rate</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Regional city</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parramatta LGA</td>
<td>43,000</td>
<td>70,000</td>
<td>27,000</td>
<td>62.8</td>
<td>2.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Specialised and major Centres</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sydney Olympic Park</td>
<td>4,000</td>
<td>23,000</td>
<td>19,000</td>
<td>475.0</td>
<td>15.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Westmead</td>
<td>14,000</td>
<td>21,000</td>
<td>7,000</td>
<td>50.0</td>
<td>1.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bankstown City Centre</td>
<td>10,000</td>
<td>14,000</td>
<td>4,000</td>
<td>40.0</td>
<td>1.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bankstown Airport / Milperra</td>
<td>16,000</td>
<td>20,000</td>
<td>4,000</td>
<td>25.0</td>
<td>0.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>87,000</td>
<td>148,000</td>
<td>61,000</td>
<td>70.1</td>
<td>2.3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Department of Planning 2010:135

While Table 6.4 shows only 87,000 (or 27.0%) of West-Central’s 322,000 existing jobs in 2006 (Table 6.3) were located in strategic centres, updated NSW government employment targets for 2036 anticipated that 61,000 (62.2%) of the 98,000 net additional jobs in the sub-region would be located in strategic centres. Increasing
Parramatta’s estimated employment target to 70,000 employees by 2036 (an increase of 10,000 on the 2005 strategy target for 2031), assumed improved public transport and mode share through provision of a new Western Express rail line. The 2010 strategy claimed increased targets to add a further 15,000 jobs in specialised centres at Westmead, Bankstown Airport/Milperra and Sydney Olympic Park would be ‘promoted and their roles strengthened’ (NSW Planning factsheet, 2010c:7); but the mechanisms for achieving this support remained unclear.

**Jobs accessibility.** Despite ongoing efforts to increase the sub-region’s economic profile as described in Section 5.6, employment in information-based services — one of the most dynamic components of the metropolitan labour market — is significantly under-developed in West-Central (Urban Research Centre, 2008). Yet cancellation of the Parramatta to Epping rail link omitted a crucial public transport connection to higher-order job concentrations and education opportunities in northern Sydney for suitably skilled West-Central residents. This cancellation further impeded inter-regional connections between northern Sydney’s skilled labour force, Parramatta CBD and the UWS Rydalmere Campus, exacerbating Sydney’s socio-economic divide (University of Western Sydney, 2010).

Many of West-Central’s older industrial areas suffer from deteriorating infrastructure, a declining ability to support industrial uses and a fragmented pattern of small allotments, making private sector regeneration of West-Central’s employment lands difficult. The area is perceived as being physically run-down and unattractive. Few of the residential areas undergoing regeneration — such as a Landcom development in Wattle Street Bankstown — are located near high-income employment centres and, according to the Bankstown interviewee, initial stages proved too expensive for the local housing market which led to a subsequent reduction in design standards (LGI02).

An over-emphasis on housing renewal, imposing onerous parking requirements and unsustainable redevelopment costs and ignoring the need for employment generation opportunities, has further constrained the land available for jobs growth in accessible locations for years to come. Attempting to reserve land to make greater provision for new jobs, the senior strategic planner from Fairfield described how:

> In Fairfield town centre we identified a commercial core [with] no residential development ... Nothing much ... is going to happen in the short to medium-term, but ... there’s an acceptance of the principle of having somewhere put aside for jobs growth... In Cabramatta nobody was willing to say ... ‘No we are not going to allow you to do residential.’ So Council asked for Cabramatta [centre’s classification] to be downgraded as it didn’t make sense to have two major centres side-by-side like that (LGI03).
In response Planning NSW argued that the Council needed to provide a few more details. Despite requesting further advice on what would satisfy this requirement the respondent noted:

... in the end ... they basically gave up and said 'What you've got is fine', because I don't think they've got anything more sophisticated that could predict how we are going to get those jobs (LGI03).

Hence, under the 2010 metropolitan strategy, Cabramatta is no longer categorised as a 'planned major centre' or expected to act as a major retail and business centre for the sub-region. The paradox of this policy response to the two centres, which appeared out of kilter with the local market was acknowledged:

Now the irony ... is the economics of Cabramatta — the price you pay per square metre for floorspace ... rivals places in the city. So nobody can afford to close a shop for long enough to rebuild housing above it; whereas in Fairfield the floorspace is worth nothing ... [It is a] funny anomaly where the economics around Cabramatta ... are probably more likely to generate higher levels of employment than they are in Fairfield. But Fairfield is the easy one in which to put a commercial core, so theoretically that's what you plan for; even though you have probably got demand that is less strong. (LGI03).

These are important locally-specific employment market understandings that underscore the need to reduce the tensions between the state and local government’s planning policies, which are currently limiting development of West-Central's economy.

**Employment changes.** The interviewees also highlighted further difficulties in meeting job growth targets. In Auburn LGA, the urban core had been extended and land zonings along Parramatta Road changed to permit office development, hotel and motel accommodation. However, Auburn’s strategy team leader described how, despite being exhorted in *City of Cities* Metropolitan Strategy (2005:112) to ‘Implement the Parramatta to City Corridor Plan,’ this plan has never been released:

I started here 4 years ago and I have seen some of the documentation for that study, but it is quite old. Councils along the route have threatened to bring it into life again, but I don’t know when (LGI01).

The West-Central sub-regional strategy increased the employment targets for Auburn substantially from 12,000 net additional jobs (Department of Planning, 2007a) to 20,000 by 2031, assuming that the central administration and distribution role of areas around Homebush (particularly Sydney Olympic Park) and Auburn town centre, would contribute significantly to Sydney’s jobs growth. However the *North-West and West-Central employment strategy* report (Urban Research Centre, 2008) cautioned that job creation and decline were operating simultaneously, while access to jobs remained a major problem.

Acknowledging the depressed nature of some of Bankstown centres, the senior executive described how Bankstown Council is attempting to promote jobs growth through physical improvements to the transit centres, hoping to attract more people.
and greater investment followed by redevelopment. The interviewee described how previous attempts in Revesby to use rezoning as a mechanism to bring about change were abandoned as a ‘no-win’. Focusing on encouraging retail and a higher residential component to support the centres was considered a ‘much better way forward’ (LGI02). Bankstown Council has developed a *Place Improvement Program* for its industrial areas, considering pollution, development consent and building compliance in tandem with an upgrade of the public infrastructure to attract improvements:

> First we did industrial land studies about how the areas would actually change ... [with] basic local area plans for particular industrial areas. The first ... is Chullora/Greenacre; it’s got everything from the big Fairfax printers through to one of our worst industrial areas at Greenacre (LGI02).

Initially, these older industrial areas were only complying with 30% of the Council’s environmental standards, but following the instigation of the improvement program ‘up to 90% of these industries are now classified as compliant’ (LGI02). Further beneficial and collaborative efforts included:

> ... work with the two big stakeholders, one is UWS at the Bankstown campus ... helping them with their master planning ... [and] Bankstown Airport (LGI02).

The UWS Bankstown campus is currently constrained by poor public transport services, but is earmarked for growth and has potential to develop into a specialised centre (Urban Research Centre, 2008:290). Under the 2010 Metropolitan Strategy Bankstown Airport/Milperra was targeted for a 4,000 jobs increase by 2036, although in recent years the area experienced a significant jobs loss. Despite losing Boeing in 2012 — a major employer at the airport — the council interviewee described how combined federal/state government initiatives assisted a Western Australian international aeronautics company to re-occupy the airport facilities. However, over-ambitious land-fill operations, by a Bankstown Airport development company, to enable some 150 hectares of new industrial development on surplus airport land, resulted in bankruptcy, the loss of small-scale aviation firms and failure to attract larger-scale uses. In respect of Bankstown Airport, the Council interviewee noted:

> We have a love/hate relationship, but generally we are quite happy for a lot of the employments land development and we ... have fights about the commercial development, but generally that’s where a lot of our other developments are coming from (LGI02).

Since only limited commercial development has occurred to date, the Council remains concerned about job generation, despite acknowledging the Airport’s development potential. Further initiatives identified by the Bankstown interviewee aimed to mirror Auburn’s success in growing jobs in locations close to Sydney Olympic Park:
... those industrial areas around Silverwater ... have attracted a whole range of slightly more commercial uses into the industrial area, [but] that pattern hasn’t happened in Bankstown ... We are ... attracting people who are getting higher paid jobs that aren’t industrial, but are still providing industrial jobs... We are trying to transition, but ... we are not just at that tipping point (LGI02).

Recently attempts were also being made to promote ethnic business communities as a core asset:

The Council established a Business Advisory Centre ... employing staff who spoke Arabic ... and we concentrated [on engaging] with the Arabic and Vietnamese business communities through that centre... We help them facilitate a whole range of services that would help grow their businesses. And we obviously do it in different languages (LGI02).

In 2011 Fairfield LGA maintained Sydney’s highest proportion of residents employed in manufacturing (Table 2.20 shows 17.8% compared to 8.5% in the SMR); many working in the large Smithfield/Wetherill Park industrial estate, despite its public transport deficiencies. At the same time, below average levels of formal qualifications and technical skills, plus limited job experience among specific resident sub-groups, restricted access to jobs. This resulted in Fairfield LGA having the highest unemployment rate (9.7%) and the lowest employment participation rate in the sub-region in 2011 (Tables 2.16 to 2.18). Given these poor indices have persisted since 1996, coupled with Fairfield’s isolation from the Sydney CBD and other higher order employment areas, the need for increasing employment participation within West-Central remains critical. Improved social policies and state investment in crucial social and transport infrastructure is required, in addition to increasing job opportunities to address the multi-factor disadvantages in West-Central identified in this research.

Further densification of the Smithfield/Wetherill Park employment area is expected to contribute 11,352 of the 15,000 additional jobs for Fairfield LGA by 2031 (Department of Planning, 2007b). Despite the Urban Research Centre (2008:261) forecasting only a modest increase of 1,000 net additional jobs by 2031, under the 2010 Strategy 8,824 more jobs were targeted for provision in Fairfield’s centres, particularly Prairiewood. According to Fairfield’s strategic planner, unlike the four other LGAs, Fairfield has not lost industrial sites through rezoning for residential purposes:

There’s only been one rezoning application to go from residential to industrial — a site that should have been industrial in the first place... Most of what we are getting is residential sites being redeveloped (LGI03).

According to the strategic planning manager, Holroyd LGA has recently been experiencing a number of urban regeneration initiatives. Industrial land in the new Pemulwuy suburb is developing under a SEPP (Greystanes Southern Employment Lands) for a 98,500 square metre business park and 6,500 square metres of retail
space. Major redevelopment of Stockland Mall in Merrylands increased the city’s retail provision and helped to revitalise this town centre, but no improvements were anticipated for the Guildford centre (Section 6.1). Despite relatively good transport accessibility, the development of logistics and warehousing in the car-dependent transport locations along the M4/M7 motorways was criticised by Holroyd’s planning manager for failing to provide the quantum of new jobs required (LGI04).

Two areas earmarked for urban consolidation in Parramatta LGA — encompassing industrial land and a depot on the eastern fringe of the CBD — illustrate the issue of balancing government targets for dwellings and employment growth. Previously Parramatta Council experienced difficulties in regenerating the older traditional industrial areas, with renewal not transitioning well with present-day employment activities. Attempting to strengthen Parramatta’s role as a ‘learning city’ the Council is now seeking to expand the Rydalmere employment area adjoining the UWS Parramatta campus, to enhance investment and employment prospects while conserving land in Camellia for heavy industries (Figure 6.4). In the future the focus may shift to recycling and green industries with Rydalmere nominated by the Council’s outcomes and development manager as having considerable jobs growth potential:

The Rydalmere master plan ... [is] looking at possibly 14,000 jobs ... [with] quite a lot of intervention to make that happen ... And we have been trying to convince the SMDA that’s a scheme they might have an interest in. We are certainly struggling ... to encourage investment in A-grade office space ... and people won’t build without a pre-commit ... [of] 80% to borrow money (LGI05).

**Figure 6.4: Employment lands in Camellia east of Parramatta CBD**

Source: NSW Planning and Infrastructure 2010:131
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Clearly the need to attract new jobs into the sub-region is paramount, but requires further spatial definition when setting job targets (Section 6.5) not just based on the numerical job needs of the SMR as a whole. The employment targets should also be coupled with a more robustly enforced centres policy to avoid repeating the implementation limitations previously discussed in Section 5.4.

In summary, this section shows varying local government attempts to encourage jobs growth and employment regeneration. Auburn LGA has increased the range of permissible uses in transport corridors and the town centre and Bankstown LGA tried to mirror Auburn’s success but failed; demonstrating the initial need for physical environmental improvements. While Fairfield LGA maintained its manufacturing focus, regeneration of its older industrial areas is impeded by access difficulties. Despite attracting new retail development in Merrylands, little change has occurred in Holroyd LGA’s other centres. Logistics and warehousing developments in the Western Sydney employment hub served by the M4 and M7 motorways are not producing the anticipated growth in jobs. While Parramatta is attempting to balance the competing demand for jobs and housing, it is struggling to regenerate older industrial areas, or cope with the absence of the Parramatta to Epping link and the poor transport connectivity with surrounding areas in general. The following section now considers a series of transport issues for West-Central, examining whether improved public transport provision could assist in regenerating the sub-region and overcome spatial disadvantages.

6.4 Urban transport issues

West-Central suffers the consequences of a macro transport problem for Sydney, due to a failure to roll-out public transport as the SMR doubled in size over the past fifty years. Section 5.7 highlighted marked differences in accessibility across Sydney, pointing to public transport’s potential to address the socio-economic divide by increasing economic capacity and improving environmental sustainability. Western Sydney has a long history of operational and patronage problems in respect of public transport, with little integration between the rail and bus networks. The use of local buses to feed the higher capacity rail systems has been underdeveloped and, in many instances, no longer relevant to residents’ transport needs. Travel between West-Central’s suburbs away from the railway lines is very difficult meaning high car dependence for cross-suburban trips and exacerbation of income deprivation in many areas.

Theoretically, West-Central’s town centres located on railway lines are well positioned to provide good access to Sydney CBD: yet the rail network, developed in the 1930s,
Chapter 6: Key concerns for West-Central Sydney

suffers from chronic under-investment compared to the 120 kms of new arterial roads constructed across the SMR since that time. For 20 years commuting times and severe overcrowding have increased on key parts of the rail network, such as the East Hills and Bankstown lines (Urban Research Centre, 2008; Christie, 2010:192). A decline in rail use in the sub-region since 1999 is attributed, in part, to the rail system’s lack of capacity and also to an overemphasis on accessing Sydney CBD and failing to provide adequate, well-serviced public transport connections to West-Central’s peripheral areas containing an increasing proportion of jobs (Battelino, Smith and Stone, 2004).

Micro issues within the sub-region of jobs dispersal, employment needs and the lack of job diversity are also a major problem. Access to employment for West-Centrals’ residents is critical and, on environmental sustainability and social equity grounds, government policies should encourage public transport use. The provision of enhanced public transport services to secure expanded employment opportunities in West-Central is therefore essential. Yet recent improvements to the strategic bus network are hampered by poor connections to the infrequent local feeder services (UWS, 2010). Although Parramatta LGA benefits from close proximity to health facilities clustered around Westmead Hospital (WSROC, 2003a) many of West-Central’s outer suburban communities still experience access difficulties.

Sections 2.2 and 5.7 described Sydney’s accessibility problems and the fragmented approach to infrastructure planning highlighted in the 2010 Christie report, in which Treasury’s attitude was viewed as a major impediment to developing an adequate public transport system:

Unfortunately, NSW Treasury’s prohibition of adding new kilometres of service (except where ‘greenfield’ growth areas are being added, notwithstanding any population growth), has led to continued under-investment in service frequencies (Christie, 2010:318).

In Christie’s view this demonstrated:

... bias against additional residents in already built areas [which] ... effectively prohibited long-deferred growth in bus service frequencies throughout the network even in areas where the population was rapidly growing (ibid:306).

... there should be an immediate end to any NSW Treasury or other government policies prohibiting increase in bus service kilometres in existing urban areas (ibid:319).

Section 1.3 outlined how a Transport NSW failure to adopt best practice examples of public participation led to community opposition to the bus reform process. Bus reform consultations revealed strong preferences for more public transport use and extension of services in the sub-region but these opportunities were not grasped. Despite distributing questionnaires to each household within a specific contract
region — highlighting the proposed realignment of bus routes — essential information on inter-regional connections, peak and off-peak services and frequencies, start, finish or anticipated length-of-journey times, weekend or holiday operations, was omitted, which impeded any informed community response to the surveys (Laurence, Falzon and Worrall, 2009; WSROC, 2009c:20). Both Bankstown and Holroyd Councils argued that, despite providing more direct services to centres, the strategic bus corridors required further tailoring of the transport options to maintain residents’ access to local health, education and community services and facilities (reported at WSROC Board meetings at that time). Yet Transport NSW still appears more concerned with the means of transport (buses, trains and roads), rather than pursuing accessibility outcomes.

Many of West-Central’s school and university students have limited experience of a reasonable standard of public transport service, with increasing proportions driven to school or accessing tertiary education by car. Long commuting times and the high value placed on high quality education by many CALD residents; mean more parents are enrolling their children in schools closer to their work than home (AGA Consulting and Berryman, 2007:51). Employment practices also add to car dependency. While eastern Sydney is comparatively well served by public transport, in GWS novated leases, whereby company cars and running costs are frequently provided as a component of salary packages in order to compensate for poor public transport access, all contribute to the sub-region’s single occupancy car use (WSROC, 2009b:20). These lifestyle practices are unlikely to change if infrastructure backlogs are not addressed, or more effective alternative travel modes are unavailable.

While a roll-out of dedicated bus lanes across Sydney has encouraged a mode switch for some commuters from the sub-region, unloading zones in town centres and the limited provision of commuter car parks, park-and-ride or kiss-and-ride facilities at interchanges such as Parramatta, cause on-street parking congestion, impeding bus movements. Several submissions to the EIS for the Liverpool to Parramatta T-Way revealed transport modelling projections based on an inflated level of patronage (Department of Planning, 2001:12). However, while residents generally only reconsider their transport mode options when moving house, changing jobs or accessing education facilities, recent research has reported that patronage on the T-Way is reaching projection levels (Beard, 2011:68). Ideally, local buses in West-Central should connect to trunk routes and provide better service levels, but Treasury-imposed budget constraints limited the privately-operated neighbourhood buses use of the T-Ways trunk rights-of-way (Fairfield Council, 2001). In addition, the route selection was not conducive to pedestrian movement, which also
discourages bus patronage (GHD, 2003:4). One ex RTA director interviewed highlighted the conundrum:

The dedicated right-of-way idea — there are all sorts of arguments for and against that for buses. You can say it presents high speed, longer distance, high standard ... quality services, (but) it doesn’t go directly to anywhere anyone wants to go. Whereas, if you run buses down the High Street ... they go exactly where people want, but take forever. The only reason that the railways succeed by running down the backs of [properties] is that centres have developed around those stations, rather than vice versa ... (SGI06).

Despite the bus reforms, this bureaucrat criticised the current system’s lack of integration:

It wasn’t until a couple of months before [the T-Ways] were due to open that ... [Transport NSW] started to think about ... how to change bus services in the North-West to make use of them ... They certainly did not see it as an opportunity to maximise people using public transport (SGI06).

This respondent described how recent refurbishment of Prairiewood shopping centre in Fairfield ‘changed the shape and gave it a front door on the side of the Transitway’ (SGI06). However, better coordinated land use/transport planning could have avoided the need for an expensive retrofit of this new retail centre. The potential for developing supporting land uses for the T-Ways was further complicated when local politics intervened:

... the local MP [objected] ... reacting to local residents ... who didn’t want medium-density housing. But from a transport point of view it was an ideal location ... You are up against all sorts of local pressures; it doesn’t matter if it’s re-development for social housing reasons or re-development for improving transport (SGI06).

While the strategic bus corridors now provide essential inter-regional connections with express buses reinforcing the activity hubs, bus patronage in Bankstown in 2011 remained low at 1.5%. Previously improving links to Parramatta and Liverpool, Transport NSW retreated from much-needed service improvements, leaving Bankstown Council’s efforts focused on relieving major traffic congestion and attracting more people onto buses.

In response to whether accessibility is being improved by the ongoing rail clearways program or the strategic bus corridors, the Auburn strategy team leader pinpointed persistent poor accessibility accounting for a particularly low 1.1% bus patronage (Table 2.23):

... we don’t have buses along Parramatta Road that go into the city or Parramatta. We’ve got lots of north/south movement across the M4 and Parramatta Road but we don’t have any that run the whole length. But this bus (route) ... will really help that retail area because it’s very close to the train station (LGI01).

The Bankstown senior manager pointed to important improvements to the Revesby line:
... investment in the East Hills line — the Kingsgrove/ Revesby quadruplication coupled with ... a ‘turnback’ at Revesby — have made significant improvements. That combined with upgrades of Revesby and Padstow Stations and construction of associated commuter parking stations has turned this into a major route (LGI02).

Yet he described how, conversely, the Bankstown Line still suffers from slow, poor quality services, and no further major rail upgrades or services are planned for the LGA. This partly accounts for the fact that only 14.9% of Bankstown residents travelled by train for work in 2011. Transport safety concerns on trains, at stations and in car parks required costly improvements to transport interchanges. Furthermore the road network required expensive re-configuration to improve accessibility and the construction of improved road/ railway underpasses (Figure 6.5).

**Figure 6.5: Transport improvements in Bankstown centre**

![Bankstown Transport Improvements](image)

Photographed by the author in 2010

Fairfield’s workforce is heavily dependent on cars for journeys-to-work, which adversely restricts the supply of labour, particularly unskilled workers who are more reliant on public transport. Fairfield's strategic planning manager considered further augmentation of the T-Way services, with feeder bus routes within the Wetherill Park industrial area and beyond, as essential:

... most of the [unskilled labourers] ... probably live in Fairfield [suburb] and it’s not practical to get onto the Transitway to be able to get there. So ... even if you can connect to those nodes, there does not seem to be enough density of employment ... [and] it’s so dispersed that you would almost have to run [bus routes] up and down every street (LGI03).
This respondent described Fairfield’s greatest transport improvements were the provision of extra local services such as ‘the little bus that runs from Canley Vale to Canley Heights’ (LGI03). He considered addressing locally-specific service issues as the most effective interventions, but criticised the NSW government’s disconnected planning and transport policy objectives:

The Metro Strategy made an assumption that everything would be fine to put density around the Cabramatta town centre because there would be a mode shift. No-one told the RTA. So the RTA wants everything modelled to the nth degree in areas where they perceive they’ve got problems. So the inconsistency … is that … Fairfield has probably got more density but, because the RTA aren’t sensitive to the road issues there, we don’t have to do much about the road issues, but for Cabramatta we do (LGI03).

As Section 5.3 stressed conflicts and differences across departmental transport policies, particularly in respect to the regeneration of town centres, caused concern for the interview informants. Despite Holroyd being considered to be well served by railways, increasing passenger congestion on trains due to limited service levels on the Cumberland Line led the Council’s strategic planning manager to caution:

I doubt whether the rail system will cope with increased pressures from urban consolidation (LGI04).

Parramatta Council’s respondent described the city’s transport interchange as being ‘over capacity’ (LGI05) and previous research by SGS Economics and Planning (2006) had cited the congested transport interchange and poor pedestrian amenity as accessibility issues hampering further growth of Parramatta as the second CBD. The Council’s outcomes and development manager characterised Parramatta as divided into three separate parts:

… instead of Parramatta Park being like Central Park in New York … or Hyde Park in Sydney, it … divides… the CBD from Westmead … So one of the ideas was to run a LOOP [a council bus service link to the east] … in through Harris Park at lunchtime … and we have looked at another LOOP through to the University … [however] running a free shuttle there perhaps is not one of our highest priorities (LGI05).

Transport initiatives documented in the 2010 Metropolitan Strategy included development of a Regional City Transport Strategy for Parramatta CBD in partnership with the Council; provision of new express train services and 1,000 extra buses to improve connectivity; continuing roll-out of bus priority measures; and enhancement of the cycleway/footpath network within Sydney Olympic Park. In its submission to the Strategy the Council argued for: realigning the proposed North-West Rail Line to link Castle Hill with Parramatta; amendments to the Parramatta–Epping Rail connection; provision of a new station in North Parramatta; and rail access to the UWS Rydalmere campus. Calling for improved rail access from the north and east and extra bus links particularly to Sydney Olympic Park, the Council sought better
connectivity between Parramatta CBD and the main road network (Parramatta City Council, 2011).

In summary this section demonstrated how the series of disconnected decisions outlined above, further reinforce the need for better co-ordination and government commitment to integrated land use and transport policies to address West-Central’s social exclusion issues. Government transport policies continue to favour residential uses over employment in transit nodes. By assuming that jobs take care of themselves, few incentives are provided to encourage, or zone, for new jobs in transit-accessible locations. Major transit expansion projects to connect West-Central to higher order job centres, such as Macquarie Park, are lacking. Social polarisation is exacerbated by the continued orientation of the transport policy focus on accessing Sydney CBD, with its dominance of employment, civic opportunity and public investment — coupled with continuing dispersal of housing, commercial activity and limited jobs growth for West-Central. The driver of urban form in the sub-region has moved from railways to the car; with regional investments reinforcing car-orientated growth. Dislocated housing and labour sub-markets and the inaccessibility of suburbs other than by the car, are placing financial and lifestyle strains on many West-Central residents and contributing to the stark social gradient.

Treasury bias acting against regeneration of West-Central’s older suburbs, is demonstrated by the reluctance to extend public transport outside ‘greenfield’ infrastructure and the restrictions on extending the length of local, privately-operated bus routes. The sub-region suffers from a lack of an integrated planning framework buttressed with strong funding mechanisms. West-Central lacks a good public transport system and, while it has benefitted from new roads and T-Ways, public transport is still neglected and not attracting jobs into centres. While jobs remain dispersed in the sub-region many can only be accessed by car. Poor route planning has led to a lack of inter- and intra-regional connections; transport difficulties for Parramatta Road; a three-way divided Parramatta LGA; mixed public transport outcomes in Bankstown; and a disconnection between West-Central workers and the Smithfield/Wetherill Park employment area. All these factors contribute to high car dependency and the persistent low bus use.

Improving patronage figures for the T-Ways (Beard, 2011:68) demonstrate increasing community acceptance of effective transport alternatives to car use, although there remains a planning failure to capitalise on the locational advantage provided by the T-Ways and the M7 corridor. Infrastructure plans lack the support of consistent, strategically orientated long-term funding to address problems of inaccessibility, congestion, excessive energy use, greenhouse emissions and energy
shortfalls. A predominance of single occupant car commuting patterns further reinforced by expansion of the highway network, facilitates car-orientated commuting — which is both environmentally and fiscally unwise — while the competitiveness of traditional transit modes are neglected.

The research and interviewee findings outlined above demonstrate recognition that social inclusion is as much about location, as access to labour markets, and the importance of extending employment opportunities for West-Central’s poor residents. Section 6.5 now examines how locational disadvantage is a co-incidence of housing, employment and transport issues; leading to a geography of disadvantage further stigmatised by negative media representation of the sub-region.

6.5 Locational disadvantage in West-Central Sydney

Tackling issues of locational disadvantage, including the provision of infrastructure in supporting social inclusion and urban regeneration objectives, would help to address the policy deficiencies and unconnected governance structures discussed later in Section 6.6. The West-Central case study exemplifies the playout of the poor social inclusion outcomes for Sydney’s middle-ring suburbs when previous support mechanisms are withheld.

The National Housing Strategy (1992:37) noted how locational disadvantage hampers access to services and jobs for people lacking private transport. Other commentators warned:

To the extent that people move to outer suburbia to obtain affordable housing, such pricing trends may be socially inequitable unless strong policies to relocate employment and to develop public transport are pursued in tandem (Burnley, Murphy and Jenner 1997:1125).

Research into locational disadvantage, drawing on US, UK and EU evidence, considered whether government interventions helped improve the lives of residents in deprived areas, stressing that the components of ‘disadvantage’ and ‘location’ take many forms (Ware, Gronda and Vitis, 2010:1). Whilst hard to define precisely, due to problems of causality and the terms built around ‘somewhat vague’ concepts of ‘community’ and ‘neighbourhood’, locational disadvantage is described as a form of exclusion from everyday activities, services and facilities (Ware et al., 2010).

Dismissing the notion that distance from the Sydney CBD makes West-Central an undesirable location, the Shelter NSW interviewee nominated similar outlying areas such as Sutherland Shire and the northern beaches as attractive places to live; albeit with beach locations (NGI14). Further inquiry into the nature of locational
disadvantage and its contribution to social exclusion in the sub-region prompted an ex Minister in the previous NSW (Labor) government to observe:

> I think the areas are hidden from public view. We don’t see them, we don’t drive through them, we don’t live in them and we don’t know people from them ... There is a cachet to certain neighbourhoods that are close to the Harbour ... and a lot of the ... media focus all of their attention on the attractiveness of those neighbourhoods — the other areas don’t seem to exist except as crime hotspots.

> There is a bit of ... a trend as people become successful to move out of these neighbourhoods, so they don't retain talent ... capital ... capacity (whether it’s educational ... bright kids, committed parents) ...It’s like a downward spiral — an area becomes unattractive ... migrants moving out because other migrants are moving in (MPI16).

A NSW economic development director described how poor transport services and locational disadvantage negatively impact on employment recruitment:

> … we are in North Parramatta at the other end from the station ... Whenever I advertise positions here, I very rarely get anybody applying for it ... because they want to know whether we are near the station ... that's absolutely paramount and so I often miss out on highly skilled people (SGI11).

Commuting daily to North Parramatta from Campbelltown in South-West Sydney, the regional information manager described her experiences of using Parramatta Council’s free LOOP bus service:

> It's a 25 to 35 minute journey plus the walk in between ... tacking ... onto the end of your [train] journey — already transferred on a different platform, plus walked to work. That's what I do every day (SGI12).

These respondents pointed to the mismatch between where people live and where they work, with the manager stating:

> ... there should be a lot more done in terms of some strategic directions — more actions about trying to encourage jobs closer to home — Lots of desire to do it, but whether that is actually translated into the reality is another thing entirely ... that’s been very problematic (SGI11).

Her colleague elaborated further on this issue:

> It’s about getting all levels working together making those critical decisions (SGI12).

Despite considering Parramatta well-positioned at the centre of population the senior transport bureaucrat cautioned:

> ... it really doesn't have, and maybe never will have, a good public transport system. What the government could have done is say ... 'We have got the Bradfield scheme...focused on the city of Sydney, we will now do a scheme for the next century ... have a radial system focusing on Parramatta’ ... The emphasis is still on commuter transport to the CBD because that’s where public transport runs.... So even though the growth is in the west — you can’t just isolate the west ... it would be a radically different transport network. (SGI06).

By way of contrast he also cited the planning failure to capitalise on the existing public transport system in the North-West sub-region:

> Blacktown ... has got excellent public transport ... In the three years I was there not one square metre of commercial floor space was built — no employment, other than
Undoubtedly West-Central has benefitted from significant investment in the motorway system, but is disadvantaged by its poor public transport provision. Future development patterns need to differ substantially from the current focus on car-based access principles to encourage public transport use as a more sustainable urban form.

As the former government Minister noted:

The two T-Ways have been useful for people who want to go from A-B but they have had no impact on the economic development of Western Sydney in terms of centres ... The one from Rouse Hill to Parramatta — there was one opportunity to create a good centre — maximising the use of the infrastructure ... The local politics prevailed ... people didn’t want any change ... and the Councillors ... put a stop to all of it ... it’s just not as effective as it could have been (MPI16).

The ex RTA director commended a previous Minister’s personal commitment to improving public transport:

The reason the Liverpool-Parramatta T-Way broke with tradition is mainly because [he] ... strongly believed public transport should be a lot better ... an opportunity to break out of a completely inflexible, private bus operated contract arrangement (SGI06).

Further impediments contributing to car-dependent lifestyles identified by WSROC councils over many years have pointed to a lack of equitable concession rates; limited accessibility options particularly for students and the aged; and the failure of businesses in the region to stagger work hours to spread peak loads.

Section 2.2 pointed to the ongoing physical, social and environmental decay of West-Central, with media coverage and public perceptions compounding housing, employment and transport problems. Sections 6.2 and 6.3 examined how housing and labour markets operating at a variety of scales interact in a complex way, since, broadly speaking, housing is delivered through localised sub-markets while, labour markets tend to operate regionally. Previous research by Gleeson and Randolph (2002:10) (Section 2.2) pointed to the mismatch between housing and labour market provision heightening both unemployment and socio-economic stress. However the work of Peck and others (1996; 2002;2011) shows local scale factors can also be crucial in determining labour market outcomes, especially at the household level. In addition to the poor public transport system, which locks many of the sub-region’s residents out of the more lucrative labour markets located in the ‘global arc’, a body of research by Fagan and others has demonstrated that access to employment opportunities is also shaped by the intersection between a range of other factors, including demographic factors such as age, skill levels, gender, ethnicity, language proficiency and access to social services, including child care (Fagan, 2004; Fagan and Dowling, 2005).
As Section 5.1 demonstrated, Sydney’s transport system is effectively locking West-Central’s workers out of the more lucrative labour markets located in the ‘global arc’, while diminishing opportunities to raise skill levels. Car-dependent workers (experiencing road congestion and increasing journey-times) and public transport users (struggling with poor service levels and inadequate mode connections) find difficulties in reaching employment or training opportunities. Such labour market fragmentation impacts negatively on social cohesion. This requires a re-working of urban policies to better connect West-Central’s older suburbs with deeper labour markets, through radically different transport strategies placing a greater emphasis on public transport provision.

Section 5.4 described how car dependency scattered land uses and hampered access to jobs and services, changed social patterns and altered neighbourhoods and town centre operations. Poor accessibility is compounded by inappropriate land use arrangements, inadequate public transport infrastructure, including the poor regulatory and administrative arrangements governing provision of bus services and travel information. Whereas the fragmentation of the labour market is shaped by transport access, segmentation is increasing social exclusion in the sub-region. This requires a more integrated approach as suggested by mobilizing social inclusion.

Section 5.7 pointed to evidence of community stress — resulting from a combination of housing and transport stress — leading to an increase in socio-economic polarisation. Many market-orientated policies demonstrate limited spatial awareness and are not based on solid evidence, greatly inhibiting understanding of the various dynamics operating across a variety of policy scales. Inequalities arising from market interventions, such as Commonwealth government funding shifts in education, health and welfare and labour market policies, or the policy implications of decreased mobility and increased social isolation, remaining largely unaddressed, are all exacerbating the sub-region’s disadvantage.

### 6.6 West-Central Sydney’s assets

As Sections 1.1 and 2.1 stressed, an exceptionally ethnically diverse population moved to the area in the post-war period, attracted by the availability of affordable housing (including public housing), employment opportunities and space to bring up a family. Still further opportunities lie in the largely un-tapped pool of non-English-speaking skilled migrants contributing to the sub-region’s development. Since 1968 government relocations, including Sydney Water, the RTA and NSW Police, plus infrastructure investment in performing arts and protection of heritage assets, added to Parramatta’s attraction as a place to live (Figure 6.6).
The successful establishment of the legal precinct in Parramatta — adding to the area’s employment diversity and boosting its economy — demonstrates the benefits of agency collaboration:

... the attraction it has caused in other run-off businesses ... have been absolutely brilliant ... in a relatively short time ... So what you have had is a championing within the State government ... and then you’ve got the private sector saying ‘Great here’s an opportunity, let’s build on that’ ... If other centres ... think about it along those lines ... you would then start to encourage the people who are better skilled, higher paid, to come back into where their home-base is ... the corporates out there.... they would give their right arm to be able to travel and work just half an hour away (SG11).

Figure 6.6 Parramatta city centre

West-Central’s location, adjoining six of the nine other Sydney sub-regions, makes it accessible for businesses serving most of the SMR. An important employment destination and effectively drawing on labour and resources from neighbouring areas, Parramatta’s role is increasingly reinforced as the SMR’s geographic population centre, with improving accessibility to Sydney CBD. Parramatta’s transition role, sandwiched between the eastern gentrifying suburbs and the traditionally lower income areas further west, is experiencing rising land values (currently greatest north of Parramatta Road but moving further south). A changing perception of Parramatta River as a lifestyle asset encouraged redevelopment of a number of redundant industrial areas for residential uses, and Parramatta retains a number of
large sites, both south of its CBD in ‘Auto Alley’ and in Camellia/Rydalmere to the
east, offering significant employment re-development opportunities.

West-Central is ranked highly in terms of employment self-sufficiency. Characterised
in NSW documents as competitive, innovative and adaptable; capable of engaging
with the global economy; the provider of economic spaces strengthening industry
networks, clusters and advanced infrastructure to support the flows of ideas, people
and products (NSW Government 2007). Containing concentrations of employment in
petroleum and chemicals, machinery and equipment, metals and engineering and
processed foods, its role in wholesaling, transport and logistics — capitalising on its
central location — are further strengths, albeit these industries provide fewer jobs.
While knowledge services, including BFBS, professional services, information
technologies and life services remain concentrated in eastern Sydney, their growing
manufacturing component in biotech, semiconductors and computer hardware could
operate in West-Central (Urban Research Centre, 2008). High-activity specialised
centres, including airports, business parks and health and education facilities play
important economic, social and employment roles.

Figure 6.7: Sydney Olympic Park

Key resources, such as the Westmead Health Precinct, the UWS campuses and
Sydney Olympic Park (Figure 6.7), help attract higher paid jobs, promote innovation,
research and development skills, but urgently require greater public transport
accessibility and decreased congestion to strengthen their economic competitiveness and social significance.

Overall, the continuing role of West-Central as a manufacturing hub, with greater access to the SMR via the M5 and M7, should assist jobs growth, provided that replacement of departing industrial uses with residential development pressures are strongly resisted, to avoid increasing the proportions of residents commuting out of the sub-region to work.

Substantial NSW government investments in the T-Ways and new Metro buses have improved public transport services. Federal government assistance advanced the opening of the M7, increasing accessibility and providing greater pressures for land use changes to accommodate new businesses and activities; despite lacking public transport support. This new geography created the need for more place-based planning and an increased focus on regional issues and partnerships.

Sections 6.2 and 6.3 exposed the planning issues arising from unrealistic population, dwelling and job projections in respect of West-Central and the need for explicit attention to be given to the sub-region’s neighbourhoods in their own terms, because if urban regeneration outcomes were ever to be achieved they would obliterate these suburb’s existing social makeup and character. These are important reasons for considering housing, employment and transport issues in tandem, including the role that infrastructure can play in supporting social inclusion through coordinated governance as now discussed.

6.7 Governance

Vision without action is a daydream; action without vision is a nightmare (wise old Japanese saying).

Section 3.1 identified the shifting role of the nation state in the 1980s from government to governance. Sydney’s governance is multi-faceted and more complex than in many other global cities and is constituted through a diverse set of institutional influences operating at a variety of scales (Kubler, 2005). The overseas evidence presented in Section 4.3 suggested that, prior to the GFC, comparable global cities had managed to achieve greater cooperation across levels of government, together with the private and non-profit sectors — working together to address issues of social imbalance.

As Section 2.2 noted, the Commonwealth government’s immigration policies impact both positively and negatively on West-Central’s growth. From 1996 to 2006, of the 933,077 new arrivals to Australia, 44% moved to NSW, 38% of whom settled in
Western Sydney. Such influences on West-Central demonstrate the importance of federal engagement in regional planning and management, particularly due to the additional burden of providing social services to support new arrivals and an ageing population. Issues arise when growing population levels fail to generate an increase in economic activity, causing social strain. Yet local government is in no position to confidently predict whether one area would have a higher demand for new dwellings over another, or prepare in advance for the additional social support services and facilities required by different cultural groups.

Negative perceptions of the role of the federal government agencies emerged during the interviews, with the ex RTA director criticising simplistic approaches:

> The Commonwealth Grants Commission ... go around and they count things ... and say ‘Well Sydney has already got lots of bus stops and railway stations therefore it doesn’t deserve a big slice of the Commonwealth Grants’. They all go to Brisbane where they've got fewer bus stations and bus stops (SGI06).

This limited understanding of the sub-regional impacts of national policy shifts and blindness to the uneven spatial distribution of social and economic needs, emerged as further impediments. According to the economic development director:

> ... the Federal government has been so absorbed by natural growth sectors ... what’s happening in Western Australia or Queensland and to a lesser extent in Victoria. They have poured lots of infrastructure into those areas. They've worked very cooperatively and very cohesively with some of those state governments in making that happen and ... NSW has been totally behind the eight-ball in attracting new infrastructure ... new investment. I think from where we should be, we are twenty years behind (SGI11).

Federal governance issues aside, the poor relationship between the state and local government also caused concerns.

**Friction between the NSW and local government.** Currently the political relationship between the state and local government is fraught, stemming largely from complex political policy changes in the state’s role in planning from the mid to late 2000s. Local government has no constitutional status, other than as a de-centralised state government agent — despite significant state government expectations of local government’s effectiveness in the prevailing political scene, there is a reluctance to allow councils to expand their power as in non-federal countries such as the UK and New Zealand. Local government’s role is already very diverse: for example Parramatta Council undertakes some 20 separate business functions supplying extensive services across the LGA. Deficiencies in local government structures, identified since 1972, have pinpointed: fragmentation; a frequently limited and inflexible resource base; services and cost-spills across arbitrary boundaries; and small-minded parochialism (Brown and Bellamy, 2006).
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The NSW Local Government and Shires Association commissioned an independent Inquiry into the Financial Sustainability of Local Government (Allan, 2005). Central to the issue of local government finance was whether it should have an equity (distribution or welfare) function and if the revenues raised should be on a benefit or capacity-to-pay basis.

As WSROC stressed:

All levels of government should work together to develop a viable and effective intergovernmental agreement ... [to] put an end to the practice of cost-shifting of government services to local government and the community. A re-allocation of services to local government ... should be accompanied by adequate provision of recurrent funding (WSROC, 2005d:13).

Western Sydney hosts a disproportionate level of the nation’s population growth, with inadequate resources, amounting to a huge and unacknowledged form of indirect cost shifting. Inter-generational cost-shifting occurs through failures to provide or maintain infrastructure in high growth redevelopment areas such as West-Central. Direct cost shifting results from diminishing financial support from higher levels of government occurring once a program has been established ‘in partnership’ with Councils. Estimates of the financial extent of cost shifting range from $500 million per annum (House of Representatives, 2003) to the Australian Local Government Association’s estimate of $1.1 billion (Allan, 2005).

PricewaterhouseCoopers (2006) estimated that the national total infrastructure backlog for local government was in the order of $11 to $16 billion. Despite a much greater demand for councils to provide a growing range of human services in recent years (Brown and Bellamy, 2007:177), local government in NSW is prohibited from imposing development levies for maintenance purposes (WSROC, 2005); posing a major financial constraints on maintaining West-Central’s ageing infrastructure.

Increasing financial pressures are acute for West-Central’s councils. A decade of state government restructuring, leading to local government and planning reforms; changing metropolitan strategies; demographic, economic and social challenges in a context of shortages of planning staff and infrastructure shortfalls, are all contributory factors. Congruently, communities call for wider-ranging, higher quality services and facilities; more public participation in decision-making; and greater environmental emphasis. Western Sydney councils complain about the lack of ongoing support from the state; constantly changing population forecasts; too much ‘stick’ and too little ‘carrot’; and unrealistic expectations of local government’s role, often interpreted by local government as ‘buck-passing’ (WSROC, 2005d).

While accounting for around $24 billion in public expenditure, over $10 billion in taxation and employing over 170,000 people (Australian Centre for Excellence for
Chapter 6: Key concerns for West-Central Sydney

Local Government, 2011:2), and providing essential services that are ‘vital to national well-being’ (Commonwealth of Australia, 2010), councils remain in a precarious position. Local government’s role has expanded exponentially over the last 25 years and, despite having the ability to raise revenue through rates, these rates are capped in NSW. Expenditure at this level of government remains at approximately 1% of GDP (Independent Pricing and Regulatory Tribunal, 2008:45). A widespread misconception is that local government receives around 30% of total taxation, yet in reality, in 2004 its revenue constituted less than 3% of all government levels of taxes, compared to 8% in Canada and Germany, 15% in the US and an even higher proportion in the UK which reflected the much broader range of local government functions in the UK, including education and policing (Allan, 2005). However, these government functions in the UK are now being cut, reduced and privatised.

Following a decade with nine inquiries into local government’s status and prospects, no official government response was provided to the Allan Inquiry and none of its recommendations were adopted. An IPART 2009 review of rate-pegging led to some modification but not abolition of the process. Notwithstanding, the Integrated Planning and Reporting Framework in NSW to improve strategic, financial and workforce planning, plus the federal government’s 2009 Local Government Reform Fund, may assist improved asset and financial management through the collection of national data (Australian Centre for Excellence for Local Government (ACELG) 2011:5).

In NSW no one government body has overall responsibility for urban regeneration, leaving a disconnection between metropolitan planning and provision of essential infrastructure to support population growth in West-Central’s older suburbs, requiring a more equitable sub-regional balance. As the Fairfield interviewee comments in Section 6.3 demonstrated, while constantly demanding more local government action, Planning and Infrastructure NSW provides little support and, when challenged over local issues, tends to retreat, leaving behind a policy vacuum.

Significantly, interviewees identified numerous governance barriers to urban regeneration of West-Central. One perceptive insight came from the Department of Industry and Investment director:

Having three tiers of local, state and federal government involved in this kind of planning, infrastructure, urban renewal is a recipe for disaster. They never seem to agree ... [having] to be politically correct in terms of meeting the special interest groups ... Sometimes you have to be ruthless and say ‘We are going to get rid of that ... [or] put something in here because we have got no other choice. We are not coping in the current market at the moment ... and we just get absolutely mired in this non-decision-making (SG11).
Questions probing the reasons behind the palpably poor working relationship between the tiers of government in NSW provoked this director to comment:

It’s a silo mentality, very much about ‘My patch’ and ‘You are not touching my empire. How dare you’. Part of our role is to try and be that facilitator, the collegiate, trying to bring all the elements together and its bloody hard work. …. The practitioners here at the local level have all the good will in the world... but as soon as it gets ... to their central office and policy areas it sounds a death knell (SGI11).

The regional information manager added ‘There’s a lot of buck-passing as well’ (SGI112).

An issue explored further in the interviews was whether joined-up approaches are as productive as their supporters claim. Clearly the effectiveness of role of the Department of Premier and Cabinet (DP&C) working across agencies is paramount, as the regional coordinator explained:

... we work around the area as opposed to being specialists... Governments by definition are regulatory and there is no regional governance. You can’t have regional governance without budgets and budgets come through line agencies. So our role isn’t around governance, it’s about working around issues, intersections, joining dots ... In terms of regional governance ... the new government might indicate that there may be plans to change that. I can confirm that Blacktown City Council ... felt they weren’t getting much cooperation nationally (SGI08).

Similar poor cooperation concerns were raised by Fairfield and Auburn Council’s respondents.

The silos around and within agencies and professions, the lack of integration, plus the DP&C’s interpretation of governments’ role as regulatory and the ‘my patch’ obsession, all demonstrate little evidence of commitment to improved governance. Policy-makers are still separating out areas of urban life and failing to provide joined-up solutions to linked problems. The DP&C respondent explained the difficulties:

... the infrastructure, the transport, the social inclusion, all that’s very easy to talk about and the previous government and this one made a significant effort to try and transpose one plan over another... I think it’s reflected in current government policy [but] there is difficulty in translating policy into action... It doesn’t mean it shouldn’t happen, it doesn’t mean it can’t. Time will tell (SGI08).

In the Fairfield Council interviewee’s view:

I think we have too many councils who ... scurry to do things in very different directions. You need to maintain local engagement, but there needs to be a level of decision-making that is more strategic and the more localised the engagement the more fragmented the decision-making ... if people had to balance the ... issues ... you would get an outcome that at least ... looks at a more equitable solution (LGI03).

The scale of the councils was also identified by a previous Mayor and former NSW government Minister as an impediment to effective strategic planning at the regional scale, compounded by a neo-liberal approach to planning by the state government:
Western Sydney needs better local leadership ... the council units are too small to have clout with federal and state governments. The leadership of mayors changes all the time ... there is no unit large enough to have the focus of metropolitan media ... it’s hidden in our consciousness.

... there’s not really a ‘place-based’ approach to anything at a state government level. So the DoP move from strategic planning to ... approvals planning. It’s almost as if you give up on the failure of planning so you just focus on individual large projects ... You had the Metropolitan Strategy’s sub-regions, they had plans and projects ... but I don’t think there was a concerted effort within government to achieve those outcomes ... there were a number of ministers ... who certainly didn’t believe in intervening in the market place (MPI16).

These governance barriers pinpoint the need for effective linkages between strategic planning and the budgetary processes. A way of identifying key infrastructure needs and a more holistic and cooperative effort between all three levels of government, private enterprise and the community is necessary to address West-Central’s problems.

The Australia and New Zealand School of Government’s research into federalism argued that local government needs greater empowerment to play a fuller role in governance, through:

- embracing the role of subsidiarity;
- eliminating cost shifting;
- fully addressing the problem of vertical fiscal imbalance; and
- providing ... greater autonomy through full constitutional recognition (Brown and Bellamy, 2007:173).

Section 1.7 described how the interview questions sought to unpack the reasons behind West-Central’s ongoing disadvantage. In response to question about why the increasing socio-economic divide in West-Central is ignored, the DP&C’s representative concluded:

... I think [government] would say that in more recent times you’ve had a much greater focus on Western Sydney, although seemingly more of a focus on South-West than West-Central Sydney and there are local employment coordinators and the Jobs for Western Sydney focus. So ... that’s a bit different in terms of the spend (SGI08).

Section 5.1 described how the latest metropolitan strategies for Sydney had relegated Western Sydney to a support role for global Sydney. The DP&C regional coordinator attributed this to a number of factors:

... some of it is historical and clearly in terms of manufacturing and associated other types of work they want flat cheap land and that’s in Western Sydney ... It’s all about the cost of land. From the Harbour Bridge in a circle it just gets less expensive the further you go from there. The employment lands in Western Sydney are a classic case — whether they are serving the best purpose ... arguably it’s not generating the employment it should. But it is employing some people, so I guess it’s a start (SGI08).

The implicit irony of the situation, highlighted by Parramatta Council’s outcomes manager, reflected Begg’s 2003 research on urban competitiveness as discussed in 4.3.
... one of the interesting things about Sydney is where the land is the most expensive attracts the most investment (LGI05).

A similar situation also occurs in London.

A further comment from a previous transport director with extensive experience of NSW politics was also enlightening:

All governments, federal and state, make big, broad decisions which favour the group which supports them. So if it’s a conservative government they will make decisions concerning taxation or incentives ... which favour big business ... All other levels of decision-making revolve around marginal electorates and the lobbying power of individual MPs, the short-term and the next election ... [Howard] favoured the aspirational people with big mortgages in areas ... that didn’t need middle-class welfare. At the local level ... [politicians] look at which electorates they are going to lose or win ... and put all the money into that (SGI06).

For decades leading up to the 2011 state election, politicians viewed Western Sydney as a Labor heartland and tended to disregard community concerns over the region’s inadequate physical and social infrastructure provision. Increasing government restrictions on the use of developer contributions was constraining local government’s ability to deliver the transport, cultural and recreational outcomes proposed in draft strategies. One bureaucratic and industry response to sprawl was simply to reduce the size of house lots, fitting more people into less space. Several infrastructure initiatives, such as the Parramatta to Epping rail link were announced, only to be deferred or cancelled — fuelling regional cynicism about government effectiveness. Furthermore, WSROC board members frequently complained of the increasing practice whereby individual landowners advanced rezoning proposals by dealing directly with the state government — bypassing any local government and community involvement.

Following the 2011 election, ending twelve years of Labor dominance in NSW, Sydney’s political stratification described in Section 2.3, is no longer so spatially concentrated, with many policy areas, including the metropolitan strategy and a planning reform process, currently under review. However, a survey of the general public and planning professionals by the Better Planning Network (an affiliation of 420 community groups) in response to a White Paper — *A New Planning System for NSW* — casts doubt that the proposed planning reforms will increase residents’ opportunities for participation in the planning decisions affecting their lives (Manion and Marketinfo, 2013).

Section 2.2 described the major challenge for West-Central’s councils as the urban regeneration of the older suburbs without displacing or further marginalizing their poorest residents. Clearly the sub-region’s disadvantage has long been recognised, as one NGO interviewee stressed:
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Back to the Whitlam days ... 40 years ago — there’d [been] recognition that there were social exclusion issues around Western Sydney that needed attention. It’s not as if no-one has put any call on governments to address that. In fact we know it’s been an issue (NGI14).

The DP&C respondent attributed the limited sub-regional investment to:

The economics, pure and simply ... you were talking about ... social disadvantage in terms of Western Sydney ... some of that’s historical because that’s where the large (public housing) estates are ... and governments are going to spend money there ... I’m not convinced ... that Parramatta LGA is struggling at all. I mean there are pockets ... that struggle — the housing estate end — but comparably Parramatta is going pretty well (SGI08).

However, the ex-RTA director cautioned:

... look into the Hunter region over the fifteen years of Labor government, the left wing/solid traditional parts of Newcastle got not one cent ... whereas Maitland has ... three of everything, because it has always been marginal. So that’s how governments make decisions. It’s ridiculous ... It’s too solidly Labor to be of any interest to the Labor party or the conservatives ... Following the last state election you would say Labor is no longer relevant in NSW, it’s on its way out. If you say 'No it’s going to revive', what you would revive are its old attitudes that this is a solid core Labor heartland that you would ignore (SGI06).

The Shelter NSW representative echoed this view:

Western Sydney has been historically viewed as a working class area and very supportive of the Labor Party. This has been a negative for it perversely ... it’s taken for granted by Labor governments and for conservative governments not seen as a key constituency. That’s based on the assumption that resources are distributed on the basis of how people vote. I would hope that isn’t the case ... public resources should go where there is a merit argument for it, and I don’t hold the view that resourcing is all about pork barrelling ... it is a bit of a paradox (NGI14).

Responding to whether there has been any turnaround he noted:

It’s not as if there haven’t been activists ... Ironically because of the social change that is taking place in the edge of the sub-region as a result of market forces ... I’m really indicting the series of Labor MPs and Ministers in NSW, because there’s been a lot of talk and a lot of political power of Western Sydney MPs in the Cabinet, but things have changed just too slowly (NGI14).

The following section now describes the problems encountered by agencies grappling with competing areas of responsibility.

**NSW agencies.** A significant 2005 Metropolitan Strategy aim was refocusing Landcom’s role towards strategic projects and the provision of redevelopment sites to achieve the state’s urban renewal objectives. However, by 2010 Landcom’s urban regeneration role remained confined to ‘ensuring’ 7.5% of its new dwellings were to be affordable for moderate income households on government-owned land; despite a reference to being ‘heavily involved in urban renewal’ (Landcom 2010 Annual Report). Building social capital was considered ‘crucially important, unlocking privately-owned land by providing infrastructure close by’ (ibid); although how unlocking private land was related to social capital remained unclear. While not legislatively responsible for low-cost housing provision, one interviewee envisaged expanding Landcom’s role to implement government’s plans by encouraging greater
housing diversity and the agency was exploring options for provision and delivery of long-term rental accommodation. Describing how the obstacles to Landcom’s greater involvement in urban regeneration to date resulted from NSW Treasury restrictions on land banking, he stressed:

Where we say ‘government-owned land’... we have to pay full market value ... There was a lot of land that Landcom bought up in the past ... One of the criticisms from ... Treasury is ‘You have this land bank but the money in that could be better invested’. So our business model switched to developing the land of others ... Two recent purchases [bought from the Department of Defence] ... we paid full value for that. (DII17).

A balance had to be struck between Landcom’s key performance indicators and its first objective of being ‘financially self-sustainable’, with the seemingly competing objectives of ‘delivering metropolitan outcomes’ and ‘achieving the NSW urban renewal objectives’:

... we have seven objectives. The first one, and the following six that are more or less diametrically opposed ... It’s an irony that if you took the first one, which is to maximise, not just optimise, the State’s assets ... we would just be another developer ... and the government would say ... ‘We need somebody who can solve a few problems’ ... Landcom is an optional extra [unlike] the Departments of Education or Police ... So unless we are doing things that the private sector can’t do, or what the government needs us to do, then we are going to be out of business in a short period ... If you use the (following) six objectives to help you to do the right thing, and you use the first objective to help you do it efficiently, then you haven’t got a bad balance (DII17).

With councils unable to consolidate land and reluctant to expand into housing provision, Landcom appeared keen to address these issues by participating in strategic partnerships:

Our role would be to demonstrate housing forms that work that other people could just copy ... If a council came to us and had some land and we acquired some other land to make it work we would do that. The advantage ... would be we wouldn’t have to buy all of the land in the first place and we would get assistance with the planning process.

We probably do need to get a policy position from government that says ‘We are happy for you to do that’. I think the private sector development industry would like to see us in a role ... [acquiring] sites, to pull them all together, de-risking them and handing them over to the private sector. I don’t think that’s a problem, except that we need to be able to make something [financial] out of that ... otherwise you can do it for a little while, but eventually you run out of money (DII17).

Recognising the need to provide a greater diversity of dwelling types and tenures, the Landcom interviewee described how in-house research into a *Rental Housing Portfolio Project* had revealed:

... around the world there is a lot of institutional investment in rental housing. But in Australia there isn’t ... What we were trying to do was to investigate the barriers to investment by institutional investors and help them to create an asset class ... sourcing the sites, procuring the buildings, managing the tenants ... But at the end of the day it is difficult to meet the benchmarks for investment from institutions ... a big chunk of that return is in capital gains rather than cash (DII17).
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Despite failing to gain Commonwealth government support for this research, Landcom’s respondent commented that:

It’s a particularly good piece of practical research that’s all there ... In my view it will be the single biggest assistance to providing housing (DII17).

Section 4.5 described the NSW Labor government’s attempt to drive urban regeneration by establishing the Sydney Metropolitan Development Agency (SMDA) in 2010. In commenting on whether the establishment of the SMDA would result in better renewal outcomes for the sub-region, the Housing NSW representative noted:

I haven’t ... had anything to do with them in Granville. The Department [of Housing] has ... although their focus is a slightly different area. We do have a lot of stock in Granville, but it’s just outside the city centre ... and their [SMDA] focus seems to be here [Auto Alley, Parramatta] ... It certainly would make sense to link the two ... but I’m not sure if they will do that (SGI07).

However acknowledging the potential for the SMDA to address the problems of the middle suburbs, he suggested:

Redfern/Waterloo is a fabulous opportunity to create a really liveable, connected area ... because government owns all the land. But surely there are models around the world where you can do that with privately-owned land. And SMDA may be the opportunity to do that ... I suspect not, because I think we do not have much of a vision here in NSW ... we let the lowest common denominator take over (SGI07).

In contrast, rather than discussing a future role for the SMDA, the interviewees from Planning NSW keenly promoted an Urban Renewal SEPP stressing:

... the government recognised recently ... a need to introduce a policy that was targeted at promoting the delivery of urban renewal ... the Urban Renewal SEPP ... That’s a really effective way of picking the key centres, where the government has identified there are some challenges associated in delivering urban renewal ... to drive, in partnership with the councils, the strategic planning. Totally separate to a SMDA, but just to solve some of those complicated issues and assist councils with those sorts of challenges (SGI10).

Criticised for being ‘limited guidelines’ one local government outcomes manager described the lack of insight into the nature of the problems:

I don’t know that the Urban Renewal SEPP has done anything ... When the SMDA started looking at Granville ... they said ‘Maybe this is a social renewal program associated with social disadvantage rather than poor building form’ (LGI05).

These insights provide yet further evidence of competing areas of agency responsibilities. In respect of the failure of successive NSW governments to deliver on their planned public transport commitments and poor consultation practices, the ex-RTA director commented:

The Labor government wasn’t interested in planning after about their first five years ... We prepared plans ... all the road stuff was delivered but none of the public transport. So ... from the 2005 election onwards they deliberately said ‘We don’t want any plans ... indicating what you are going to do [because] you are setting yourself up.’... Yes you can make one-off announcements, but if you have a coherent plan there is an
expectation that you will deliver on it and clearly they realised that after ten years in
government they did not have confidence in delivering on any of it (SGI06).

This respondent clearly felt constrained by political instructions to limit community
consultation to avoid having to justify the changes in policy direction:

Well that’s the other thing that also disappeared.... no more community consultation.
They were deliberately uncommunicative, everything was dealt with through their own
spin people and it was just the beginning of the end. They shouldn’t have won in 2007
— they didn’t expect to (SGI06).

Significant contradictions remained between the ‘city of cities’ objectives of the 2005
and 2010 Metropolitan Strategies and the CBD-focused 2010 Metropolitan Transport
Plan; notwithstanding the views of the Planning and Infrastructure NSW manager
responsible for urban regeneration who declared:

The Metropolitan 2010 Plan is an integrated plan that was developed with the
Department of Transport and there were some longer-term links ... really needed to
connect up the City of Cities ... getting the infrastructure to keep up with what you are
trying to do. You have to have vision and make long-term plans but ultimately
governments make decisions about which projects they are going to run with. There’s
limited funding ... but those things in the Metropolitan Transport Plan are more short-
term projects to 2021, rather than 2036 in the other one (SGI09).

Previously long-term transport corridors were reserved for future development, but
this level of strategic planning now appears absent, as this respondent suggested:

I think it’s more going back the other way now, so they identify a corridor then they
have to go about ... acquiring it ...It’s just become more complicated because of going
across private landholdings and we have to work out how we are going to do that
(SGI09).

Her colleague added:

... when you identify a future corridor, that changes the market’s expectations about
the future of the land. If you are looking at something like a rail line, that may be
constructed in 30 or 40 years time, it’s that balance about what do you do in the
meantime — that potentially sterilises private land or it just complicates the system
(SGI10).

Such contradictory policies and poor collaboration clearly frustrated the locally-based
state government representatives, with the Industry and Investment director
commenting:

When it comes to the State Plan, the Metro Plan, the Transport Plan, nothing ever
connected and they refused to sit in a room and say ‘This is what we basically want we
want to do politically’ (SGI11).

Unfortunately, the policy disparities between these government strategic documents
still require resolution; because of the conflicting departmental and agency objectives
in NSW; the limited resources available for local government; and the restrictive role
played by Treasury. These governance barriers lack effective links between strategic
planning and the budgetary processes and require a more holistic and cooperative
effort from all three levels of government, private enterprise and the community to address this complex and interconnected policy paradox. The combination of housing, employment, transport and governance issues is generating, or at least reinforcing, West-Central’s urban disadvantage. Clearly one-off simplistic solutions are not the answer, but require robust responses solving more than one problem at a time.

6.8 Summary and conclusions

Averaged Census data by LGA conceals pockets of severe socio-economic disadvantage in West-Central Sydney. The sub-region is far from homogeneous and exhibits major variations in deprivation between its suburbs. Poverty has many dimensions, rarely resulting from a single factor. Some areas experience serious social issues, such as a lack of housing amenity, high unemployment, poor English proficiency, falling employment participation, low secondary school retention rates and limited access to tertiary education. These problems, exacerbated by the needs of high concentrations of recent immigrants in specific suburbs, are placing severe strain on inadequate support services — symptoms of broader problems of social dislocation following several decades of structural changes in the Australian economy.

Like the preceding chapter, Chapter 6 engaged with the important contributions made by the interviewees, demonstrating numerous shared concerns about the impediments to urban regeneration and recognition of the need for a more holistic approach to social reform, with integration across separate policy areas to achieve greater social inclusion.

Current NSW strategies struggle to acknowledge the pivotal roles of housing, employment and transport in building and sustaining stronger neighbourhoods and communities. A simplistic urban capacity and numbers approach establishes blanket dwelling and employment targets, ensuring sufficient allocation of land and minimising government liabilities to provide supporting physical and social infrastructure. This supply-led, market-reliant response, demonstrates little understanding of demand-side factors. Severe affordability constraints mean the release of further residential land will not necessarily translate into housing demand, when the price of housing is far out of reach of its intended market. Population pressures and rapid socio-cultural change should not be restricted to planning only for the release areas or, alternatively, urban renewal — both pressures fuel growth. West-Central’s current residents need to be planned for and backlogs of facilities and services need to be addressed by a more equitable provision of resources. In pre- and immediate post-war suburbs, regeneration occurred through dwelling
replacement and higher density redevelopment, whereas the relatively modern 1970s and 1980s areas show little change.

For increasing proportions of West-Central’s population, spending on housing is the biggest investment of a lifetime and this has both social and economic consequences. This results in complex sets of effects ranging between cultural expectations, behaviour and notions of value, together with issues of labour mobility, transport, location disadvantage, land shortages, planning restrictions and poor access to services and facilities in the sub-region. With economic value of housing and its accessibility often viewed as measures of neighbourhood success, interventions either add or subtract value. Successful public policy is retreating from passively acknowledging this issue and more actively enhancing and capturing value for the public good. Such policies require an asset/investment approach to regeneration areas, contrasting with the welfare-service orientated approach implicit in existing programs.

The economic value of property and land appreciates where liveability factors score highly. Educational attainment; access to good quality services including retail, public services and leisure facilities; perceptions of community safety; transport infrastructure; aesthetics; and the quality of the public realm, are important indicators, since property values reflect whether areas score well or poorly on these indices. Yet policies and practices to improve value are under-developed in West-Central and direct targeting of areas, assessing the economic impacts and the effectiveness of interventions, risks pricing an area out of its established residents’ reach. While strategic documents mention equality, policy-makers still separate out areas of urban life into professional silos, despite key international lessons in neighbourhood regeneration demonstrating that housing, employment and transport problems require coordinated solutions. Arguably partnership and place-management approaches — seeking effective and sustainable long-term outcomes — show the importance of a comprehensive and inclusive approach which would draw together all planning and governance stakeholders to address the range of challenges.

In a sub-region of increasing ethnic and cultural diversity, poor English proficiency for many residents presents a major challenge. Negative media stereotyping, emphasising crime and personal safety issues (associated with economic, racial, ethnic and cultural tensions), impacts on people living or planning to settle there. West-Central councils are focusing on community safety, capacity-building and cultural development to positively address these perceptions. Yet government policies tend to compartmentalise urban issues into either social or economic problems, while remaining blind to factors such as intergenerational unemployment,
a lack of social capital and residents’ lack of empowerment and voice. Conversely, changing demographics, increasing spatial segregation and polarisation are better characterised as cultural disadvantage problems, with both social and economic consequences.

The lack of affordable housing and limited dwelling choice leave many residents experiencing multiple socio-economic difficulties. Importantly, these are not confined to public housing estates, but exist among many living in privately rented housing and parts of the sub-region suffer an acute shortage of appropriate housing and accessible jobs. In West-Central renewal is occurring in the form of multi-unit, attached and apartment dwellings in the older suburb’s town centres. Since these dwelling forms are expensive to construct, in order to maximise profits, housing design standards are lowered and limited emphasis is placed on environmental performance. Housing policies, little considering who will occupy these apartments, mean the socio-spatial implications of urban consolidation policies are poorly understood. Rezoning of West-Central’s older residential suburbs, followed by properties changing hands lot-by-lot, sees an ad hoc scenario providing a disparate mix with large dwellings, villas, town houses and apartments emerging as the new physical suburban fabric. Increased traffic, lack of open space and services, loss of heritage and streetscape character, poor sustainability and privacy concerns remain outstanding issues; fuelling fears that higher density neighbourhoods contribute to social polarisation, by creating second-class housing areas.

Regeneration presents an opportunity to consider both the social and physical form of evolving neighbourhoods and town centres. Strategies aimed at weaving community with culture, housing, neighbourhood and built-form are needed, to promote social inclusion through structure planning and design. A re-vitalised public domain is a key ingredient for achieving higher quality places. Greater sensitivity to local circumstances and to housing and employment needs is essential, thereby limiting further concentrations of disadvantage and providing a coordinated approach to assembling privately-owned lots and tackling strata-titling issues. This regeneration approach requires better research understandings of the wide-ranging interconnected issues of property redevelopment potential, resident mobility intentions, strategic plan implications, socio-demographic characteristics, education and employment opportunities and urban capability assessment.

Entrenched labour market access problems in parts of West-Central and an over-emphasis on employment self-sufficiency goals, fails to deliver equitable suburban labour markets. Losing jobs from old industrial suburbs and limited employment growth in more accessible locations, make servicing journey-to-work by public
transport extremely difficult, resulting in increased private vehicle travel costs, congestion and transport disadvantage. Dispersed employment should be actively discouraged and replacement of old industrial and commercial lands with residential development must cease, with jobs, not just housing, concentrated in regionally accessible centres. National policies should aim to reduce car dependency, rather than amplifying social isolation and disengagement among poorer, jobless and socially-marginalised populations.

The link between employment and social inclusion is complex. Quality-of-life and sustainability concerns are coupled with questions of access to labour, infrastructure and markets, yet metropolitan strategies have failed to identify a jobs generation pathway for West-Central. With mounting evidence that the job targets are unlikely to be achieved, or come from the manufacturing sector, and risk being part-time and casual: greater emphasis is needed on attracting permanent, career jobs to the sub-region. Creating new jobs can help reduce social exclusion, but importantly depends on the nature of these jobs; where they are located; and whether they restore a sense of control, provide an acceptable relative status or offer future prospects. Social inclusion is not just concerned with reducing unemployment, since social exclusion from participation in society may result from state operations using means-tested benefits, or the pricing decisions of the suppliers of goods and services. Some town centres have good transport links, but generally most jobs available to West-Central’s residents are either in local suburbs, or dispersed across the region. Most residents do not travel into Sydney CBD but crowd onto already congested suburban roads, which are the result of a huge infrastructure deficit needing to be addressed, prior to accepting a higher density population influx. Increasing fuel costs necessitate fundamental changes in existing lifestyles, not only because of the adverse impacts of fossil fuel reliance, but also growing social exclusion.

Considerable variations in income levels, apparent at the local scale, show West-Central becoming a much more divided and polarised area. In addition to income inequality, residents’ life chances and opportunities are not universally shared. Shifting provision of services from the public to the private sector has exacerbated inequality, with the emerging spatial segregation adversely affecting people’s welfare in areas lacking employment, essential public transport, community facilities and services provision. West-Central’s imbalance in its skills and labour force, affected \textit{inter alia} by changes in the global economy and patterns of labour mobility, migration and advances in technology, is leading to population leakage and skills flight. But overseas evidence is emerging that sub-regions which embrace and are actively attracting immigrants, can be more successful in transforming failing
Chapter 6: Key concerns for West-Central Sydney

Economies. Proactive planning and community development practices are required, with stronger communities supporting weak markets in West-Central, as shown by the UK comparators described in Section 4.2. Creating jobs in line with future population growth is challenging and not simply a matter of creating sufficient variety, but of improving access to social infrastructure and upgrading employment skills, qualifications and job experiences.

Political interests and fiscal policies tend to favour release area development, rather than tackling the additional maintenance required to support the older suburbs’ regeneration. For decades, jobs spread across the sub-region, attracted to lower cost suburban land with fewer political and regulatory hurdles. Previous policies favoured residential uses in transit nodes and rarely considered employment, assuming that jobs take care of themselves and never provided incentives to limit zoning for jobs to transit-accessible locations. Major transit expansion projects — failing to connect West-Central to higher-order job centres — demonstrated limited analysis and awareness of employment distribution by location. Section 2.1 showed significant proportions (45.9%) of West-Central residents leaving GWS each day to work, although Parramatta attracted labour from other sub-regions.

While 700 hectares of land is earmarked for future employment lands in the Western Sydney Employment Hub (Figure 6.8) with increased accessibility afforded by the M7, essential plans for public transport provision remain absent. Poor public transport use in West-Central — often mistakenly attributed to the low density urban form acting to reduce transport accessibility — is exacerbated by dispersed employment destinations; the complexity of trips; few cross-regional travel opportunities; safety concerns; and a failure to improve public transport services in the older suburbs. This often necessitates the purchase of a second (or third) car per household.

A Catch 22 history exists whereby public transport is not provided due to high levels of car ownership and car ownership continues rising because of inadequate public transport provision. Decades of rapid residential and industrial growth, leading to a network of isolated, car-dependent home and work environments, contributes to the social exclusion suffered by West-Central’s residents and this is becoming more critical as the population ages. While Parramatta is relatively well-served by public transport, many recently developed areas are entirely road transport dependent and some older suburbs experience a long-term decline in rail use.

Transport systems are internationally recognised as key determinants of sustainability and community well-being, strongly influenced by perceptions of safety. Commuting times affect stress levels, determine available family time or recreation participation: hence, provision of accessible public transport modes and
better service levels are essential. Improving public transport could be the key to reducing concentrations of socio-economic disadvantage, by increasing housing and work choices and may prove politically more acceptable by satisfying deep-rooted community values, rather than continuing attempts to re-engineer West-Central’s low density suburbs around roads and cars.

**Figure 6.8 Employment lands in West-Central Sydney**

Source: NSW Department of Planning 2007: 27
To stem the population loss from the older suburbs, a growth strategy, suiting wide-ranging future population needs, should reflect the following five goals:

- Equality of opportunity and freedom of choice
- Variety in the provision of both housing type and tenure
- Good accessibility to employment and education facilities
- Provision related to need and incomes
- Flexibility to meet future change.

Complex governance arrangements currently hinder articulation of the sub-region’s needs and are further complicated by a constantly changing administrative map. The interrelationships between the policy areas of housing, employment and transport must be addressed relationally and there is a body of knowledge available that could support improved social inclusion outcomes for residents.

West-Central’s liveability depends upon how successfully governments consider both individual needs and citizens’ collective values and expectations: performance indicators should reflect the community’s own priorities. This understanding requires skilled assessment of the implications of greater equity in the decisions made affecting the sub-region. Yet this research on West-Central demonstrates how community members and local government are unequal, subordinate partners to state government bodies. Pre-existing knowledge and expertise is considered inferior and superfluous to the regeneration process. As this thesis highlights, considerable hurdles exist to achieving a more socially inclusive sub-region in the absence of an effective institutional framework, but the research also points to achievements through government and non-government cooperation. In particular, the concerted government response to the NBESP, with a clearly defined vision, delivered a not unsubstantial increase in the social housing stock in NSW, reversing decades of decline. The policy conclusions emerging from this and previous chapters, starting at the level of the nation state and finishing with the impacts on West-Central, are collated in Chapter 7; including identification of further opportunities for greater coordination and the development of alliances between agencies that emerged through the course of this research.
CHAPTER 7: Summary and policy conclusions

Introduction

City planning and design may not create the division between ‘rich and poor’ in a society, but can entrench these differences, stigmatise places and deny people the connectivity and opportunity to live the lives they see are available to others (WSROC, 2008b:10).

In 2010 the UN installed social inclusion as a central concept of social policy in Europe. Through an original, mixed method case study the research for this thesis examined whether a social inclusion agenda could enhance social, economic and sustainability outcomes for one of Sydney’s most culturally diverse sub-regions — West-Central Sydney in NSW Australia. West-Central was identified as a disadvantaged location with complex and enduring issues for specific groups that needed to be better understood and addressed. A co-incidence of housing, employment and transport issues, leading to geographic disadvantage and rising wealth in suburban Australia more generally over the last two decades, has been accompanied in West-Central by a particular version of social polarisation and increasing deprivation. Hence this research presents an example of how socio-economic disadvantage plays out for Australia’s poor middle-ring suburbs when support mechanisms are withheld.

A review of the effectiveness of government policies and practices targeted at socio-economic disadvantage suffered by West-Central’s residents, revealed many complex interconnecting issues in the policy areas of housing, employment and transport. Notably, the research has shown how Australian urban regeneration experience lacks consideration of suburban communities living in non-public housing areas. Previous research in Western Sydney demonstrated that the focus on urban consolidation was resulting in haphazard, market-led renewal, constraining any form of planning-led regeneration for years to come (Gleeson and Randolph, 2002:13). In contrast to other developed nations, this research found Sydney’s social problems to be relatively moderate and amenable to corrective action, but may not always be so given the increasing socio-economic divide.

The need for physical renewal and social change in the ageing middle ring suburbs of major cities is neglected by governments in Australia. This neglect
was an important motivation for this thesis to consider the adequacy of political and agency policies to deal with the complex issues of socio-economic disadvantage. This research found that, in general, planning interventions in West-Central Sydney have a disappointing track record in buffering its residents against issues such as poverty, unemployment and locational disadvantage. Significant numbers of poor households in some of West-Central’s older suburbs are entrapped by shrinking employment opportunities, reinforcing their low-income status and effectively limiting their housing choices. While earmarked for substantial population, dwellings and jobs growth, these suburbs lack implementation and infrastructure support.

Therefore this thesis aimed to bring together previous cross-disciplinary research findings; to extend the scope of existing studies; and assess the current policy settings attempting to deal with the sub-region’s problems. Key insights emerged when socio-economic disadvantage was explored through the lens of a social inclusion agenda. The thesis revealed the strong association between social exclusion and housing, employment and transport policies, together with the role of individual agencies, and structural factors in determining poverty and inequality. Greater policy coordination and more effective strategic planning, involving consultation and concerted intervention, necessitates strengthening the responsibilities and accountability of the range of agencies charged with urban regeneration.

As identified in Section 1.4 the key objectives of the research for this thesis sought to:

1. Mobilise social inclusion as a framework to develop better conceptual understandings of the relationship between housing, employment and transport policies and the underpinning governance arrangements.
2. Critically assess how housing, employment, transport and governance measures in a context of urban regeneration could add social and economic value to households in the West-Central sub-region.
3. In light of selected overseas interventions, examine the effectiveness of planning policy in Sydney, particularly pertaining to the social inclusion agenda.

Hence this research asked how a more integrated approach to urban regeneration of West-Central’s older suburbs might be formulated. It explored whether such an approach required combining market demands with innovative public interventions, a better understanding of the drivers of housing and job
Chapter 7: Summary and policy conclusions

supply and the role of public transport in the regeneration process; all in the context of an evolving Metropolitan Strategy.

This chapter concludes the thesis in the following way. Section 7.1 assesses the thesis objectives; the methodology adopted for achieving these objectives; and how and where in the document they were addressed. While the main empirical findings of the research were summarised in the conclusions to Chapters 3 to 6, Section 7.2 synthesises these empirical findings in respect of the study’s three main research objectives to explain the processes leading to West-Central’s increasing socio-economic disadvantage. Section 7.3 sets out how the thesis has contributed to the advancement of knowledge and whether the objectives of the research have been met. Section 7.4 reviews the policy implications of the thesis findings, leaving Section 7.5 offering ideas for future research, while Section 7.6 provides the thesis conclusion.

7.1 Assessment of the thesis objectives and methodology.

As the thesis title suggests and as anticipated in the introduction to Chapter 1, the narrative strategy for portraying the West-Central sub-region drew on the thesis title — Social inclusion: Policy, practice, people and place — repeatedly focusing on five predominant concerns which emerged from the literature review:

1. The concept of social inclusion as a lens through which to view the urban regeneration policy agenda, thus helping to create a more equitable society for all and leading to more effective, coordinated governance arrangements.
2. The policies adopted by governments and agencies to deal with complex issues of socio-economic disadvantage.
3. The practice of these policies.
4. The impacts of these policies and practices on the people resident in the sub-region.
5. The lessons that can be drawn for the place that is West-Central Sydney.

Box 7.1 now revisits the thesis objectives as set out previously in Section 1.4 Box 1.1 ‘Thesis methodology’ and briefly comments on how these questions were addressed in order to reach the research project’s three objectives, plus further clarification of the location of the arguments in each of the Chapter sections.
### Box 7.1 Assessment of thesis objectives and methodology

**Thesis objective 1:** Mobilise social inclusion as a framework to develop better conceptual understandings of the relationship between housing, employment and transport policies and the underpinning governance arrangements.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Where predominantly addressed</th>
<th>Assessment of research objectives</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Chapter 1 introduced the concepts of social inclusion and exclusion and described the disadvantage produced by the complex frame of housing, employment and transport issues.</td>
<td>The social inclusion framework helped to elucidate the importance of the relationship between housing, employment and transport policies that are currently considered in isolation. The concept of social inclusion then became pivotal to the remaining chapters.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chapter 2 established the reasons for selecting specific suburbs in West-Central for the case study and provided a spatial and demographic overview of West-Central.</td>
<td>Combining theoretical analysis, quantitative and qualitative empirical data, and the conclusions to Chapter 2 led to an investigation of the development of social inclusion as a socio-spatial concept.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chapter 3 discussed the role of social inclusion and explored its use across the key jurisdictions of housing, employment and transport.</td>
<td>Chapter 3 demonstrated the policy outcomes deriving specifically from a social inclusion framework to address the complex, interconnected issues of disadvantage. It re-worked understandings of poverty, evoking the need for interventions to be inclusive and spatially aligned; calling for coordinated national objectives and integrated strategies for greater equity.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chapter 4 provided a history of the nation state’s role in regeneration, drawing on in-depth research on Glasgow.</td>
<td>Chapter 4 elevated urban regeneration as a policy concern and married it to the concept of social inclusion; demonstrating the capacity of interventionist strategies to deliver improved social outcomes and the importance of addressing the empirical relationship between the three policy areas in the lives of residents and the need for government intervention in urban regeneration.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chapter 5 interrogated the key planning issues of housing, jobs and transport provision at the regional scale; synthesising from the primary source a wealth of evidence provided by the key informants into the sub-region’s disadvantage.</td>
<td>Chapter 5 pinpointed the policy implications for urban governance at the regional scale; demonstrating the inability of successive governments to manage urban development. The interview findings exposed the inadequacies of current policies and the importance of considering the social impacts on existing residents.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chapter 6 assessed the extent to which the intersection of urban regeneration and social inclusion concepts impacted on the West-Central Sydney sub-region.</td>
<td>Chapter 6 identified the complex governance arrangements hindering articulation of West-Central’s needs which require greater equity in decision making.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
**Thesis objective 2:** Critically assess how housing, employment, transport and governance measures in a context of urban regeneration could add social and economic value to households in the West-Central sub-region.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Section 1.3 reviewed previous research into the long-term disadvantage of the older suburbs.</td>
<td>Assessment of the previous research revealed a spatial blindness to the increasing socio-economic polarisation across the SMR and the need to consider the multi-dimensional aspects of disadvantage.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Section 2.1 revealed the complex spatial and demographic context of West-Central, illustrating the limitations of current housing and employment projections.</td>
<td>Section 2.1 examined the issues of housing affordability, limited economic resources and employment; alongside justice, well-being, mobility and social and political participation, in the context of social inclusion.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Section 2.2 reviewed previous research highlighting processes contributing to the long-term disadvantage of West-Central’s older suburbs and a continuing policy failure to address the sub-region’s issues.</td>
<td>The conclusions drawn from Chapter 2 and the review of the social inclusion literature in 3.1 helped generate the research questions to key regional informants. These findings prompted the research emphasis on the multi-dimensional social and spatial aspects of social exclusion in West-Central, by seeking to unpack the processes that cause people to become socio-economically disadvantaged in the first place.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chapter 3 traced the nation state’s shift from government to governance. Section 3.2 reviewed policy-related literature across a range of disciplines.</td>
<td>Chapter 3 revealed how social exclusion and inclusion concepts have been mobilized both overseas and in Australia to deal with poverty and disadvantage but require intervention from a centralised power.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chapter 4 examined international experience in urban regeneration drawing important lessons for Australia.</td>
<td>Chapter 4 demonstrated how the concept of social inclusion has been operationalised and the empirical relationship of urban policies in the lives of residents.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chapter 5 critiqued previous metropolitan strategies for their policy approach to housing, employment and transport. Chapters 5 and 6 reported the findings from a series of interviews conducted with key informants.</td>
<td>The interview findings demonstrated how in West-Central the intersection of urban regeneration and social inclusion objectives required consideration of the interrelationship between the policy areas of housing, employment and transport. An examination of the secondary data plus a review of policies and the findings from the interviews exposed the inadequacies of the current housing/employment/transport policies, demonstrating the importance of considering these policies in a socially integrated and spatial way.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chapter 6 presented a critique of how the strategic studies, policies and urban regeneration practices impact negatively upon West-Central.</td>
<td>Drawing on the testimonies of the interviewees, Chapter 6 provided real evidence of the way social and economic value could be added to West-Central.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Chapter 7: Summary and policy conclusions

**Thesis objective 3:** In light of selected overseas interventions, examine the effectiveness of planning policy in Sydney particularly pertaining to the social inclusion agenda.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Where predominantly addressed</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Chapter 3 reflected on the contemporary debates and urban changes framing approaches to social inclusion in cities</td>
<td>Chapter 3 showed how fiscally prudent governments dismantled redistributive urban policies, favouring neo-liberal initiatives, technological innovation and labour market flexibility.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chapter 4 examined international experience in urban regeneration and provided a major overview of policy interventions in the UK. Sections 4.2 and 4.3 examined the capacity for interventionist policies to deliver better social outcomes. Section 4.5 discussed the approach to urban regeneration in Australia.</td>
<td>Chapter 4 showed how improvements in resident well-being involve more than just household circumstances, but is generated by the quality of their immediate surroundings. It revealed the importance of urban regeneration in increasing social inclusion but necessitating working at a local scale as opposed to attempting major structural changes to urban forms.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chapter 5 examined the impact of planning policies in respect of housing, employment and transport issues for West-Central’s residents</td>
<td>Chapter 5 revealed the micro-level disadvantage of poor infrastructure provision.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chapter 6 revealed how mechanisms for public interventions in regeneration of the disadvantaged older suburbs are lacking and this presents a major governance challenge.</td>
<td>The interview text in Chapter 6 was analysed and using the key informants’ deep and rich vein of practical experience helped the thesis demonstrate how economic value can be increased in West-Central when liveability factors score highly.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chapter 7 summarised the hierarchy of choices West-Central faces and identified further opportunities for greater policy coordination and the opportunities for development of further alliances between agencies</td>
<td>The thesis was determined to make practical policy conclusions with policy recommendations made throughout the thesis. Chapter 7 synthesised these conclusions and demonstrated how the changing role of the state and the complex interrelated nature of West-Central’s deficiencies can be usefully tackled through urban regeneration based on a social inclusion agenda.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Objective 1:** The first objective of this research was to mobilise social inclusion as a framework to develop better conceptual understandings of the relationship between housing, employment and transport policies and the underpinning governance arrangements.

Chapters 1 and 2 described the disadvantage produced by the complex frame of housing, employment and transport issues. The use of a combination of theoretical analysis, quantitative and qualitative empirical data led to an investigation of the development of social inclusion as a socio-spatial concept.

As Section 3.3 demonstrated, the social inclusion and exclusion concepts have made a valuable contribution to understandings of poverty, disadvantage and territorial planning. While discovering a differing emphasis across international
Chapter 7: Summary and policy conclusions

jurisdictions, the research found that adopting a social inclusion agenda could strengthen the nation state’s role in urban regeneration and so improve the social, economic and physical condition of areas undergoing transition and decline.

Chapter 1 demonstrated the importance of working at both micro and macro levels, to deal with the plurality of urban life. Using a combination of urban theory with analysis of quantitative and qualitative methods and documentary research, the thesis drew on findings from urban studies, town planning, geography and sociology and an analysis of local contemporary political and economic contexts. Following this investigation, the thesis thereafter demonstrated the power of a mixed method approach to addressing urban disadvantage, coupled with statistical analyses and integration with a small number of academic studies in Chapter 2. Gathering data from a range of sources, using a variety of techniques, overcame difficulties stemming from studies relying on ‘single theory, single method and a single set of data’ (Minichello, 1990:223).

Chapter 3 traced the idea of the social inclusion narrative, describing how contemporary nation states have focused on social exclusion and inclusion to deal with socio-economic disadvantage. Section 3.2 explored how the social inclusion concept developed across the key jurisdictions of housing, employment, transport and governance in North America, the EU and particularly the UK. This international research revealed how poverty is increasingly framed in terms of capacity to participate in society and hence is directly linked to social inclusion. Having assessed the territorial directions of different states’ roles, the usefulness of deploying social exclusion and inclusion to address the complex interconnected issues became apparent and evoked the need for interventions to be inclusive. The research found these concepts provide a dynamic, multi-dimensional approach to the analysis of disadvantage, since individuals were no longer considered to be victims but actors coping with both inclusion and exclusion, often simultaneously. Section 3.1 recognised the nation state’s shift from a charter based around ‘government’ to one based on ‘governance’, while noting the latter’s rather vague conceptualization, which points to the need for intervention measures to parallel that shift. Such intervention requires multiple, integrated actions between the housing, employment and transport policy areas; involving crossing from a national scale through to regions, local communities and down to the level of the household.
Chapter 7: Summary and policy conclusions

These insights provided the raison d’être for this research to consider the impacts of demographic factors — including socio-economic status, cultural and linguistic diversity, geography, gender and age — and status — such as homelessness, unemployment, a lack of empowerment and location disadvantage. Section 2.1 presented a spatial and demographic overview of West-Central based on Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) and NSW Bureau of Transport Statistics data, examining the issues of housing affordability, limited economic resources and employment; alongside justice, well-being, mobility and social and political participation, in the context of social inclusion. Section 3.3 concluded by confirming the value of adopting the social inclusion agenda to evaluate the nation state’s policy role in urban regeneration.

In addition to melding qualitative and quantitative approaches to investigating a social inclusion agenda, case study examples were integrated throughout the thesis as an approach to finding solutions; reinforced by largely intuitive procedures based on the author’s real world practice. Importantly, by choosing not to devote a separate chapter to a standard literature review, theory contributing to the methodology, analysis and reporting activity was embedded throughout the manuscript. Hence the thesis progressively introduced and assessed its key concepts, especially a discussion of place theory, urban regeneration processes and approaches to urban disadvantage and urban complexities, and the concept of social inclusion.

In particular Chapter 3 demonstrated how a national strategy, contributing to realising social inclusion objectives, could improve social outcomes, including factors such as exposing discrimination on the grounds of gender, ethnicity, disability, age, religion and sexuality (the EU’s equalities agenda). Hence social inclusion was found to be concerned with the questions of rights, recognition and inclusion in the processes of decision-making, rather than simply the outcomes of those decisions. These are questions of human flourishing.

Chapter 5 considered how metropolitan policies have failed to contribute to social inclusion outcomes, while Chapter 6 revealed how the lack of public interventions in the regeneration of West-Central’s older suburbs was contributing to social exclusion in the sub-region.
**Objective 2:** The second objective of the research was to critically assess how housing, employment, transport and governance measures in a context of urban regeneration could add social and economic value to households in the West-Central sub-region.

Chapter 2 introduced the argument that demographic projections at the SMR level do not sufficiently acknowledge the extent of the differential that occurs across socially and economically diverse sub-regions such as West-Central and within LGAs. Hence the thesis chose ‘the suburb’ as the optimum level at which to address socio-economic disadvantage, since suburbs were sufficiently large to enable intervention to be feasibly implemented, either within them or in suburban clusters.

Section 2.2 reviewed previous research highlighting processes contributing to the long-term disadvantage of West-Central’s older suburbs; the spatial blindness to the increasing socio-economic polarisation occurring across the SMR; and a continuing policy failure to address the sub-region’s issues. These findings prompted the research emphasis on the multi-dimensional social and spatial aspects of social exclusion in West-Central, in seeking to unpack the processes that cause people to become socio-economically disadvantaged in the first place.

Tables selected from previous research were initially reconfigured with 2006 Census data and later updated, following the staged release of the 2011 data in June and October 2012, to formulate the spatial and demographic overview presented in Section 2.1 (summarised in Appendix 2). Through the use of Tables and Figures and, coupled with a distillation of the policy perspectives emerging from government and industry reports and empirical observations of the findings, this overview demonstrated the major differences between West-Central, the five LGAs, and suburb variations compared to the Sydney average in 2011. The secondary data were deployed to capture and reinforce an understanding of the territorial relationship between housing, employment and transport policies and the complexity of the social exclusion and inclusion argument, in a systematic attempt to present these concepts coherently in relation to one another. Important information from the ABS 2006 SEIFA Index of socio-economic disadvantage revealed concentrations of low income households in the older suburbs located adjacent to railway lines, correlated with the areas targeted for urban consolidation under the 2005 Metropolitan Strategy. Unfortunately, the release of the SEIFA 2011 Index in late March 2013, proved too late to be considered in depth in this research, although it
Chapter 7: Summary and policy conclusions

revealed very little change in the disadvantaged case study suburbs since 2006 (Section 6.1).

The conclusions drawn from this spatial and demographic overview, together with the ideas emanating from the social inclusion literature review described in Section 3.1, helped to generate the research objectives detailed in Section 1.4. Prior to the interviews with key informants, an outline set of questions was forwarded to the participants to help focus discussion on the diverse issues under consideration (Appendix A.1). A summary of government targets for housing, employment and transport for their LGA was presented to the local government interviewees. This device effectively enabled respondents to elaborate on recent changes to the case study suburbs, drawing on information emerging from residential and employment studies conducted following the 2006 Census. Given that the interviews were conducted during the course of 2011, in parallel with the latest ABS Census data collection, this strategy attempted to keep the information on the sub-region up-to-date.

In order to gain a better understanding of West-Central’s residential role and function in relation to the types of housing markets attracted to the area, Section 2.1 examined the household and family structure of the sub-region’s residents, finding West-Central contained higher proportions of families with children, multi-generation and group households and lower proportions of small households than the SMR average. Yet, as Section 6.2 discovered, government forecasts persistently assumed a continuing growth of smaller households, and promoted the provision of small 2-bedroom apartments located in centres and transport corridors in support of urban consolidation planning objectives. Section 5.5 concluded that this failure to consider the social impacts of urban consolidation policies on West-Central’s residents was leading to socially regressive outcomes.

Sections 6.2 and 6.3 described how erroneous population, dwelling and job projections assumed that current average SMR trends would continue in a linear fashion over unrealistic planning horizons, with unsubstantiated delivery timeframes. Previous metropolitan strategies and transport plans, reviewed in Chapter 5, were criticised for failing to provide the necessary infrastructure to support West-Central’s population growth: these failures resulted in major difficulties in accessing employment and services, high car dependency and increasing social polarisation along spatial lines. Chapter 6 highlighted the specific housing, employment, transport and governance policies impacting on the sub-region and demonstrated how poor accessibility was contributing to
social exclusion and locational disadvantage. Importantly, Chapter 6 cautioned that the social impacts of urban regeneration processes, on both the current residents and an incoming population, may present the greatest governance challenge for the sub-region for years to come.

Significantly, the thesis found that international research furnished evidence that residents’ ‘state of well-being’ involves more than just particular household circumstances, but is generated both by their immediate surroundings and the quality of the physical and social environment they share with others. Section 6.8 pointed to academic research recognising that the economic value of property and land will appreciate where ‘liveability’ factors score highly, citing school quality and educational attainment, accessibility to good quality services, perceptions of community safety, the importance of public transport infrastructure and the aesthetics and the quality of the public realm. Put simply, property values reflect whether an area scores well or poorly on these indices compared to elsewhere. Yet policies and practices focusing on improving value are relatively under-developed in Australia, as Chapter 6 demonstrated.

Section 5.7 showed how micro-level disadvantage can adversely affect people, especially those without access to a car, or when public transport is inadequate. Sections 2.1 and 6.4 demonstrated the sub-region’s increasing car dependence; challenging widely-held perceptions that the most disadvantaged areas contain lower rates of car ownership, since residents living in the sub-region’s highest unemployment and lowest median household income areas had higher rates of car dependency than the SMR average in 2011. Section 5.7 described the vicious circle perpetuated by the lack of mass transit options and dispersed employment locations contributing to the sub-region’s high car dependency and adding to living costs. Section 6.5 demonstrated how locational disadvantage arose from a co-incidence of housing, employment and transport issues with a disproportionate effect on the most socio-economically disadvantaged residents.

This combination of theoretical analysis, quantitative, qualitative and empirical data helped to clarify the causes of socio-economic inequality and inequity in the distribution of economic and social opportunities across Sydney. Consideration of the ways in which housing, employment and transport policies could assist in moderating such inequality, provided the basis for recommending some policy initiatives to improve social outcomes.
Chapter 7: Summary and policy conclusions

**Objective 3:** The third thesis objective sought *in light of selected overseas interventions, to examine the effectiveness of planning policy in Sydney, particularly pertaining to the social inclusion agenda.*

Exploring whether large over-concentrations of single forms of tenure and socio-economic disadvantage could be avoided and local housing and employment opportunities broadened, necessitated investigating greater understanding of government interventions in urban regeneration both in Australia and overseas. Since government-led urban regeneration is relatively new in Australia, Sections 4.1 and 4.2 provided an overview of selected regeneration practices in the US, the EU and the UK in the context of housing, employment and transport policies.

The extensive review of relevant literature across a range of disciplines presented in Chapters 1 and 2 revealed limited understandings of the impacts of national policy shifts on West-Central, with rising suburban wealth over the last twenty years coinciding with an expansion of socio-economic polarisation and deprivation. Reflecting on the dynamic nature of urban change and describing national and metropolitan trends impacting at the local level, Section 1.2 demonstrated the need to understand the role of both scale and place in relation to West-Central’s socio-economic disadvantage. The importance of integrating housing, employment and transport policies — too often held in separate disconnected portfolios — to enable critical analysis of the inclusion and exclusion agenda in the sub-region, was considered paramount. Section 2.4 concluded this integration required extensive cooperation between all three levels of government and a stronger regional response to the wider structural issues affecting Sydney, to enable the urban regeneration of West-Central’s older suburbs.

Drawing on international examples to examine the effectiveness of government policy interventions to reduce social inequality, Section 3.1 presented a three-phased history of increasing government interest in urban policies: starting in the 19th century with the role of the nation state; followed by post-war urban regeneration initiatives focused on area-based projects; which were then swept aside by UK conservative governments from 1979 to 1991. During the 1980s an emphasis on local entrepreneurialism, driven by a top-down neo-liberal political-economic orthodoxy, resulted in a commitment to property-led regeneration involving public-private partnerships. New Labour’s late 1990s ‘Third Way’ attempts were criticised for failing to provide enduring solutions to disadvantage. Governments in western democracies were shown to be promoting competitiveness between districts, cities and regions within a global economy,
which is adding to increasing socio-economic polarisation. This research drew attention to how fiscally-prudent nation states had reduced welfare entitlement and dismantled redistributive urban and regional policies in favour of neo-liberal initiatives, technological innovation, labour market flexibility and organic growth.

Section 3.2 found that until recently social exclusion was widely used in the UK and the EU across a range of disciplines to highlight the interrelationship between unemployment, limited future prospects and a lack of empowerment. Yet, despite establishing a Social Exclusion Unit (SEU) by a 1997 Labour government intent on reversing the downward spirals of socio-economic decline, the SEU failed to differentiate between social exclusion as an explanatory concept and its political deployment. Whereas the EU embraced a social inclusion agenda, concentrating intervention measures to improve employability, the UK remained focused on apparent remedies to the social exclusion of residents in deprived neighbourhoods via the regeneration of run-down areas.

Section 3.2 found the variations in the contemporary state’s role in advanced nations came from different ideological and political positions, albeit with a common, active role for the state in mediating social and economic affairs and their territorial manifestations. Drawing on these findings this thesis argued for widening the traditional views of poverty and deprivation; to consider the complex causes and consequences of disadvantage; and to place a greater focus on equity through social inclusion measures in order to combat poverty and social exclusion.

Questioning whether the increasing social polarisation in West-Central can be resisted by improving access to a wider range of housing, education, job opportunities and social infrastructure — supported by improved public transport services and accessibility — helped reinforce the thesis calls for wide-ranging policy reforms. Section 4.3 drew extensively from in-depth research from Glasgow University investigating housing renewal, labour markets and governance issues, stressing that, despite a substantial amount of UK public expenditure on urban regeneration of the worst neighbourhoods, there was often no long-term benefit to the areas concerned. Chapter 4 concluded that regeneration in the UK was found to be focused on economic rather than social priorities; mistakenly assuming market forces would expand the size of the economy with the benefits filtering down through society; and governments in some developed countries in the last decade had become very risk adverse. Clearly, social priorities in the UK were sacrificed in the interests of economic success and what proved to be a misguided reliance on market efficiency.
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In fact, de-concentrating deprivation combined with activities to attract higher income earners to live in an ‘improved’ neighbourhood in the UK was resulting in community dispersal and destruction of local support networks. As noted in Section 4.2, these remain contentious issues. Hence a key lesson from international and local experience in neighbourhood regeneration over the last decade, described in Sections 4.4 and 4.5, was that ‘joined up’ problems required ‘joined up solutions’, since partnership and place management approaches are proven as the most effective and sustainable outcomes over the long-term, based on the premise that you ‘tackle everything or you tackle nothing’. Consequently what is needed is a comprehensive and inclusive approach that draws together all stakeholders in planning to address the full range of issues and challenges.

Section 4.4 highlighted operational and strategic policy weaknesses and identified six spheres of failure of urban policy in the UK with a tokenistic approach to forming partnerships, summarised in Boxes 4.3 and 4.4. Following consideration of these impacts overseas, important conclusions were able to be drawn as to best practice principles for urban regeneration (see especially Box 4.5). Section 4.6 highlighted the importance of adopting a social mix policy to address social exclusion related to housing provision, citing three case study findings in Fairfield and Liverpool in south-west Sydney, as briefly described in Appendix 6. The research findings from these four earlier chapters informed the critiques of NSW policy directions in Chapter 5 and the specific policy impacts on the West-Central sub-region in Chapter 6.

Analysis of a succession of NSW metropolitan strategies and other sectoral plans (Sections 5.1 and 5.2) demonstrated limited government understanding of how interconnected housing, employment and transport policies produce inequality, and a poor appreciation of the changes needed for sensitive urban regeneration. Section 5.4 reflected on appropriate 21st century planning principles for Sydney and concluded that sustainable cities should provide equitable access to services and facilities, more opportunities for local political participation by residents and improved economic vitality. Sections 5.5 to 5.7 distilled the issues and paradoxes experienced in West-Central due to the separation of housing, employment and transport infrastructure policies; with Chapters 5 and 6 concluding this demonstrated the need for policy integration with significant land use planning and governance implications.

The interviewee comments and my own working experience in Western Sydney, helped to focus attention on aspects of housing (tenure, density, dwelling size
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and location); employment (labour market access, poor education and participation levels); and locational disadvantage (high car dependency and poor public transport provision) — all indicators of social inclusion and exclusion. The interview questions sought to unpack the reasons behind West-Central’s particular ongoing disadvantage; for instance, why the increasing socio-economic divide in Western Sydney — arguably the nation’s third largest regional economy — was not given greater attention in national policy or social/scientific enquiry; how low patterns of public expenditure in West-Central could be justified; and why development of social infrastructure is rarely considered a form of public investment in Australia. Chapter 6 revealed worsening social disadvantage — manifest in long-evident regional differentials in income, educational attainment and employment status (described in Section 2.1) — occurring in some of the older suburbs afflicted by distinct combinations of social exclusion, transport poverty and location inaccessibility in West-Central Sydney.

The following section now summarises the empirical findings of the thesis, demonstrating how a combination of housing, employment and transport issues is contributing to West-Central’s socio-economic disadvantage.

7.2  Synthesis of empirical findings

This research found that West-Central sub-region’s issues are complex and enduring and require better understanding. Notably, private renters’ needs are neglected and the wider issues of the market’s inability to improve equality, or at least prevent increasing inequity, are not being addressed. While policymakers are alert to the disadvantage concentrated in the older public housing estates — and draw on social capital and community building approaches to urban regeneration — the scant attention given to clusters of disadvantaged, low cost private rental housing areas in West-Central has meant no effective regeneration programs or much-needed social interventions. This confirmed the previous research findings, exposing the increasing socio-economic polarisation occurring across the SMR and a continuing failure to address the sub-region’s ongoing physical, social and environmental decay. This awareness prompted the research emphasis on uncovering the multi-dimensional social and spatial aspects of social exclusion.

Section 2.2 demonstrated that Sydney’s urban disadvantage is not an inner city phenomenon as might be found in US or European cities. It is also incorrect to characterise the outer and middle ring suburbs as universally disadvantaged. West-Central contains growing pockets of relatively affluent communities and
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social exclusion is not tenure specific. While narrowing the focus of social housing to an option of last resort — resulting in estates containing exceptionally high concentrations of vulnerable households — increasing proportions of equally disadvantaged communities inhabit West-Central’s private rental stock, living in poor quality, insecure accommodation, with many paying unaffordable rents. The spatial and demographic profile in Section 2.1 revealed West-Central’s distinctive demographic character comprised elevated proportions of low income earners and very young families, with high unemployment and low employment participation rates. West-Central Sydney accommodates the most ethnically and culturally diverse population in Sydney. Also, increasing proportions of residents lack English proficiency skills. Importantly, much urban social disadvantage in West-Central’s private residential areas was found to be incipient and invisible to some analysts and policy-makers.

Yet, as Chapters 1 and 6 demonstrated, West-Central is targeted for major population growth, with significant housing, employment and transport implications. Section 2.2 described how when people ‘get on’ they move out of the area, leaving behind concentrations of disadvantage, with both social and physical impacts. Hence, through this ‘churn’ the middle income market is being sucked out of the sub-region leaving behind the very poor and households with little choice in where they live and work. These disadvantaged households are now concentrated in West-Central’s older suburbs located adjacent to the railway lines. In this context the mechanisms for public interventions were found to be lacking, resulting in major planning deficits for the sub-region.

At the macro level the portrayal of the housing targets for the sub-region was found to be illogical. Section 6.2 described how West-Central’s housing markets differ markedly from those in the other two Western Sydney planning sub-regions. As an established urban area containing limited undeveloped sites, growth in West-Central can only occur through urban consolidation. In contrast to the urban fringe, where new masterplanned estates on greenfield sites are developed by major development companies, most of West-Central’s urban renewal is facilitated by small-scale firms on a site-by-site basis. The greatest challenges for urban regeneration in the sub-region, as identified in Section 4.5, included a limited over-reliance on renewing social housing estates and redevelopment of redundant industrial land. A further impediment is the fragmented impacts of knockdown-rebuild (KDR) activity on urban consolidation objectives, exacerbating the risk of displacement of the poorest households through this gentrification process.
Starting with a housing discussion in Section 5.5, it became evident that a lack of affordable housing contributes to the social exclusion suffered by West-Central’s poorest residents, with socio-economic disadvantage occurring through housing market mechanisms, high concentrations of private rental housing and social housing allocation policies. Previously considered to be low cost private rental areas, residents in these older suburbs are now contending with rising rents, a deteriorating housing stock, poor urban design, low provision of infrastructure and a strong demand for greater support services. While public housing tenants benefit from greater security, private renters risk displacement and falling into a housing gap situation whereby they are ineligible for public housing but are finding private rental increasingly unaffordable, with little hope of ever entering into home ownership.

Section 5.5 introduced the notion of housing careers and the benefits of social mix and Section 6.2 described housing policy assumptions that dwelling demand in the sub-region would drive the need for small apartments. The 2011 Census revealed a reversal of this household trend nationally, and Section 2.1 showed that West-Central has consistently maintained higher occupancy rates than the SMR average. Hence such complex demographic changes made the historical stereotypes of particular housing markets redundant yet, as Section 5.5 concluded, new housing supply remains slow to respond to such changes; leading to a mismatch between housing stock and specific household needs in many of West-Central’s older suburbs. Section 2.1 pointed to research demonstrating that the demand for multi-unit dwellings is split, with investors and renters preferring units (often strata-titled) due to their greater affordability and low maintenance, and owner-occupiers preferring Torrens-titled townhouses, villas or terraces. However, this study found very little evidence of efforts to better match the range of type or tenure of new housing options with actually existing demand.

The Commonwealth/State Housing Agreement focuses on the fiscal politics of a very small public housing sector, while at the same time urban planning, infrastructure provision, taxation and monetary policies are implemented with scant regard for their housing impacts. Despite a reluctance to intervene in the housing market, the NSW government’s role in housing policy is pivotal (Section 4.5), with many impacts stemming directly from local regulatory practices to macro-economic issues of interest rates, taxation policies and promotion of home ownership for attaining financial security. Government policies fail to address broader exclusionary forces and lack guidance from any national
housing policy framework. This thesis calls for new policies to attract private investment and greater state provision in the affordable end of the housing market.

Section 5.5 reviewed recent research assessing the release of land on the urban fringe to address the housing supply and affordability problems, demonstrating ‘greenfield’ development contributes only marginally to supplementing Sydney’s dwelling needs. Importantly, an over-reliance on land release was shown not to translate into effective demand when housing prices were beyond the reach of low and middle income households, and acted to exacerbate, rather than alleviate, pressures on West-Central’s housing markets. Similarly, as Section 2.2 indicated, in the absence of government interventions, urban renewal was unlikely to be economically viable in some of the locations earmarked in metropolitan plans and required a more comprehensive understanding of the drivers of supply and demand. Nowadays there is a growing public perception that purchasing unsustainable housing in fringe locations is unwise, due to high energy costs, rising petrol prices and poor public transport provision; all of which can diminish liveability (Section 5.7). Generational disadvantage is increasing in West-Central, with house price inflation encouraging over-investment in certain housing types and disincentives for older households to trade down. Conversely, as the population ages, more of West-Central’s older households risk financial insecurity in retirement having failed to pay off their mortgage debt (Section 6.2). The need for greater policy integration was demonstrated by the conclusions about housing, employment and transport policy in Chapters 5 and 6 and the land use planning and governance implications that were drawn from these findings.

Section 5.6 revealed the limitations of West-Central’s employment market and the mismatch between macro-economic issues and residents’ employment needs. Section 2.2 described how significant numbers of poor households in some of West-Central’s older suburbs are entrapped in areas of shrinking employment opportunities, reinforcing their low income status and effectively limiting their housing choice. Chapter 6 found that while these suburbs are earmarked for substantial population, dwellings and jobs growth, they lacked implementation resources and infrastructure support. Demonstrating a cycle of area decline and deprivation, marginalised disadvantaged sub-groups are separated from work, leisure, cultural pursuits, family and other social networks. The resulting social problems magnify fiscal difficulties for governments struggling with urban regeneration issues.
This thesis highlighted how the collapse of manufacturing discussed in Sections 2.2 and 5.6; the concentrations of people with low educational attainment demonstrated in Section 2.1; and the mismatches between employment growth areas and areas of lower cost housing, are further exacerbating the SMR’s social polarisation. In particular a lack of transport connectivity shown in Sections 5.7 and 6.4, the sub-region’s limited job choice shown in 5.6, the increasing proportions of residents lacking English proficiency demonstrated in 2.1, all contribute to the need for appropriate government interventions to address these complex, interrelated issues.

While some of West-Central’s suburbs are located close to railway lines, bus interchanges and large shopping complexes, many have infrequent bus services, few cultural and social facilities and services and little community amenity. Chapters 5 and 6 described how the inadequacies of the public transport system and the dispersal of education and employment opportunities compound disadvantage due to high transport costs. Section 6.5 cautioned that a combination of housing stress coupled with transport stress was contributing to community stress in the sub-region, while the over-emphasis on accessing Sydney CBD and other privileged areas in the so-called ‘global arc’ was increasing the disparity between Sydney’s sub-regions.

In areas suffering economic decline such as West-Central, economic factors, population growth, migration, immigration, and demographic shifts should not be ignored. This thesis argued that poverty reduction and social inclusion policies should be promoted on both social and economic grounds; industrial diversity should be increased, rather than confined to narrow specialisation; and employment opportunities widened to reflect West-Central’s diverse social structure and varying skills composition in different locations.

Chapter 4 concluded that the success of localism depended on maintaining the credibility of user-pays principles that rely on transparent transactions. Arguably, sub-regional regeneration plans require funding measures mutually agreed between the three levels of government — since under the current governance system local government is unable to fulfil its urban regeneration obligations.

Reflections on the interview findings. Chapters 5 and 6 engaged with the insightful commentaries provided by the interviewees, demonstrating numerous shared concerns about impediments to urban regeneration, the need for a holistic approach to social reform and recognition of the interrelationship between the policy areas to achieve greater social inclusion. Many respondents
described the spatial blindness of existing policies, the over-emphasis on housing issues at the expense of jobs, and the sub-region’s poor public transport accessibility. There was general agreement that the sub-region’s long-recognised needs had been neglected in favour of pursuing growth in more privileged locations. The fragmentation of government agency and departmental objectives, particularly the disconnection between the current Metropolitan Strategy planning objectives and a continuing transport focus on accessing Sydney CBD were highlighted. A failure to consult with regional stakeholders and NSW Treasury restrictions on infrastructure provision were all identified as hurdles to urban regeneration; showing the importance of mining the embodied knowledge held by individuals living and working in West-Central.

Section 7.3 now evaluates whether the thesis objectives seeking to address the decline and socio-economic disadvantage suffered in some West-Central locations have been met.

7.3 The contribution to the advancement of knowledge

For the first time, at least in an Australian urban setting, this research demonstrated the importance of focusing on social inclusion, rather than integration per se, to deal with issues of urban disadvantage, specifically through the dimensions of housing, employment and transport, and the underpinning governance arrangements. Significantly, the thesis mounted the argument that effective metropolitan planning necessitates having to deal with these policy areas in an integrated way, based on an understanding of the multiple aspects of social exclusion and the usefulness of deploying social inclusion to address the complex, interconnected issues of social disadvantage.

The thesis recognised a range of processes contributing to the creation of disadvantage, including demographic factors such as high concentrations of private renters and the erosion of relative incomes, plus contextual factors such as high unemployment and poor accessibility to facilities and services. The research articulated how the lack of a systematic approach to housing, employment and transport problems in West-Central was contributing to increasing socio-economic polarisation across the SMR. This case study demonstrated how metropolitan policies and local programs need to be based on an understanding of the multiple aspects of social exclusion, and be framed and coordinated with the aims of promoting social inclusion. Ideally, all metropolitan/urban region level policies should be coordinated through a focus on promoting social inclusion in order to overcome economic, social and spatial inequities.
Section 1.2 observed that, while the social policy literature describes the processes of socio-economic inequality across *space*, social inclusion and exclusion concepts also have a relationship to *place* — hence the thesis placed emphasis on both people and place, but does not include interviews with residents. Extending the research in this way was not possible due to time, resources and word constraints. Certainly the thesis lacks a community voice, and this would have been desirable given the complexity and interrelationship of the issues being addressed. Responsive regeneration necessarily includes local people in the planning process, utilising community cultural development approaches to the master planning of older areas in response to local needs. Hence future planning for regeneration of West-Central’s older suburbs should invite resident engagement, building on existing community values.

Chapter 3 established that social exclusion incorporates both the causes of, and the states associated with, socio-economic disadvantage and demonstrated how deploying social exclusion and inclusion concepts can make a valuable contribution to understandings of poverty, disadvantage and territorial planning. Despite finding a differing emphasis across international jurisdictions, this thesis argued that adopting a social inclusion agenda in Australia could significantly strengthen the nation state’s role in urban regeneration to improve the social, economic and physical condition of areas undergoing transition and decline.

Attention was drawn to the importance of providing an appropriate and accessible range of community services and facilities to benefit households, particularly those most reliant on the neighbourhood to fulfil their needs. Opportunities for resident interaction and participation in community affairs, attractive residential areas contributing to community social life, and greater housing choice encouraging social mix and integration between areas, were demonstrated to reinforce positive social relationships. Moreover, good quality design and greater availability of a variety of affordable dwellings could increase community acceptance of urban consolidation in West-Central, providing urban consolidation proposals are supported by appropriate infrastructure and improved access to a full range of urban services.

This thesis concluded that a lack of understanding of the social impacts of urban consolidation policies contributes to residential segregation and is associated with reduced quality of life opportunities. This is leading to an increased likelihood that West-Central’s future residents will be poor, and will remain poor, with an increasing risk of unemployment. Yet the socio-economic polarisation occurring across Sydney could be mitigated by providing more equal access to
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education, jobs, facilities and services. Significantly, this research highlighted the links and inherent paradoxes in government departmental and agency policies for West-Central. Greater policy coordination and more effective strategic planning — involving consultation and concerted intervention — necessitates strengthening the responsibilities and accountability of the range of agencies charged with urban regeneration.

The case study of West-Central demonstrated how opportunities exist through agency cooperation to operate a wide range of interventions to alleviate location-based socio-economic disadvantage. The interviewee responses showed that agency representatives with sufficient knowledge of the sub-region are willing to cooperate to bring about change. Interventions to improve public transport accessibility in particular, can be expected to produce good results.

Important dimensions of social exclusion revealed in this research are concerned with the lack of a voice for the poor and the socially excluded, political power and representation. This thesis shows how indicators of social exclusion are valid for analysing aspects of poverty and social polarisation. Earlier Chapters demonstrated the social exclusion manifest in the older suburbs of West-Central Sydney and this thesis sought to articulate more coordinated policy measures aiming to strengthen community empowerment.

Current housing, employment, transport and urban planning policies, developed in isolation, were shown to be struggling to catch up with ongoing changes in society. A body of international evidence (summarised in Section 4.7) suggested a fundamental re-examination of urban regeneration policies requires development of a new set of sustainable urban management skills. Many aspects of planning and urban development processes can help create desirable, socially supportive and sustainable living environments. Factors such as inadequate education and employment opportunities and poor transport accessibility to facilities and services, are impacting upon West-Centrals’ residents quality of life. These factors can, at least to some extent, be addressed by locational interventions such as improving inter- and intra-sub-regional transport links and job creation schemes.

This thesis has demonstrated how a more holistic approach to urban regeneration — placing emphasis on fairness in the distribution of resources, recognising peoples’ rights, the accountability of decision-makers and greater accessibility to economic resources and services — would encourage participation of West-Central’s residents in decisions affecting their lives. In particular the research has explored how policies and practices seeking to improve property
and neighbourhood value can be achieved without displacing poorer households in order to make a contribution to the re-orientation of urban policy, both in Australia and overseas.

### 7.4 Policy findings and implications

The extensive review of relevant literature across a range of disciplines revealed limited government understandings of the impacts of national policy shifts on West-Central, with rising suburban wealth over the last twenty years coinciding with an expansion of socio-economic polarisation and deprivation. Reflecting on the dynamic nature of urban change and describing national and metropolitan trends impacting at the local level, demonstrated the need to understand the role of both scale and place in relation to West-Central’s socio-economic disadvantage. The importance of integrating housing, employment and transport policies — too often held in separate disconnected portfolios — to enable critical analysis of the inclusion and exclusion agenda in the sub-region, was considered paramount. This integration required extensive cooperation between all three levels of government and a stronger regional response to the wider structural issues affecting Sydney, to enable the urban regeneration of West-Central’s older suburbs.

A national strategy, contributing to realising social inclusion objectives, could improve social outcomes, including factors such as exposing discrimination on the grounds of gender, ethnicity, disability, age, religion and sexuality (the EU’s equalities agenda). Hence social inclusion was found to be concerned with the questions of rights, recognition and inclusion in the processes of decision-making, rather than simply the outcomes of those decisions. These are questions of human flourishing. Having assessed the territorial directions of different states’ roles, the usefulness of deploying social exclusion and inclusion to address the complex interconnected issues became apparent and evoked the need for interventions to be inclusive.

This research recognised the nation state’s shift from a charter based around ‘government’ to one based on ‘governance’, (while noting the latter’s rather vague conceptualization), which points to the need for intervention measures to parallel that shift. Such intervention requires multiple, integrated actions between the housing, employment and transport policy areas; involving crossing from a national scale through to regions, local communities and down to the level of the household.
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The thesis explored how the social inclusion concept developed across the key jurisdictions of housing, employment, transport and governance in North America, the EU and particularly the UK. This international research revealed how poverty is increasingly framed in terms of capacity to participate in society and hence is directly linked to social inclusion. The social inclusion and exclusion concepts were found to provide a dynamic, multi-dimensional approach to the analysis of disadvantage, since individuals were no longer considered to be victims but actors coping with both inclusion and exclusion, often simultaneously. Social exclusion gained currency in part, by going beyond traditional concepts of poverty and deprivation and focused on both the processes and causal mechanisms; even if their exact nature remained open to debate. Implying agency — since exclusion was something done to and by people — social exclusion moved away from blaming the victim to examining issues of closure and discrimination. As such the term became a powerful, if pragmatic, tool.

The research demonstrated how the social inclusion and exclusion concepts have made a valuable contribution to understandings of poverty, disadvantage and territorial planning. While discovering a differing emphasis across international jurisdictions, adopting a social inclusion agenda could strengthen the nation state’s role in urban regeneration and so improve the social, economic and physical condition of areas undergoing transition and decline.

A range of data sources provided greater insight into the sub-region’s problems and to guide future policy direction. Reflecting on the housing, employment and transport policy findings and their particular relevance for West-Central, the research revealed significant planning hurdles limiting effective urban regeneration of West-Central’s older suburbs that needed to be addressed. This thesis argued for a re-examination of the principles underpinning urban regeneration policies, seen as lacking an integrated approach to addressing complex urban problems and thereby contributing to the growing socio-economic divide between Sydney’s older middle ring localities and the newer, more affluent, master-planned housing estates. As the research demonstrated the planning system of itself cannot deliver good quality, affordable housing or new jobs but, if simply left to the market, Sydney risks becoming even more polarised. Many of the governance problems emanated from fragmented agency and departmental responsibilities, often with conflicting objectives. A lack of urban financing knowledge and an unrealistic reliance on unsubstantiated
policies was identified. These governance issues all reinforced the thesis calls for the development of new skills in sustainable urban management.

Section 6.2 criticised the treatment of affordable housing as an urban capacity and numbers exercise, with an assumption that markets will respond, while ignoring years of market failure. Supply-side barriers identified included holding costs and expensive infrastructure requirements. Accordingly, Section 6.7 argued for joint policies, planning and programs addressing housing affordability, with more strategic local government involvement in housing provision and social interventions. However, it was also noted how these are deterred by inequitable local government funding arrangements and, particularly, cost-shifting in NSW.

The complementary contributions of infrastructure, urban structure and local assets are crucial to local job creation, requiring coordinated government and agency commitment to planning, financing and regulation. An effective metropolitan strategy should recognise the links between economic development, labour force participation and journeys-to-work. Yet, West-Central suffers from a spatial bias in the SMR economy that favours the so called ‘global arc’ and requires provision of a significant number of appropriate new jobs and improved to support the growing population.

Economic growth is unquestionably important but requires a fairer distribution of benefits to address the current socio-economic divide. Beyond the local and immediate economic effects of employment for stimulating demand for goods and services, greater consideration should be given to the wider social implications of economic growth. In parts of West-Central entrenched labour market access problems fail to deliver equitable suburban labour markets. Together, the loss of jobs from old industrial suburbs and limited employment growth in more accessible locations, makes servicing journey-to-work by public transport extremely difficult and results in increased private vehicle travel costs and congestion. Dispersed employment should be actively discouraged and replacement of old industrial and commercial lands with residential development must cease: and jobs, not just housing, should be concentrated in regionally accessible centres.

The link between employment and social inclusion is complex. Quality of life and sustainability issues, access to labour, infrastructure and markets remain continuing concerns. Yet West-Central requires a jobs generation pathway to compensate for the decline in manufacturing in the sub-region. Indeed, the research showed mounting evidence of unachievable job targets if the current
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employment structure persists. With future jobs more likely to be part-time and casual under the current employment structure, greater emphasis is needed to attract permanent, career jobs to the sub-region. Creating new jobs can help reduce social exclusion, but importantly social inclusion depends on the nature of these jobs, where they are located, whether they restore a sense of control and provide an acceptable relative status and offer future prospects. As the research discovered, social exclusion is not just concerned with unemployment; since exclusion from participation in society may result from interconnected housing, employment, transport and governance issues.

Inadequate transport services can profoundly affect residents’ quality of life. While income distribution, housing choice and inclusive neighbourhood designs warrant significant academic research, the importance of the role of public transport in preventing social exclusion is generally ignored. Decision-makers also appear unwilling to consult residents about local needs, or to intervene to limit development in certain locations to secure better accessibility outcomes. This thesis pointed to the trend for governments to withdraw from planning and infrastructure provision and to simply interpret their role as regulatory. Yet regional economic studies show that in order to drive jobs growth, infrastructure, urban structure and local assets are inseparable and have to be planned for, financed and regulated by coordinated government action.

Clearly, focusing employment in centres, supported by provision of public transport and child care infrastructure would assist accessibility. Exceptionally high car dependence, leading to widespread transport stress, is exacerbated by land use and infrastructure policy settings, particularly for those vulnerable to increased fuel prices. National policies should aim to reduce car dependency, rather than amplifying social exclusion among poorer, socially marginalised populations. Yet, accommodating more people in centres as opposed to jobs provision, does not guarantee a net reduction in overall inter-urban movement. Attempts to re-engineer the city at the metropolitan scale are not necessarily achievable or more sustainable and can be socially regressive. While some town centres have good transport links, generally most jobs are dispersed across the region. The majority of West-Central’s residents do not travel into Sydney CBD but crowd onto already congested suburban roads, exacerbating a huge infrastructure deficit, one needing to be addressed prior to accepting a higher density population influx.

Sydney’s transport and infrastructure challenges require prioritisation and integration, leading to improved social and economic outcomes in the best
interest of the whole city; in contrast to transport initiatives approached in isolation that are leading to increased disadvantage and inequity by privileging some areas at the expense of others. Such limited government understandings of patterns of urban disadvantage and the complex causal mechanisms — housing and employment sub-markets and accessibility issues, generating, or at least reinforcing them — require greater collaboration between policy-makers and academics to generate locally appropriate policy responses.

Significantly, the thesis found that international research furnished evidence that residents’ ‘state of well-being’ involves more than just particular household circumstances, but is generated both by their immediate surroundings and the quality of the physical and social environment they share with others. Metropolitan policies have failed to contribute to social inclusion outcomes and erroneous population, dwelling and job projections assumed that current average SMR trends would continue in a linear fashion over unrealistic planning horizons, with unsubstantiated delivery timeframes. Yet, government forecasts persistently assumed a continuing growth of smaller households and promoted the provision of small 2-bedroom apartments located in centres and transport corridors in support of urban consolidation planning objectives. This thesis concluded that this failure to consider the social impacts of urban consolidation policies on West-Central’s residents was leading to socially regressive outcomes.

Previous metropolitan strategies and transport plans were criticised for failing to provide the necessary infrastructure to support West-Central’s population growth: these factors resulted in major difficulties in accessing employment and services, high car dependency and increasing social polarisation along spatial lines. Micro-level disadvantage can adversely affect people, especially those without access to a car, or when public transport is inadequate. The vicious circle perpetuated by the lack of mass transit options and dispersed employment locations is contributing to the sub-region’s high car dependency and adding to living costs. Also locational disadvantage has arisen from a co-incidence of housing, employment and transport issues with a disproportionate effect on the most socio-economically disadvantaged residents.

This research demonstrated the sub-region’s increasing car dependence, challenging widely-held perceptions that the most disadvantaged areas contain lower rates of car ownership: residents living in the sub-region’s highest unemployment and lowest median household income areas had higher rates of car dependency than the SMR average in 2011. Chapter 6 highlighted the specific housing, employment, transport and governance policies impacting on
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the sub-region and demonstrated how poor accessibility was contributing to social exclusion and locational disadvantage. Importantly, it cautioned that the social impacts of urban regeneration processes, on both the current residents and an incoming population, may present the greatest governance challenge for the sub-region for years to come.

Chapter 4 concluded that regeneration in the UK was found to be focused on economic rather than social priorities and it mistakenly assumed market forces would expand the size of the economy with the benefits filtering down through society. In addition, governments in some developed countries in the last decade had become very risk adverse. Clearly, social priorities in the UK were sacrificed in the interests of economic success and what proved to be a misguided reliance on market efficiency.

In fact, de-concentrating deprivation combined with activities to attract higher income earners to live in an ‘improved’ neighbourhood in the UK was resulting in community dispersal and destruction of local support networks. As noted in Section 4.2, these remain contentious issues. Hence a key lesson from international and local experience in neighbourhood regeneration over the last decade, was that ‘joined up’ problems required ‘joined up solutions’, since partnership and place management approaches are proven as the most effective and sustainable outcomes over the long-term, based on the premise that you ‘tackle everything or you tackle nothing’. Consequently what is needed is a comprehensive and inclusive approach that draws together all stakeholders in planning to address the full range of issues and challenges.

Section 4.4 highlighted operational and strategic policy weaknesses and identified six spheres of failure of urban policy in the UK with a tokenistic approach to forming partnerships, summarised in Boxes 4.3 and 4.4. Following consideration of these impacts, important conclusions were able to be drawn as to best practice principles for urban regeneration (especially in Box 4.5). Section 4.6 highlighted the importance of adopting a social mix policy to address social exclusion related to housing provision, citing three case study findings in Fairfield and Liverpool in south-west Sydney (briefly described in Appendix 6).

Analysis of a succession of NSW metropolitan strategies and other sectoral plans demonstrated limited government understanding of how interconnected housing, employment and transport policies produce inequality, and a poor appreciation of the changes needed for sensitive urban regeneration. Section 5.4 reflected on appropriate 21st century planning principles for Sydney and concluded that sustainable cities should provide equitable access to services and facilities, more
opportunities for local political participation by residents and improved economic vitality. Sections 5.5 to 5.7 distilled the issues and paradoxes experienced in West-Central due to the separation of housing, employment and transport infrastructure policies; with Chapters 5 and 6 concluding this demonstrated the need for policy integration with significant land use planning and governance implications.

Reflecting on the housing, employment and transport policy findings detailed in Sections 5.5 to 5.7 and, given their particular relevance for West-Central shown in Sections 6.2 to 6.5, the research revealed significant planning hurdles limiting effective urban regeneration of West-Central’s older suburbs that needed to be addressed. Section 5.4 argued for a re-examination of the principles underpinning urban regeneration policies, seen as lacking an integrated approach to addressing complex urban problems and thereby contributing to the growing socio-economic divide between Sydney’s older middle ring localities and the newer, more affluent, master-planned housing estates. As Section 5.3 demonstrated, of itself the planning system cannot deliver good quality, affordable housing or new jobs but, if simply left to the market, Sydney risks becoming even more polarised. Many of the governance problems emanated from fragmented agency and departmental responsibilities, often with conflicting objectives. A lack of urban financing knowledge and an unrealistic reliance on unsubstantiated policies was identified. These governance issues all reinforced the thesis calls for the development of new skills in sustainable urban management.

Section 6.2 criticised the treatment of affordable housing as an urban capacity and numbers exercise, with an assumption that markets will respond, while ignoring years of market failure. Supply-side barriers identified included holding costs and expensive infrastructure requirements. Accordingly, Section 6.7 argued for joint policies, planning and programs addressing housing affordability, with more strategic local government involvement in housing provision and social interventions. However, it was also noted how these are deterred by inequitable local government funding arrangements and, particularly, cost-shifting in NSW.

Emerging large-scale influences, such as world-wide urbanisation; an increasingly ageing population; unprecedented climate change; oil, food and water insecurity and globalisation processes, need a connected policy approach. However, as this research demonstrated, this requires reviving some of the lost arts of land use planning, strengthening the role of social planning and greater
coordination, communication, cooperation and commitment across agencies to provide greater social inclusiveness.

Academic research diagnoses the causes of poverty and social exclusion and analyses the impact of policies on social outcomes, but necessitates further engagement with policymakers and community groups to deliver socially-inclusive regeneration policies. A nationally-integrated social inclusion strategy should acknowledge that the different policy areas of housing, employment and transport can mutually reinforce each other. Policies to combat poverty and social exclusion are the responsibilities of all levels of government, but there appears little convergence between those setting national objectives and the delivery of grounded policies. Ideally, given the multidimensional nature of poverty and social exclusion, social inclusion-related objectives should be anchored in all policy design, implementation and budgetary decision-making in Australia; but are hampered by neo-liberal governments reluctant to intervene in the regeneration of the older suburbs.

Despite its social, economic and cultural significance, West-Central’s problems remain largely invisible in regional policy frames, with national policies focused on non-metropolitan regions and rural disadvantage, while NSW maintains a mono-centric planning focus on Sydney CBD. Yet representatives of centralised departments having limited contact with the sub-region would benefit from tapping into the wealth of local experience. Previous government attempts to decentralise public investment and facilities in Sydney met with success only in health and tertiary education domains, yet the achievements in establishing Parramatta as Sydney’s second CBD through the relocation of government services — albeit over a considerable time — strengthens the case for further decentralisation. The legal precinct in Parramatta exemplifies how large-scale redevelopment projects are not simply planning decisions, but require whole-of-government commitment.

While the peak agencies for housing focus on broader state-wide or national policy positions, they are less concerned with the sub-region’s specific issues. Also, while residential planning and development issues are key concerns for local government, through its regulatory function and the importance placed on community well-being and amenity, no agency represents the specific interests of West-Central’s low income households, which suffer unaffordable housing and limited employment opportunities.

Broadening the new development agency UrbanGrowth NSW’s remit could assist packaging of land and encourage greater partnership between private home
builders, social housing providers and councils. However, removal of restrictions limiting regeneration to public housing estates and surplus government lands, while expanding the agency’s role and responsibilities in existing policy settings, needs greater financial independence and a relaxation of NSW Treasury profit-making strictures. Operating under existing development corporation legislation and deliberately targeting interventions to enhance value, UrbanGrowth NSW could grasp opportunities for capturing the betterment to pay for the necessary supporting infrastructure — an approach previously adopted in UK new towns — but underutilised by public sector agencies in Australia. At the very least, housing policies should provide incentives for developing affordable housing in targeted urban renewal areas such as West-Central.

An enhanced and well-maintained public realm can positively affect location perceptions, reducing fears of crime and anti-social behaviour. More guidance on the provision of attractive places, helping to encourage people with choice to remain living there, supporting businesses and retail facilities, in turn reinforcing and retaining value is needed. But this requires greater urban design skills than are usually found in state and local government agencies.

The Rudd Labor government’s 2010 Nation Building Economic Stimulus Package (NBESP) demonstrated how a national program to build more social housing required a coordinated government response, an army of skilled labour and stimulated the construction industry and, in turn, created more jobs. Extension of the program might help address the challenges posed by pending environmental crises, but requires re-assessment of urban management processes and responsibilities and different forms of more accountable metropolitan governance. While opportunities for more joined-up government existed at the federal government level through Infrastructure Australia, the financial support for the COAG National Objectives and strategic planning for the capital cities, it now appears to be receiving lacklustre support from the current government. Moreover, all NSW government activities require better coordination, with local government empowered and properly funded to carry out its agreed responsibilities. Without government intervention in the market, pockets of disadvantage in West-Central’s suburbs will increase as social problems concentrate and new investment drains further, risking Sydney becoming an even more divided and polarised society. This growing disadvantage is not only about income inequality, it has also to do with opportunities to lead full lives.
Chapter 7: Summary and policy conclusions

7.5 Ideas for further research.

As in most urban research, further case studies at the local level would allow more in-depth assessment of the regeneration issues for West-Central’s older suburbs. Given the extensive scale and multifaceted issues the sub-region faces, future research exploring the following topics could help to facilitate this goal:

- A study of power plays, resource restrictions, discursive associations, entrenched political practices and public and private administrations that prevent implementation of ‘rational’ policies.
- Analysis of previous research into the fate of urban policies and previous attempts at policy coordination in the period 1970 to 1990 drawing on the works of Alexander (1994); Fincher (1991,); Painter (1984); McLoughlin (1992); Mowbray (1994); and Huxley (2000), would shed further light on on the challenges to metropolitan coordination and locally responsive programs.
- Ethnographic studies to draw out West-Central residents’ personal experiences of urban regeneration would provide an essential contribution to the understanding of the value of adopting the social inclusion concept.
- An investigation into the role and function of a more empowered urban regeneration authority could commence by transposing valuable policy lessons learnt from urban regeneration of public housing estates to renewal of privately rented low income areas. This could then be supplemented by investigations of overseas experience of similar authorities.
- Further development of affordable housing design guidelines, subdivision layouts and building specifications and investigation into equity-sharing opportunities for lower-income households, could assist UrbanGrowth to demonstrate a sound business case for incorporating affordable housing for sale and rent within a range of developments.
- Research into the optimum locations for promoting employment, particularly office developments at transport nodes, could inform urban regeneration policies for increasing public transport patronage and reduce drive-to-work rates.
- Studies of comparative international sub-regions suffering similar issues to West-Central would help to gain insight into more efficient governance arrangements.
Such further research, identified throughout the preparation of this thesis would help to inform understanding of West-Central Sydney’s future challenges, variations and trends.

7.6 Conclusion

What stands out in the Australian context is our limited understanding of patterns of urban disadvantage and of the complex causal mechanisms (Gleeson and Randolph (2002b: 101).

This thesis re-affirms Gleeson and Randolph’s findings that the limited policy understanding of worsening urban disadvantage and its causal mechanisms — such as complex housing and employment sub-markets and governance issues in Western Sydney — are generating, or at least reinforcing it in a circular fashion. In the West-Central Sydney sub-region there is a clear and growing locational dimension to social exclusion in relation to housing, employment and transport opportunities, leading to increasing social polarisation and forming an additional barrier to low income residents’ full participation in a wide range of activities and negatively impacting on their abilities to lead full lives.

The key research concerns. The project’s first concern was with recognising the wider processes contributing to the long-term disadvantage of the older suburbs of West-Central Sydney. Second, it highlighted continued policy failure which risks issues of disadvantage becoming invisible to policymakers and practitioners. Third, it is mindful of the need for a process of recovery to learn the lessons from those failures. Fourth, it emphasised the need for the integration of key housing, employment and transport policies to provide a critical analysis of the social exclusion/social inclusion agenda — too often held separately in different disconnected portfolios — to assist social inclusion in this sub-region. Finally, it pointed to the need for extensive cooperation and a stronger sub-regional response in the context of wider structural issues affecting Sydney, with each level of government sharing responsibility for West-Central’s urban regeneration.

Social inclusion is more than just an aspiration for a modern city. This research points to social inclusion, encompassing social equity and justice, as a prime ingredient of an economically successful city. The concept is also a prerequisite for a city’s long-term social and environmental sustainability. This insight underscores the importance of policies for social inclusion and their role in effective urban planning.

Rather than simply an action to correct a residual social problem, implementation of a social inclusion agenda should act to drive urban
regeneration, but currently governments are tending to look at issues in isolation without taking into account specific community needs. Metropolitan planning is extremely complex, particularly given the myriad agencies and influential players involved in the urban development process and require much finer-grained understanding of Sydney’s spatial divide. One-off simplistic solutions are inadequate and there is a need for interrelated policies capable of solving more than one problem at a time. When governments only acknowledge the existence of a problem once they have defined a practical solution, this elevates some issues at the expense of others. The short-term thinking of governments, whose electoral popularity relies on quick solutions to visible issues, also contributes to West-Central’s disadvantage. However, the lessons drawn from the UK experience in urban regeneration demonstrated some of the political obstacles to the successful implementation of policy recommendations, as shown by the subsequent reversal of the rhetoric of ‘Big Society’ and ‘inclusion’ by the Cameron Coalition government.

Over the past decade in NSW a body of academic research and in-depth inquiry has demonstrated the breadth of issues that impact upon West-Central including: the need for socially sustainable urban renewal; the importance of re-engineering the sub-region’s economy; the lack of an integrated transport plan for Sydney; and the necessity to reverse the precarious financial status of local government. Despite remaining outstanding issues, governments could make a difference, using their planning, housing and economic powers to bring socio-economic advantage. But acting in isolation, the planning system cannot deliver good quality, affordable housing or appropriate jobs in accessible locations, with the likelihood that, if left to market forces, Sydney will become even more divided. Equality should be addressed, not just in a redistributive sense, but in terms of equal opportunities, requiring a more holistic and coordinated approach to metropolitan planning, viewing all the resource mechanisms of government — social service policies, economic planning and fiscal measures together with land use planning — as integral parts, inter-dependent on each other.

The major deficiency in all post-war Sydney metropolitan strategies has been the absence of adequate implementation mechanisms, which have largely arisen from constraints to funding the public services required to support development. An over-emphasis on planning for growth neglects consideration of existing residents’ life experiences, their complex histories and wide-ranging aspirations. While economic growth provides resources and investment opportunities, an inequitable distribution of benefits adds to the growing socio-economic divide.
Yet NSW urban growth policies struggle to acknowledge the link between land use policies, affordable housing, the need for more jobs and greater accessibility to facilities and services.

Broad planning imperatives to increase urban consolidation are insufficient to bring the required changes, needing innovative taxation and investment incentives; new forms of governance; and improved processes of state, federal and local interventions. Attempts to re-engineer the city are not necessarily achievable or more likely to produce urban sustainability and they can be socially regressive. This research challenged the notion that increasing the number of housing units per land area automatically produces benefits; concluding that urban consolidation policies should be re-framed in terms of how many people are accommodated or employed per hectare, not just achievement of dwelling targets.

West-Central is a culturally diverse area, targeted for substantial population increase, despite suffering deep disadvantage due to housing affordability issues; limited employment opportunities; poor public transport provision; insufficient major social and cultural institutions; and the malign management of many civic spaces. Spatial concentrations of disadvantage intensify problems such as: heightened fears of crime, disproportionately low education participation and attainment and inter-generational unemployment, often with significant consequences for the most socially excluded. Public housing currently serves a limited social (welfare) role, hence private rental’s housing contribution requires re-definition since it no longer acts as one stage in a housing career, but is becoming the only long-term option for many households.

Social policy currently operates primarily through piecemeal ameliorative programs and hence is limited to consideration of a probable future. A stronger, more utopian approach to the urban regeneration of West-Central’s older suburbs suggests focusing on a preferred society — assessing policies and programs by their contribution to this end. Equality should be addressed not just in a redistributive sense, but in terms of equal opportunities, requiring a holistic and coordinated approach to more radical social reform. Yet it appears easier for politicians to agree on the values that characterise a good society than on the institutional arrangements embodying them.

Urban planning policies should endorse the nurturing of social diversity and compassionate responses to disadvantage; recognising the interrelationship between greater community sustainability, well-being and health. Combating poverty and social exclusion requires coordinated alignment between national
Chapter 7: Summary and policy conclusions

objectives and integrated strategies for greater equity, with social inclusion embedded in all the effective technologies of governing to improve social outcomes. But policymakers and researchers are still separating urban life into different areas of study and failing to provide joined up solutions to linked problems. Hence a social inclusion agenda resonates for West-Central, by focusing on local neighbourhood regeneration of areas of disadvantage, regardless of tenure. At extension, a social inclusion agenda should embrace the links between housing, employment and transport policies for greater community sustainability, well-being and health. Three interwoven arguments emerge from this research: the first is for a holistic approach to framing policies that endorse and nurture social diversity and provide compassionate responses to disadvantage. The second is for recognition of the links between housing, employment and transport policies so as to strengthen social inclusion while minimising social exclusion. The third is for a review of governance arrangements, to better embrace a social inclusion agenda and the development of new skills in sustainable urban management.

A strongly articulated vision, that is also applicable in other contexts, requires a focus of metropolitan policies on issues of social inclusion, rather than accepting inequality as the natural order of things. This requires that future metropolitan strategies should undertake the following:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Box 7.2: Summary of policy implications.</th>
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<tr>
<td>1. Clarify the delineation of responsibilities between currently fragmented agencies and different levels of government in order to deliver joined-up government.</td>
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<td>2. Develop partnerships across different spheres of government, recognising that spatial issues and the well-being of communities are a shared responsibility.</td>
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<td>3. Renew the emphasis on ‘planning for place’, community development and social equity.</td>
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<td>4. Develop a funding model for the delivery of social and physical infrastructure recognising the nexus between population growth and service delivery in both new and established areas.</td>
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<td>5. Commit to a fairer allocation of scarce resources and investment capital.</td>
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<td>6. Invest not only in hard physical infrastructure and technology but in access to learning and higher-order job opportunities.</td>
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<td>7. Recognise that managing urban growth for sustainable outcomes for future generations requires significant urban financing innovation, a greater understanding of the spatial impacts of policies and new skills in sustainable urban management.</td>
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<tr>
<td>8. Realign policies to combat poverty and social exclusion so that social inclusion goals are embedded in all relevant policies at all levels of government, integrated with implementation and budgetary decision-making, and reinforced through on-the-ground programs.</td>
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<tr>
<td>9. Integrate housing, employment and transport policies to ensure they reinforce each other and thereby contribute to improved, enduring social outcomes.</td>
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References
Appendices
Appendices
Appendix 1: Interview participant information

Appendix 1.1 Participant in formation sheet
This sheet provided information on the following:

- Who was carrying out the study
- What the study was about
- What the study involved
- How much time it would take
- How would the study benefit the participant
- Would the study cause any discomfort for the participant
- How the study was paid for
- How the results would be disseminated
- Whether the participant could withdraw from the study
- Whether the study could be discussed with other people
- Contacts for further information
- What happens if the respondent has a complaint
- The University of Western Sydney Human Research Ethics Committee Approval number H8868.

Appendix 1.2: An outline of questions for interviewees
This research is examining the capacity of the West-Central Sydney sub-region to deliver the substantial housing and employment targets required by the Sydney Metropolitan Strategy, given that the area is already suffering severe socio-economic disadvantage and inadequate infrastructure. Previous research has pointed to outdated housing, employment and transport policies which, at best, are only providing partial solutions and at worst, can result in adverse social and economic consequences.

Substantial re-engineering of the region is required to meet economic and employment targets, including reassessing job locations, reducing car dependency, efforts to raise labour force and tertiary education participation, improved housing affordability, greater understanding of housing market supply and demand and analysis of the appropriateness of a social inclusion agenda in this context.

Non-government agencies

1. Please can you describe your current position (and any previous position if relevant) and how long you have worked at this organisation.
2. Why is the increasing socio-economic divide in Western Sydney, arguably the nation's third largest economy not given greater attention in national policy?
3. Why have the patterns of public expenditure in the sub-region been so low?
4. Why is there so little understanding of the impacts of national policy shifts regionally and blindness to the uneven spatial distribution of social and economic needs?
5. What do you consider to be the barriers for better urban outcomes for the renewal of the older suburbs of West-Central Sydney?
Appendix 1: Interview participant information

6. What do you believe would facilitate better urban outcomes for the renewal of the older suburbs of West-Central Sydney?

7. The State Plan 2006 talks about a focus on engaging with ‘disadvantaged’ and ‘marginalised’ communities. In your view is this an appropriate way to define the ‘problem’?

8. How could the issues be represented differently?

9. Are there opportunities to adjust policy settings in housing and welfare that are currently contributing to spatial polarisation and decline in West-Central Sydney?

10. Do you consider that the current urban consolidation objectives could lead to socially regressive outcomes and if so, why?

11. Will the establishment of the Sydney Metropolitan Development Authority (SMDA) result in better outcomes for the sub-region.

12. If so, how?

Local government respondents

1. Please can you describe your current position (and any previous position if relevant) and tell me how long you have worked at ... City Council.

2. Focusing on the older suburbs within your LGA that are targeted for urban renewal (e.g. around railway stations and low density ‘fibro’ housing areas) can you please identify their locations (A map of the LGA will be provided to confirm those areas with specific issues).

3. What variations are there in the social and physical makeup of these suburbs?

4. What gaps have you identified in the social and physical infrastructure needed to support urban renewal in these suburbs?

5. Can you give me examples of actions that the Council has taken to improve the social and physical environment of these areas?

6. What proportion of your new housing is being delivered through the rezoning of ‘brownfield’ sites, dual occupancies, extensions and knockdown-rebuild? In respect of the ‘brownfield’ sites how has the Council balanced the need to fulfil both the dwelling and employment targets set by the State Government?

7. In areas that have been experiencing urban renewal, are the established community expressing concerns about the changing urban character and social fabric of these areas? How is your new LEP being received and what is its current status?

8. A study into Socially Sustainable Urban Renewal by City Futures for WSROC in 2008 identified significant obstacles to achieving the NSW government’s dwelling targets for the older suburbs of West-Central Sydney. Can you give me any insights you may have as to how social inclusion and sustainable urban renewal can be delivered in this low market context?

9. Similarly, the North-West and West-Central Sydney Employment Strategies 2008 report identified severe constraints to achieving the employment targets for this sub-region, noting it will struggle to generate new jobs to meet government targets and community needs. What opportunities have you identified that would help to support job growth in this LGA (noting the proportion of residents currently work outside the LGA)?

10. A recent study by the Urban Research Centre identified above-average concentrations of small and medium-sized enterprises that are operated by owner/managers from non-English-speaking backgrounds in this sub-region. What steps, if any, are the Council
taking to promote these ethnic business communities as a core asset and a positive feature of this area?

11. Have any of the transport improvements (such as the ongoing rail clearways program or the strategic bus corridors) made a significant improvement to accessibility within the LGA and what further improvements are needed?

12. The previous NSW government established a Sydney Metropolitan Development Authority (SMDA) to assist with urban renewal. Do you think this would be of assistance in your LGA?

13. What are the major impediments to achieving sustainable urban renewal in your LGA from a housing, employment, transport and governance perspective?

Transport NSW

1. Please can you describe your current position (and any previous position if relevant) and how long you have worked at this organisation.

2. Why is the increasing socio-economic divide in Western Sydney, arguably the nation’s third largest economy, not given greater attention in national policy and why have the patterns of public expenditure in the sub-region been so low?

3. Why is there so little understanding of the impacts of national policy shifts regionally?

4. What do you consider to be the barriers for better urban outcomes for the renewal of the older suburbs of West-Central Sydney? For example is there still a Treasury directive that there should be no increase in service kilometres for buses except in ‘greenfield’ release areas, since this would appear to be a bias against urban renewal in areas such as West-Central Sydney?

5. In Western Sydney, despite an emphasis on the development of the ‘strategic bus corridors’, poor levels of bus services are still experienced in the middle of the day. Many criticisms were levelled at the ineffectiveness of bus review consultation process which was viewed as a token exercise. Are there plans to review consultation processes in the future?

6. The 2010 Metropolitan Transport Plan, covering the period up to 2020, seems to contradict the objectives of the 2005 and 2010 Metropolitan Strategies by retreating from development in centres and continuing the focus on Sydney CBD, how is this being resolved?

7. A number of transport studies have pointed to the poor accessibility and transport difficulties being experienced, even in areas that are located close to railway lines. Are urban consolidation policies adequately reflecting this?

8. The SMH reported on 6/10/11 that there are plans to convert about a third of the CityRail network to metro services, is this the case? If so what are the advantages, given it would be extremely expensive and would provide fewer seats?

9. Social policy is often viewed from the perspective of ‘people problems’, alternatively, there is a focus on ‘place problems’; yet ‘people’ and ‘place’ policies should not be seen to be in tension or considered in isolation. While strategic documents mention ‘equality’, do you consider that policy-makers are still separating out the areas of urban life, failing to provide the ‘joined-up solutions to ‘linked problems’ that are so often called for?

10. Are there opportunities to adjust policy settings in transport, housing and employment that are currently contributing to spatial polarisation and decline in West-Central Sydney?

11. The NSW government’s LEP for Parramatta in 2007 forecast 30,000 additional jobs over the next 25 years, along with 20,000 additional residents in the city centre. However, the 2009 employment forecasts now envisage only 11,000 additional jobs in Parramatta centre between 2006 and 2036, with Westmead employment expected to grow by around 9,000 jobs over this period. Since choices to be made about how these jobs will be
distributed between the CBD and other centres, should this in turn play a larger role in determining the best public transport investment strategy for Sydney?

12. What improvements do you see resulting from the establishment of one overall Transport Authority for NSW? Also, would the establishment of the Sydney Metropolitan Development Authority (SMDA), to ‘drive future transit-oriented and urban renewal’ result in better outcomes for the sub-region? If so, how?

**Planning and Infrastructure NSW**

1. Please can you describe your current positions (and any previous positions if relevant) and how long you both have worked for this organisation.

2. What do you consider to be the barriers inhibiting the delivery of urban renewal in West-Central Sydney and what policies are currently facilitating change?

3. Do you consider that existing governance arrangements are adequate for the task?

4. Do you think that policymakers have difficulty in communicating the economics that are behind urban renewal?

5. In your experience has there been sufficient community consultation to explain the benefits of urban renewal and reduce the backlash against growth and change?

6. Within the five local government areas that comprise the West-Central Sydney sub-region, are the local plans sufficiently up-to-date to plan for the anticipated residential and employment growth?

7. What planning hurdles have been encountered which affect the implementation of urban renewal objectives?

8. Are current infrastructure/funding plans adequate to deliver the new infrastructure that is required or to fix the existing shortfalls?

9. Are there any market-based levers that could be developed to help?

10. What will be the result if effective urban renewal cannot be achieved?

11. The 2010 Metropolitan Transport Plan which covers the period up to 2020 seems to contradict the objectives of the 2005 and 2010 Metropolitan Strategies by retreating from development in centres and continuing the focus on Sydney CBD, how is this being resolved?

12. Are there opportunities to adjust policy settings in transport, housing and employment that are currently contributing to spatial polarisation and decline in West-Central Sydney?

13. What is needed to address these problems? Is the new Metropolitan Development Agency likely to be the answer?
Appendix 1: Interview participant information

**Housing NSW**

1. Please can you describe your current position (and any previous position if relevant) and how long you have worked at this organisation.

2. Why is the increasing socio-economic divide in Western Sydney, arguably the nation’s third largest economy, not given greater attention in national policy and why have the patterns of public expenditure in the sub-region been so low?

3. While currently the Department is working to renew some of the larger social housing estates there would appear to be little consideration given by NSW Planning and Infrastructure to the socio-economic disadvantage suffered by low income residents in areas of private rental housing. Why, in your view has there been so little understanding of the impacts of national policy shifts regionally and blindness to the uneven spatial distribution of social and economic needs?

4. What do you consider to be the barriers for better urban outcomes for the renewal of the older suburbs of West-Central Sydney?

5. What do you believe would facilitate better urban outcomes for the renewal of the older suburbs of West-Central Sydney?

6. Previously NSW strategic documents in 2005 -2010 talked about a focus on engaging with ‘disadvantaged’ and ‘marginalised’ communities. If the ‘disadvantaged’ and ‘marginalised’ are defined as the ‘problem’ this neglects and distracts attention from the deep and disabling structures in which they are situated; such as the lack of affordable housing for low income groups, inadequate public transport provision and a lack of suitable jobs; ignoring the fact that the economic process itself is distributional. How could the issues be represented differently?

7. Social policy is often viewed from the perspective of ‘people problems’, alternatively, there is a focus on ‘place problems’; yet ‘people’ and ‘place’ policies should not be seen to be in tension or considered in isolation. While strategic documents mention ‘equality’, do you consider that policy-makers are still separating out the areas of urban life, failing to provide the ‘joined-up solutions to ‘linked problems’ that are so often called for?

8. Are there opportunities to adjust policy settings in education, health, housing and welfare that are currently contributing to spatial polarisation and decline in West-Central Sydney?

9. Under the Federal Government’s Nation Building Economic Stimulus Plan the Department of Housing has been delivering a considerable number of new social housing units over a short time period. Are there plans in place to consider extending the program in the future or to expand the eligibility criteria to provide more affordable housing for those in most need?

10. Will the establishment of the Sydney Metropolitan Development Authority (SMDA) to ‘drive future transit-oriented and urban renewal’, result in better outcomes for the sub-region? If so, how?

11. Over the years the Department of Housing has collaborated with local councils on a range of issues. Do you consider these strategic partnerships to have been of value? If so, what difficulties have you experienced and what opportunities do you see for the provision of housing in targeted areas that are in most need of urban renewal?

12. As the result of the recent change in government in NSW the Department no longer reports to a single Minister for Housing but to the Minister for Family and Community Services and the Minister for Finance. Can you please outline the reason for this change and what, in your view, will be the advantages and disadvantages of this change?
Appendix 1: Interview participant information

**NSW Premier and Cabinet**

1. Please can you describe your current position (and any previous position if relevant) and how long you have worked at this organisation.

2. Why is the increasing socio-economic divide in Western Sydney, arguably the nation’s third largest economy, not given greater attention in national policy and why have the patterns of public expenditure in the sub-region been so low?

3. Why is there so little understanding of the impacts of national policy shifts regionally and blindness to the uneven spatial distribution of social and economic needs?

4. What do you consider to be the barriers for better urban outcomes for the renewal of the older suburbs of West-Central Sydney?

5. What do you believe would facilitate better urban outcomes for the renewal of the older suburbs of West-Central Sydney?

6. The current NSW strategic documents talk about a focus on engaging with ‘disadvantaged’ and ‘marginalised’ communities. If the ‘disadvantaged’ and ‘marginalised’ are defined as the ‘problem’ this neglects and distracts attention from the deep and disabling structures in which they are situated; such as the lack of affordable housing for low income groups, inadequate public transport provision and a lack of suitable jobs; ignoring the fact that the economic process itself is distributional. How could the issues be represented differently?

7. Social policy is often viewed from the perspective of ‘people problems’, alternatively, there is a focus on ‘place problems’; yet ‘people’ and ‘place’ policies should not be seen to be in tension or considered in isolation. While strategic documents mention ‘equality’, do you consider that policy-makers are still separating out the areas of urban life, failing to provide the ‘joined-up solutions to ‘linked problems’ that are so often called for?

8. Are there opportunities to adjust policy settings on education, health, housing and welfare that are currently contributing to spatial polarisation and decline in West-Central Sydney?

9. Do you agree with the UN that a ‘social inclusion’ agenda could help to create a society for all and may lead to an increased degree of joined up governance?

10. Will the establishment of the Sydney Metropolitan Development Authority (SMDA), which was set up by the previous government to ‘drive future transit-oriented and urban renewal, result in better outcomes for the sub-region? If so, how?

**Member of Parliament**

1. Please can you describe the various positions that you have held and your involvement in the sub-region.

2. Why are the increasing socio-economic divides in Western Sydney, arguably the nation’s third largest economy, not given greater attention in national policy and why have the patterns of public expenditure in the sub-region been so low?

3. Why is there so little understanding of the impacts of national policy shifts regionally and blindness to the uneven spatial distribution of social and economic needs?

4. What do you consider to be the barriers for better urban outcomes for the renewal of the older suburbs of West-Central Sydney?

5. What do you believe would facilitate better urban outcomes for the renewal of the older suburbs of West-Central Sydney?

6. NSW strategic documents have focused on engaging with ‘disadvantaged’ and ‘marginalised’ communities. If the ‘disadvantaged’ and ‘marginalised’ are defined as the ‘problem’ this neglects and distracts attention from the deep and disabling structures in which they are situated; such as the lack of affordable housing for low income groups,
Appendix 1: Interview participant information

inadequate public transport provision and a lack of suitable jobs; ignoring the fact that the economic process itself is distributional. How could the issues be represented differently?

7. Social policy is often viewed from the perspective of ‘people problems’, alternatively, there is a focus on ‘place problems’; yet ‘people’ and ‘place’ policies should not be seen to be in tension or considered in isolation. While strategic documents mention ‘equality’, do you consider that policy-makers are still separating out the areas of urban life, failing to provide the ‘joined-up solutions to ‘linked problems’ that are so often called for?

8. Are there opportunities to adjust policy settings on education, health, housing and welfare that are currently contributing to spatial polarisation and decline in West-Central Sydney?

9. Do you agree with the UN that a ‘social inclusion’ agenda could help to create a society for all and may lead to an increased degree of joined up governance?

10. Will the establishment of the Sydney Metropolitan Development Authority (SMDA), which was set up by the previous government to ‘drive future transit-oriented and urban renewal, result in better outcomes for the sub-region? If so, how?

NSW State and Regional Development

1. Please can you describe your current positions (and any previous positions if relevant) and how long you have worked at this organisation.

2. Is the increasing socio-economic polarisation occurring in Western Sydney contributing to difficulties in supplying local market needs for lower cost labour in some areas; a loss of vital and socially diverse neighbourhoods; and adding to the social and economic costs of displacement?

3. Do you agree that urban consolidation policies based simply on job numbers, with no consideration of whether the jobs are full-time or only part-time, is an issue for the sub-region? Also we have had decades of ‘centres policies’ that aimed to concentrate jobs in centres when in reality, since 1986 in GWS, only 18% of jobs have developed in centres with the rest scattered across suburbia. Do you consider there to be a mismatch between where people live and where they work?

4. Is there a failure to see the potential for people to engage in the labour market?

5. Why is there so little understanding of the impacts of national policy shifts regionally and blindness to the uneven spatial distribution of social and economic needs?

6. What do you consider to be the barriers for better urban outcomes for the renewal of the older suburbs of West-Central Sydney and what do you believe would facilitate better urban outcomes for the renewal of the older suburbs of West-Central Sydney?

7. Previous NSW strategic documents have talked about a focus on engaging with ‘disadvantaged’ and ‘marginalised’ communities. If the ‘disadvantaged’ and ‘marginalised’ are defined as the ‘problem’ this neglects and distracts attention from the deep and disabling structures in which they are situated; such as the lack of affordable housing for low income groups, inadequate public transport provision and a lack of suitable jobs; ignoring the fact that the economic process itself is distributional. How could the issues be represented differently?

8. Social policy is often viewed from the perspective of ‘people problems’ — poverty, lack of education, unemployment, poor English-speaking skills, a lack of social cohesion, an ageing population etc. Alternatively, there is a focus on ‘place problems’ — location disadvantage, high car dependency, increasing congestion, ageing housing stock, poor urban design, lack of attractive civic meeting places, rising oil prices leading to social exclusion. Should ‘people’ and ‘place’ policies not be seen to be in tension or considered in isolation? While strategic documents mention ‘equality’, do you consider that policy-makers are still separating out the areas of urban life, failing to provide the ‘joined-up solutions to ‘linked problems’ that are so often called for?
9. In your view are there opportunities to adjust policy settings on employment, education, housing and transport that may be contributing to spatial polarisation and decline in West-Central Sydney?

10. The 2010 Metropolitan Transport Plan, which covers the period up to 2020, seems to contradict the objectives of the 2005 and 2010 Metropolitan Strategies, by retreating from development in centres and continuing the focus on Sydney CBD. How does this apparent disconnect affect your department?

11. The NSW government’s LEP for Parramatta in 2007 forecast 30,000 additional jobs over the next 25 years, along with 20,000 additional residents in the city centre. However, the 2009 employment forecasts now envisage only 11,000 additional jobs in Parramatta centre between 2006 and 2036, with Westmead employment expected to grow by around 9,000 jobs over this period. Since choices to be made about how these jobs will be distributed between the CBD and other centres, should this in turn play a larger role in determining the best public transport investment strategy for Sydney?

12. The establishment of one overall Transport Authority for NSW has been widely welcomed what improvements do you see resulting from this? Also in your view would the establishment of the Sydney Metropolitan Development Authority (SMDA), which was set up by the previous government to ‘drive future transit-oriented and urban renewal’, result in better outcomes for the sub-region? If so, how?

**NSW Landcom**

1. Please can you describe your current positions (and any previous positions if relevant) and how long you have worked at this organisation.

2. As a State-owned corporation of the NSW government — created under the Landcom Corporation Act 2001 — can you give me an account of how you see Landcom’s role in urban redevelopment?

3. Can you give me examples of how Landcom has positively influenced the objectives of the Metropolitan Strategy and the NSW State Plan?

4. How is Landcom facilitating urban regeneration and creating ‘social capital’?

5. What drives Landcom’s key performance indicators and how do you balance your kpi’s of ‘delivering metropolitan outcomes’ with being ‘financially self-sustainable’?

6. In Landcom’s Annual Report 2010 it is said to ‘provide the link (balance?) between NSW’s social, environmental and economic objectives, the commercial sector and community aspirations. Through PRECINX Landcom is encouraging greater housing diversity and is exploring options for provision and delivery of long-term rental accommodation. While stressing that provision of low-cost housing is not a Landcom legislative responsibility it does claim to be conscious of moderate income households’ needs and stresses the need for a diverse range of housing. What is Landcom’s definition of ‘Moderate income households’, what proportion of low cost housing are you currently providing and can you outline what measures you believe are needed to ensure a more diverse range of housing can occur?

7. In the chairman’s report it was also stated that Landcom was ‘heavily involved in urban renewal’ and that building social capital is seen as ‘crucially important’, noting the importance of ‘unlocking privately owned land by ‘providing infrastructure close by’. Yet much of Landcom’s work on social sustainability appears focused on ‘greenfield’ projects and the emphasis in the current plan seems to rely on access to government-owned land. Can you give me examples of other urban renewal projects?

8. What is the organisation’s role in renewing existing urban areas with established populations? Do you see that the organisation will take on more risky developments, setting the lead for the private sector in the future?

9. While many of Landcom’s developments involve Commonwealth or State-owned land how much Council land is involved in its developments?
10. Do you envisage that Landcom will have an expanded role in relation to community housing providers for longer-term rental and longer loan repayment periods?

11. Under the Federal Government’s Nation-Building Economic Stimulus Plan Landcom is involved in delivering 1,300 social housing units over 18 months (directly 500 + contract administration for 800 new dwellings). It is also reported to be establishing a presence in the community and social housing sector (34 group homes State-wide). Is this an area where Landcom is proposing to play a greater role in the future?

12. A significant objective in the 2005 strategy from a housing perspective was a refocusing of Landcom’s role in strategic urban renewal projects and development. The plan envisaged that Landcom would perform a wide range of roles including land assembly, project management and the provision of, sites for redevelopment, to achieve the State’s renewal objectives. Now a separate Metropolitan Development Agency has been established to perform what appears to be a similar role. In what way is Landcom proposing to assist the new Metropolitan Development Agency?

13. The Annual Report states that ‘urban regeneration remains a challenge’ together with ‘responding to moderate income housing needs’, providing ‘affordable housing’ and promoting urban renewal (with 60-70% of new housing over the next 25 years forecast to come from urban renewal). Landcom has played an important education role (Housing Diversity Guide and draft Density Guide plus demonstration projects plus the Not-for-Profit Housing Partnership) can you point me to other examples of successful urban renewal outcomes?

**Appendix 1.3 Participant consent form**

Prior to the commencement of the interviews the respondents signed a Participant Consent Form authorised by the Human Research Ethics Committee of the University of Western Sydney.
Appendix 2: Demographic differences

Box A.2.1: Demographic difference between West-Central and the SMR in 2011

Ethnic diversity
- Higher and increasing proportions of residents born overseas, originating from countries where English is not the first language with many experiencing English language difficulties.

Population distribution
- Four LGAs are fully urbanised with higher net urban densities.
- From 1981-2011 West-Central contributed 14.3% of SMR growth and almost a quarter of the GWS population increase in only 2.6% of Sydney’s land area.
- Ermington suburb in Parramatta LGA is the weighted geographic SMR population centre.
- Higher proportions aged 34 years or younger and lower aged 40+.
- Older suburbs experiencing population loss.

Households
- Higher and increasing proportions of family households and smaller proportions of lone persons.
- Much greater occupancy rates.
- Sharing of housing occurs on a significant scale.
- Higher proportions of flats containing couple families with children and one parent families.
- Distinct dwelling type preferences affecting the area’s demographics.

Housing tenure
- Increasing proportions of mortgagees and renters (in both private and social housing) and decreasing outright ownership.
- Much higher proportions of medium and high density dwellings than either of the other two sub-regions but lower proportions of high density than SMR average.

Employment status
- Lower proportions employed in both full-time and part-time work.
- Higher unemployment and poorer employment participation.
- More clerical and administrative workers, labourers and machinery operators but fewer professionals.
- Manufacturing dominates but is declining.
- Only Parramatta has BFBS jobs.

Incomes
- The lowest average household incomes in the SMR.
- Lower tertiary education participation and levels of qualifications and fewer training opportunities.
- University entrance increasing slightly but declining TAFE attendance.

Transport needs
- High car dependency and increasing car ownership.
- Very little use of buses for journey-to-work.
- Increasing cross-regional travel, adding to congestion and journey times and increasing transport costs.
- Although an important employment destination, high proportions work outside the GWS region.
Appendix 2: Demographic differences
Appendix 3: What is meant by density?

Density is a measure of how many people, houses or households are accommodated in a given area, yet most NSW plans focus on dwelling density.

Dwelling density: In this context the lower the density the bigger each individual house allotment, but this provides no direct correlation with household size. Dwelling density also raises sustainability concerns, since most low-density development consumes more energy and land, increasing travel distances and capital expenditure for the distribution of services (Fingland, 2011b). While there is nothing intrinsically wrong with any particular dwelling density, a balance should be achieved between accessibility to employment, facilities and services, the economic use of land, public transport operations, construction costs, privacy, public and private open space, market demands and environmental capacity (ibid:16).

Complex medium density developments, particularly apartments, involve demanding design challenges. A combination of multiple related dwellings accommodating a range of lifestyles, requires a high level of amenity (including visual and acoustic privacy, adequate ventilation and sun penetration) plus the provision of communal facilities (open space, laundry and garbage facilities). Car parking — often a contentious issue — should be carefully sited to be convenient yet avoid diminishing the quality of adjoining open space. Developments need to respond appropriately to the context of their location, the opportunities and constraints afforded by the site and minimise their impact upon the natural and built environment. Residential apartment buildings are large, having a greater physical impact than individual dwellings, hence their design should contribute to the amenity of the public domain, the quality of cities and the impact upon inhabitants (ibid:17).

Low density: In Sydney refers to housing densities achieved when homes with three or more bedrooms are located on lots around 700m² to 2,000m².

Medium density: describes development of three or more houses on one parcel of land. This housing may be single, two or three storeys in height, either attached or freestanding. Generally medium density has some component of common property and is strata or community titled. This term also refers to a range of densities including detached houses on small lots, townhouses, terrace
or row houses, duplexes, triplexes, villas and ‘walk up’ apartment buildings (flats). Medium density dwellings are generally smaller than separate houses, containing up to four bedrooms.

**High Density:** refers to developments over four storeys in height, where there are at least 80 dwellings per hectare, and often more than that.

**Table A.3.1: Typical dwelling densities**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Density group</th>
<th>Dwelling type</th>
<th>Minimum lot size per dwelling (m²)</th>
<th>Net density (No. of dwgs/ha)</th>
<th>Gross dwg. density per suburb</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Low</td>
<td>Detached dwelling</td>
<td>1000</td>
<td>5.2</td>
<td>7.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>800</td>
<td>6.5</td>
<td>8.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>700</td>
<td>7.4</td>
<td>10.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>560</td>
<td>9.3</td>
<td>12.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>500</td>
<td>10.4</td>
<td>14.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Medium</td>
<td>Villa zero lot line/courtyard</td>
<td>400</td>
<td>13.0</td>
<td>17.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Semi-detached</td>
<td>350</td>
<td>15.0</td>
<td>20.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Row/terrace</td>
<td>200-260</td>
<td>20.0-160</td>
<td>27.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Townhouse</td>
<td>175</td>
<td>30.0</td>
<td>40.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3 storey apartment/unit</td>
<td>130</td>
<td>40.0-52.0</td>
<td>54.0-70.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High</td>
<td>Apartment/unit/flat</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>135.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Multiple apartments</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>135.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: South Australian Urban Land Trust 1988 Section 7.15

Different definitions of density will naturally produce different figures:

- **Net residential density:** is calculated considering only the residential blocks on which houses are built.

- **Gross residential density:** includes non-residential uses found in residential neighbourhoods, such as local schools and parks.

- **Overall urban density:** includes all other urban uses, such as industrial areas, roads, transport terminals and regional open space.

When NSW fixed upon a target of 15 dwellings per gross hectare for fringe development in the early 1990s (SEPP 25: *Residential Allotment Sizes*) — translating into a net target of over 20 dwellings per hectare — this dramatic trebling the density of traditional residential suburbs proved to be understandably controversial. Hence density calculations depend on where the boundary is drawn and what uses, other than pure residential, are included. This highlights the importance of comparing like with like.

**Population density:** is a measure of how many people are accommodated per hectare of land. Comparing journeys-to-work across urban areas in Australia, Canada and the US on a consistent basis, Mees (2009a) demonstrated similar densities in Australian cities and called for a radical review of urban transport policies. Mees calculated that Sydney’s overall *urban* population density at 20.4
people per hectare (pph), while lower than Los Angeles (27.3 pph), is higher than urban population densities in Vancouver (17.2 pph), Portland, Oregon (12.9 pph), or Perth (12.1 pph) — places which are often quoted as best case examples of the link between density and public transport provision. Newman and Kenworthy’s (1989) data on urban form and transport inadvertently used the gross residential density for these cities, rather than the overall urban density they used for Toronto. While their 2001 correction dramatically reduced Toronto’s density from 41.5 to 25.5 (pph), few policymakers/researchers in Australia acknowledged the different figures, and continued to maintain that densities in Australia’s cities are too low to support the provision of public transport. Table A.3.2 demonstrates the important population density variations occurring within each of West-Central’s LGAs. For example, while Parramatta LGA had the highest overall population density at 27.3 pph in 2011, the density of suburbs showed considerable variations, (77.1 pph. in Harris Park and 31.4 pph in North Parramatta). An even more marked distinction was shown between the suburbs of Abbotsbury and Cabramatta in Fairfield LGA and Pemulwuy and Pendle Hill in Holroyd. In the case of Pemulwuy, the low population density (7.85 pph.) can be attributed to the industrial land use located to the west of the suburb, and the lower overall LGA population density in Fairfield results from 30% of the city encompassing rural/residential land uses (see Table 2.5 in Section 2.7), again demonstrating the importance of boundaries.

Table A.3.2: Population density comparisons in West-Central 2011

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>LGA and Suburbs</th>
<th>Population 2011 (e.r.p)</th>
<th>Land Area (hectares)</th>
<th>Population density p.p.h</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Auburn LGA</td>
<td>73,738</td>
<td>3,247</td>
<td>22.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Auburn North</td>
<td>9,896</td>
<td>240</td>
<td>41.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Newington</td>
<td>5,316</td>
<td>90</td>
<td>59.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bankstown LGA</td>
<td>182,354</td>
<td>7,684</td>
<td>23.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bankstown CBD</td>
<td>18,141</td>
<td>254</td>
<td>74.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Villawood</td>
<td>3,601</td>
<td>312</td>
<td>11.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fairfield LGA</td>
<td>187,768</td>
<td>10,159</td>
<td>18.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Abbotsbury</td>
<td>4,203</td>
<td>497</td>
<td>8.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cabramatta</td>
<td>20,639</td>
<td>504</td>
<td>40.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Holroyd LGA</td>
<td>99,163</td>
<td>4,025</td>
<td>24.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pemulwuy</td>
<td>3,010</td>
<td>384</td>
<td>7.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pendle Hill</td>
<td>5,483</td>
<td>130</td>
<td>42.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parramatta LGA</td>
<td>166,856</td>
<td>6,102</td>
<td>27.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Harris Park</td>
<td>5,014</td>
<td>65</td>
<td>77.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>North Parramatta</td>
<td>11,842</td>
<td>377</td>
<td>31.4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: ABS 2011 Census data compiled by .id consulting and re-configured by the author.
Appendix 3: What is meant by density?

What is frequently overlooked in discussions about density is that even predominantly residential areas contain a range of functions other than dwellings, taking up a significant proportion of the land in terms of employment areas, shops and schools, roads and open space.

Figure A.3.1 illustrates how a typical land use budget for a community of 10,000 people deals with much more than roads and houses. Even assuming a mix of housing densities, the residential component rarely occupies much more than 50% of the land take, with 8% required for employment, 4% for schools and shops, 20% for roads and 16% for open space and conservation purposes. Obviously as the population increases so does the demand for schools. A government primary school requires 3 hectares of land and a high school 6 hectares; and other uses such as hospitals, universities and TAFE colleges and cemeteries are all major space consumers.

Figure A.3.1: Typical land use budget for a population of 10,000

Source: South Australian Urban Land Trust 1988 Section 7.15
Appendix 4: Housing forecasts

West-Central’s housing future needs should be identified for both the existing and incoming populations based on an analysis of the trends in the formation of household structures with groups of varying sizes and differing proportions of these households. Housing mix by sector can then be based on the percentage of house and apartment completions at the regional scale, over a period of time by the various building agencies involved.

**Housing mix.** The basic need for a policy on housing mix stems from the desire to improve on the standard all-purpose housing package presented by the development industry, which bears little relationship to the variety of living arrangements required by the range of household groups found in society and which may prove inappropriate for the population for which they are designed.

In view of the increasing polarisation of the functions of the private and public sectors of the housing supply system, balancing housing provision by area and tenure split and sites for special housing are all important considerations, if an over-concentration of disadvantaged households (such as occurred in Housing NSW estates in the past) is to be avoided. The start of housing forecasts should therefore consider the likely household structure in the sub-region, analysed in terms of age, sex, marital status, cultural background and family situation. This approach, adopted in a number of British New Towns in the 1970s, attempted to avoid the use of crude ratios such as average occupancy rates, which can be very misleading, since a small shift in average rates may disguise major overall shifts in occupancy rates.

Housing projections can be made using four broad household categories based on detailed census analysis:

- **Group 1:** Families and other groups of 3 or more persons, including young children.
- **Group 2:** One or two person households in the 30 to 60 year age groups.
- **Group 3:** One or two person households of statutory retirement age.
- **Group 4:** One or two person households aged 15 to 29.

This grouping has the advantage of differentiating between three fairly distinct categories of one and two person households, their propensity to establish separate households and the potential for these trends to continue.
Appendix 4: Housing forecasts

In addition, an analysis of housing tenure type in an area is an important component of housing forecasts. One submission to the Metropolitan Strategy Review (UDIA, 2010:19) claimed a 6% decline in the proportion of outright ownership over the past decade. Yet 2011 census analysis (Table 2.13) reveals 29.1% of Sydney’s households owned their homes and a further 33.2% were purchasing i.e. 62.3% of households were owner/purchasers — not dissimilar to the proportion ten years earlier (62.7%). Undoubtedly the 2011 results demonstrate a decrease in outright ownership in Sydney and conversely a significant increase in the proportion of housing being purchased since 2001 — mistakenly described by some commentators as a national trend away from home ownership. However, these authors failed to acknowledge the clarification of the distinction between ‘outright ownership’ and ‘buying a home’ by the ABS Census in 2006, hence demonstrating that the earlier 2001 data had been skewed.
Appendix 5: Transport alternatives for Sydney

**Sydney’s second airport.** In developing the 2005 Metropolitan Strategy, politics, parochial, factional and vested interests ensured that the airport issue remained the ‘elephant in the room’; with NSW and national competitiveness and efficiency concerns ensuring ongoing vacillation over the issue. Simpson described how the NSW Government showed:

... complete disinterest in city strategic planning and their ideological commitment to privatisation’, coupled with ‘the contractual incompetence of the previous Federal Government (Simpson, 2008:28).

This effectively gave Sydney Airports Corporation a veto over a second airport and negatively impacted on metropolitan planning for Sydney. As Meyer (2008) correctly asserted at that time, airports are important drivers of economic activity and major determinants of the spatial structure of cities. Simpson described further consolidating airport activities at Kingsford Smith Airport (KSA) as misguided, ‘because it fails to play the airport trump card well’ (i.e. by concentrating jobs in eastern Sydney), and is without the ‘strategic advantages of a polycentric city’. Noting how Sydney’s geography, with its urbanised development hugging the eastern seaboard, lacks an economic hinterland or a network of inland cities found in polycentric structures in North America, Europe and China; Simpson positioned the concept of the 2005 ‘City of Cities’ as:

... a spatial device to achieving a more equitable distribution of jobs and services, improving travel patterns and public transport mode share and creating and reinforcing local identity’((Simpson, 2008:28).

However, the 2005 Metropolitan Strategy omitted to make any mention of the possibility of establishing a second Sydney Airport. Questioning the ability of the six regional city plans to attract investment which, as Simpson noted, are based not so much on ‘build it and they will come’ as ‘zone it and they will build’, ignored the fundamental driver of urban intensification — the provision of jobs and the economic opportunity arising from infrastructure investment. Simpson argued that another ‘centre of gravity’ was required, with Badgerys Creek developed as an international airport linked to the Western Sydney Employment Hub and served by a circular high speed rail link connecting Central Station to KSA, Liverpool, Penrith and Parramatta regional cities. Simpson judged the extra 25 minutes travel time incurred an insignificant addition to international long-distance flight times. Notwithstanding the strength of such arguments,
consideration of the potential future role for the other regional cities of Newcastle, Gosford and Wollongong (which would benefit by improved rail links to Sydney CBD, the regional cities and any future airports) remain neglected and the issue remains unresolved at the time of writing.

A fast train line. Rather than focusing on Sydney’s airport needs in isolation, viewing the network of east coast cities as a positive attribute, a Fast Train Line — yet again under investigation — may proffer an effective alternative or even prove to be a long-term additional necessity for national infrastructure investment. Greater utilisation of Newcastle and Canberra airports (avoiding expensive relocation of the support services located around Sydney airport (KSA) could provide a much-needed impetus for urban de-centralisation outside the Sydney basin.

Creating an interchange for a modern fast train serving the east coast of Australia in Parramatta (at the centre of Sydney’s population and already in receipt of not inconsiderable public transport investment), with efficient links to Liverpool, Penrith and Sydney CBD, could utilise federal government infrastructure funds to significantly boost employment in Western Sydney and the sub-region. In response to global warming, the NSW government should follow the EU and Victoria’s examples by seeking to reduce the environmental and economic impacts of medium distance air travel, such as between Sydney to Melbourne (WSROC, 2009:33). Improving country and inter-city rail services, delivering people into the centre of cities with development of air rights above stations helping to finance the infrastructure provision, may provide a more radical solution and break the current impasse, but requires an integrated and more coordinated policy response and long-term strategic planning.
Appendix 6: Three case studies

Box A.6.1 illustrates Fairfield LGA’s long history of high car dependency resulting from poor public transport provision.

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<th>Box A.6.1: Transport in Fairfield LGA 1986 to 2011</th>
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<td>With train use declining as a proportion of journey-to-work in all areas of Sydney since 1986, this trend was particularly marked in Fairfield LGA (Fingland, 2003). Exceptionally high proportions (70.5%) of Fairfield’s residents still travelled to work by car in 2011, compared with 63.5% for the sub-region and 58.3% in the SMR (tables 2.22 and 2.23). Despite being located on a major railway line, Fairfield’s poor use of public transport (13.6%) in 2011 represented an 8.9% proportional decline from the 22.5% mode share in 1986, with a 22.3% population increase over that period. Car ownership was also increasing with 48.3% of Fairfield’s households having 2 or more cars, compared to 41.7% in 2006 (table 2.24) — with highest rates in the newer residential and rural/residential suburbs, for example, 78.7% of Cecil Park suburb’s households contained 2 or more cars compared with the 48.3% LGA average (ABS, 2011).</td>
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Box A.6.2 Wattle Grove case study

A 1989 joint venture between the Defence Housing Authority (DHA) and Delfin Property Group developed 166 hectares of land at Holsworthy/Pleasure Point (Liverpool), adjoining a residential subdivision containing 1,973 married quarters for army personnel in the largest Army village in Australia at that time. The development, now known as Wattle Grove, provided 1,700 lots catering for some 5,000 residents. While Defence Force personnel were found to be accustomed to moving on a regular basis, their families experienced similar relocation difficulties to those in socio-economically disadvantaged groups; with children repeatedly having to settle into new schools and housewives isolated at home unable to find employment (PPK consultants, 1989). Development of the site integrated civilian and defence force homes, providing a mix of densities and a wider choice of accommodation. The DHA purchased 30% of the lots to relocate their tenants, with the remaining 70% sold on the open market. Previously, the 1986 ABS census showed Holsworthy/Pleasure Point comprising a predominance of families with dependent children (70.6%), compared to Liverpool (35.7%) and the SMR (33.9%).

Following re-development, by 2006, the proportions of families with children replicated the SMR average, with much greater diversity in jobs. More than two thirds (68.9%) of the Wattle Grove labour force were employed full-time, a quarter worked part-time with the unemployment rate more than halved since 1991. According to the 2001 SEIFA Index ranking Liverpool was the third most Western Sydney disadvantaged LGA behind Fairfield and Auburn. Yet by 2006 it improved to seventh position; with Wattle Grove and Holsworthy/Pleasure Point suburbs (scoring 1097.8 and 1080.9 compared to 979.3 for the Western Sydney region); becoming Liverpool’s two least disadvantaged suburbs.
Appendix 6: Three case studies

Box A.6.3 provides an overview of the Bonnyrigg Living Communities (BLCP), a collaborative project between Housing NSW and Fairfield City Council.

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<th>Box A.6.3: Bonnyrigg Living Communities Project (BLCP) 2004</th>
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<td>Demonstrating ongoing collaboration between the state and local government through a $733 million redevelopment of the Housing NSW Bonnyrigg estate in Fairfield LGA, this project is a public-private partnership known as Newleaf Communities, comprising Becton Property Group, Westpac Banking Corporation, St George Community Housing Association and the Spotless Group. The BLCP project aims to 'build community' and 'reduce social exclusion'. A total of 833 existing social housing dwellings in poor repair are being replaced with 2,330 new homes, comprising 31% social housing dwellings and 9% sold to home purchasers. A further 134 dwellings are being built or purchased off-site, maintaining the stock of 833 social houses. This 15 year partnership is responsible for the finance, design and construction of all the new homes, together with tenancy and management services and construction of parks and community facilities.</td>
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