



Government of South Australia

Department for Families
and Communities

Living in caravan parks in South Australia

Nancy Rogers, Craig Hirte,
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1 Introduction

Caravan parks have traditionally been the domain of holiday-makers. However, the status and nature of caravan parks has changed significantly over the last 15 to 20 years to include a sizeable group for whom the park is 'home'. At the time of the 2001 Census there were 7,602 people in South Australia living in caravan parks, with the number falling to 5,500 in the 2006 Census. In their analysis of the 2001 Census, Chamberlain and MacKenzie¹ classified the caravan park population into three subgroups: those who were marginal residents (with no other accommodation; not owning their own van; and not employed full-time); those who had made a lifestyle choice (owning their own accommodation and generally older/retirees); and workers in full-time employment. Their analysis classified 748 people in South Australia (13.6% of the caravan park population) as marginal residents.

To date, there have been few studies in South Australia examining the changing nature of caravan parks as an accommodation option, including the characteristics of long term residents and the extent to which parks are an option of choice or necessity. Similarly, little is known about resident views and experiences of caravan park dwelling and the quality and nature of housing and tenure.

This project was conducted in response to this gap in knowledge. It was undertaken by the Research Unit in the Department for Families and Communities (DFC), at the initiative of the Homelessness Strategy Unit, Housing SA (DFC). The project has sought to identify the extent to which caravan parks are used by non-tourists and draw a profile of these residents, including their reasons for living in caravan parks; their housing pathways and aspirations; and their perceptions of caravan park life. It has also examined park managers'/owners' views of non-tourist usage. It should be emphasised that the study has sought to paint a picture of the complete population in caravan parks, rather than focus on a specific population of interest (for example, marginal residents).

This project has drawn on a number of information sources, but predominantly surveys of residents and managers.

1.1 Overview of previous studies

1.1.1 Long term residents in caravan parks – trends and issues

The issues associated with long term caravan park residency began to emerge in Australia in the mid to late 1970s, although it was not until the early 1990s that problems linked to this type of tenancy began to receive national attention². At that

1 Chamberlain, C & MacKenzie, D (2008) *Australian Census Analytic Program Counting the Homeless 2006*, Australian Bureau of Statistics Catalogue 2050.0,

2 Wensing, E, Wood, M & Holloway, D (2003a) *On the Margins? Housing risk among caravan park residents* AHURI, UNSW-UWS Research Centre

time, increasing numbers of caravan park and mobile home dwellers were reported³, a trend linked to high upfront costs of private rental and general issues of housing affordability.

The earlier literature was characterised by small scale studies and government initiated reports. By the late 1980s and early 1990s more significant projects were undertaken (eg an Australian Housing Research Council study involving nearly fifty caravan park managers and six hundred residents in South East Queensland and North East NSW⁴). Similar issues emerged in these studies, including the absence of standards in parks, the uncertain legal status of residents (especially in jurisdictions where legislation prohibited the use of caravans for long term accommodation) and insecurity of tenure. Other issues related to:

- discrimination faced by residents, including problems accessing services
- the concentration of vulnerable groups in some parks
- social and geographical isolation
- problems associated with high density living (including noise and lack of privacy)
- in some parks, poor physical conditions and management practices.

The literature, while identifying problems, also acknowledged caravan parks as an emergent form of low cost accommodation⁵.

By 2000 the literature noted improvements with regards to tenancy protection and awareness of issues related to caravan park living across the service system and government⁶. However, advocacy continued for clear minimum standards and tenancy and service rights - strategies argued as essential to bring caravan parks in line with other housing options.

In the early 2000s, a decline in the number of long term residents began to be noted in South East Queensland⁷. This was attributed to the declining profitability of parks, increased operating and compliance costs⁸, rising property values and demand for large, well situated parcels of land for redevelopment (providing owners with an attractive alternative to continued operation).

3 Industry Commission (1993) *Public Housing: Volume 1* Industry Commission, Canberra in Wensing, E. et. al. (2003a), *ibid*.

4 Purdon Associated Pty Ltd (1994) *Housing Choices for Caravan Park Residents* Australian Housing Research Council, Australian Government Publishing Service, Canberra

5 Berry, M. (1994) Closing address *Proceedings of the Newcastle Seminar* in Wensing, et. al. (2003a) *op. cit*.

6 Geggie, J. & Eddy, G. (2000) *National Dissemination Program of the Hunter Caravan Project: Final Report 1992-1999* Family Action Centre, University of Newcastle

7 Greenhalgh, E, Anderson, J & Minnery, J. (2001) *Caravan Park Supply in South East Queensland: Implications of changes for residents, community and government* Queensland University of Technology and Queensland Shelter, Brisbane.

8 Reed, R & Greenhalgh, E (2003) 'The Changing Role of caravan as a Housing Alternative and Implications for the Real estate Market' *Australian Property Journal* August 2003, p. 507-515

This trend was subsequently confirmed by Wensing et al⁹ who noted a national decline in the number and capacity of long-term establishments between 1992 and 1997, despite an increase in the overall number of caravan parks in Australia. This study also highlighted the persistence of problems and issues faced by residents. Poor standards were again noted with most permanent residents living with minimal amenities compared to conventional housing. Park closures or changes to the market/sector, lack of security of tenure (including tenancy agreements and rights of appeal), park rules and management styles were found to place some residents at risk of eviction and homelessness.

Recent reports indicate the decline in the number of caravan park sites and on-site vans (which are being replaced by more expensive cabins)¹⁰. Closures of caravan parks, particularly in coastal areas, have been found to result in significant hardship for residents, including homelessness¹¹. Concerns have also been raised about the impact of the decline in the sector on affordable housing options for low income households and vulnerable groups, especially in the context of rising housing costs.

Ironically, caravan accommodation is 'now considered both as a problem and a solution'¹² with on-going concerns about standards and risks to residents on the one hand¹³ and the loss of a low cost housing option on the other.

1.1.2 Characteristics of long term residents

A number of studies have attempted to describe and categorise caravan park residents. The 1978 report by the Centre for Urban Research and Action identified three major groups¹⁴:

1. 'savers' - newly established families saving for their first home;
2. 'trapped' - using caravan park accommodation for longer periods and often moving between different locations; having few alternative options and mostly intending to move to public housing; and
3. 'independents', mainly older couples who own their caravan and choose this type of accommodation for its low cost, reduced maintenance burden and flexibility.

9 Wensing, E, Holloway, D & Wood, M (2003b) *On the Margins? Housing risk among caravan park residents* AHURI, UNSW-UWS Research Centre

10 Prideaux, B & McClymont, H (2006) 'The Changing Profile of Caravanners in Australia' *International Journal of Tourism Research* 8, 45-58

11 Mornington Peninsula Shire (2004) *SEE-Change home and belonging: caravan park living on the Mornington Peninsula*, Mornington Peninsula Shire.

12 Newton, J (2006) 'Permanent residents in caravan, managers and the persistence of the social' *Health Sociology Review* 15: 221-231.

13 Wensing, et al. (2003b) *op. cit.*

14 Centre for Urban Research and Action (CURA) (1978) report referred to in Wensing, E. et al (2003a) *op. cit.*

A 1994 study of 600 households in caravan parks in Queensland and NSW found that park residents were older, more likely to be single males and less likely to be of non English speaking or Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander background¹⁵. Many were unemployed and those who worked were predominantly blue collar, with an average income lower than the general population. One in five households did not own a car; however a large proportion owned their caravan. Affordability was the main reason for living in the park, followed by lifestyle, a desire to move to a new area and, for some, a specific hardship or crisis including financial difficulties or relationship breakdown. The vast majority were satisfied with their park and facilities: there was little they disliked about park living and most did not feel exploited or vulnerable due to the nature of tenure. Limited access to public transport, the poor condition of amenities and limited space were, however, identified as major problems. Nearly half expected to stay in their current location for the next 5 years.

More recently, Wensing et al¹⁶ identified three groups within the caravan park population:

1. older people (aged over 55), predominantly retirees who own their dwelling but are renting the site;
2. itinerant and seasonal workers in construction, farming and fruit picking who use this form of accommodation for its affordability and flexibility;
3. individuals who moved into a caravan park as a last resort with no other alternative.

Marked differences in terms of tenant profile were noted between different park locations. Coastal parks were often a lifestyle choice for low-income retirees while inland and metropolitan parks were more likely to house those with nowhere else to go. It was also found that across the board the population was characterised by low income (with 62% of residents earning less than \$500 a week) and poor employment prospects (80% having no recognised post school qualifications and nearly 10% unemployed).

The characteristics of long term park residents have been found to be a product of many factors, including the location of the park, standard of amenities and cost; but also the preferences of individual park managers who may favour older, less troublesome tenants¹⁷ and choose against families with children, people referred by welfare services¹⁸, young people, Aboriginal people or those with disabilities¹⁹.

15 Purdon Associated Pty Ltd (1994) *op.cit.*

16 Wensing, E. et al. (2003b) *op.cit.*

17 Newton, J. (2006) *op. cit.*

18 Brooks, D, Hernandez, K & Sturt, G (2005) 'Beyond the Boom Gate: Supporting Park Residents' *Parity* 18, 5, p.24.

19 Parks and Village Service (PAVS) (2000) *Getting to residents of Inland: a report on consultation on NSW inland residential PAVS*, Sydney.

1.1.3 Issues for specific groups of residents

Older residents

For many older residents, caravan parks are a lifestyle choice providing affordable accommodation, a socially rewarding environment and effective support networks²⁰. Some have replaced their home with a caravan to free up capital and increase their financial independence whilst also acquiring a more manageable home²¹.

Despite this element of choice, studies have identified that older residents are generally living on a very modest income with few alternative accommodation choices²². Most have bought their dwelling but do not own the land, making them vulnerable to closures²³; have no resources to purchase a conventional house and are often unable to either relocate or recoup the costs of their van. In addition to financial losses, closures threaten the loss of social and support networks. Improved legislation and greater protection for these residents has been recommended²⁴.

Families with children

A number of studies have identified the particular issues faced by families with children. These include increased risk to children associated with the location, structure and environment of parks, including overcrowding, inadequate amenities and poor access to services²⁵. One study found that families were usually resident in cheaper, poorly sited (off the tourist route) parks, and that most of the families were fractured and some in crisis, with issues including unemployment, poverty and domestic violence²⁶. Difficult circumstances were frequently compounded by poor access to child care, education, and community services and physical and social isolation was exacerbated by living in a caravan park. Caravan park living has been assessed as placing children in an unsafe environment and increasing family stress due to cramped and often sub-standard conditions²⁷.

Initiatives such as the Hunter Caravan Project (established in 1986), have been designed to provide support to families with children (for example, through direct service

20 Beckwith, J (1998) 'The role of caravan in meeting the housing needs of the aged' *Urban Policy and Research* 16, 2, 131- 137.

21 Woodbridge, S (2003) *Coping with Change: Comparing the Retirement Housing Decision of Older People* (paper presented at the Social Change in the 21st Century Conference), Centre for Social Change Research, Queensland University of Technology.

22 Parks and Village Service (PAVS) (2004) *Home among the gum trees: Securing the future for older people who live in residential in NSW* Ministerial Advisory Committee on Ageing, Sydney.

23 Greenhalgh, E & Connor, J (2003) *No Place for Home: Residential Park Decline and Older People* Paper presented at the 3rd National Homelessness Conference 'Beyond the Divide', Brisbane.

24 For example, Beckwith, J.(1989) *op. cit.* or and Village Service (PAVS) (2004) *op. cit.*

25 Wensing, et al (2003a) *op. cit.*

26 Schiller, W. (1989) 'Alternative lifestyle or having no alternative? – Families living permanently in caravan in Australia' *Early Child Development and Care* 52, 33-59.

27 Eddy, G (2003) *Caravan Pilot Family Crisis Child Care Program* – final report for the Commonwealth Department of Families and Community Services, Canberra

provision or advocacy). Different service models have been trialled to reach vulnerable families²⁸. Minimum standard requirements, incentives and assistance to proprietors in upgrading facilities have also been proposed as solutions. Generally, however, caravan parks have been argued to be inappropriate accommodation for families with children²⁹.

This conclusion was also reached by researchers in the northern metropolitan area of Melbourne³⁰. They interviewed ten families in a study examining the circumstances which led families to move to a caravan park, their experiences living in a park and likely exit pathways. Improved support and service co-ordination were recommended, however it was concluded that better services would not address the inherent problems facing families in caravan parks.

Over time, the proportion of families living in parks appears to have declined. Earlier research reported between 33% and 66% of permanent residents as families with children³¹, while more recent studies put that number at less than 10%³². This may be due to a decline in actual number of families, or the rise of other groups (such as those making a lifestyle choice).

Caravan park living and homelessness

The connection between caravan park living and homelessness was explored by Wensing et al. who reported 'a high and recurring incidence of homelessness'³³ amongst residents, particularly those for whom this was accommodation of 'last resort' (rather than a lifestyle choice). Many such residents had experienced homelessness before moving into caravan parks, with pathways including debt, domestic violence or imprisonment. These residents were often vulnerable to eviction, mainly from a failure to pay fees or rent or due to anti-social behaviour. Whilst little was known about where people went after leaving parks, few positive pathways were indicated.

The precarious nature of caravan park tenancy combined with the variable standards of accommodation was equated with the experience of boarding house residents, classified as tertiary homeless³⁴. In fact, caravan parks have often been used as a substitute for boarding houses in regional centres and country towns³⁵.

28 *Ibid.*

29 Kenny, T & Cox, M (1982) *Caravan Park Families: An Action Research Study into the Needs of Children and Families Living Permanently in NSW* in Wensing, et al. (2003a) *op. cit.*

30 Lazzari-Wegener, J (2004) *Let's Find Another Place: the experience of homeless families using caravan as crisis housing unpublished report*, HomeGround Services, Melbourne

31 Kenny, T & Cox, M. (1982) *op. cit.*

32 Wensing, et al. (2003a) *op. cit.*

33 *Ibid.*

34 Chamberlain, C & MacKenzie, D (2008) *op. cit.*

35 Chamberlain, C. *Marginal Residents of Caravan Parks*

http://www.chp.org.au/parity/articles/results.shtml?finename_num=00210 accessed 15/01/2008

Despite problems with this type of accommodation, a lack of low cost housing means that caravans have sometimes been used by crisis accommodation agencies³⁶.

1.1.4 The South Australian context

In 1989 a Shelter SA report³⁷ highlighted problems experienced by residents in South Australian caravan parks. In response, a working party consisting of consumer, industry and government representatives was established. Their report noted a trend for an increased number of households living permanently in relocatable homes or caravans with an estimated number of between 1,200 and 2,000 households living permanently in parks.

While caravan parks were recognised as adding to the diversity of housing choice, the lack of legal protection for residents and park owners and 'unresolved social issues' particularly for the aged and families with children were raised as concerns. The report recommended that while the market place should be allowed to determine the level of supply of park sites, regulation was needed to guide tenancy and occupancy rights and ensure adequate physical standards and access to social amenities. In 2004 Shelter SA reported limited progress on these issues³⁸ with a renewed call for government action.

In early 2006, the closure of the Vines Caravan Park at Woodcroft highlighted the problems of vulnerable residents, particularly the elderly and disabled. Many required assistance to relocate (subsequently provided by the Southern Junction Community Services as part of a special government-funded transition support project). On the project's completion, 19 of the 54 residents had moved into private rental accommodation, 18 to conventional housing (either public, community or self owned), 6 to another caravan park, 4 with friends or family on a temporary basis and the remainder accessed aged facilities or moved in with family on a longer-term arrangement³⁹. Whilst positive outcomes were achieved for many, some noted the stress associated with the process of transition and uncertainty about their future, while others described loss of their social and support networks⁴⁰.

In August 2006 the Residential Parks Bill was tabled in Parliament aimed at addressing tenancy issues for caravan park residents. In response to concerns about growing pressures on caravan parks as redevelopment sites, a cross-government working group was formed. Later that year the group released a Discussion Paper reporting on an investigation of the role of caravan parks in SA, identifying the potential

36 Wensing, *et al.* (2003b) *op. cit.*

37 Report to Cabinet by the Caravan Working Party (1991) *The Role of Mobile Home and caravan in South Australia* unpublished report, Government of South Australia

38 Shelter SA Caravan (2004) Shelter SA Snapshots, *Snapshot 3*, July 2004, Adelaide.

39 Rosa, C & Watts, M (2006) *Vines Caravan Park transition Support Project* Southern Junction Community Services, Christies Beach, SA.

40 One former resident from The Vines was interviewed (co-incidentally) in this study and reported ongoing negative impacts – financial, social and emotional – from the closure.

pressures for redevelopment and recommending a policy response⁴¹. One of its key recommendations was to 'identify the characteristics of populations living within caravan parks to assist with community service provision'.

The Residential Parks and Caravan and Tourist Parks Development Plan Amendment (DPA) was released on interim effect on 13 December 2007. The purpose of the DPA is to ensure caravan parks are specifically designated and therefore protected from redevelopment outside of their current use unless rezoning is sought and gained. This DPA was approved on 11 December 2008 and rezoned most caravan park sites in Adelaide and near-country areas to one of two specific-purpose caravan park zonings:

- **Caravan and Tourist Park Zone:** for caravan parks entirely or predominately used by tourists for short-term stays, with only a minority (if any) of the park dedicated to long-term accommodation; or
- **Residential Park Zone:** for caravan parks primarily used to meet the demands of long-term residents, and a minority of tourists.

In two cases caravan parks have dual zoning, one part of the caravan park being for short term stays and the other part primarily for long term residents.

1.2 The current study – aims, research questions, definitions and methodology

This project explored the non-tourist use of caravan parks in South Australia. 'Non-tourist use' was defined as people staying in caravan parks who are not tourists and have no other permanent address.

The study aimed to profile non-tourist residents, establishing who they are, why they live there and the nature of their tenure. It also sought to map existing caravan parks and the extent to which they are used for non-tourist purposes.


The overarching intent of the project was to describe the overall population in caravan parks and the changing role of caravan parks as a housing option.

The project utilised existing data, notably the ABS Census of Population and Housing. This information was supplemented with additional information obtained via telephone interviews with managers of caravan parks and face-to-face interviews or the completion of a mail-back survey by residents. Detailed information on methodology is obtained in the relevant sections of the report, with copies of the research instruments in the Appendix.

The study was approved by the Families and Communities Research Ethics Committee.

Limitations of the study relate to the size and representativeness of the sample and definitional issues.

⁴¹ Caravan Park Working Group (2006) *Discussion Paper: Caravan Park Policy Planning Framework* - an unpublished report of the Caravan Park Working Group, November 2006, Government of South Australia



The research succeeded in surveying 239 residents (estimated at a 26% response rate). This sample size has enabled a degree of confidence in the statistical analysis, however 'more is always better' and the representativeness of the sample could be questioned.

A much better response rate was achieved in parks where 'door-knocking' occurred. These were all in the metropolitan area. The response rate from mail-back surveys (across the rest of the State) was quite low, with no responses received from many parks. Thus, the data may not be representative of the views of residents in all parks, those in regional areas and in particular workers and those with children. Further, a small number of managers would not agree to participate in the research or allow access to their premises. In at least one instance, this included a caravan park known to have a concentration of marginal residents and where concerns have been reported about conditions and amenity. It may be therefore that the parks which denied access have different characteristics to those which assisted in the research and that results were not representative of poorer-quality facilities or the views and experiences of their residents.

There are complex definitional issues as to what does and does not constitute a caravan park, specifically if and when large-scale 'residential parks' with transportable homes are included. Some parks are structuring themselves with two separate sections – a tourist area, and then a semi-separate non-tourist residential park. These issues – now subject to legislative definition in SA - were not resolved whilst the research was being conducted. This made it difficult to decide which parks would be targeted for interviews, but also which locations and sites should be included in the data analysis requested from the ABS Census.



2 How many caravan park residents? An analysis of the 2006 Census

This section summarises data from the August 2006 Census of Population and Housing relating to caravan park residents¹.

The ABS analysis of the Census identified 5,500 people living in 3,030 caravan park dwellings in South Australia (Table 1). This is a 28% decline from the 2001 Census, when 7,602 residents were recorded.

The greatest numbers of dwellings and residents were in the Northern Adelaide region in the metropolitan area and the Murray and Mallee in the country. The Northern Adelaide region also had the highest average number of persons per dwelling, indicative of a greater concentration of families. Almost half the residents – 48% – were in either metropolitan Adelaide or the Adelaide Hills.

Table 1: Caravan park non-tourist dwellings and persons, by regions

Region	Caravan park dwellings		Persons		Average number of persons per dwelling
	N	%	N	%	
Northern Adelaide	663	21.9	1,662	30.2	2.5
Western Adelaide	64	2.1	131	2.4	2.0
Eastern Adelaide	46	1.5	92	1.7	2.0
Southern Adelaide	420	13.9	646	11.7	1.5
Adelaide Hills	77	2.5	112	2.0	1.5
Fleurieu and KI	133	4.4	234	4.3	1.8
Eyre and Western	184	6.1	289	5.3	1.6
Far North	224	7.4	376	6.8	1.7
Barossa	409	13.5	651	11.8	1.6
Murray and Mallee	418	13.8	680	12.4	1.6
Yorke and Mid North	232	7.7	367	6.7	1.6
Limestone Coast	160	5.3	260	4.7	1.6
Total	3,030	100.0	5,500	100.0	1.8

Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics, Census 2006

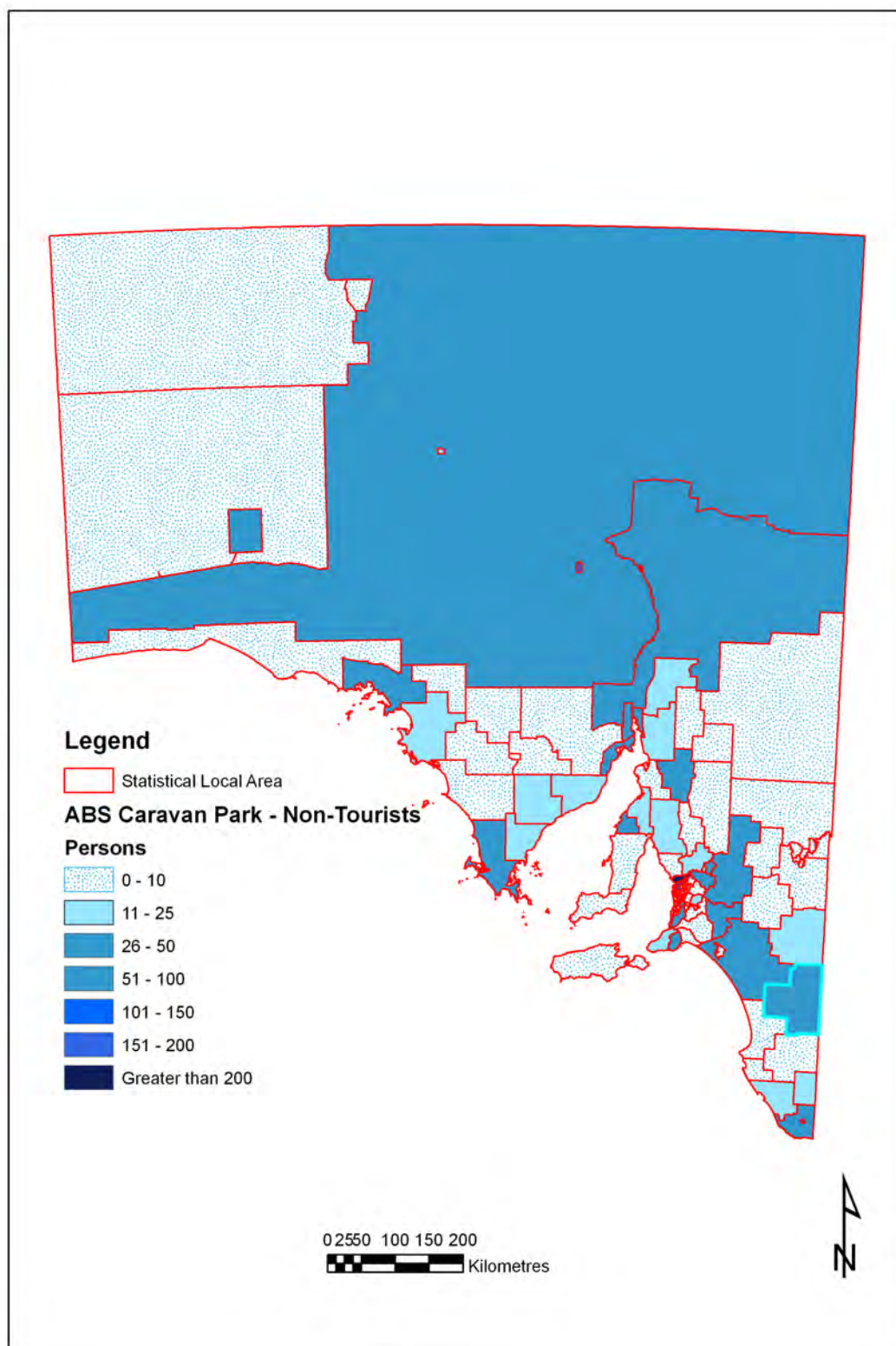
Note: Cells in this table have been randomly adjusted to avoid the release of confidential data.

Regions based on SA government regions.

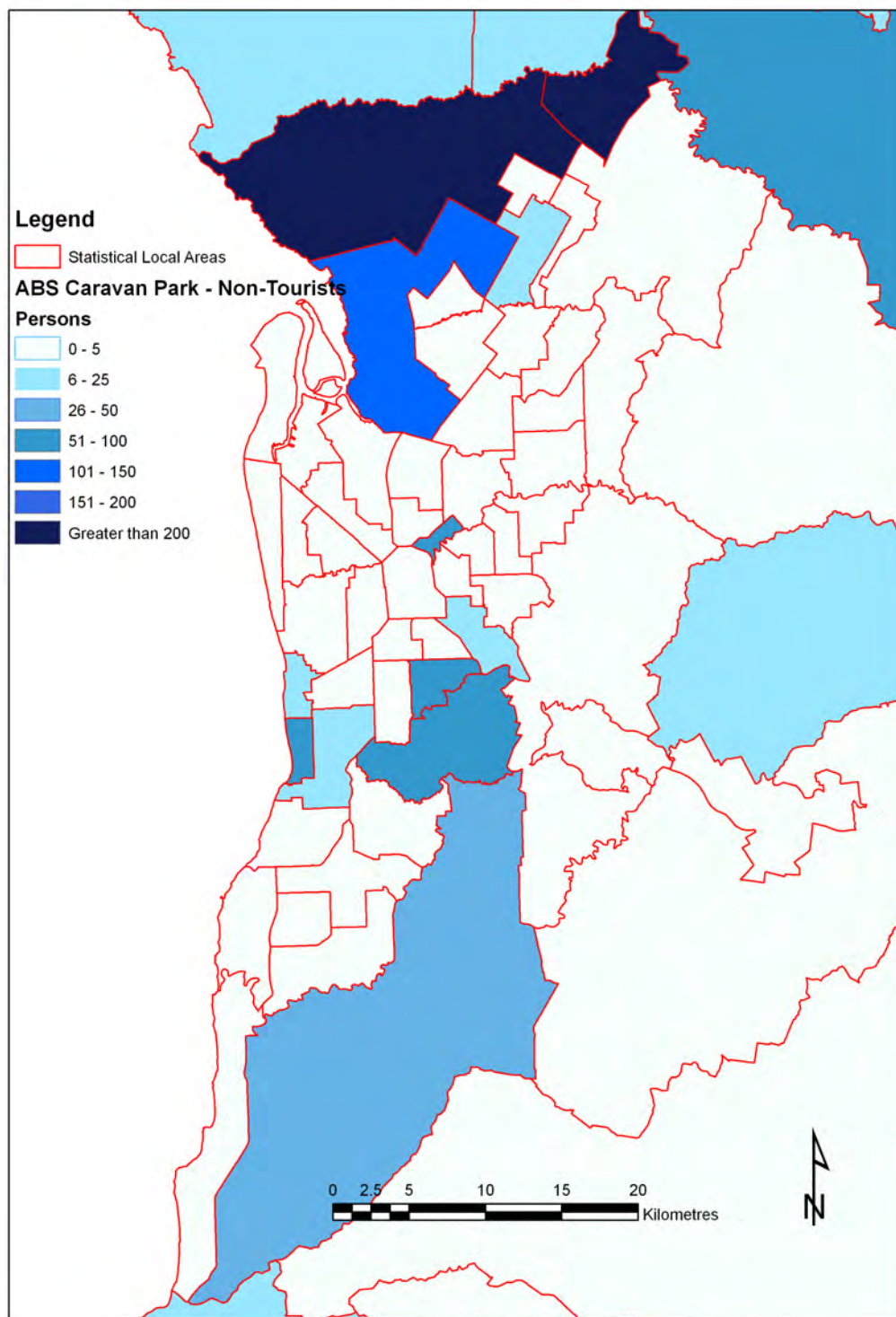
The location and concentration of caravan park residents is represented in the following maps.

¹ Note, this request included Manufactured Home Estates. Only some of these were included in the analysis of caravan park residents by Chamberlain and Mackenzie (dependent on other information about the nature of the Estate and its residents drawn from the Census Unit Record Files).

Map 1: Distribution of Non-Tourists living in caravans, South Australia non-metropolitan SLAs 2006



Map 2: Distribution of non-tourists living in caravan, Adelaide metropolitan SLAs 2006



2.1 Household and family composition

People living in caravan parks are much more likely (compared to the SA population) to be living alone. Almost half the caravan park households (44%) were single persons (compared with 28% for SA - Table 2).

414 caravan park households (13.7%) were recorded as having dependent children, with a total of 704 children aged 14 years or under (Table 3). These families were especially concentrated in the Northern Adelaide region, where over a third of households included children (either in couple families or one parent households). Some 382 children aged 0 to 14 (54% of the caravan park children population) were located in Northern Adelaide. Northern Adelaide is also the only region where the majority of caravan park residents – 51% - were aged 39 years or younger. The caravan park population in this region is therefore quite distinctive.

Table 2: Household and family composition by Region (% of regions)

Region	Lone person household		Family household: couple with no children		Family household: family with dependent children		Total households	
	SA pop ⁿ	Caravan park non-tourists	SA pop ⁿ	Caravan park non-tourists	SA pop ⁿ	Caravan park non-tourists	SA pop ⁿ	Caravan park non-tourists
Northern Adelaide	24.4	29.3	26.5	22.1	30.0	34.3	124,292	661
Western Adelaide	32.5	34.4	25.2	28.1	22.2	7.8	84,519	64
Eastern Adelaide	32.4	32.7	25.5	36.7	21.1	6.1	80,389	49
Southern Adelaide	27.0	53.7	27.7	24.5	25.9	9.3	126,374	421
Adelaide Hills	19.3	55.3	30.2	26.3	32.2	5.3	22,715	76
Fleurieu and KI	27.0	35.8	39.0	38.1	22.2	9.7	16,048	134
Eyre and Western	28.8	47.0	28.7	26.5	28.9	4.3	20,939	185
Far North	30.2	49.8	26.7	18.4	30.3	9.9	8,813	223
Barossa	22.3	46.3	30.9	39.5	30.3	5.1	21,908	408
Murray and Mallee	27.7	49.0	31.3	21.8	27.4	8.6	25,735	418
Yorke and Mid North	28.7	47.2	34.2	30.6	24.4	7.0	28,293	229
Limestone Coast	26.2	54.3	30.2	19.8	29.3	12.3	23,450	162
South Australia	27.7	44.1	27.9	26.4	26.2	13.7		
Total	161,687	1,336	162,765	800	152,834	414	583,475	3,030

Note: Cells in this table have been randomly adjusted to avoid the release of confidential data.

Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics, Census 2006

2.2 Demographics

The caravan park non-tourist population is notably older than the South Australian population overall, with 48% aged over 50 years (compared with 34% SA: Figure 1, Table 3). The largest cohort was those aged 50 – 59, closely followed by those aged 60 – 69 (this age group was the most over-represented in parks compared to the SA population). There were also substantial numbers in the 70 years+ cohort (702) still resident in parks, most notably in the Barossa region. Despite being under-represented, children and younger people still comprised 25% of permanent residents, with 12.8% being children aged 0 – 14.

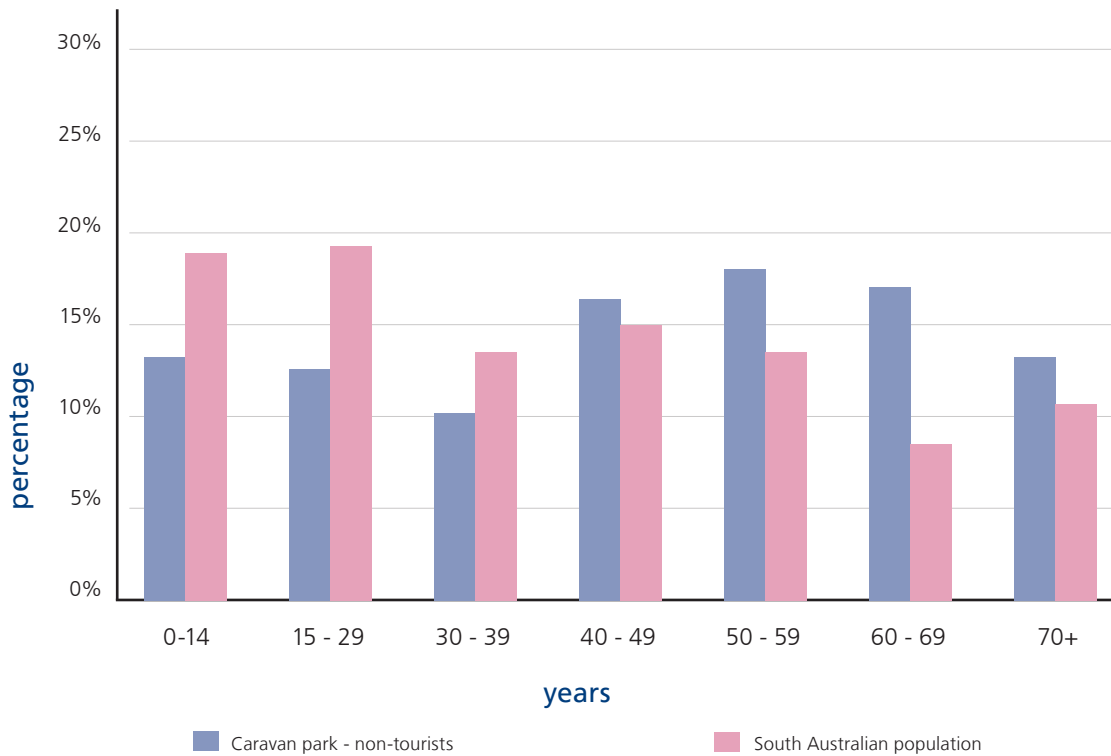
Table 3: Caravan park non-tourists, region by age

Region	0-14 years	15-29 years	30-39 years	40-49 years	50-59 years	60-69 years	70 years and over	Total
Northern Adelaide	382	243	221	370	219	162	65	1,662
Western Adelaide	23	11	23	26	25	12	10	130
Eastern Adelaide	10	15	9	13	16	18	11	92
Southern Adelaide	59	56	62	113	134	118	105	647
Adelaide Hills	4	11	15	14	26	19	23	112
Fleurieu and KI	18	23	12	23	54	63	40	233
Eyre and Western	25	22	32	49	66	65	31	290
Far North	37	86	48	49	75	64	18	377
Barossa	42	32	29	51	90	169	238	651
Murray and Mallee	56	94	74	96	162	117	80	679
Yorke and Mid North	24	21	25	59	82	96	60	367
Limestone Coast	24	59	24	48	40	44	21	260
Total	704	673	574	911	989	947	702	5,500

Note: Cells in this table have been randomly adjusted to avoid the release of confidential data.

Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics, Census 2006

Figure 1: Age



Residents were more likely than the SA population overall to be male (57% compared with 49% SA), with the over-representation particularly high in some regions (over 60% in Southern Adelaide, the Adelaide Hills, Murray and Mallee and Yorke and Mid-North) (Table 4).

Table 4: Sex by region

Region	Male				Female				Total	
	SA population		Caravan park non-tourists		SA population		Caravan park non-tourists		SA pop ⁿ	Caravan park non-tourists
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	N
Northern Adelaide	165,762	49.5	898	54.1	169,025	50.5	763	45.9	334,787	1,661
Western Adelaide	100,289	48.9	65	49.2	104,940	51.1	67	50.8	205,229	132
Eastern Adelaide	96,312	48.0	51	54.3	104,446	52.0	43	45.7	200,758	94
Southern Adelaide	157,038	48.5	388	60.2	166,551	51.5	257	39.8	323,589	645
Adelaide Hills	31,861	49.6	69	60.5	32,431	50.4	45	39.5	64,292	114
Fleurieu and KI	20,173	49.0	126	54.1	20,971	51.0	107	45.9	41,144	233
Eyre and Western	27,941	50.9	172	59.3	26,930	49.1	118	40.7	54,871	290
Far North	13,064	52.9	224	59.7	11,651	47.1	151	40.3	24,715	375
Barossa	29,673	49.7	357	54.8	30,047	50.3	295	45.2	59,720	652
Murray and Mallee	33,686	50.4	409	60.1	33,119	49.6	271	39.9	66,805	680
Yorke and Mid North	35,581	49.9	225	61.6	35,775	50.1	140	38.4	71,356	365
Limestone Coast	31,220	50.2	151	58.3	30,997	49.8	108	41.7	62,217	259
Total	742,600	49.2	3,135	57.0	766,883	50.8	2,365	43.0	1,509,483	5,500

Note: Cells in this table have been randomly adjusted to avoid the release of confidential data.

Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics, Census 2006

The household income status of people in caravan parks was generally very different to SA and the region as a whole, with a far higher proportion of low income households. Overall, 39% of caravan park households had income less than \$500 per week (Table 5). The corollary of this is that most caravan park households (61%) had income over \$500 pw. Low income was particularly notable in the Yorke and Mid North, the Barossa and the Adelaide Hills. Eastern and Northern Adelaide had the lowest proportion of low-income residents.

Table 5: Low income households by region

Region	SA population		Caravan park non-tourists	
	N	% of low income households	N	% of low income households
Northern Adelaide	26,470	21.5	110	20.6
Western Adelaide	21,640	25.9	19	33.9
Eastern Adelaide	15,182	19.2	3	8.1
Southern Adelaide	24,924	19.9	160	44.0
Adelaide Hills	3,143	13.9	37	56.9
Fleurieu and KI	4,340	27.3	56	48.3
Eyre and Western	5,413	26.2	53	34.4
Far North	1,842	21.2	34	19.0
Barossa	4,225	19.4	198	55.3
Murray and Mallee	6,971	27.4	148	41.0
Yorke and Mid North	8,693	31.1	118	61.8
Limestone Coast	5,104	22.0	70	51.9
South Australia	127,947	22.1	1,006	39.4

Notes:

1. Low income households are those households with incomes less than \$500 per week
2. Percentages exclude persons with negative or no income from total.
3. Cells in this table have been randomly adjusted to avoid the release of confidential data.

Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics, Census 2006

Caravan park residents were more likely than the general SA population to not be in full time employment (Table 6). The largest single group were those not in the labour force: it can be assumed these were predominantly retired. However, there was also a substantial population – 2,238 (46.8%) – in some form of employment, including 30% full-time.

Table 6: Labour force status (persons over 15 years)

Labour force status	SA population		Caravan park non-tourists	
	N	%	N	%
Employed, worked full-time	425,288	35.4	1,436	30.0
Employed, worked part-time	217,856	18.1	626	13.1
Employed, hours not stated (c)	17,476	1.5	176	3.7
Unemployed	37,912	3.2	195	4.1
Not in the labour force	440,163	36.6	2,015	42.0
Not stated	63,316	5.3	345	7.2
Total	1,202,011	100.0	4,793	100.00

Note: Cells in this table have been randomly adjusted to avoid the release of confidential data.

Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics, Census 2006

Census data suggest caravan parks have a lower representation of culturally and linguistically diverse populations, shown for example in proficiency with English (Table 7).

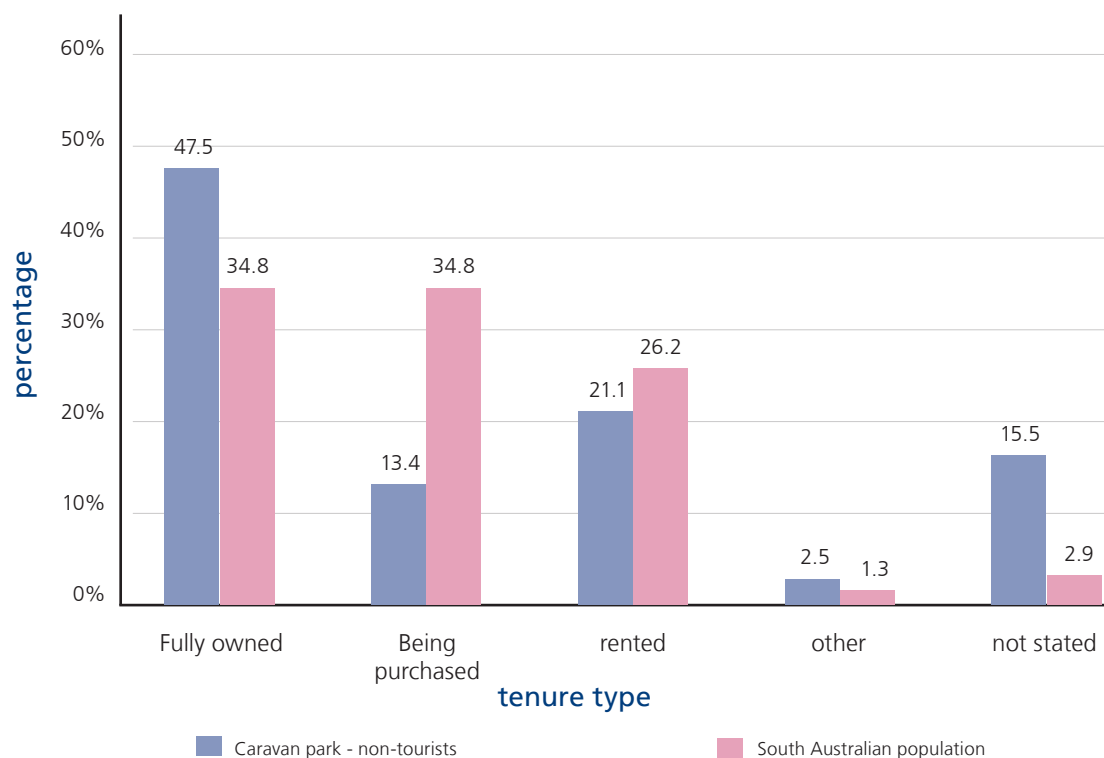
Table 7: Proficiency in English language by region (% of region)

Region	Speaks English only		Speaks other language and speaks English: very well or well		Speaks other language and speaks English: not well or not at all	
	SA pop ⁿ	Caravan park non-tourists	SA pop ⁿ	Caravan park non-tourists	SA pop ⁿ	Caravan park non-tourists
Northern Adelaide	60.9	89.8	29.4	4.4	8.8	0.6
Western Adelaide	36.2	84.1	44.9	3.8	18.0	8.3
Eastern Adelaide	43.4	76.3	44.9	8.6	10.7	0.0
Southern Adelaide	71.4	88.4	24.1	5.7	3.8	0.0
Adelaide Hills	83.7	92.9	14.7	0.0	1.1	4.4
Fleurieu and KI	89.3	91.4	9.5	1.3	0.7	0.0
Eyre and Western	80.3	88.9	16.3	3.1	2.4	0.0
Far North	59.1	81.4	28.3	4.5	4.7	0.0
Barossa	88.0	91.9	10.0	2.2	1.6	0.5
Murray and Mallee	61.6	88.2	25.1	5.0	11.1	1.0
Yorke and Mid North	85.2	87.2	12.5	4.9	1.8	1.4
Limestone Coast	73.4	81.2	20.2	4.6	4.9	7.3
South Australia	59.3	88.2	31.1	4.2	8.6	1.1
Total number	182,576	4,853	26,483	231	1,300	60

Note: Cells in this table have been randomly adjusted to avoid the release of confidential data.

Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics, Census 2006

Figure 2: Tenure type



2.3 Tenure

A greater proportion of residents fully owned their caravans/homes (48%) compared to the SA population (35%) and a lower proportion were renting (Figure 2). However the high percentage of 'not stated' amongst caravan park respondents is indicative of confusion around the interpretation of this Census question in the caravan park context.

2.4 Need for assistance with core activities

The 2006 Census included, for the first time, disability-related questions about the need for assistance with core activities. The proportion of caravan park non-tourists who indicated a need for assistance (5.2%) was similar to the population overall (5.1%) (Table 8).

Table 8: Need for assistance with core activities by region

Region	SA Population		Caravan park non-tourists	
	N	% of region	N	% of region
Northern Adelaide	15,945	5.0	51	3.2
Western Adelaide	11,915	6.1	8	6.5
Eastern Adelaide	9,570	5.1	4	5.0
Southern Adelaide	15,360	4.9	26	4.3
Adelaide Hills	2,017	3.3	8	7.3
Fleurieu and KI	2,251	5.9	13	6.3
Eyre and Western	2,529	4.9	11	4.1
Far North	940	4.2	12	3.8
Barossa	2,589	4.5	44	7.3
Murray and Mallee	3,308	5.2	36	5.6
Yorke and Mid North	4,386	6.5	44	13.1
Limestone Coast	2,394	4.1	10	4.1
South Australia	73,204	5.1	267	5.2

Note: Cells in this table have been randomly adjusted to avoid the release of confidential data.

Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics, Census 2006

2.5 Marginal residents

Chamberlain and MacKenzie² have proposed three sub-groups of caravan park residents: those who have made a life-style choice; workers; and marginal residents. In their analysis of the 2006 Census they classified caravan park residents as 'marginal' if they were renting their accommodation, no members of the household were in full-time employment and persons were at their usual address on Census night.

For the current research project the ABS undertook a similar analysis of 2006 Census data. This identified at least 675 marginal residents in 423 households (12.3% of residents)³.

² Chamberlain C & D MacKenzie, (2008), *op cit*

³ Note that tenancy status is one of the key measures used by Chamberlain and MacKenzie to determine marginal or other group status. In the 2006 Census, 15.5% of caravan park dwellers did not respond to the question about tenancy status. Detailed analysis of the individual unit record files for these respondents is necessary in order to properly determine the group to which they would be most appropriately assigned. This was not possible in the current analysis, which therefore excluded from the marginal group all those for whom tenancy status was unknown. The total marginal residents in the current report is thus less than the figure of 748 marginal residents in 522 dwellings (13.6% of the caravan park population) published in the *Counting the Homeless 2006* report.

These identified marginal residents were younger than the other caravan park residents, with 30% under 30 years (compared with 25% of the total non-tourist population, Table 9.) Ninety-three children under 14 years were identified in marginal households. The majority (60%) of marginal residents were males.

Table 9: Age by marginal non-tourist status

Age	Marginal non-tourist residents		Total non-tourist residents	
	N	%	N	%
0-14 years	93	13.8	704	12.8
15-29 years	109	16.1	673	12.2
30-39 years	88	13.0	574	10.4
40-49 years	115	17.0	911	16.6
50-59 years	104	15.4	989	18.0
60-69 years	88	13.0	947	17.2
70 years and over	78	11.6	702	12.8
Total	675	100.0	5,500	100.0

Note: Cells in this table have been randomly adjusted to avoid the release of confidential data.
Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics, Census 2006

Marginal residents were more likely to live in lone person households than other caravan park residents (Table 10).

Table 10: Household composition by non-tourist status

Household composition	Marginal Non-tourist residents		Total Non-tourist residents	
	N	%	N	%
Lone person household	271	64.1	1,428	41.9
Family household: couple family with no children	46	10.9	919	27.0
Family household: family with dependent children	49	11.6	527	15.5
Family household: other family	14	3.3	150	4.4
Other household	43	10.2	382	11.2
Total	423	100.0	3,406	100.0

Note: Cells in this table have been randomly adjusted to avoid the release of confidential data.
Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics, Census 2006

2.6 Summary – 2006 Census data

According to the 2006 Census:

- 5,500 people in South Australia were living in caravan parks in 3,030 dwellings or households⁴. This is a decline of 28% from 2001, when 7,602 residents were recorded.
- The greatest concentration of these residents was in the Northern Adelaide region. Almost half (48%) were living in either the metropolitan Adelaide or the Adelaide Hills.
- 414 caravan park households (13.7%) included dependent children. A total of 704 children under 14 were recorded (12.8% of the caravan park population), with a high concentration (54%) in the Northern Adelaide region.
- The caravan park population in Northern Adelaide was quite distinctive: far younger than the population in other regions (with over 50% under 39 years); and including a higher proportion of families and children.
- Caravan park residents were more likely (than the SA population overall) to be living alone. They also tended to be older; were more likely to be male; on a low income; own their own dwelling and not be in the labour force. There was a lower representation of people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds. However, most (61%) households had incomes above \$500 per week and 30% were in full time employment.
- A lower proportion of residents (compared to the SA population) indicated a disability (need for assistance with core activities).
- Further work undertaken by Chamberlain and MacKenzie⁵ (subsequent to this research) identified 748 marginal caravan park residents in South Australia (compared to 675 in Table 9) residents in South Australia in 522 dwellings (13.6% of the caravan park population) as 'marginal'.

⁴ Note this includes Manufactured Home Estates

⁵ Chamberlain C & MacKenzie, D (2008), *op cit*



3 Caravan parks with long-term residents

The first challenge for this project was to determine:

1. caravan parks in South Australia which cater for long-term residents and
2. current numbers of long-term (non-tourist) residents.

A number of sources were used to compile a complete list of parks: the Caravan Park Association guide; a list provided by Planning SA; telephone directories and websites. Letters were sent to all parks introducing the project¹ and advising that the research officer would telephone them in the near future.

The research officer then attempted to ring all parks to give more information about the study and to ascertain (in the first instance) whether they 1) catered for non-tourists and 2) currently had non-tourist residents. For those parks where letters were returned as undeliverable or telephone contact could not be made, the local Council was contacted to determine if the Park was still functioning. These strategies resulted in a final list of **225 current caravan parks**.

Of those 225:

- 1 refused to provide any information
- 112 (49.7%) only provided tourist accommodation
- 112 potentially catered for non-tourists.

Of the 112 who said they catered for non-tourists, four currently had no long-term residents (and two in fact had never had any). Another six declined to participate in the study or provide any further information.

Information on current residents was therefore drawn from the 104 participating parks. These together indicated a total of **2,313 non-tourist sites across South Australia** (considerably less than the 3,030 dwellings identified in the 2006 Census)².

The reported number of non-tourist sites in individual parks ranged from 1 to 297. The overall size of parks also varied greatly - from 12 to what was described as 'unlimited'. Three parks had over 300 sites (tourist and non-tourist). The larger parks reported a higher proportion assigned to non-tourists.

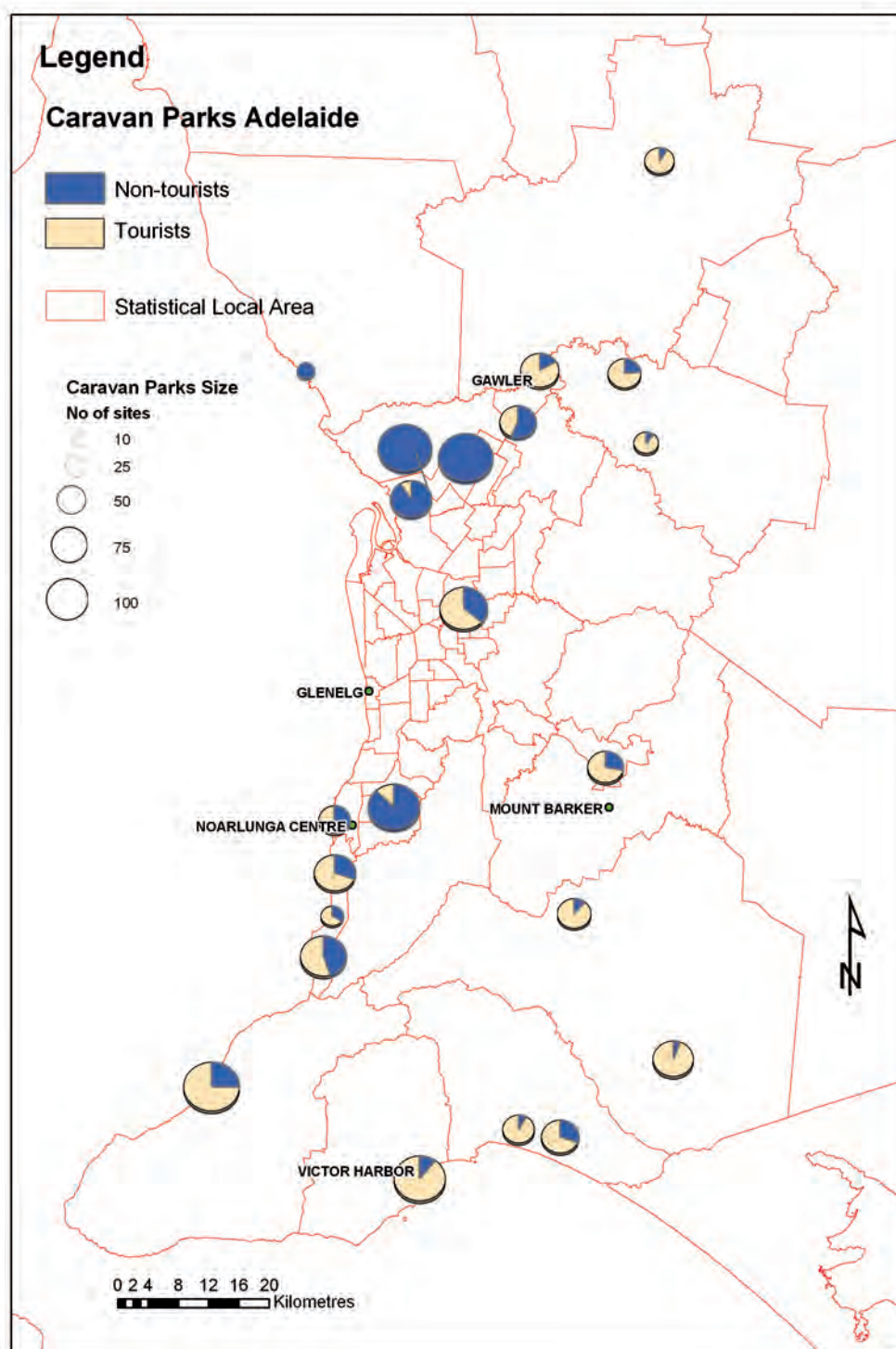
Most of the larger caravan parks in Adelaide cater principally for non-tourists and are located in outer Northern Adelaide – Virginia and Two Wells. The situation is reversed in the country (with the exception of Roxby Downs), where parks mainly cater for tourists with few non-tourist sites.

Maps 3 and 4 summarise the location of caravan parks with long term residents.

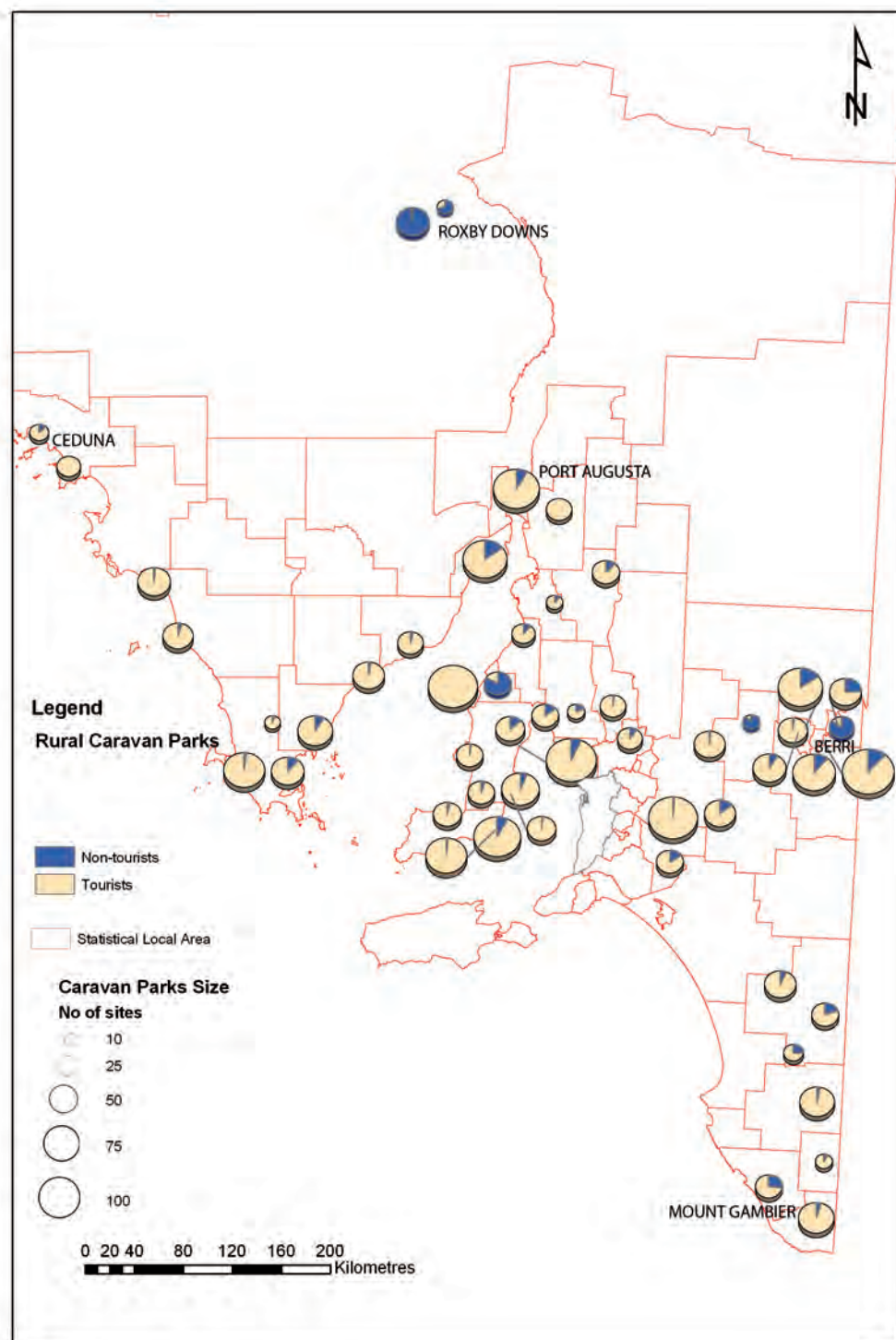
¹ The Caravan Park Association forwarded letters to its members on behalf of the project team

² This difference is likely to be at least partly attributable to Manufactured Home Estates

Map 3: Location and size of participating caravan parks, Adelaide



Map 4: Location and size of participating caravan parks, South Australia





4 Survey of caravan park owners/managers

Managers or owners of almost all the caravan parks with long-term or non-tourist residents (104 of the 112) agreed to participate in a telephone survey (see Appendix for survey instrument).

Most respondents had substantial experience in the caravan park industry, including 40% with five or more years (Table 11). The median length of experience was 4 years.

Table 11: Length of time running the caravan park

Length of time running park	N	%
Less than 6 months	10	9.6
6 to 12 months	12	11.5
1 to 3 yrs	23	22.1
3 to 5 yrs	18	17.3
5 to 10 yrs	25	24.0
Greater than 10 yrs	14	13.5
Not stated	2	1.9
Total	104	100.0

Respondents were asked how they saw the future structure of their park in one and five years time (Table 12). Just over half anticipated no change across the five years. Parks anticipating change were more likely to be moving toward tourist rather than non-tourist use, but generally parks anticipated change in line with their current focus (ie parks with a majority of tourists moving more towards tourists, and vice versa). Parks expecting to be sold within the year (five) were all in country/regional areas.

Table 12: Future structure of park in one and five years

Future Structure	1 year		5 years	
	N	%	N	%
All tourist	9	8.7	13	12.5
More tourist	12	11.5	17	16.3
Same as current	68	65.4	54	51.9
More non-tourist	7	6.7	10	9.6
All non-tourist	0	0.0	1	1.0
Sold	5	4.8	0	0.0
Other	3	2.9	5	4.8
Not stated	0	0.0	4	3.8
Total	104	100.0	104	100.0

The reasons given for these perceptions were related to demand and the best business structure for the park. Generally, managers presented a picture of increased specialisation – tourist or non-tourist usage – with the choice between the two based on the location of the park (tourist area or not), size and structure. Comments often reflected difficulties in accommodating tourists and permanents in the same facility.

“It’s basically a tourist park. The more non-tourists you have the less the tourists like it”.

“We currently only have a small number of tourist sites. Changing to all non-tourists would give a greater sense of security to residents and be more financially beneficial”.

“Demand by tourists is too great to increase the number of non-tourists”.

“There is a high demand (from non-tourists.) They give a continued income. Will move from vans to resident owned relocatable homes”.

“It’s hard to cater for a mixed group”.

4.1 Accommodation, agreements and cost

The vast majority of residents were reported to be living in cabins, villas or vans. Only a very few parks (7) reported non-tourists in tents – most managers said they would not allow this form of residency.

Forty-four percent of respondents had no formal agreement with their residents. The remainder had some form of agreement although what was meant by this was extremely variable. Some described their agreements in formal and comprehensive terms: lease agreements; a contract; a tenancy, site or residential agreement. Others indicated the agreement was a signed copy of the park rules or a registration form which included the rules. Several owners said that they would be instituting an agreement, in line with the new legislative requirements.

Contrary to expectations, there did not seem to be a relationship between the focus of the park and having a formal agreement. For example, of the 18 parks which indicated 30% or more non-tourist sites, the majority (11 – 61%) had no agreements in place. Only 4 (22%) reported a formal agreement with another 3 requiring residents to sign a copy of the park rules. By contrast, 17 (41%) of the 44 parks with 15% or less non-tourist sites reported a formal agreement, with 52% having no agreement at all.

Many respondents chose not to provide details of their rates and charges. Of those who did respond, rates for resident-owned accommodation ranged from \$50 to \$140 per week (plus electricity), with an average rate of \$82. Onsite vans, cabins or villas ranged from \$70 to \$210 per week with a mean of \$136.

Some facilities charged different rates dependent on the number of occupants. Some charged a higher rate for the initial period of time (varying from 4 weeks to 6 months) with cheaper rates over the longer term. Country regions had both the cheapest and the most expensive accommodation, depending on location and facilities.

Only 43% of managers thought that their park was accessible to people with disabilities. Another 21% indicated that their park had some disability access. Parks in the metropolitan area were more likely to report disability accessibility and some said that they were 'working on it'.

4.2 Resident characteristics

Managers were asked for their views as to why people chose to live in caravan parks (Table 13). Responses generally indicated Parks as an option of choice rather than necessity. That is, people chose a lifestyle - 'simpler', 'convenient' or 'less to worry about', or other advantages such as a sense of community, an atmosphere, or a sense of safety. However, responses also nominated affordability as a key consideration. Only a minority indicated 'no other accommodation available' was a major reason for living in parks.

Table 13: Reasons for living in parks

Reasons	N	%
Affordable	55	52.9
Lifestyle	29	27.9
No other accommodation	19	18.3
Convenient location	14	13.5
Less to worry about	7	6.7
Safe Secure	6	5.8
Smaller accommodation	6	5.8
Sense of community	4	3.8
Atmosphere	4	3.8
Able to own accommodation	2	1.9
Low maintenance	2	1.9
Not stated	7	6.7

Managers were asked to nominate the major groups of non-tourists in their facility. Retirees and workers were identified by approximately 70% of respondents (Table 14). The industries connected with workers (seasonal or otherwise) included fruit picking, mining, meat works and wineries.

Some parks reported a mixture of groups, whilst others only one type.

Table 14 Types of residents as identified by managers

Main groups living in park	N	%
Retirees	72	69.2
Seasonal workers	21	20.2
Other workers	53	51.0
Unemployed	29	27.9
Disability pensioners	11	10.6
Single people	3	2.9
Single parents	5	4.8
Families with young children	7	6.7
Other group	1	1.0
Total	104	

Generally, retirees were identified as staying for very long periods of time, with the longest being 36 years.

“They generally stay forever”.

Exit pathways for retirees were often predicted as aged care or death:

“They usually stay until they are too old or die”.

Parks focused on retirees thus generally reported a very stable group of occupants.

“We’ve only had 2 people change in the last 2 years”.

By contrast, workers usually stayed for a matter of months, in line with seasonal work patterns. Some parks also had policies excluding workers over the peak tourist periods of Easter and Christmas.

Marginal residents were the most transient, with periods of stay usually described as weeks or months.

4.3 Making it work

For many managers, longer term residents provided a clear business advantage – a stable income source (Table 15). Other positive comments usually focused on retirees,

whose contribution to a sense of community and stability was frequently noted. They 'kept an eye on things', 'took pride in the park and maintained their area', 'look out for each other' and made sure that 'the park is never lonely'.

Table 15: Positive aspects of non-tourists

Advantages	N	%
No positives	7	7.3
Income	76	79.2
Do things around park	17	17.7
Keep an eye on things	16	16.7
Create atmosphere	12	12.5
Tourists like them	5	5.2
Use less park facilities	1	1.0
Get to know residents	2	2.1
Total	96	

Some managers also noted advantages from (carefully vetted) workers – busy all day, use fewer park facilities, pay their bills on time and don't make trouble. Only a few managers said there were no positives in having long term residents. These tended to be parks where the focus was clearly on tourism.

Negative comments were almost exclusively focused on the 'marginal' group, generally relating to disruptive behaviour.

"Drugs – they trash the place".

"They want everything and don't pay".

"Can be scary and disruptive - tourists don't like them in the park".

However, some also noted issues with retirees, who could become 'possessive of the park' and 'think they own the place'. A small group of managers also noted the challenges in catering for people 'ageing in place'.

"Have to learn to deal with health issues, particularly as they get older, like dementia".

"As they get older, there are concerns about their health. Some have no family and rely on neighbours for assistance".

Table 16: Negative aspects of non-tourists by proportion of non-tourist sites in park

Disadvantages	Total	
	N	%
No negatives	36	40.0
Don't look after site	8	8.9
Think they own the park	20	22.2
Very picky	7	7.8
Don't like or interfere with tourists	10	11.1
Disruptive	8	8.9
Too much time on their hands	4	4.4
Abusive / fighting	9	10.0
Drunken behaviour	6	6.7
Don't respect other peoples rights	1	1.1
Like to build	1	1.1
Don't pay on time	7	7.8
Don't follow park rules	2	2.2
Take up space	3	3.3
Total	90	

Park managers generally reported, however, that long-term residents fitted in well. This was clearly achieved by specific management strategies – only letting in certain groups; carefully vetting potential residents; physically separating tourists and residents or park specialisation; making sure people were very clear about park rules and then strictly enforcing them.

"If they didn't (fit in) they would be asked to leave".

"We don't tolerate trouble makers".

"Park segregated so do not tend to interact with the tourists, tend to stick in their own groups".

"Need to decide if the park is tourist or non-tourist – the two don't mix".

Respondents were very clear about the need to vet potential residents and maintain control over mix and behaviour. These concerns were generally focused on the marginal group: people who drank too much, used drugs, or were difficult to manage in the close living arrangements of the park were generally unwanted. Some managers had broader categories of 'unwelcome', such as younger people, the unemployed or families with children.

A few managers conducted interviews before accepting long-stay residents, with approximately a quarter requiring references. Others used subjective criteria – “they look okay”, they “look like they will fit in”. Most (65%) had, at one time or other, asked non-tourist residents to leave for non-payment of fees or abusive, difficult behaviour.

Only half the respondents said they would accept referrals from crisis housing agencies. Others (31%) said they had accepted such referrals in the past but wouldn’t any more. The quality of communication with and follow-up from agencies and punctual payment were repeatedly identified as the vital factors as to whether the referral was a ‘success’ or not. Managers wanted clear, honest information from referring agencies and a guarantee of follow-up support. They resented being ‘dumped on’ or ‘lied to’ – “they don’t say who they are, just that they want to book in”. Those who no longer accepted crisis clients generally reported being burned in the past.

“Some agencies won’t say why the client needs to be there. If the agency refuses because of confidentiality we will not accept them because of duty of care to our residents”.

“Agencies don’t really care. Clients dumped and not followed up”.

Managers frequently reported problems with residents referred by housing agencies, usually difficult behaviour (including violence and property damage), which might be fuelled by alcohol and drugs. Respondents therefore wanted support:

“We have a good relationship with the agencies, but there is no back up service”.


“They never follow up clients”.

4.4 Summary

Caravan park managers generally predicted stability in their business over the next five years, with changes being towards increased specialisation. Only 5 (all in regional/ country areas) anticipated closure.

Almost half the parks reported no formal agreement with their residents and where agreements existed they were extremely variable in nature, scope and formality. Having an agreement was not found to relate to the size or focus of the park. There was also great variation in fees, to the extent that in many instances parks could not be described as an affordable or low cost housing option.

Managers generally reported people lived in caravan parks as a result of a life-style choice. Retirees were described as a generally very long-stay and stable group; whilst workers moved according to the seasonal nature of their employment. Marginal residents were the minority and usually quite transient.



Respondents were generally very positive about retirees and workers with negative comments and problems largely confined to marginal residents. A range of management strategies were consistently identified to ensure smooth running of parks, including vetting potential residents, separating tourists from non-tourists and enforcement of park rules. The marginal group were the most likely to be refused admittance. Only half the respondents would accept crisis housing referrals, with follow-up support; good communication and clear information indicated as vital to make these arrangements work. However, responses indicated these were often problematic.

5 Resident survey

5.1 Methods

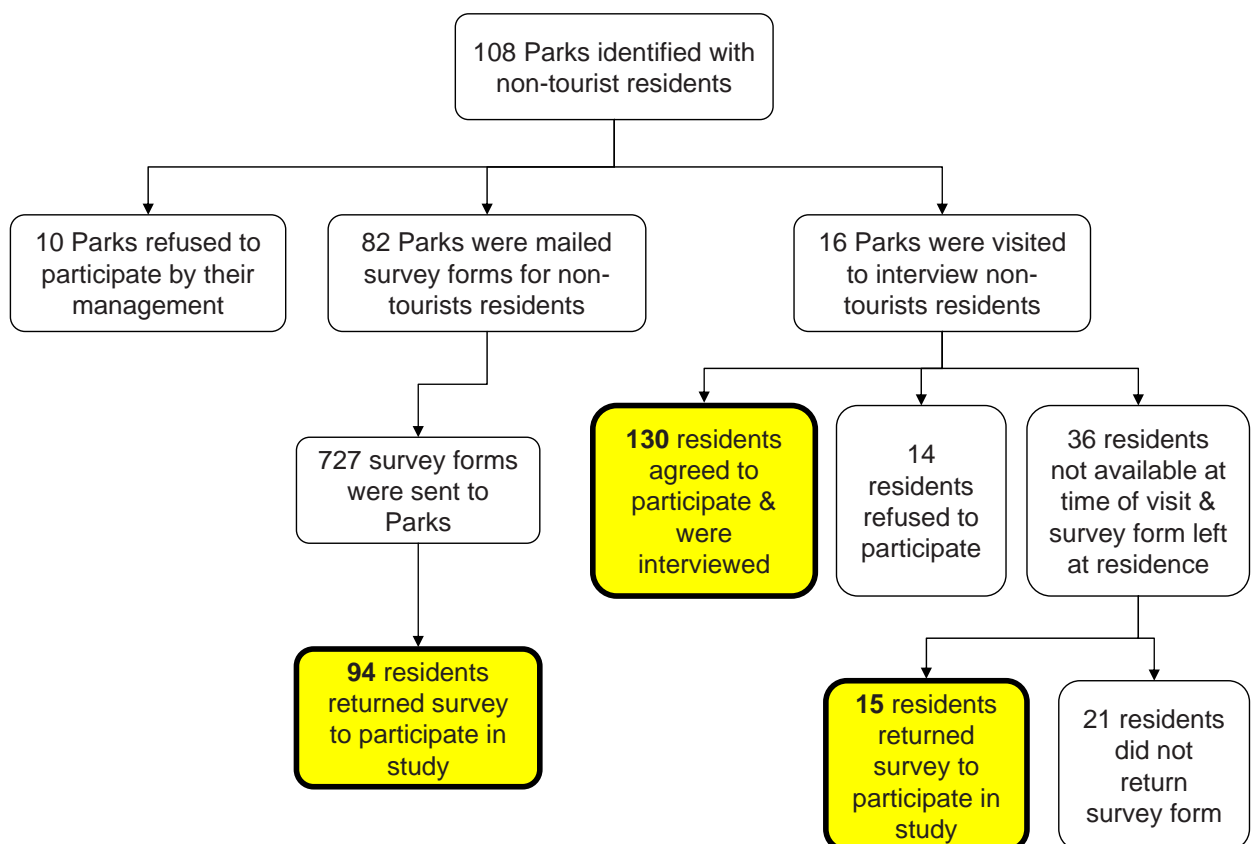
The resident survey involved two strategies:

- face-to-face interviews with a random sample of caravan park residents on-site at selected parks and
- mail-back surveys from other caravan parks with non-tourist residents.

Figure 3 contains a flow chart of the recruitment process. When contacted by telephone, 108 of the 225 caravan parks confirmed that non-tourists lived in their park. Managers were asked if they would be willing to either 1) allow interviews to occur on site or 2) make available mail-back surveys for residents to complete. All but 10 agreed to participate.

Subsequently, 16 parks located in or near Adelaide were visited for face-to-face interviews and 82 parks were sent survey forms. All responses were voluntary and confidential and park management had no knowledge of which residents participated or the information provided.

Figure 3: Flow chart of the recruitment of non-tourist residents



In the 16 visited parks, systematic sampling was used to randomly select 180 non-tourist dwellings. From these dwellings, 130 residents consented to be interviewed, 14 refused and 36 were unavailable or not at home. Survey forms were left at these dwellings, 15 of which were later returned.

A total of 727 survey forms were sent to the 82 unvisited parks of which 94 were returned. No forms were returned from 43 parks which may indicate they were not made available to residents. Seventeen of these parks were known to have at least 10 residents and three at least 40.

A total of 239 residents completed surveys (estimated as a 26.4% response rate). The response rate was far better for visited dwellings: 80.6% as compared to 12.9% for mail-back.

Locational information was analysed according to three regions defined by ABS statistical divisions (SD): the Adelaide SD, Outer Adelaide SD and Rural (all other SDs).

Compared to the caravan park residents in the 2006 Census, the 239 respondents tended to be older (Figure 4) and were more likely to be in the Adelaide SD (Figure 5). Results were weighted to the population described by the 2006 Census so responses were representative of age and regional distribution.

Figure 4: Age distribution of residents for observed sample and from Census 2006

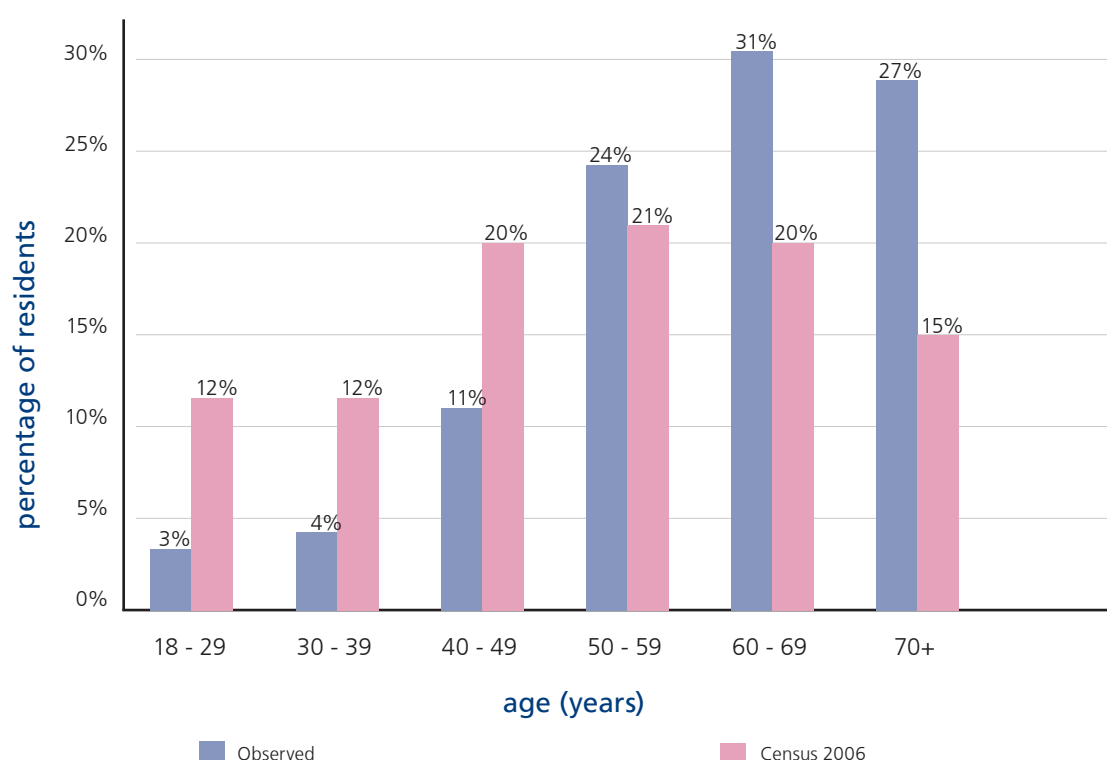
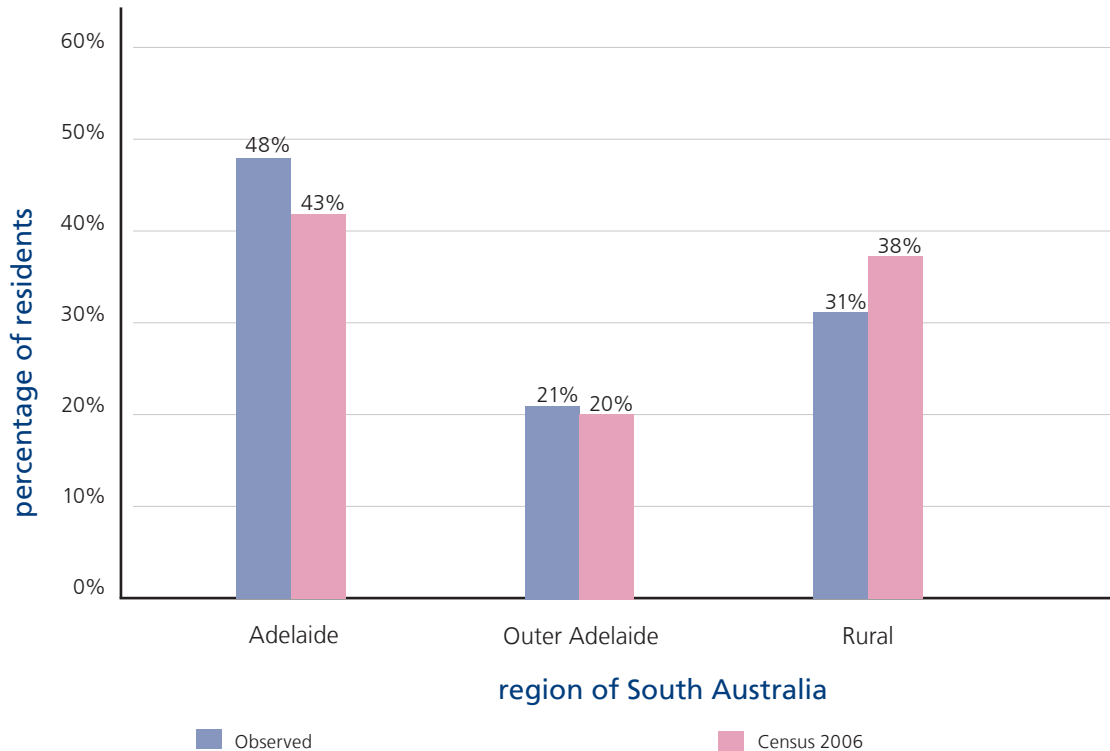


Figure 5: Location of residents for observed sample and from Census 2006



Following the categories and counting rules developed by Chamberlain and MacKenzie¹, residents were assigned into one of three groups based on ownership of the accommodation they lived in and their employment status. These groups were:

- Lifestyle choice – indicated by “owned their accommodation” or “retired but not working full time”
- Workers – working full time (regardless of ownership of dwelling)
- Marginally housed – did not indicate they owned their accommodation (thus including those whose ownership of their accommodation was unknown), were not working full time and were not retired.

On this basis, 42 respondents (18%) were assigned to the marginally housed group, 151 (63%) to the lifestyle choice group and 46 (19%) to the workers (Table 17). Those whose tenancy status was unknown (11) were allocated between the three groups based on other data contained in their responses (eg if retired or not).

¹ Chamberlain C & MacKenzie, D (2008), *op cit*

Table 17: Defined groups (number of residents each category)*

Employment status	Own their accommodation			% of residents (within employment status)
	Yes	No	Unknown	
Full time	W (n=24)	W (n=12)	W (n=11)	19%
Part time	LC (n=5)	MH (n=10)	MH (n=3)	8%
Casual	LC (n=21)	MH (n=1)	MH (n=1)	10%
Disability pension	LC (n=19)	MH (n=15)	MH (n=2)	15%
Unemployed	LC (n=20)	MH (n=7)	MH (n=1)	12%
Retired	LC (n=66)	LC (n=2)	LC (n=8)	32%
Non-waged	LC (n=4)	MH (n=2)	MH (n=0)	2%
Unknown	LC (n=6)	MH (n=0)	MH (n=0)	2%
% of Residents (within ownership)	69%	21%	11%	

* LC = Lifestyle Choice, W = Workers, MH = Marginally Housed

Kruskal-Wallis tests were used to compare the distribution of continuous indicators across discrete groups of categorical indicators (the three groups). Chi-Squared tests were used to test the independence of two categorical indicators. Logistic regression was used to compare the likelihood of household satisfaction or overall health between indicators of interest while controlling for other possible confounding indicators. Data analysis used SPSS software version 15.0.1. Statistical significance was inferred with a p value of <0.05.

5.2 Results

5.2.1 Demographics

Overall 60% of respondents were male. A small proportion identified as Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander (2.8%) or from a non-English speaking background (4.3%). Approximately a third were retired and 37% currently had some form or level of employment (Table 18).

Table 18: Current employment status (n=239)

Employment status	Percentage
Full time	19%
Part time	8%
Casual	10%
Disability pension	15%
Unemployed	12%
Retired	32%
Non-waged	2%
Unknown	2%
Total	100%

5.2.2 Groups

Most respondents were classified as having made a lifestyle choice (Table 19). Data from the 2006 Census would suggest marginal residents were over-represented amongst respondents (18% cf. to 12.3%) and workers under-represented (19% cf. to approx 30%).

Table 19: Distribution of vulnerable group (n=239)

Vulnerable groups	Number of residents	Percentage
Lifestyle choice	151	63%
Workers	46	19%
Marginally housed	42	18%
Total	239	100%

There was a significant age difference between the three groups (Figure 5), with those who had made a lifestyle choice tending to be older and workers younger. Most commonly, the marginally housed were aged 40 to 49 years.

There was a significant difference in the distribution of groups between regions (Table 20). The marginally housed were more likely to be in the Adelaide region (60%) whilst workers were more likely to be found in regional or rural areas (67%). All groups had more males than females (Table 20).

Figure 6: Age distribution by groups (n=239)

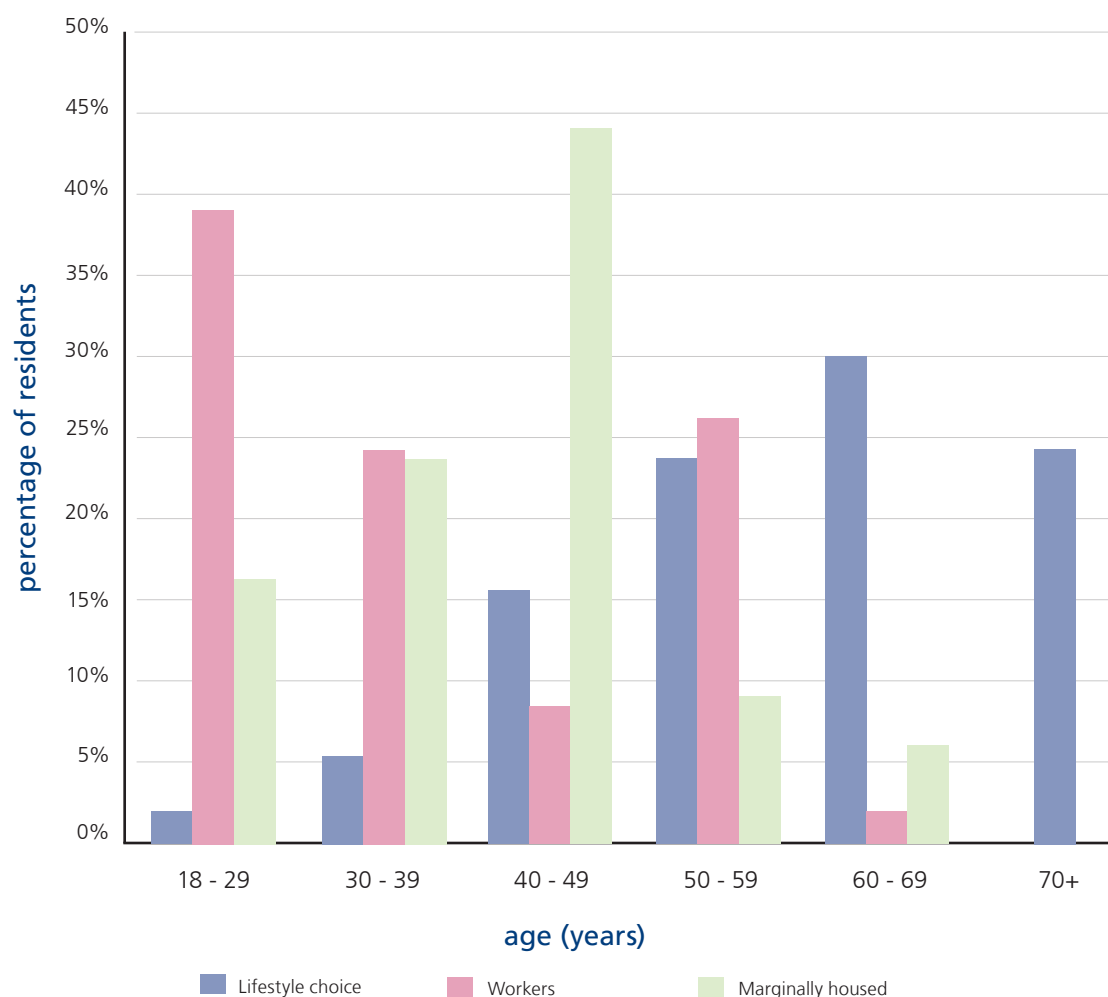


Table 20: Demographics by groups

	Lifestyle choice (n=151)	Workers (n=46)	Marginally housed (n=42)
Location			
Adelaide	42%	29%	59%
Outer Adelaide	27%	4%	11%
Rural	31%	67%	29%
Sex			
Male	58%	68%	59%
Female	42%	32%	41%

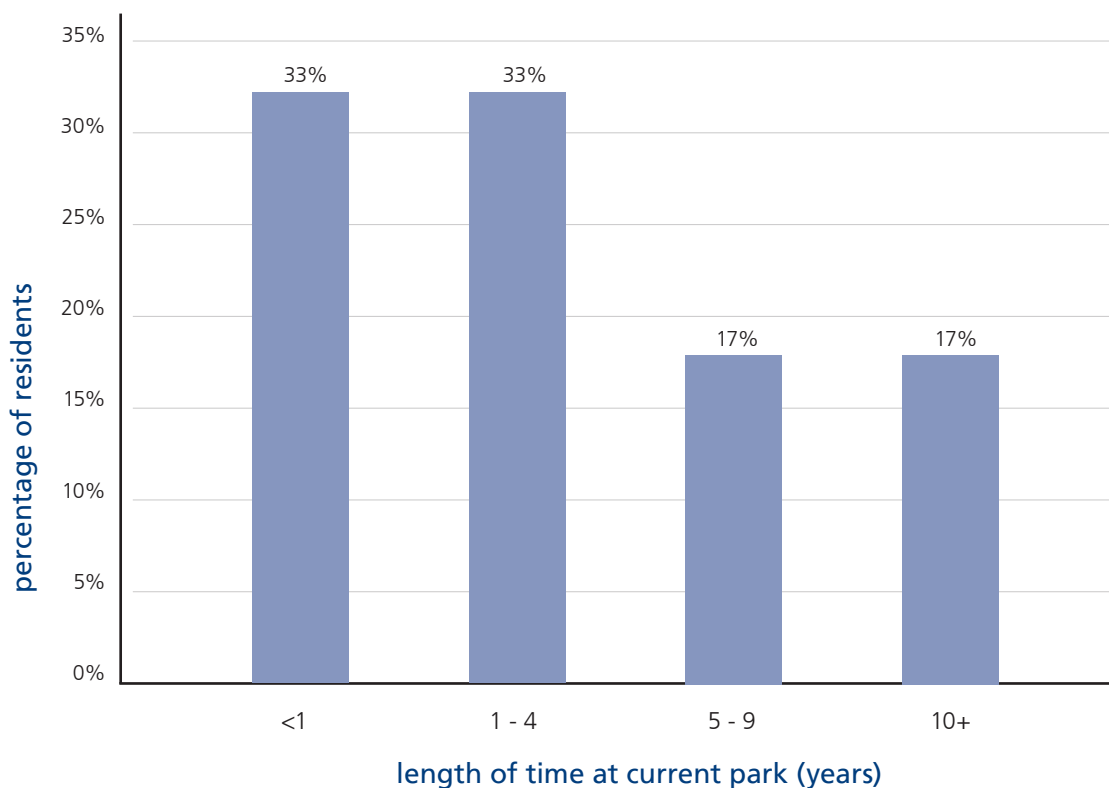
5.2.3 Length of stay

Most respondents had moved to their current park relatively recently - 66% within the last four years (Figure 7). However, 7% had lived there for 15 or more years. The median length of residence was 2.25 years, with a range from 1 month to 25 years.

Length of stay was significantly related to age, location and grouping. Thus:

- Median length of stay increased with age: 3 months for those aged 18 to 29; 6 months for those aged 30 to 39; 4.6 years for those aged 60 to 69 and 7.9 years for those aged 70+.
- Residents in Outer Adelaide had a significantly greater length of stay (median of 6 years) followed by Adelaide (median 2 years) and the rural region (median 1.1 year).
- The lifestyle choice group had a significantly longer length of stay (median 3.5 years), compared to the marginally housed (2 years) and workers (6 months).

Figure 7: Length of time at current park (n=237)



Most respondents - 71% - had not lived in another park before their current location. Only a very small number had lived in multiple parks (4% in 5 or more parks).

Those aged 40 to 49 and 50 to 59 were significantly more likely to have previously lived in another park (44% and 45%). No significant differences were found between regions or groups.

5.2.4 Household type

Most respondents lived in single person or couple-only households (Table 21). Families with children were under-represented compared with the caravan park population in the 2006 Census. Only 10 (4%) were living with children, with a total of 13 children whose ages ranged from 17 months to 19 years, compared to 12.3% of families with children in the Census. In interview, a number of respondents said they had children who did not live with them full-time, but came for access visits on weekends or in holidays. Couple households were over-represented in comparison with the Census (46% cf. to 26.4%).

Table 21: Family type of resident's household (n=238)

Family type	Percentage
Single person only	41%
Couple only	46%
Single person with children	2%
Couple with children	2%
Other*	9%
Total	100%

* Living with another adult not their partner, either friend or relative

Residents living with children were less likely to have previously lived in a caravan park (18% cf. to 29%) and the length of time living in their current park tended to be shorter (median of 1.6 years to 2.3 years). However, these differences did not reach statistical significance. They were significantly more likely to be marginally housed (Table 22).

Table 22: Group and location between those living with and not living with children

	Living with children (n=10)	Not living with children (n=229)
Groups		
Lifestyle choice	30%	65%
Worker	0%	20%
Marginally housed	70%	15%
Region		
Adelaide	70%	42%
Outer Adelaide	0%	20%
Rural	30%	38%

Those living alone were significantly less likely to be in the lifestyle choice group. They were significantly more likely to be workers, living in rural areas and younger than other residents (Table 23).

Table 23: Group and location between single person only and couple only

	Single person only (n=98)	Couple only (n=110)
Groups		
Lifestyle choice	52%	76%
Worker	33%	12%
Marginally housed	15%	12%
Region		
Adelaide	30%	46%
Outer Adelaide	22%	18%
Rural	48%	35%

5.2.5 Perceptions of caravan park life

Satisfaction

Residents were asked to indicate if people in their household were usually satisfied with living in the caravan park. (Data from 203 respondents were available: no response from 15% (n=36)). A very high rate of satisfaction was indicated (Table 24).

Table 24: People in household satisfied with living in park (n=203)

People satisfied	Percentage
Everyone	90%
Some people	2%
No one	8%
Total	100%

The marginally housed were the least likely to be satisfied, with only 71% indicating everyone was satisfied, significantly lower than other groups (94% lifestyle group and 100% workers).

Residents in the Adelaide region had a significantly lower level of satisfaction: 82% (compared to 97% in outer Adelaide and 98% rural region).

Residents living with children tended to be less satisfied compared to those without children (80% to 91%) although this did not reach statistical significance. Comments from parents often revolved around whether children had play opportunities and things to do in the park. Both advantages and disadvantages of living close to neighbours were identified.

"Living here with a child is okay but sometimes she gets up to mischief because she's bored".

"The kids make their own fun, there is a games room, the pool, there is always plenty to do".

"It's a little bit stressful because of the noise factor, difficult to discipline my son quietly. Some other residents have complained".

"It's easier to keep an eye on the baby because of the smaller environment. All the permanents know him and make sure he doesn't wander off".

Advantages

Most respondents identified multiple advantages in living in a caravan park (Table 25: mean (SD) advantages per respondent of 6.5 (5.4).) Only 2% did not identify any advantages.

Table 25: Advantages of living in park (n=239)

Advantage*	Percentage
No advantages	2%
Affordable	62%
Able to own your own accommodation	35%
Sense of community	30%
Convenient location	36%
Freedom / independence	37%
Friends, social aspect	46%
Good management	27%
Lifestyle	38%
Low maintenance	52%
Nice environment	36%
Park amenities	23%
Peace and quiet	52%
Roof over head	38%
Safe / secure	52%
Able to move on when you want to	29%
Less thing to worry about	37%
Stability	19%
Other	2%

* More than 1 advantage could be indicated

Responses indicated a range of benefits, usually relating to affordability (including the ability to own their own accommodation); reduced burdens and greater freedom (low maintenance, 'less to worry about', able to move on, independence) and the advantages of living in close proximity to others (sense of community; friends, social aspect; security). Caravan park living emerged overall as an option of choice and well-suited to most respondents.

"It's not too large a garden to cope with and affordable for pensioners".

"You can go away on holidays and know your place will be okay".

"Everyone looks out for each other".

"No rates or strata maintenance costs, no hassles with neighbours".

"Why live in a house?"

"It's an easier lifestyle, like being on holiday all year round, totally different to owning a house."

Advantages related to the social/community aspect were repeatedly identified:

"I get to gather with some other ladies from the park a couple of times a week to chat and do craft, either in someone's home or in the club house".

"Everyone would come to my assistance if I needed it but they don't intrude".

"The small living areas create a closer bond".

"When living alone without developed social skills – I have had a severe hearing impairment since I was 19 years old – it's less socially isolated in a caravan park than in rented accommodation like a flat or a house. People come and leave but mostly respect each other".

However, respondents were also clear that some people fitted in better than others and living in close proximity could be a disadvantage (depending on your neighbours):

"Caravan park life is not for everyone – the people who do best here are those who work at keeping a good community. 'Ferals', freeloaders, have no place in a caravan park".

"I would like to see management take greater control on who they let into the park".

Affordability was the most commonly identified advantage across all groups (Table 26). However, differences also emerged.

The marginally housed were less satisfied overall with caravan park life. They were less likely to identify benefits relating to lifestyle, location, park amenities or owning their own accommodation and were more likely to indicate benefits related to low maintenance and stability. They were also more likely to identify no advantages and tended to identify fewer advantages (mean 5.1 (SD 4.7) advantages, lower (with borderline significance) compared to 6.8 (5.5) for the lifestyle choice and 6.8 (5.4) for workers).

The lifestyle group were more likely to identify benefits relating to community or social aspects, peace and quiet and safety/security.

By contrast, the easiness of accommodation – low maintenance, less to worry about and able to quickly move on – were of most importance to workers. These emerged as very pragmatic – caravan parks provided a convenient 'roof over their heads'.

Table 26: Advantages of living in park by groups

Advantage*	Lifestyle choice (n=151)	Workers (n=45)	Marginally housed (n=42)
No advantages	1%	0%	11%
Affordable	63%	60%	60%
Able to own your own accommodation	43%	33%	7%
Sense of community	33%	24%	28%
Convenient location	39%	41%	19%
Freedom / independence	38%	39%	31%
Friends, social aspect	51%	36%	37%
Good management	30%	22%	21%
Lifestyle	42%	39%	21%
Low maintenance	46%	67%	55%
Nice environment	38%	33%	31%
Park amenities	26%	22%	12%
Peace and quiet	57%	41%	42%
Roof over head	30%	63%	42%
Safe / secure	59%	33%	45%
Able to move on when you want to	26%	48%	19%
Less thing to worry about	33%	63%	21%
Stability	23%	17%	10%
Other	3%	2%	0%

* More than 1 advantage could be indicated

It would be expected that the advantages indicated by residents related to their satisfaction levels (shown in Table 24). Table 27 compares the percentage of households with everyone satisfied where they indicated a given advantage compared to where they did not indicate that advantage.

Table 27: Percentage of households with everyone satisfied with living in the park for residents that indicated an advantage against those that did not indicate that advantage

Advantage	% to indicate (n=293)	If indicated then % satisfied	If NOT indicated then % satisfied
No advantages	2%	20%	92%
Affordable	62%	92%*	88%*
Able to own your own accommodation	35%	94%	88%
Sense of community	30%	97%	88%
Convenient location	36%	97%	86%
Freedom / independence	37%	96%	87%
Friends, social aspect	46%	94%	88%
Good management	27%	95%	88%
Lifestyle	38%	99%	85%
Low maintenance	52%	97%	85%
Nice environment	36%	97%	87%
Park amenities	23%	94%	89%
Peace and quiet	52%	95%	85%
Roof over head	38%	91%	90%
Safe / secure	52%	95%	84%
Able to move on when you want to	29%	98%	87%
Less thing to worry about	37%	100%	86%
Stability	19%	95%	89%
Other	2%	100%	90%

* Example: For the 62% of residents indicated affordable, 92% of these residents indicated everyone was satisfied in their household. While for the other 38% of residents that did not indicate affordable, 88% of these residents indicated everyone was satisfied in their household.

Analysis² suggested that household satisfaction was significantly **higher** if residents indicated friends, social aspect or peace and quiet as an advantage, independent of group, age and region. Further, household satisfaction tended to be higher (with borderline significance) if residents indicated freedom/independence or safe/secure, independent of group, age and region. There was no significant difference in satisfaction for the other advantages after controlling for the influences of groups, regions and age.

² Logistic regression was used to compare the difference in household satisfaction between the indication of each advantage while controlling for the influence of groups, regions and age.

Disadvantages

Participants were also invited to identify disadvantages in living in caravan parks (Table 28). Responses reinforced the picture of high levels of satisfaction and low dissatisfaction. Approximately a third of respondents (34%) said there were no disadvantages (compared to only 2% who identified no advantages). Far fewer disadvantages were identified compared to advantages – a mean (SD) of 1.8 (2.3) per respondent. Further, each disadvantage was nominated by only a relatively small proportion of respondents.

Table 28: Disadvantages of living in park (n=239)

Disadvantage*	Percentage
No disadvantages	34%
Not good for the kids	7%
Lack of access to facilities (shop, schools)	8%
Too close to neighbours	15%
Small living space	18%
Lack of space for storing belongings	20%
Park amenities	9%
Shared bathroom	16%
Disability access not good	3%
No control over maintenance	3%
Have to wait to use amenities eg laundry	4%
Standard of accommodation	1%
Don't get on with other residents	3%
Disturbance by other residents	9%
Don't like park rules	8%
Feel isolated	4%
Inconvenient location	3%
Lack of privacy	12%
Not safe	1%
Lack of security of tenure (can be asked to leave)	16%
Expensive	6%
Lack of access to public transport	5%
Other	10%

* More than 1 disadvantage could be indicated

The most commonly identified disadvantages related to space, security of tenure and amenities (particularly shared bathrooms). Issues related to physical isolation/location were also identified – including access to facilities (shops, schools) and public transport.

“There is a lack of public transport and not much is stocked in the park shop”.

“It’s good as long as you have your own transport”.

“I’m not totally happy because of lack of access to the hospital, doctors, shops and transport”.

Relationships with other residents were problems to a very small proportion, suggesting generally cohesive and positive living environments within parks. The level of scrutiny in the park was generally an advantage, but could be a disadvantage:

“Some people take the environment too seriously. One man in his 70’s has elected himself the village policeman”.

“There’s no privacy – you walk outside to do something and everyone knows”.

The approach and attitude of park management was a major determining factor in satisfaction. Most residents indicated management were friendly, responsive, caring and fair:

“The owners are great people and anything that needs doing gets done straight away”.

“Of course, it depends on the management, but we are lucky”.

However, a minority reported the opposite:

“The park rules seem to lean too much to what you cannot do and not to what you can do. No issues apart from poor park management – it’s arrogant. No pot plants are allowed”.

“The park manager takes a long time to do anything. Sometimes management comes up with strange little rules”.

“It was nice when I first moved in but now there is new management who don’t seem to consider residents. They’re not cooperative”.

Concerns about security of tenure, decision making and park rules were related to the discretionary power and individual style of management:

"It pays to be quiet and keep to yourself, it's easy to get evicted".

"You can be locked out if management thinks you're guilty of a misdemeanour".

"If there are any problems you can be asked to get out in 28 days. The new legislation gives you the right to appeal to a tribunal but this would take a long time and where do you live in the meantime?"

"The big thing is security. We'd like a lease".

"You have no leg to stand on if something goes wrong".

Table 29 summarises identified disadvantages according to resident group.

Those who had made a lifestyle choice were far less likely to identify any disadvantages and also identified fewer disadvantages (mean (SD) of 1.2 (1.6) disadvantages per respondent). This was the most satisfied group overall. They were far less likely to report issues relating to security, accommodation standards or size and park amenity – probably influenced by the fact that their accommodation was likely to be self-owned, larger and of a better standard compared to other residents, and often in specialist parks.

By contrast, workers were the most likely to identify disadvantages (mean (SD) was 3.0 (2.6)). Relatively high proportions indicated issues relating to space, storage, amenities, shared facilities and lack of security of tenure. These issues were not so strong for the marginally housed (with a mean of 2.7 (3.1) disadvantages), but still much more common than for those who had made a lifestyle choice.

The percentage of households with everyone satisfied where they indicated a given disadvantage compared to where they did not indicate that disadvantage, is shown in Table 30. Analysis³ suggested that household satisfaction was significantly lower if residents indicated **lack of access to facilities, too close to neighbours, small living space, lack of space for storing belongings, shared bathroom and lack of privacy**, independent of group, age and region. Household satisfaction tended to be lower (with a borderline significance) if residents indicated **have to wait to use amenities, don't get on with other residents, disturbance by other residents** and **inconvenient location**, which were independent of group, age and region. There was no significant difference in household satisfaction for the other disadvantages after controlling for the influences of groups, regions and age.

³ Logistic regression was used to compare the difference in household satisfaction between the indication of each disadvantage while controlling for the influence of groups, regions and age.

Table 29: Disadvantages of living in park by groupings

Disadvantage*	Lifestyle choice (n=151)	Workers (n=46)	Marginally housed (n=42)
No disadvantages	44%	17%	17%
Not good for the kids	5%	4%	14%
Lack of access to facilities (shop, schools)	11%	0%	5%
Too close to neighbours	9%	28%	23%
Small living space	6%	43%	35%
Lack of space for storing belongings	12%	43%	21%
Park amenities	1%	22%	17%
Shared bathroom	9%	43%	17%
Disability access not good	4%	0%	2%
No control over maintenance	3%	2%	5%
Have to wait to use amenities eg laundry	2%	4%	12%
Standard of accommodation	0%	0%	7%
Don't get on with other residents	1%	0%	12%
Disturbance by other residents	8%	4%	17%
Don't like park rules	12%	2%	2%
Feel isolated	1%	0%	19%
Inconvenient location	3%	0%	2%
Lack of privacy	7%	27%	17%
Not safe	1%	0%	0%
Lack of security of lease (can be asked to leave)	10%	43%	7%
Expensive	2%	22%	0%
Access to public transport	7%	0%	7%
Other	7%	7%	24%

* More than 1 disadvantage could be indicated

Table 30: Percentage of households with everyone satisfied with living in the park for residents who indicated a disadvantage against those who did not indicate that disadvantage

Disadvantage	% of all to indicate (n=293)	If indicated then % satisfied	If NOT indicated then % satisfied
No disadvantages	34%	99%	85%
Not good for the kids	7%	86%*	91%*
Lack of access to facilities (shop, schools)	8%	72%	93%
Too close to neighbours	15%	67%	93%
Small living space	18%	68%	94%
Lack of space for storing belongings	20%	85%	92%
Park amenities	9%	57%	92%
Shared bathroom	16%	67%	94%
Disability access not good	3%	100%	90%
No control over maintenance	3%	100%	90%
Have to wait to use amenities eg laundry	4%	63%	92%
Standard of accommodation	1%	0%	92%
Don't get on with other residents	3%	40%	92%
Disturbance by other residents	9%	69%	92%
Don't like park rules	8%	94%	90%
Feel isolated	4%	0%	94%
Inconvenient location	3%	83%	91%
Lack of privacy	12%	56%	94%
Not safe	1%	100%	91%
Lack of security of lease (can be asked to leave)	16%	95%	90%
Expensive	6%	100%	90%
No public transport	5%	100%	90%
Other	10%	64%	94%

* Example: For the 7% of residents that indicated not good for the kids, 86% of these residents indicated everyone was satisfied in their household. While for the other 93% of residents that did not indicate not good for the kids, 91% of these residents indicated everyone was satisfied in their household.

5.2.6 Park Life – interviewed residents

Respondents who were interviewed face to face (as compared to completing a mail-back survey) were asked additional questions about their experiences⁴.

Ten percent (10%) of interviewed residents (and 29% of the marginally housed) reported problems with the facilities in their park, either slow maintenance or lack of cleanliness (Table 31). These complaints were localised to three parks and were not general across the sector. In particular, one park – with a relatively high number of the marginally housed – was the source of most of the complaints (47% of respondents from that park complained about standards and amenities).

Table 31: Problems with facilities in the park by groups for interviewed residents

Problem	Lifestyle choice (n=85)	Workers (n=16)	Marginally housed (n=29)
Yes	5%	0%	29%
No	52%	81%	51%
Do not use park facilities	43%	19%	20%

The majority of those interviewed - 57% - often had contact with other residents (Table 32). Workers were the most likely to indicate contact (although this difference did not reach statistical significance: 80% of workers, compared to 57% marginally housed and 53% lifestyle choice).

Generally, respondents indicated they got on well with other residents (68%: Table 32). The marginally housed were least likely to indicate positive relationships (58% compared to 69% lifestyle group and 85% workers) but this difference did not reach statistical significance.

Those who had frequent contact with other residents were highly likely to indicate that they got on well with others (97% of those who often had contact with other residents compared to 27% who never or sometimes had contact with others.)

The great majority of respondents - 84% - said privacy was not a problem for them (Table 32). Workers indicated a significantly lower level of privacy (49% compared to 80% in the marginally housed group and 92% in the lifestyle choice group.) Residents in transportable homes indicated a higher level of privacy (94%) compared to those in standard caravans (81%) and caravans with a hard annex (85%) but this difference did not reach statistical significance. Residents who owned their accommodation reported significantly higher levels of privacy (89%) compared to those who did not (71%).

A minority of respondents - 20% - felt isolated at the park (Table 32). However, only

⁴ 130 residents were interviewed, 102 (78%) from Adelaide, 28 (22%) from Outer Adelaide and 0 from the rural region. Results from the Interview data were weighted to the population living in caravan parks described by the 2006 Census by age and region of SA (Adelaide and Outer Adelaide).

3% identified isolation as a disadvantage of living in a caravan park. The level of isolation was significantly higher for the marginally housed (39% compared to 29% of workers and 11% lifestyle choice). Those who owned their accommodation were significantly less likely to feel isolated (11%) compared to those who did not own their accommodation (45%).

A total of 9% of interviewed residents said they weren't able to get to shops or other facilities when needed (Table 32). The marginally housed were most likely to identify this as an issue, although this did not reach statistical significance (18% marginally housed, 8% lifestyle choice group and 0% workers). Residents in Outer Adelaide were significantly more likely to indicate inability get to shops or facilities when needed (23%) compared to those in Adelaide (5%).

Table 32: Views of living in park of interviewed residents

	Percentage
Satisfied with accommodation (n=130)	
Very dissatisfied to neutral	12%
Somewhat satisfied to very satisfied	88%
Any problems with facilities in park (n=130)	
No	55%
Yes	10%
Do not use – have own facilities	35%
Contact with other residents (n=130)	
Never to sometimes	43%
Often	57%
How you got along with other residents (n=126)	
Poor to fair	32%
Good	68%
Have enough privacy living in park (n=130)	
Never to sometimes	16%
Often	84%
Feel isolated in park (n=130)	
No	80%
Yes	20%
Get to shops and other facilities when needed (n=130)	
No	9%
Yes	91%

5.2.7 Previous accommodation

Most people (and the majority in each group) owned their own home or lived in private rental before coming to the caravan park (Table 33).

Table 33: Previous accommodation of residents before living in current park (n=238)

Previous accommodation	Percentage
Own home	54%
Private rental	26%
Public rental	5%
Boarding house	<1%
Staying temporary with friends or family	11%
Slept rough / homeless	1%
*Other	3%

*Includes boat, hotel

A small but not insignificant proportion – 13% - had previously been in an accommodation type that could be defined as homeless or marginal housing (a boarding house, staying temporarily with family and friends or sleeping rough: Table 34). Workers and the marginally housed were significantly more likely than those who had made a lifestyle choice to indicate one of these housing options. It may be that workers had a different reason for being in this form of accommodation – for example, living in a ‘boarding house’ in a location related to their seasonal work.

Residents with children were significantly more likely to have previously lived in marginal housing (60% compared to 12% not living with children).

Age was also a determining factor: older people were significantly more likely to have previously owned their own home, whilst younger people were more likely to have previously lived in marginal accommodation (49% of those aged 18 to 29).

Table 34: Groups and living with children by previous accommodation (n=236)

	Own home	Private rental	Public rental	Marginal housing	% Total for row
Groups					
Lifestyle choice	66%	21%	6%	7%	100%
Workers	40%	37%	0%	23%	100%
Marginally housed	30%	35%	9%	25%	100%
Living with children					
Yes	20%	10%	10%	60%	100%
No	56%	27%	5%	12%	100%
Region					
Adelaide	48%	32%	4%	16%	100%
Outer Adelaide	66%	19%	4%	11%	100%
Rural	56%	24%	8%	13%	100%

Table 35: Reasons for leaving previous accommodation to live in a caravan park (n=237)

Reason*	Percentage
Lifestyle choice	51%
Wanted to move on	26%
Accommodation became no longer available	10%
Could not afford it	11%
Relationship with family / friend breakdown	8%
Relationship with partner ended	16%
Didn't get on with other residents	1%
Didn't get on with owner of previous accommodation	1%
Health reasons	7%
Escape domestic violence	<1%
Wasn't safe	4%
Didn't like it	3%
Accommodation was temporary	3%
Other	1%

* More than 1 reason could be indicated

Reasons why residents left their previous accommodation are listed in Table 35. The most common were lifestyle choice and wanting to move on, responses suggesting choice and some degree of control. However, 49% indicated affordability, relationship breakdown, personal health, personal safety, accommodation no longer available or temporary accommodation as a reason, all suggesting some constraint of choice. Mean (SD) number of reasons indicated per person was 1.4 (0.8).

Reasons for leaving previous accommodation were quite different across the three groups (Table 36).

- The marginally housed were the most likely to identify reasons indicative of vulnerability, particularly relationship breakdown and the availability of accommodation. They were less likely to indicate a lifestyle choice and wanting to move on.
- Predictably, those who had made a lifestyle choice were most likely to indicate this as a reason, with 'wanting to move on' also a common response. Affordability and health-related reasons were more of an issue for this group.
- Workers tended to indicate reasons indicative of choice – lifestyle and wanting to move on. Affordability did not emerge as an issue.

Residents living with children were significantly more likely to indicate reasons of relationship breakdown (53% to 6%) or marginal/homeless accommodation (20% to 2%) compared to those not living with children, and were less likely (borderline significance) to indicate a lifestyle choice (19% to 52%).

Table 36: Reasons for leaving previous accommodation across groups

Reason for leaving previous accommodation*	Lifestyle choice (n=151)	Workers (n=46)	Marginally housed (n=42)
Lifestyle choice	56%	59%	23%
Wanted to move on	23%	49%	10%
Accommodation no longer available	8%	10%	20%
Could not afford it	15%	1%	8%
Relationship with family / friend breakdown	5%	5%	22%
Relationship with partner ended	17%	9%	24%
Didn't get on with other residents	1%	1%	0%
Didn't get on with owner of previous accommodation	1%	1%	0%
Health reasons	11%	0%	3%
Escape domestic violence	0%	0%	2%
Wasn't safe	5%	0%	2%
Didn't like it	3%	2%	2%
Accommodation was temporary	3%	1%	6%
Other	1%	0%	0%

* More than 1 reason could be indicated

Reasons for leaving previous accommodation also differed according to region (Table 37). Those in the rural region were more likely to indicate lifestyle choice, wanted to move on or didn't like it, and were less likely to indicate availability of accommodation or relationship breakdown.

Table 37: Reasons for leaving previous accommodation by region

Reason for leaving previous accommodation*	Adelaide (n=102)	Outer Adelaide (n=47)	Rural (n=90)
Lifestyle choice	43%	42%	64%
Wanted to move on	14%	29%	37%
Accommodation no longer available	15%	9%	5%
Relationship with family / friend breakdown	11%	9%	4%
Relationship with partner ended	21%	16%	11%
Didn't like it	<1%	0%	6%

* More than 1 reason could be indicated

5.2.8 Main reason for living in a caravan park

Respondents were invited to identify their main reason for living in a caravan park. Affordability was the major driver for just over 40%; whilst almost a quarter indicated lifestyle (Table 38).

Table 38: Main reason for living in a caravan park (n=213)

Main reason	Percentage
Affordable accommodation	41%
Home ownership	4%
Suits my lifestyle	24%
Location is good	8%
Low maintenance	5%
No choice / nowhere else to go	10%
Safety and security	6%
Other	1%

NB: High percentage of missing responses (13%)

Affordability and no choice were often closely related, for example:

"I couldn't afford to go anywhere else, I was only left with \$5,000 (following a relationship breakdown). I had two young children, the eldest moved in with my mother and the youngest lived in the park with me".

"I have insufficient finances, borrowing capacity or equity to buy a home or flat or pay the level of rental required for accommodation in the market place".

"We could only afford a factory built home and this park allowed us to have a site with a 20 year licence agreement".

These constraining factors did not necessarily mean people were dissatisfied:

"I can afford to live here and I really like it".

Lifestyle choices were usually couched in positive language:

"For the country style living, peace and quiet, native birds and animals".

"I gave the money to the children, I only wanted something small".

"I don't have to look after things like a yard and have maintenance of anything but I have got my own little bit of land".

The main reason for living in a caravan park varied according to groups, location and age. There were also observed differences between those living with and without children although these did not reach statistical significance.

- Affordability was the most common reason across all three groups (Table 39). However, the marginally housed were more likely to indicate that they had no choice and workers were more likely to indicate location as the main driver.

Table 39: Main reason for living in a caravan park across groups

Main reason	Lifestyle choice (n=142)	Workers (n=35)	Marginally housed (n=35)
Affordable accommodation	43%	42%	36%
Home ownership	5%	6%	0%
Suits lifestyle	28%	14%	17%
Location is good	5%	24%	2%
Low maintenance	5%	2%	6%
No choice / nowhere else to go	5%	9%	35%
Safety and security	7%	3%	4%
Other	2%	0%	0%

- Residents in the Adelaide region were more likely to indicate affordability and lack of other options and less likely to indicate a lifestyle choice (Table 40). Rural respondents were more likely to indicate the advantages of location and less likely to indicate safety and security. Residents in Outer Adelaide were more likely to indicate low maintenance.

Table 40: Main reason for living in a caravan park across regions

Main reason	Adelaide (n=102)	Outer Adelaide (n=43)	Rural (n=67)
Affordable accommodation	50%	35%	33%
Home ownership	5%	2%	5%
Suits lifestyle	18%	25%	33%
Location is good	<1%	8%	19%
Low maintenance	3%	11%	4%
No choice / nowhere else to go	16%	8%	4%
Safety and security	7%	11%	1%
Other	2%	0%	2%

- Younger residents were significantly more likely to indicate advantages related to location or lack of options. Middle aged residents were significantly more likely to indicate the possibility for home ownership. Older residents were significantly more likely to indicate lifestyle, low maintenance and safety and security.
- Residents living with children were more likely to indicate affordability (74% to 40%) or lack of choice (19% to 10%) but these differences did not reach statistical significance.

The main reason for living in a caravan park was significantly associated with satisfaction. Residents who indicated lifestyle were significantly more likely to indicate satisfaction, compared to those with another main reason (100% to 87%). By contrast, those who indicated no choice / no where else to go were significantly less likely to be satisfied (46% to 95%).

5.2.9 Accommodation type, ownership and tenancy

Most respondents lived in a caravan (57%) or transportable home (29%), with a very small minority in a tent (Table 41). The type and standard of caravan varied: 23% had a hard annex and one had 3 solid rooms built on.

Table 41: Type of accommodation* (n=214)

Accommodation	Percentage
Cabin / villa	11%
Caravan – standard	44%
Caravan with hard annex	13%
Tent	1%
Transportable home	30%
Other**	2%

* Details on accommodation type unknown for 9%

** Other included motor home and campervan

The type of accommodation varied between groups (Table 42). Those who had made a lifestyle choice were likely to live in a higher standard of accommodation, (transportable home) whilst the marginally housed were more likely to live in a caravan (especially a standard caravan).

Table 42: Type of accommodation used across groups

Accommodation	Lifestyle choice (n=147)	Workers (n=35)	Marginally housed (n=36)
Cabin / villa	8%	19%	16%
Caravan – standard	39%	43%	65%
Caravan with hard annex	12%	23%	6%
Tent	2%	0%	0%
Transportable home	38%	12%	13%
Other	2%	3%	0%

Accommodation type also varied according to age group and household structure. 92% of residents with children were in a standard caravan (compared to 42% without children). Older residents were more likely to live in a transportable home: 44% of those aged 60 to 69 and 61% of those aged 70+. Caravans were more likely to be used by younger residents.

Accommodation type was significantly different across the regions (Table 43), with a greater use of transportable homes in Adelaide and Outer Adelaide. The use of caravans was slightly lower in Outer Adelaide with a higher use of cabins and villas in the rural region.

Table 43: Type of accommodation used by regions

Accommodation	Adelaide (n=102)	Outer Adelaide (n=45)	Rural (n=72)
Cabin / villa	4%	9%	22%
Caravan – standard	45%	32%	50%
Caravan with hard annex	12%	8%	17%
Tent	0%	6%	0%
Transportable home	38%	44%	9%
Other	1%	1%	3%

Ownership information was reported for 214 respondents (89%). Of these, 77% owned their accommodation and 23% did not. The percentage owning their accommodation was significantly higher amongst those living in a transportable home or a caravan with hard annex (Table 44).

Table 44: Ownership of accommodation by type of accommodation (n=209)

Accommodation	Percentage who own their accommodation
Cabin / villa	49%
Caravan – standard	69%
Caravan with hard annex	92%
Transportable home	91%
Total	77%

Ownership was significantly higher for older residents (93% aged 60 to 69 and 93% aged 70+ compared to 43% aged 18 to 29 and 50% aged 30 to 39).

Those living with children were less likely to own their accommodation (39% with children compared to 78% without). For residents aged from 18 to 49, 32% of those living with children owned their accommodation compared to 57% without children. This suggests the lower rate of ownership for those with children may be independent of an age effect.

Ownership tended to be different across regions (with borderline statistical significance), with 72% in the Adelaide region owning their accommodation, 89% in Outer Adelaide and 77% in the rural region.

Residents who owned their accommodation tended to have been at their current park for a significantly longer period: a median stay of 3 years (compared to 1 year for others).

Information on **tenancy agreements** were provided by 228 respondents (95%), 38% of whom had a written agreement. Most (67%) did not provide any details about the agreement, however 26% indicated it was “to follow park rules” and 7% said they had a lease for a fixed period (ranging from 4 to 21 years). Residents within the same park often gave different responses to this question.

The proportion of residents with a written agreement varied significantly according to grouping and location. Only 16% of workers indicated they had a written agreement, compared to 35% of the marginally housed and 48% of those who had made a lifestyle choice. People in rural areas were the least likely to have an agreement (47% in Adelaide, 55% in Outer Adelaide and 25% in the rural region).

5.2.10 Health

Residents were asked to provide a self-assessed rating of their health status and indicate any changes in health since arriving at their current park. A very high proportion of respondents indicated their health was good to excellent (Table 45) and had not changed since arrival (Table 46).

Table 45: Overall health of residents (n=234)

Overall health	Percentage
Poor to fair	21%
Good to excellent	79%

Table 46: Change in health since arrival at current park (n=233)

Change	Percentage
Worse	15%
The same	66%
Better	19%

There was a significant association between the general health of residents and changes in health since arriving at the park. Those who had poor to fair health were more likely to indicate deterioration, whilst those with good health were more likely to indicate an improvement.

Details on the possible reasons for changes in health were not well reported (only 48% gave a reason). For those whose health had improved, the most commonly identified factor was reduced stress because of the move to the park.

“Since moving into the park I’ve been better in mind, more content”.

"Peace of mind – that's why my health is better".

"My health has improved because there's no stress living in the park".

Deterioration in health status was usually attributed to age-related factors or existing medical conditions – with many noting their health was 'no different than it would be anywhere else'.

"I'm losing my eye-sight: age-related macular degeneration".

"My health is somewhat worse because of age and osteoarthritis".

In only a very few instances was declining health directly connected to living in a caravan park. One person stated that their health was somewhat worse because of the cold and poor cooking facilities, whilst several others indicated stress or depression.

"The park can make depression a bit worse at times – mainly because of the financial situation".

The strongest theme in responses, however, was the beneficial health effects and greater health surveillance/support because of living in a caravan park. People with medical conditions often reported that they felt supported and safer than in conventional housing.

"When undergoing chemo-therapy, the park owners would check on me regularly and other residents keep an eye on me".

"My health is somewhat worse due to leukaemia. It's easier living in a park with health issues, you have everyone around you. People look out for each other".

"When I had a stroke someone found me very quickly. Now I have a button that rings".

"Everyone would come to my assistance if I needed it but they don't intrude".

As would be expected, older residents were significantly more likely to indicate poor to fair overall health and deteriorating health.

Table 47: Health status across groups

Accommodation	Lifestyle choice (n=140)	Workers (n=55)	Marginally housed (n=39)
Overall health			
Poor to fair	25%	3%	30%
Good to excellent	75%	97%	70%
Change in health			
Worse	19%	2%	19%
The same	59%	90%	56%
Better	21%	8%	25%

After controlling for the effect of age, analysis⁵ indicated that the marginally housed were significantly more likely than those who had made a lifestyle choice to report poor or fair health. It is estimated that the odds of indicating poor to fair overall health was 73% lower in the lifestyle choice group compared to the marginally housed and 96% lower for workers compared to the marginally housed (after controlling for age). These results indicate that, if age was assumed to be equal across the groups, the marginally housed had the poorest health status.

5.2.11 Services and supports

Almost a quarter (22%) of respondents reported someone in their household had a disability or needed a special service (Table 48). The marginally housed (30%) and the lifestyle choice group (25%) were significantly more likely than the workers (4%) to indicate a household member with a disability. Respondents with a disability were significantly higher in the Adelaide region (31%) followed by Outer Adelaide (23%) and rural areas (12%), and amongst older residents.

Only a very small proportion of respondents - 7% - regularly used a community support service or support worker, with the great majority of these services (80%) coming to the caravan park (Table 48).

“My husband has Parkinson’s. Domiciliary Care services come to the park”.

Marginally housed (10%) and life-style choice (8%) residents were significantly more likely to regularly use a service compared to workers (0%). Older residents were significantly more likely to regularly use a service, as were residents with poor to fair health (borderline statistical significance, (12%) compared to those with good to excellent health (4%)).

⁵ Logistic regression was used to compared the overall health of residents across groups while controlling for the possible influence of age.

Table 48: Need and use of support service by residents

	Percentage of residents
Any one in household have a disability or special need? (n=230)	
No	78%
Yes	22%
Do you receive regular community support service? (n=234)	
No	93%
Yes	7%
If receive service, do these services come to the park? (n=15)	
No	18%
Yes	80%
Unknown	2%
Are there other services or supports that would be useful to you? (n=233)	
No	94%
Yes	6%
Do you know where to go to find out about service? (n=224)	
No	37%
Yes	63%
Do you have problems getting transport to where you need to go? (n=233)	
No	88%
Yes	11%
Agency arrange for you to move to park? (n=235)	
No	98%
Yes	2%

Only a very small group - 6% - said they needed additional services or supports (Table 48). The marginally housed were significantly more likely to indicate such a need (16%, compared to 6% of the lifestyle choice group and 0% of workers), as were those living with children (25% compared to 6% without children).

Residents who already regularly used a support service were significantly more likely to indicate a need for further support (32% compared to 5% who did not use a service) as were those with poor to fair health.

Generally respondents knew where to find information on services and supports (63%: Table 48). In particular, those who needed additional services or supports generally reported that they knew where to go to find out about them (84%, compared to 63% who did not need additional services).

Eleven percent (11%) of residents reported transport problems (Table 48). These were significantly more likely to be the marginally housed (32% compared to 7% lifestyle choice and 4% workers), those with children (38% compared to 9% without) and those who needed for other services (need 36% vs no need 10%).

5.2.12 Future accommodation

Respondents were asked to indicate their future accommodation plans (Table 49). Just on half planned to stay in their current location, which was generally their preferred option (Table 49).

Table 49: Planned future accommodation (n=239)

Accommodation	Percentage of residents	Percentage to indicate this was their preferred option
Stay in current park	49%	74%
Another caravan park	14%	84%
Live with family or friends	1%	100%
Aged facilities*	3%	63%
Other housing†	16%	88%
Undecided / not indicated	17%	-

* Includes retirement village, nursing home

† Includes ownership of a house / unit, private rental or public rental

Financial, health or transport issues were the main reasons when the future accommodation indicated was not the first choice:

“Life in a park is okay but I would like to live in house but can’t afford it”.

“Would prefer to stay here but health will not permit it”.

“Unable to remain in caravan park because no public transport or shops”.

There were significant differences in plans for future accommodation between the three groups (Table 50). The marginally housed revealed a broad spread of intention, with the most common being other housing and a relatively high level of indecision. The main intention for both the other two groups was to stay in the current park. Residents living with children were significantly more likely to intend to seek other housing (63%) compared to those without children (14%).

Table 50: Future accommodation by groups

Accommodation	Lifestyle choice (n=151)	Workers (n=46)	Marginally housed (n=42)
Stay in current park	57%	46%	24%
Another caravan park	18%	2%	15%
Live with family or friends	1%	0%	0%
Aged facility*	5%	0%	0%
Other housing†	9%	25%	34%
Undecided / not indicated	10%	27%	28%

* Includes retirement village, nursing home

† Includes ownership of a house, private rental or public rental



6 Discussion

6.1 Who lives in caravan parks?

Analysis of the 2006 ABS Census identified 5,500 people living in caravan parks in South Australia. Almost half these people were in either metropolitan Adelaide or the Adelaide Hills, and they were more likely (than the SA population) to be living alone; male; on a low income; not in the labour force and owning their own dwelling. Although their average age was older than the SA population overall, they were less likely to indicate a disability (need for assistance with core activities).

Chamberlain and MacKenzie's three categories of park residents - workers, those who have made a lifestyle choice and the marginally housed - were adopted for analysis in the current study and have been found to be generally valid, with the three groups having a range of different characteristics and attributes. However, analysis also suggests the groups are not totally independent and they cross-over or share attributes in a range of areas.

The largest group living in caravan parks are those who have made a **lifestyle choice**. These are older, generally retired, and very satisfied with park living. Although affordability is the major factor driving their housing choice, they particularly value the social and community aspects of park living, as well as the safety and security, peace and quiet and reduced responsibilities with regards to their housing, including maintenance. Their housing is generally of a higher standard than other caravan park residents and they tend (and intend) to stay in the same park for many years. Many have a strong sense of ownership and shared responsibility for the park and its environs. Parks are their preferred accommodation option and most would prefer to age in place. Park managers generally prefer them as clientele. Their ageing in place does, however, create some challenges for the park (including amenity, infrastructure and management responsibilities and responses). Informal supports are frequently provided within the park setting by both neighbours and management and some residents also receive formalised home care and other assistance. However, it would be expected that over time caravan parks will increasingly become sites where a higher level of formal and informal aged care is required. Infrastructure and amenity issues (including disability access) are also likely to become more prominent.

The financial vulnerabilities of this group should also be noted. Many are living on a low income, suggesting caravan parks may operate, by default, as a form of low-income retirement village. A small minority have come to parks from marginal housing or homelessness or as a consequence of relationship breakdown. The group also have concerns about security of tenure and their rights and recourse options, and their quality of life is significantly influenced by the attitudes, style and decisions of management.

Workers are usually living in parks for a relatively short period of time and for quite pragmatic reasons. Location and convenience have been the major drivers for their

accommodation choice. They tend to be located in rural areas and are associated with a range of industries. On the whole, they have good health and do not need additional assistance. They have quite a pragmatic attitude to their accommodation: they want somewhere easy but comfortable, where they can move on when needed. They are not looking for permanence and appear to have less interaction with other park residents. Managers may prefer them because they are relatively undemanding and spend minimal time in the park (being occupied with day-time work). They are more likely than other residents to be living alone and tend to be younger. However, a noticeable minority are family groups which include children. Workers report a very high degree of satisfaction with caravan park life (100%) but also the largest number of disadvantages (usually relating to standards and facilities). They generally live in parks focused on tourists. Security is a concern for them - few have written agreements and some park owners report that they move workers on in peak holiday periods. Almost a quarter of the workers identified that they previously came from options classified as marginal accommodation or homelessness. However it may have been that these options - boarding houses, staying temporarily with family and friends - were more linked to employment patterns than housing and personal vulnerability.

The **marginal** are the smallest group of residents (approximately 12 – 14%) and clearly the most vulnerable. They are more likely to have children with them; are the least likely to be satisfied with their accommodation and are more likely to have moved to a park because of lack of choice or as a consequence of a relationship breakdown. Still, the majority (70%) report satisfaction with caravan park life, with particular advantages being affordability, low maintenance and stability. Twenty-five percent (25%) reported having come to the park from circumstances of homelessness/marginal housing. Despite being a much younger group, their self-reported health status is approximately equal to those who have made a lifestyle choice and (after controlling for the effects of age) they emerge with the poorest health. They are more likely than the other groups to report feeling isolated, a household member with a disability, regular contact with a support worker, a need for additional services and transport problems. They have a high rate of indecision and uncertainty about their future but often aspire to conventional housing. This group is the most likely to be viewed as problematic by managers and other residents and are not permitted or welcome in many parks. They are often concentrated in certain parks, particularly in the Adelaide area, which may have a lower standard of amenity.

6.2 “It’s not good for kids”

The special analysis of the 2006 Census undertaken for this study found 414 caravan park households with dependent children (13.7% of the total). These included 704 children aged 14 years or younger. Families with children were especially concentrated in the Northern Adelaide area (382 children). The analysis indicated that the minority of these children (93 children – 13.2%) were in households which could be classified as marginal.

Only a small number of families with children participated in this study. Those families indicated both positives and negatives about living in a caravan park with children. Positives included activities for the children and community surveillance; negatives included lack of activities, loss of privacy and lack of space. Families with children were more likely to have come to caravan parks from marginal housing or homelessness and for reasons related to affordability and lack of other options. Families were less likely to own their own accommodation and more likely to be living in a standard caravan (ie smaller, poorer quality accommodation than other options).

Although little specific information was able to be gathered in this study about children, the data generally would support previous literature – in the words of one respondent - “its not good for kids to be brought up in a caravan park”.

6.3 Different parks, different places

Consistent with interstate research, considerable diversity was found in the nature, characteristics, focus and style of caravan parks across South Australia. It also appears this diversity is increasing with the development of more specialised facilities catering for distinct groups. Owners are making business decisions towards one group or the other, dependent on park location, size and demand.

Managers and residents agree that there are inherent problems in trying to mix residents with tourists. Thus, one group of owners are moving more towards the long-stay industry (primarily, the lifestyle choicers), preferring this group for the steady income flow, their positive contribution to park life and their stability. However, in predominantly tourist areas, there is no market advantage in residents and disadvantages for management in terms of their specific demands and requirements and their impact on the tourist clientele. It will probably be the marginal residents who are “squeezed out” in this trend - many parks now will not accept them: they are widely reported as the most problematic group, disruptive to other residents and tourists alike. There are few advantages for management in their tenancy.

Even now the marginal residents tend to be concentrated in a relatively small number of parks. It was notable that these parks were often the source of the relatively few negative comments about park amenities, including cleanliness. Thus, the marginal would be expected to become more marginalised, in parks with poorer facilities (and arguably more questionable management) with a risk of these becoming ‘ghettos’.

Diversity across the sector was also found in terms of management style and facilities. The researcher’s visits to parks, along with the responses from those surveyed, generally indicated a high standard in both management and accommodation/amenity. However, there were a small number of facilities where management and amenity were much more problematic. As noted, these included some facilities with concentrations of marginal residents. It should also be remembered that a small number of facilities declined to participate in the study, including at least one

facility known to accommodate marginal residents where standards are reported as problematic.

6.4 What makes it work?

Across the board, a high degree of satisfaction - and indeed enthusiasm - was found for caravan park living. Similar to previous studies, the vast majority of respondents were satisfied with the park they were in and its facilities; were very positive about the lifestyle and did not feel exploited or vulnerable. However, there was also some dissatisfaction. Drivers of satisfaction were both internal and external to the individual resident.


As some respondents said, living in a caravan park 'is not for everyone'. Overall, those for whom caravan parks were an option of choice, rather than necessity, were much more satisfied and generally extremely positive. These people had chosen a lifestyle (whether as workers or retirees) which suited them for a range of reasons and were generally very happy. In particular, people whose priorities included a social or community environment, an easy lifestyle and 'peace and quiet' were highly likely to be satisfied.

As would be expected, those who had come to caravan parks through reduced choice - having no other options - or through more negative housing pathways were less likely to be satisfied (although the relatively high satisfaction level of even the marginally housed should be noted). Thus, self-efficacy, choice and control emerge as significant factors determining satisfaction. Or, as one respondent noted, "It's good if you want to live in a park but if you're forced to it could be detrimental".

However, factors external to the individual were also influential - notably, the nature of the park, the characteristics of other residents and the individual style and decisions of management. Getting on with your (very close) neighbours is obviously imperative in the close living environment of the parks. "It's good if there's a good community" was a commonly expressed sentiment. Indeed, it could be concluded that if you don't like socialising and living close to others, you should not be in a caravan park.

Further, park management have a far greater impact and influence (both positive and negative) on day to day living than landlords in conventional housing. Residents were very much affected by the discretionary powers of management (both positively and negatively), relating to rules, facilities and infrastructure, tenancy (including admittance or eviction), decision-making, charges and the future of the park. The personal characteristics of managers were very influential: they might be 'kind', 'rude', 'caring', 'helpful', 'responsive', 'keep a tight control', 'great people', 'arrogant' or 'not cooperative'. Notably, the majority of respondents were very positive about management in their park.

Finally, the actual environment influenced the lived experience. Respondents generally



wanted an attractive environment, with good amenities, close to facilities with separation between long-term residents and tourists.

6.5 “The big thing is security”

Over the years, research has consistently identified issues relating to tenancy conditions, security of tenure and agreements in caravan parks, indicative of the need for tenancy protection (including rights of appeal). These issues have been raised particularly by older residents who have bought their dwelling but do not own the land on which it is sited.

Insecurity of tenure was only directly nominated as a disadvantage by a minority of respondents (16%). However, many others made additional comments which indicated concerns either directly relating to tenancy security, or indirectly to the discretionary power of owners and the lack of recourse to appeal mechanisms. One respondent spoke for many when he stated “the big thing is security.” Or, from another, “the lack of security is just at the back of my mind”.

The data collection period for this study coincided with the introduction of the new Residential Parks Act and Development Plan Amendments and rezoning for caravan parks, specifically designed to address these issues. An undercurrent in the responses of some respondents was uncertainty as to the impact and efficacy of these changes, whether they would in fact provide viable and real protection, and possible negative unintended consequences.

This research certainly confirmed the need for improved protection, with high numbers of both managers and residents reporting no agreement as well as enormous variability in nature, scope and formality where agreements did exist. The extent to which the changes are able to achieve their objectives, any unintended consequences, and issues for both residents and managers outside the scope of the Act and rezoning will need to be monitored over time.

6.6 Caravan parks as an affordable housing option

Much of the literature and discussion about caravan parks consistently depicts them as a low cost housing option, including as an ‘option of last resort’ because of their affordability. This study has certainly shown that affordability is a major decision-making factor for people moving to parks. Affordability extends to both rental and home ownership – one of the attractions of caravan parks is that they make ‘home ownership’ available to people who could not otherwise afford it. Residents thus have higher rates of home ownership than the SA population overall. We have also suggested that caravan parks are becoming something approaching a low-income retirement village (ie people who cannot afford conventional retirement village costs may live in caravan parks instead).

Results showed great variability in fees and charges, with facilities charging up to \$140 per week for site rental (with the resident owning their own accommodation) or \$210 per week for cabin or villa rental. These prices were comparable with the low to medium end of the conventional rental market (at the time of data collection). However, these higher charges are the exception rather than the rule. Thus, while it cannot be assumed that all caravan parks are a low-cost affordable option, most still are. It may be predicted that the 'high market' end will increase as a proportion of the industry over time (as facilities and infrastructure are improved in line with the expectations of residents and the growing market specialisation).

It should also be noted that most of the park population (60%) are in households with incomes above \$500 per week. There are also many (approximately 30%) in full-time employment. Thus, many residents have the capacity to pay somewhat higher rates for their accommodation and are likely to expect and seek higher levels of amenity.

Further, affordability as a driver in housing decisions may operate in a range of different ways, from constraint ("this is the only place I can afford to live"); to weighing up relative priorities and lifestyle options ("It's cheaper to live here which means it frees up more money for other things I want to do").


In summary, caravan parks are still an affordable option for people on a low income. There are, however, considerable variations in costs between facilities and it may be expected that the 'higher cost' end will increase over time. This may restrict access to people on the lowest incomes, and/or result in a greater divide between facilities in terms of standards, costs and resident characteristics.

6.7 How vulnerable are residents?

Debate and literature on living in caravan parks sometimes portrays all or most residents as highly vulnerable and constrained with regards to their housing options and other life choices. How accurate is this perception?

Findings of this study somewhat challenge this discourse, and instead suggest that caravan parks in South Australia are usually an option of choice with which most residents are highly satisfied. Only a minority (approximately 12-14%) are 'marginal'; approximately 30% are working full-time; there are lower rates of disability than state averages; and there are a range of income levels (though overall lower than the state average). Commonly, residents feel their health and wellbeing has benefited – rather than deteriorated – from park living.

Concerns about vulnerability still remain, however. Caravan parks are home to a many people whose personal circumstances and histories include homelessness, poverty unemployment, family breakdown, violence, substance misuse and disability. For these people, caravan parks may indeed be an option of last resort and they have few alternatives.



Low-income is a common (though not universal) vulnerability across the resident population. Although household income varies, few, if any, residents are wealthy. This creates vulnerability to rising costs, but also in terms of future housing choices limiting capacity to move to other forms of housing. For example, although caravan parks enable home ownership for people who may not have the capacity to own a house in the suburbs, the investment value of this asset is lower than conventional housing and unlikely to enable other ownership options (eg retirement village).

Many residents have – or will develop – age-related vulnerabilities. Caravan parks have identified advantages for those ageing in place (companionship, surveillance, security, informal supports), but there are also potential disadvantages including access to services and formal supports, disability accessibility and facilities, the quality and suitability of amenity and isolation.

Further, the physical location of many parks may contribute to vulnerability and social exclusion, with transport and access to facilities, shops and resources often problematic.

Finally, there are vulnerabilities unique to this form of tenancy (eg not owning the land on which the home is sited and the discretionary power and influence of management). Although legislation and regulation can go some way in addressing these issues, there are still inherent risks which do not exist with more conventional housing options.

In conclusion, the evidence indicates that the caravan park population is not inherently or universally vulnerable. It does include, however, many whose circumstances or characteristics place them at risk, to a greater or lesser degree, and certainly some who are extremely vulnerable. The housing form/type itself has some strong positives, but also potential risks. Minimising these risks and maximising potential benefit is therefore the challenge for policy, planning and service delivery.



7 Conclusion

This study was conducted in order to profile non-tourist residents, establishing who they are, why they live in caravan parks and the nature of their tenure. It also sought to map existing caravan parks and the extent to which they are used for non-tourist purposes.

The research has found no evidence that, across the board, caravan parks are a negative housing option which inevitably place people at risk. Extremely high satisfaction levels have generally been reported, with residents associating their housing with improved health and safety, less stress, and increased social connectedness and informal support systems. Most residents have chosen to live in caravan parks and have a sense of efficacy and control over their housing pathways.

However, there are clear vulnerability points relating to the personal characteristics of residents; limited financial resources and the distinctive features of caravan park living. Of particular note are the many people who are ageing in place: will their accommodation and lifestyle continue to meet their needs as they age? Will they be able to access the services and supports they need, or have the capacity to move into more traditional aged care or housing options?


The minority voice must also be attended to. Not everyone is in caravan parks for reasons of choice; not everyone is suited to the lifestyle; not everyone is happy and not everyone is in a 'good' park with quality management and standards. Some people are isolated, lonely and in poor quality housing, with limited space, cooking facilities, heating and access to transport, services and shops. These numbers include some families with children, with histories including homelessness and violence.

Caravan parks – or their descendent, the residential park – are increasingly options of choice for certain sections of the population. There appears to be a slight decline in their use by the more marginal group – a pattern likely to increase over time. However, this may not be a bad thing: evidence suggests that these are the least able to fit into the close, community living inherent in parks, often becoming problematic for other residents or tourists. Living in caravan parks may also reinforce social isolation, not support access to services or employment and living conditions may be poor.

Planning, policy, regulation and service delivery are all tools which can minimise risks and maximise benefits in this housing choice. This is discussed below, in relation to specific groups and issues.

Older residents – ageing in place

Caravan parks have emerged as a positive housing option for older residents because of their affordability, security, 'easiness' and strong informal networks of care, support and relationship. The challenge is therefore to build on these strengths to support aspirations to age in place whilst, where possible, minimising vulnerability and ensuring consumer protection. Over time the caravan or residential park sector are



likely to experience increasing challenges and costs due to their ageing population, including physical infrastructure (disability facilities and accessibility) and the growing health, care and support needs of residents. These issues will also create challenges for planners and regulators at both the State and local government level. For their part, the aged and community care sector should consider issues relating to service access and in-home care for residents (and perhaps also support to facilities with concentrations of older residents). There are also challenges in keeping older people linked to the wider community, especially given the relative isolation of many facilities and their limited access to public transport, shops and services.

Support for marginal residents

Affordability, combined with other characteristics means caravan parks will continue to have a role in the lower cost housing market, including being used as a housing option by some of the most marginal members of our community. These are the most at-risk amongst the caravan park population and also the most problematic. Many managers reported 'bad experiences' with marginal residents and housing agencies, including lack of follow up and poor communication. This has made them wary of accepting further referrals or admitting potentially 'difficult' people.

Regulation and consumer protection have consistently been identified as important for marginal residents. However, there are other challenges and opportunities for planning and service delivery. Better practices could be adopted when placing or referring at-risk people to parks, including the provision of support and better communication with park management. Support will often be necessary if these arrangements are going to be successful. Generally, this population should be 'scoped in' as a focus in policy, service delivery and research, particularly in the areas of homelessness and marginal housing. Strategies may encompass diverting people from caravan parks (when it is clearly inappropriate); support to sustain tenancies or minimise risk (eg for families with children); partnership approaches with park management; and assistance for residents in moving to other alternatives.

Families with children

Many children are living in caravan parks across South Australia, for reasons which remain largely unknown. Some of these are in vulnerable families whom it may be assumed have moved to parks as a consequence of a housing or other crisis. Further research on why families are living in caravan parks, who they are, and the impacts on children, may be warranted. It may be assumed, however, that many families in caravan parks are a 'hard to reach' population, with high mobility patterns but also significant service delivery needs. Families with children need and deserve a special focus. This may include strategies to reach the population and connect them with services, but also interventions focused on keeping children out of caravan parks; providing support to families and protecting children whilst there and assisting them to move into more suitable housing.

Consumer protection, planning and regulation

Caravan parks as a long-term housing option require ongoing policy vigilance relating to consumer protection, planning and regulation. South Australia has recently implemented major policy initiatives in this area with the Residential Parks Act and the rezoning of parks. These will be monitored with regards to impacts, scope and effectiveness. A watching brief should also be maintained for other emergent policy issues, for example the potential 'ghettoisation' of some facilities.

Data-sensitive planning

Planning for policy and service delivery should be informed by the very different profiles of the caravan park population across regions. The population is not uniformly spread, with concentrations relating to age; vulnerability; employment and income status. For example, the Northern suburbs of Adelaide have a high concentration of younger people, families and children; whilst the Barossa region has high numbers of aged residents. These regional variations call for, and facilitate, different responses and strategies.

7.1 Conclusion

This study has painted a picture of caravan parks as an evolving housing option, with significant advantages but also risks. The diverse population has been described in terms of three major groups – those who have made a lifestyle choice (the largest group); workers; and marginal residents, who account for approximately 12 – 14% of the population.

The evolving and changing nature of this population and industry creates challenges for government, planners, service delivery and researchers. This study has described the resident population in 2007; however it would be anticipated that a repeat of this study in five years time may provide quite different information. Ongoing monitoring of numbers, trends, population patterns, costs, housing form and issues is therefore recommended. Further research may also be warranted, focusing in on different groups or sub-groups within the population (for example, families with children). Finally, policy, planning and service delivery in this area is still emergent and attempting to deal with and respond to new issues and challenges. Further research and evaluation is likely to be required to support and assess these innovations, as well as the immediate challenge of developing new, effective strategies to support the housing choices and meet the needs of a diverse population.



8 Appendices

- Owner/manager questionnaire (phone interview)
- Non tourist resident questionnaire (face to face interview)
- Non tourist resident survey



Caravan Park
Owners / Managers questionnaire (phone interview)

CP ID

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Preamble

Hi I'm Mandy from the Research and Analysis unit at the Department for Families and Communities. I believe that you were sent a letter introducing our Caravan Parks Project. Is it convenient for me to speak to you now or would you like to make a time to call you back.

We want to get a better understanding of how and why Caravan Parks are used by non-tourists and any issues that this may raise.

When I say non-tourists I mean all residents of the caravan park who are not on holidays and have no other permanent address.

We will be collecting a range of data from caravan park managers / owners and from non-tourist residents. Participation in this research is voluntary, you can choose to answer all, some or none of the questions. All information that you give us is confidential, no information that can identify either the caravan parks or the residents will be presented in the report, or given to anyone else.

Do you have any non-tourist residents in your park?

Would you be happy to assist us with our project by answering some questions? It will take approximately 15 minutes of your time.

1. Are you the owner or manager? Owner / Manager
2. How long have you been running this Caravan Park? Approximate length of time
3. How many sites does your park have? Number
4. Approximately how many sites are currently used by non-tourists? Number
5. Are any of these used by residents living in tents? Yes / No
6. Do you think your caravan park is accessible to people with disabilities? (toilets, showers, ramps etc)
.....
.....
7. From your experience, what are the main reasons why people live in caravan parks?
.....
.....
.....
8. Who are the main groups of non-tourist residents that you have in your park? (eg retirees, families etc)
.....
.....
.....

Prompt (if answered yes to living in tents) You said earlier that some of your non-tourist residents lived in tents, which group uses this form of accommodation?

.....

Caravan Park
Owners / Managers questionnaire (phone interview)

CP ID

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9. What do you think is the average length of stay by non tourists?

10. Does this differ for the different types of non-tourist groups?

.....

.....

11. Who fit in well?

.....

.....

12. In your experience, are there any types of customers that you prefer not to have in your park?

.....

.....

.....

13. Tell me a little bit more about these different groups, what are the positive and negative aspects of having them in your park?

Positive things (eg guaranteed income)

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.....

Negative things (difficult behaviours)

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14. Prompt What do you think could be done to improve the negative aspects? (this may include action by other people or agencies etc)

.....

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.....

Caravan Park
Owners / Managers questionnaire (phone interview)

CP ID

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15. Do you have any criteria for not accepting non-tourist residents into your park? What are they?

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

16. Do you have formal agreements with the residents (ie tenancy agreements)?

.....

.....

17. Do you mind me asking, what are the tariffs for the main types of dwellings that non-tourist residents use in your park?

Cabin / Villa 1 bedroom with ensuite	2 bedroom with ensuite
Cabin / Villa 1 bedroom	2 bedroom
Onsite van	with ensuite
Tent	Resident supplied van
Other	Please describe

18. Do you ever have to ask people to leave?

19. What are the main reasons?

.....

.....

.....

.....

20+21 How do you see the future structure of your caravan park (✓ appropriate box for 1 & 5 years)

	All tourist	more tourist	same as current	more non-tourist	all non-tourist	sold	Other (please describe)
1 Year							
5 Years							

Caravan Park
Owners / Managers questionnaire (phone interview)

CP ID

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22. Why do you think that it will move in this direction?

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

23. Do you accept Housing SA (or other crisis housing) clients?

Yes / No

24. What have been your experiences in dealing with welfare or housing referral agencies?

.....

.....

.....

25. What have been your experiences in dealing with this group of clients, referred by welfare or housing agencies?

.....

.....

.....

26. Are there any other comments you would like to make?

.....

.....

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.....

.....

.....

Thank you for your time

Our project also requires the involvement of non-tourist users of caravan parks. I would like to take this opportunity to ask, if any of these participants are residents of your caravan park, would you have any objections to use conducting interviews on site.

Yes / No

Are you the owner / manager of any other caravan parks, if so would it be appropriate for use to discuss these parks now or would you like to make a time for me to call you back?

Caravan Park

Non Tourist Residents Questionnaire (face to face interview)

Thank you for agreeing to assist us with our project. I would like to take this opportunity to remind you that you can stop the interview at any time and that you can refuse to answer any questions that you do not wish to answer.

1. How long have you lived in this Caravan Park?

Approximate length of time

2. How many other caravan parks have you lived in?

.....

3. What is the total length of time that you have lived in Caravan Parks?

Approximate length of time

4. Who do you live with?

Alone / Partner / Children / Partner & Children / other

5. If you live with children, what are their ages?

.....

.....

.....

6. Are the people in your household usually satisfied with living in the park?

Everyone / Some people / No one

7. What are the advantages for you living in a caravan park? (you may ✓ more than one)

Affordable	
Able to own your own accommodation here	
Sense of Community	
Convenient location	
Freedom / independence	
Friends, social aspect	
Good management	
Lifestyle	
Low maintenance	
Nice environment	
Park amenities	
Peace and quiet	
Roof over head	
Safe / secure	
Able to move on when you want to	
Less things to worry about	
Stability	
Other (describe)	

Comments

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

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.....

.....

8. What are the disadvantages, if any?

Not good for the kids	
Lack of access to facilities (shops, schools etc)	
Too close to neighbours	
Small living space	
Lack of space for storing belongings	
Park amenities	
Shared bathroom	
Disability access not good	
No control over maintenance	
Have to wait to use amenities eg laundry	
Standard of accommodation	
Don't get on with other residents	
Disturbance by other residents	
Don't like park rules	
Feel isolated	
Inconvenient location	
Lack of privacy	
Not Safe	
Lack of security (ie can be asked to leave)	
Expensive	
Other (please describe)	

Comments

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

Caravan Park
Non Tourist Residents Questionnaire (face to face interview)

9. Overall how satisfied are you with the standard of your accommodation?

Very satisfied / somewhat satisfied / neither satisfied or dissatisfied / dissatisfied / very dissatisfied

10. Have you had any problems with the facilities at the Caravan Park? Yes / No

11. If yes what were they? (eg difficult to access kitchen due to steps, taking children to toilet at night, unclean)

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

12. Do you have contact with other residents? Often / Sometimes / Rarely / Never

.....

13. How do you get along? Good / Fair / Tolerate each other / Poor

.....

14. Do you have enough privacy living here? Often / Sometimes / Rarely / Never

.....

15. Do you feel isolated here? Yes / No

.....

16. Can you get to shops & other facilities when you need to? Yes / No

.....

17. Is there anything that you can think of that could be done to enhance the benefits and reduce the disadvantages of living in a park? (this may include action by other people or agencies etc)

.....

.....

.....

.....

Caravan Park

Non Tourist Residents Questionnaire (face to face interview)

18. What sort of housing were you living in before you started living in Caravan Parks?

Own Home	
Private Rental	
Public Rental	
Boarding House	
Hospital	
Staying with family / friends	
Shelter	
Slept rough / homeless	
Prison	
Other (describe)	

19. Why did you leave that accommodation?

Lifestyle choice	
Wanted to move on	
Accommodation became no longer available	
Could not afford it	
Relationship with family / friend breakdown	
Relationship with partner ended	
Didn't get on with other residents	
Didn't get on with owner	
Discharged from hospital	
Health reasons	
Released from Prison	
Escape domestic violence	
Wasn't safe	
Didn't like it	
Accommodation was temporary	
Evicted	
Other (describe)	

Comments

20. What is your main reason for living in a Caravan Park now?

Affordable accommodation	
Home ownership	
Enables you to be Independent	
Suits your Lifestyle	
Location is good	
Low maintenance	
Suits you now your retired	
No choice / nowhere else to go	
Enables you to move around	
Other (describe)	

Comments

21. Ask if necessary - What type of accommodation do you live in?

Cabin or villa / Caravan / Tent

Other (describe).....

22. Do you own the accommodation you live in? (please circle) yes / no

Caravan Park

Non Tourist Residents Questionnaire (face to face interview)

23. In general would you say your health is?

Excellent / Very Good / Good / Fair / Poor

24. Compared to when you came to the park, how would you say your health is now?

much better / somewhat better / the same / somewhat worse / much worse

25. Do you or anyone else in your household have a disability or a need for special services?

Yes / No

26. In general, what is it like living in a caravan park with children / someone with a disability / as a person with a disability or an older person? (eg are there issues regarding safety, attending school, play and social activities, privacy, lack of space noise etc.)

[illegible]

27. Do you regularly use community support services or support workers? Prompt what sorts of supports? Do they come to the park? Are there any access issues?

.....

.....

.....

.....

28. Are there any other services or supports that would be useful to you at this time?

.....

.....

.....

.....

29. Do you know where to go to find out about these?

Yes / No

30. Did a welfare or housing agency arrange for you to move to the caravan park? Yes / No

31. Do you have any written agreements with the caravan park management?

Yes / No

Caravan Park
Non Tourist Residents Questionnaire (face to face interview)

32. If yes what are they? (eg tenancy agreement)

.....

.....

.....

33. How long do you think that you will stay here?

.....

.....

34. Where do you think that you will go next?

.....

.....

35. Is this where you would prefer to go?

Yes / No

36. If not why can't you go to your preferred option?

.....

.....

.....

.....

37. Would you mind telling me your age group?

Under 30 ☐

30 – 39 ☐

40 – 49 ☐

50 – 59 ☐

60 – 69 ☐

70 + ☐

38. Are you of

Aboriginal descent Yes / No

Torres Strait Islander descent Yes / No

Non English Speaking descent Yes / No

39. Are they male or female?

Male / Female

40. What best describes your current employment status? (please circle one)

Full time / part time / casual / student / disability pension / unemployed / retired / non-waged

41. Is there anything else you would like to say about living in a caravan park?

.....

.....

.....

.....

Thank you for your time

Caravan Park

Non Tourist Residents survey



Department for
Families and
Communities

Thank you for agreeing to assist us with our project. Please complete the following form and return it in the envelope provided. You can refuse to answer any questions that you do not wish to answer.

1. How long have you lived in this Caravan Park?

Approximate length of time

2. How many other caravan parks have you lived in?

.....

3. What is the total length of time that you have lived in Caravan Parks?

Approximate length of time

4. Who do you live with? (please circle)

Alone / Partner / Children / Partner & Children / other

5. If you live with children, what are their ages?

.....

.....

6. Are the people in your household usually satisfied with living in the park? (please circle)

Everyone / Some people / No one

7. What are the advantages for you living in a caravan park? (you may ✓ more than one)

Affordable	
Able to own your own accommodation here	
Sense of Community	
Convenient location	
Freedom / independence	
Friends, social aspect	
Good management	
Lifestyle	
Low maintenance	
Nice environment	
Park amenities	
Peace and quiet	
Roof over head	
Safe / secure	
Able to move on when you want to	
Less things to worry about	
Stability	
Other (please describe)	

Comments

.....

.....

8. What are the disadvantages, if any?

(you may ✓ more than one)

Not good for the kids	
Lack of access to facilities (shops, schools etc)	
Too close to neighbours	
Small living space	
Lack of space for storing belongings	
Park amenities	
Shared bathroom	
Disability access not good	
No control over maintenance	
Have to wait to use amenities eg laundry	
Standard of accommodation	
Don't get on with other residents	
Disturbance by other residents	
Don't like park rules	
Feel isolated	
Inconvenient location	
Lack of privacy	
Not Safe	
Lack of security (ie can be asked to leave)	
Expensive	
Other (please describe)	

Comments

.....

.....

.....

9. What sort of housing were you living in just before you started living in Caravan Parks?

(please ✓ one)

Own Home	
Private Rental	
Public Rental	
Boarding House	
Hospital	
Staying with family / friends	
Shelter eg homeless / domestic violence	
Slept rough / homeless	
Prison	
Other (describe)	

Caravan Park Non Tourist Residents survey

10. Why did you leave that accommodation? (you may ✓ more than one)

Lifestyle choice	
Wanted to move on	
Accommodation became no longer available	
Could not afford it	
Relationship with family / friend breakdown	
Relationship with partner ended	
Didn't get on with other people there	
Didn't get on with owner	
Discharged from hospital	
Health reasons	
Released from Prison	
Escape domestic violence	
Wasn't safe	
Didn't like it	
Accommodation was temporary	
Evicted	
Other (describe)	

Comments

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.....

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11. What is your main reason for living in a Caravan Park now?

Comments

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12. What type of accommodation do you live in? (please circle)

Cabin or villa / Caravan / Tent

Other (describe).....

.....

13. Do you own the accommodation you live in? (please circle) yes / no

14. In general would you say your health is? (please circle)Excellent / Very Good / Good / Fair / Poor

15. Compared to when you came to the park, how would you say your health is now? (please circle)

much better / somewhat better / the same / somewhat worse / much worse

	(Please ✓)	Yes	No
16.Do you or anyone else in your household have a disability or a need for special services?			
17.Do you or someone in your household regularly use community support services or support workers?			
18.Does the service or worker come to the park?			
19.Are there any other services or supports that would be useful to you at this time?			
20.Do you know where to go to find out about these?			
21.Did a welfare or housing agency arrange for you to move to the caravan park?			
22.Do you have any problems getting transport to where you need to go?			

30. Do you have a written agreement with the caravan park management? yes / no

31. How much longer do you think you will stay here?

Approximate length of time

Caravan Park **Non Tourist Residents survey**



Department for
Families and
Communities

32. Where do you think that you will go next? (please ✓ one)

Stay here	
Another Caravan Park	
Private rental	
Public rental	
House that you own	
Retirement village	
Live with family / friends	
Don't know	
Other (describe)	

32. Is this where you would prefer to go?

Yes / No

33. If not why can't you go to your preferred option?

.....

.....

.....

.....

34. What is your age group? (please ✓)

Under 30 ☐ 30 – 39 ☐ 40 – 49 ☐ 50 – 59 ☐ 60 – 69 ☐ 70 + ☐

35. Are you of (please circle)

Aboriginal descent Yes / No

Torres Strait Islander descent Yes / No

Non English Speaking descent Yes / No

36. Are you male or female? (Please circle)

Male / Female

37. What best describes your current employment status? (please circle one)

Full time / part time / casual / student / disability pension / unemployed / retired / non-waged

38. Is there anything else you would like to say about living in a caravan park?

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Please feel free to add extra pages if you do not have enough room
Thank you for your time

The background of the entire page is a solid blue color with a pattern of lighter blue hexagons. The hexagons are arranged in a staggered grid, with some hexagons being slightly darker than others, creating a subtle texture. The pattern is consistent across the top and bottom of the page, while the middle section is a solid white background.

For more information:

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