

Chapter 5

Australian Residential Mobility: Patterns and Processes

5. Australian Residential Mobility: Patterns and Processes

The previous chapter has presented intra-urban mobility as a utility maximisation process, where households make decisions about the benefits of living in one residential situation over another. This process is influenced by characteristics of the household, such as lifecycle stage and employment situation, as well as factors outside of the household, such as the physical environment and surrounding services. Relocating public housing tenants, as movers first, and public tenants second, have been shown to have very similar requirements of the residential environment, but experience much higher levels of constraint in their location and relocation decisions. This chapter analyses the characteristics of Australian movers that shape the process and outcomes of mobility. Tenure is one such characteristic. What this means is that public housing tenants experience a different form of mobility not because they are public tenants, but because of the characteristics which they are more likely to possess. Public tenants are not a cross section of our society, but a distinct group selected by, and for, their relative disadvantage, unemployment, or poverty.

This chapter is a descriptive portrait of the mover and residential mobility characteristics of Australians, with a specific focus on public housing tenants. It is possible to accurately describe the mover and mobility characteristics of Australians based upon a substantial body of literature, as well as some good quality data collected and published by the Australian Bureau of Statistics. This body of literature allows the portrait of Australian residential mobility characteristics to be built around the age, lifecycle, employment, income, ethnicity, and, to a lesser extent, tenure characteristics of movers. While public tenants, as the focus of this thesis, are also influenced by all of the other characteristics they possess, very few studies specifically explore the mobility of Australian public tenants, and there is insufficient understanding of their mobility behaviour. There are a few notable exceptions (the most well-known being Wulff and Newton, 1996), and this chapter attempts to stand alongside those studies, adding to the body of knowledge about Australian public tenant mobility.

The chapter will draw on the 1996 Australian Census of Population and Housing which present the mobility characteristics of the population of each Statistical Local Area (SLA)⁶ in metropolitan Adelaide, as well as the spatial mobility patterns and selected characteristics of movers within metropolitan Adelaide, with a special focus on public housing tenants. In addition to census data, this chapter is based upon data from other, more detailed, ABS population mobility surveys, and current and historical Australian residential mobility literature. In combination, these studies present a portrait of the motivations, choices, and characteristics of Australian movers, especially public housing tenants. Chapter Three established, using international and historical studies of mobility, an understanding of the residential mobility process, this chapter applies these findings to the Australian population.

Australian residential mobility is regarded as very similar to that occurring in other nations with similar social structures, such as non-European OECD countries, such as the US, Canada, and New Zealand, as well as the United Kingdom (Bell and Hugo, 2000). The United States for example has a lifetime mobility rate of 11.7 moves (US Census Bureau, 2001), and 44 per cent of that population changed address in the last five year inter-censal period (US Census Bureau, 2000), in Canada, the rate was 43 per cent (Statistics Canada). Australians move house, on average, eleven times during their lives (Golledge and Stimson, 1997, p. 425; Bell, 1996), and recent analysis has suggested that this figure is rising (Bell and Hugo, 2000, p. xiii). The Bell and Hugo study finds that Australian males will move 12.8 times, and females 13.6 times during their lives⁷. These high rates of mobility have been constant over the last 20 years. At the 1996 Australian census, 43 per cent of the Australian population changed residence at least once (ABS, 1998, catalogue no. 2035.0), a proportion identical to that recorded 1991 (Maher, and Whitelaw, 1995, p. 10), and only slightly lower than the 45 per cent recorded in 1981 (Maher and McKay, 1986, p. i).

⁶ A Statistical Local Area (SLA) is a basic spatial unit used to collect and describe population characteristics by the Australian Bureau of Statistics. SLAs are continuous, non-overlapping areas that cover the whole of Australia. They are designed to be roughly aligned with administrative and economic boundaries.

⁷ The female rate is higher due to a higher female life expectancy in Australia.

5.1. The Adelaide Metropolitan Area

Figure 5.1: Metropolitan Adelaide, Statistical Local Areas



Data Source: ABS, 1996 Census Boundaries

The Adelaide metropolitan area is the capital of the state of South Australia. The metropolitan area, as defined by the ABS as the Adelaide Statistical Division, is located along roughly 80km between hills and coast. The area of metropolitan Adelaide is just under 2000m². The administrative boundaries used in this research are ABS derived Statistical Local Areas. There are thirty SLAs in metropolitan Adelaide, and these are shown in figure 5.1 above.

5.2. Some Data Limitations

While the Census is the most “comprehensive source of totally enumerated information covering a wide range of social, demographic, and economic characteristics” (Maher and Whitelaw, 1995, p.6) of the Australian population, there are a number of limitations to this data and hence its use. Bell (1995) and Maher and Whitelaw (1995) present useful detailed discussions of these limitations, but to summarise, there are four main limitations:

- The census collects information about the characteristics of movers on Census night every five years. In the case of mobility, an individual’s characteristics on Census night are recorded, regardless of the fact that their mobility occurred up to five years before. The resultant data implies that movers had their census night characteristics when they moved, but these characteristics may have previously been different.
- The Census collects information about the SLA of residence five years ago and one year ago. More than one move may have occurred during these time periods, but the census only collects information about a change of address in that period, not the frequency of change of address.
- Because of confidentiality requirements, census data is aggregated to areal units. Additionally, to protect confidentiality, error is added to very small numbers of respondents so that no individual can be identified. For these reasons, it is not possible to reliably investigate mobility at smaller scales.
- The Census is self-enumerated, and therefore very simplified to ensure clear understanding by respondents of the questions; this limits the total amount and detail of information available from the Census.

In addition, specific to this analysis of public housing tenant mobility, the very small numbers of public housing tenants means that to get numbers that are large enough to be statistically useful and to avoid the effect of the error added for confidentiality described above, small scale mobility (such as at the suburb level) can not be analysed using the census.

5.3. The Characteristics of Australian Movers

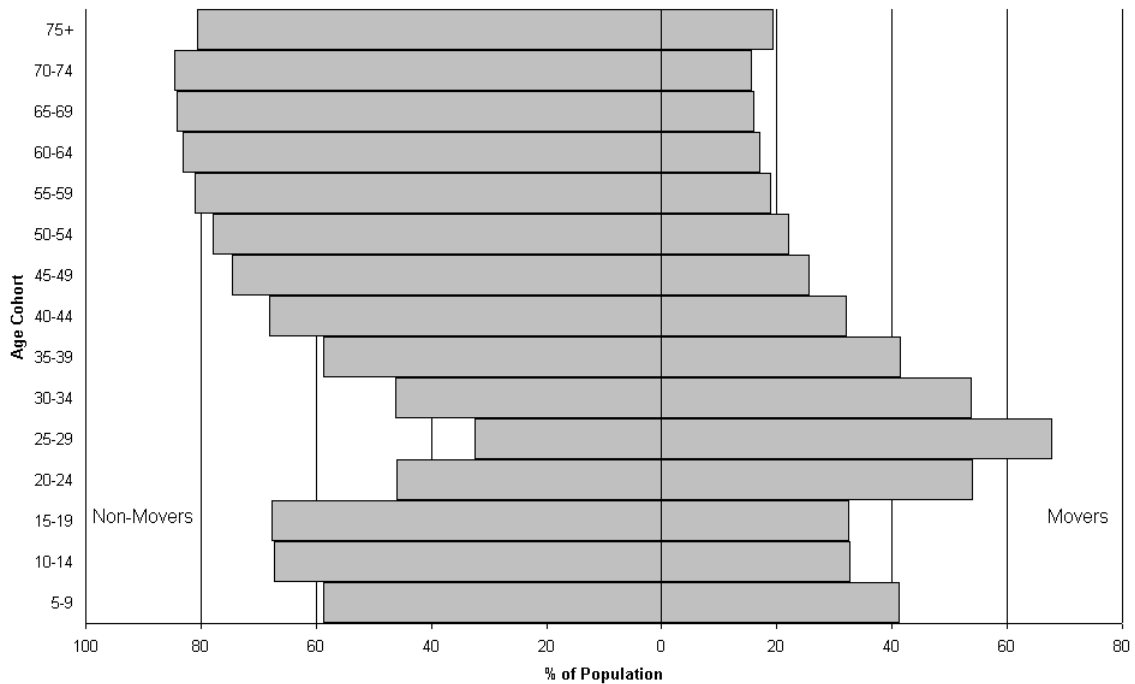
This section presents a profile of intra-urban movers in Australia, in terms of some of their major characteristics. Chapter Three has established that, in general, public tenants are predisposed to mobility based on similar characteristics to those exhibited among movers in the wider population. We know that the experiences of public tenants are much more constrained than those outside of the public sector, and this is an additional mobility factor; nevertheless, public renter mobility is still predicted largely by the same individual characteristics. These characteristics will be discussed here. The section will conclude with an examination of the effect that tenure has upon residential mobility behaviour in Australia.

5.3.1. Age and Lifecycle Stage

Lifecycle stage and the related characteristic of age are the two most favoured predictors of residential mobility motivation and behaviour (for example in the work of Rossi, 1955 and Pickvance, 1973). If the Australian population were to conform to this understanding of mobility, it would be expected that Australian movers are most likely to be in their 20s and 30s. This age period represents the most likely time of household formation, early career, and childbearing lifecycle stages. Recent movers in Australia conform to the internationally familiar pattern relating mobility to the family formation and childbearing lifecycle stages (Golledge and Stimson, 1997; Rossi, 1980; Pickvance, 1973; Mitchell, 2000). This is well illustrated in Figure 5.2 below. The figure shows relatively high residential stability among teenage cohorts, a dramatic increase in the family formation and childbearing years, from 20 until 35, and then a pattern of steadily decreasing residential mobility until a small increase in the 75+ cohort, that is assumed to be related to movement of the elderly into aged care facilities or closer to family. This lifecycle thesis is supported in various surveys of the mobility motivations of the Australian population. The two most recent Australian Internal Migration Surveys, which were last collected in 1988 (ABS, cat no 3408.0, 1987; 1988), both found lifecycle reasons to make up 18 per cent of the stated explanation given for moves. The relative importance of lifecycle reasons for

Australian movers appears to have remained constant since these surveys in the 1980s. Two recent Australian studies attribute lifecycle reasons to 17 per cent of the residential mobility explanation (ABS, cat no. 3237.2, 2000; cat no. 3237.3, 2001).

Figure 5.2: Intra-Urban Movers and Non-Movers, by Age, Metropolitan Adelaide, 1991-1996



Source: ABS, Census of Population and Housing, 1996

The degree to which these data are reflective of the mobility patterns of public housing tenants was tested using 1996 Census data describing age by mobility status for public housing tenants compared to the total population. This analysis showed age related mobility to be largely independent of tenure. Table 5.1 presents the results. This data is only able to show those individuals that changed their SLA of residence at some time during the five-year inter-censal period. Effectively this shows individuals that moved, and that moved beyond the border of their Statistical Local Area. The effect of this is that shorter distance moves are not represented, and therefore it does not mirror the data for all movers. Nevertheless, it shows almost an identical predisposition to movement by age, regardless of tenure.

Table 5.1: Individuals who changed SLA between 1991 and 1996, by Age Cohort, Public Renters and Total Population, Australia.

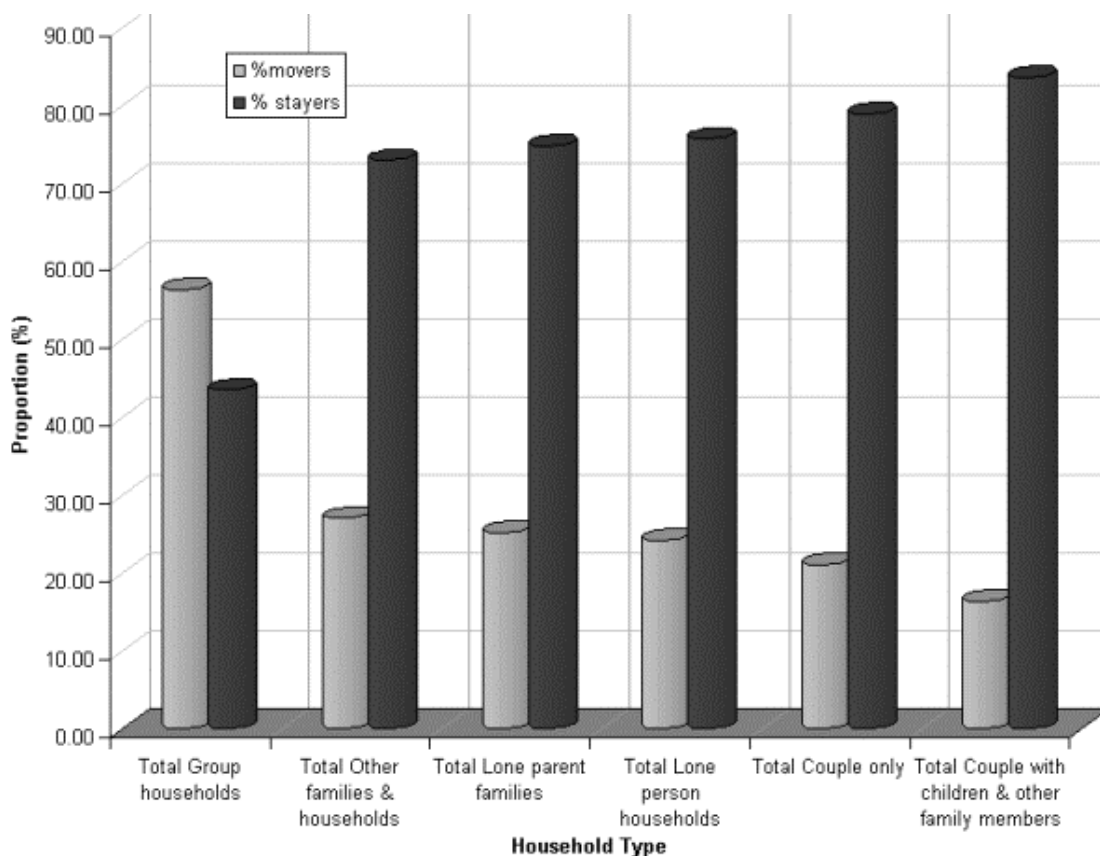
	Proportion of Public Renters who Moved %	Proportion of Total Population who Moved %
0-19 years	32	32
20-39 years	14	14
40-59 years	9	7
60-69 years	8	7
70+ years	8	9

Source: ABS, 1996 Census of Population and Housing, Unpublished Data

The lifecycle position explanation of mobility is also supported by the household type classification of recent movers in Australia. The most likely household type to be recent movers is ‘group households’⁸, a cohort largely made up from individuals likely to enter the household formation lifecycle stage. The presence of children in a household tends to limit mobility, especially if there are two parents (Maher and Whitelaw, 1995, p. 81). This is borne out in the Chapter Seven, where residential stability (mainly with respect to education) for children is seen by parents in The Parks as a central factor in their relocation decision. Following is a figure describing 1996 census data showing the relative composition of movers by household type in metropolitan Adelaide (Figure 5.3). It graphically presents the distinct difference between movers, based on their household composition. Though this same data was unavailable for public housing tenants, it would be assumed, based on the age characteristics described above, to be very similar.

⁸ “The ABS defines a group household as a household consisting of two or more unrelated people where all persons are aged 15 years or over. There are no reported couple relationships, parent-child relationships or other blood relationships in these households” (ABS, 1996 Census Dictionary, Part Two, Glossary of Concepts)

Figure 5.3: Household Types by Movers / Non-Movers, Metropolitan Adelaide, 1996



Source: ABS, 1996, Census of Population and Housing, Unpublished Data.

Note: Movers are classified as households (by SLA) resident in a different SLA at the 1991 Census.

Male and female movers have very similar levels of movement in total (as shown in table 5.2), but of interest, is the fact that age specific rates of mobility between genders in Australia are different (Figure 5.4). Females have higher rates of mobility in younger age cohorts, from 15 until 29 years, but lower rates than males from then until 69 years. This has been a consistently found in censuses during the last two decades (for example, Maher and McKay, 1986; Maher and Whitelaw, 1995; Bell and Hugo, 2000). This slight age-sex mismatch is related to three factors. Firstly, women tend to leave home younger than males (Bell and Hugo, 2000. p. 37). Secondly, there is commonly a slight age difference within couples at marriage, where females are often slightly younger, and therefore make residential moves for household formation earlier. Thirdly, there is a higher propensity for

females to stay within the family home after marriage dissolution (Bell and Hugo, 2000, p. 37), thereby lowering their mobility levels in later years in comparison with males. The higher proportion of female movers in the 75+ age cohort is a reflection of the increasing proportion of the aged population who are female. This population is more likely to have mobility associated with movement into aged care and to be closer to family.

Table 5.2: Percentage of Males and Females who Moved 1991 - 1996, as a Proportion of total Movers and Non-movers by Sex, Australia

	Males	Females
Moved 1991-1996	56.76	56.98
Did not move 1991-1996	43.24	43.02
Total	100	100

Source: ABS, Census of Population and Housing, 1996

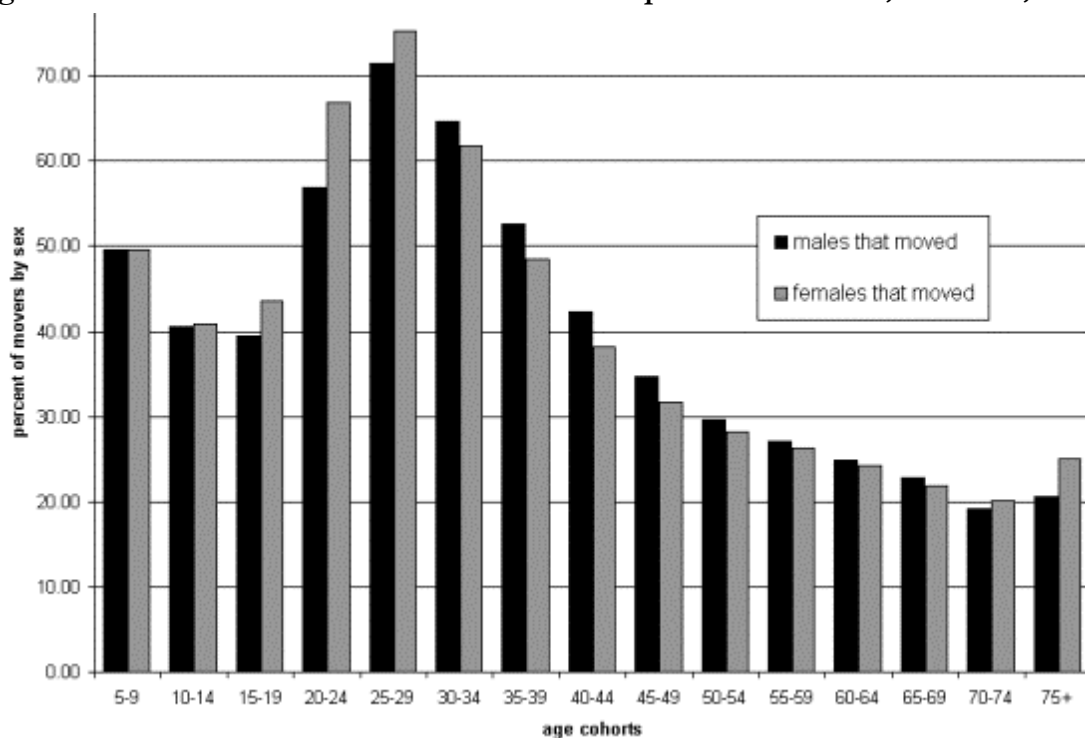
The mobility characteristics of male and female public housing tenants was tested and found to be similar to that of the total Australian population. As shown in table 5.3, public housing tenants are slightly more likely overall, than the population as a whole, to undertake extra-SLA movement. Interesting within this figure is the higher propensity for males to be movers than females. This pattern is exhibited in the total population, but to a lesser extent.

Table 5.3: Proportion of populations who changed their SLA, 1991-1996, by Sex, Australia.

	Males	Females
Public Tenants	21%	18%
Total Population	17%	16%

Source: ABS, 1996, Census of Population and Housing, Unpublished Data.

Figure 5.4: Percent of Males and Females as a Proportion of Movers, Australia, 1996.



Source: ABS Census of Population and Housing, 1996.

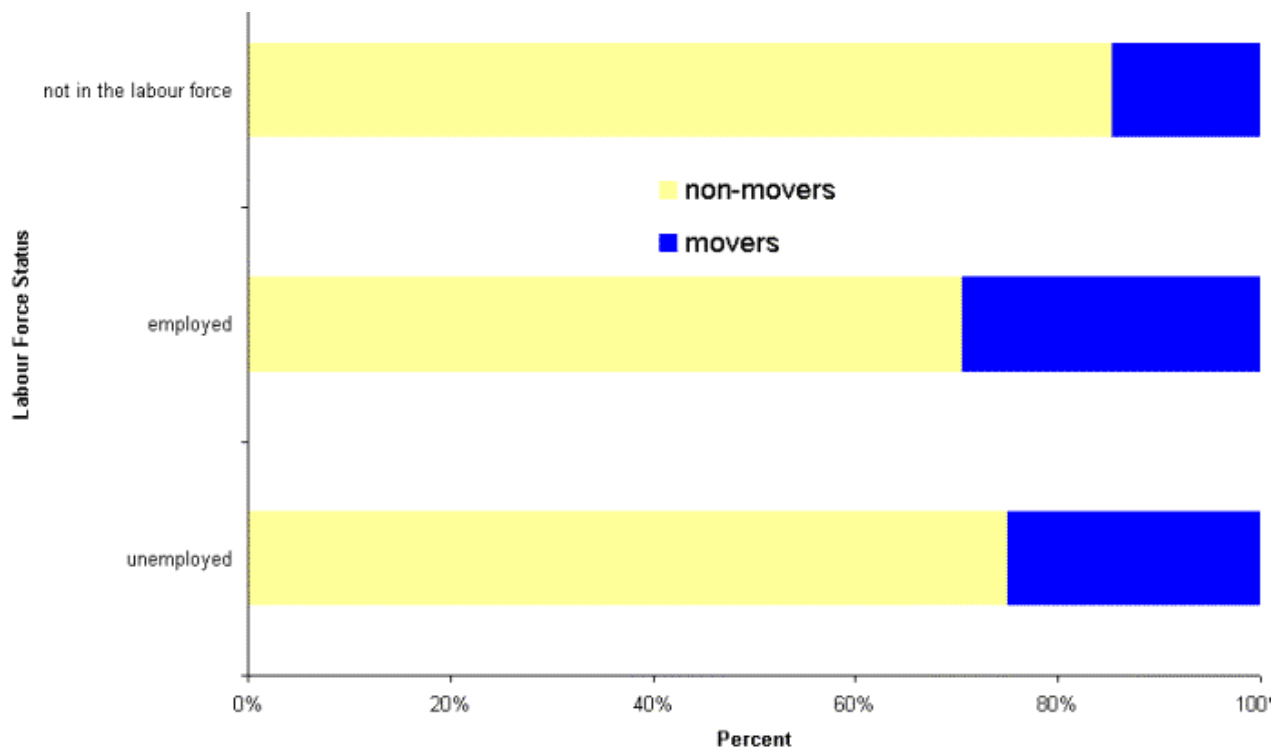
5.3.2. Employment and Income

This section examines the relationship between employment status and income of movers and non-movers to establish if the Australian population conforms to the neoclassical economic approach to understanding mobility behaviour (such as that of Sjaastad, 1962 and more recently Lee and Roseman, 1999). In this case, movers are expected to be motivated by the search to gain or improve their employment and income situation. Data of this type are more difficult to interpret than that of lifecycle stage and age, because of the confounding effect of households. Households move to maximise the outcomes for the entire household, but moves are counted in the census as the sum of the individual moves of the members of that household. The use of census data to examine employment and mobility is still possible, but it is best prefaced with the results of a focus group study of individuals done by the ABS (cat no. 3237.2, 2000). Here they found that unemployed persons were more likely to be movers than the employed. Bell and Hugo discuss the same phenomenon in their examination of 1996 Census data, finding that 34 per cent of those unemployed at the 1996 Census

had changed their residence in the preceding year (2000, p.49). This is not a new characteristic of the population, it is consistent with other Australian survey analyses during the last two decades, for example in the 1981 Australian Internal Migration Survey (Maher and McKay, 1986), and the 1992 ABS Family Survey (Wulff and Bell, 1997). Overall, jobseekers are “significantly more mobile than the general population - 29 per cent had moved house in the year ended September 1996 compared to 16 per cent of the general population.” (ABS, 1997, cat no, 6289.0). Thus confirming to the neoclassical economic explanation of mobility behaviour.

In metropolitan Adelaide, 1996 census data was used to examine moves between SLAs. This showed a positive relationship between extra-SLA mobility and employment status. These findings are presented in Figure 5.5 below. This analysis reveals mobility where the household moved further than the boundary of their SLA. As discussed above, this means that short distance moves are only counted if they extend beyond the boundary of the SLA. The employed are shown to have much higher rates of extra-SLA movement than the unemployed, and those not in the labour-force have lower levels of mobility. When combined with the findings of the Victorian focus study (ABS, 2000, cat no. 3237.2), where the unemployed are more likely to be movers, it would be assumed that though the unemployed are more likely to move, they are also more likely to prefer to move short distances, and hence not be represented so highly in the change of SLA measurement. The converse of this reading is that the employed are less likely to move, but when they do, are prepared to move further. This complies with the suggestion by Lee and Roseman (1999; also Wulff and Bell, 1997) that those moving for employment tend to move longer distances, between states or between labour markets, rather than within them. The category making up individuals not in the labour force is likely to be dominated by those of retirement age; therefore they are likely to have low levels of mobility related also to their age.

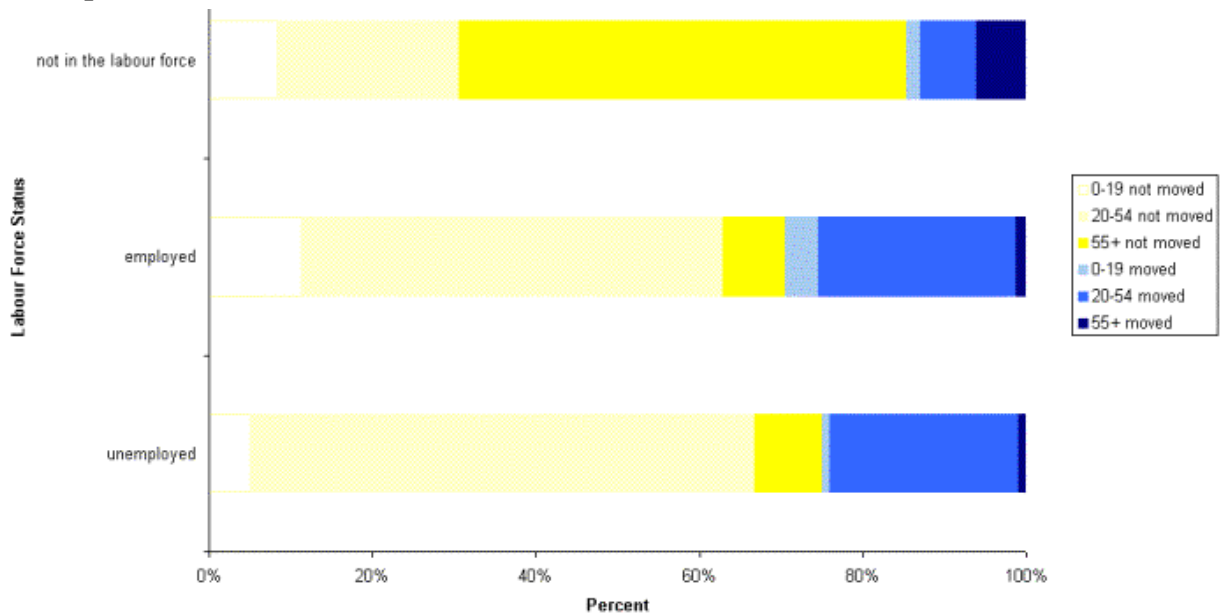
Figure 5.5: The Labour Force Status of Movers and Non-Movers, Metropolitan Adelaide, 1996.



Source: ABS, Census of Population and Housing, 1996

The age characteristics of movers and non-movers by their labour force status was tested and is presented in Figure 5.6. This confirms the above assertion that there is a close relationship between age and employment status in mobility, with those of working age making up the greatest proportion of the employed and unemployed, and under-represented in the cohort that was not in the labour force.

Figure 5.6: The Labour Force Status of Movers and Non-Movers by Age Cohort, Metropolitan Adelaide, 1996.



Source: ABS, Census of Population and Housing, 1996

Using the same change of SLA data to examine the income and mobility characteristics of movers and non-movers, a positive, almost linear relationship between the amount of income earned by individuals, and their level of extra SLA mobility was evident. This is shown in table 5.4 below. Here, low-income earners are much more likely to remain in the same residential SLA during the 1991-1996 intercensal period. This is likely to be tied to the pattern of unemployment and mobility described above. Bell and Hugo (2000, p.53) suggest that this difference is also related to the fact that “higher levels of income provide the economic resources needed to finance discretionary moves”. Another explanation for this income-based mobility pattern is likely to be related to a lifecycle stage explanation, in that older individuals are more likely to have much lower income levels (even though they may be asset rich). When Bell and Hugo (2000) examined mobility rates together with age and income, they discovered an inverse relationship between income and age. In the younger age cohorts, low-income individuals have low rates of mobility, conversely, in the older age cohorts, elderly low-income individuals have higher rates of mobility. The results shown in table 5.4 must also be tempered by the well-established fact (Bell and Hugo, 2000, Maher and McKay, 1986; Wulff and Bell, 1997) that there is a mobility

relationship between the distance of movement, and the income of the individual. Table 5.4, while showing extra-SLA movement, hides the probable finding that intra-SLA mobility will be higher, and interstate movement is likely to be lower for low income individuals.

Public housing tenants have, by definition, and through policy selection, low-income levels. This infers that public tenants would tend to lower levels of extra-SLA mobility, though higher levels of intra-SLA mobility.

Table 5.4: Weekly Individual Income by Mover / Non-Movers, Australia, 1991 – 1996

Income	Movers	Non-Movers
Less than \$120	38.67	61.33
\$120 - \$299	38.23	61.77
\$300 - \$399	45.60	54.40
\$400 - \$499	46.88	53.12
\$500 - \$599	49.34	50.66
\$600 and over	48.36	51.64

Source: ABS, 1996, Census of Population and Housing, Unpublished Data

Table 5.5: Educational Attainment by Mover / Non-Movers, Australia, 1991 – 1996

Educational Attainment	Movers	Non-Movers
Degree or higher	51.59	48.41
Diploma	46.22	53.78
Skilled vocational qualification	44.20	55.80
Basic vocational qualification	50.01	49.99
No qualification	42.17	57.83

Source: Source: ABS, 1996, Census of Population and Housing, Unpublished Data

Related to income, the level of educational attainment of individuals also acts to influence the level of extra SLA mobility within a population. Generally speaking, the higher the level of attainment, the higher the level of mobility for those individuals. The exception to this statement is the section of the population with basic vocational qualifications who also have relatively high levels of mobility. This information is presented in table 5.5, appears closely related to the patterns of mobility associated with income level described above.

5.3.3. Country of Birth

The country of birth of individuals, while not a major explanation of intra-urban mobility, influences the mobility propensity of Australians. The population born overseas has slightly lower rates of mobility than the Australian-born population (ABS, 2000, cat no. 3237.2, p. 7). There are also differences between the mobility levels of those born overseas (OS). Individuals from other “Mainly English Speaking Countries” (MES) (United Kingdom, Ireland, US, Canada, New Zealand, South Africa) have higher mobility rates than individuals born in other countries overseas. Mobility propensity by country of birth was investigated in a recent ABS study of the neighbouring state of Victoria and the findings are detailed in table 5.6 below.

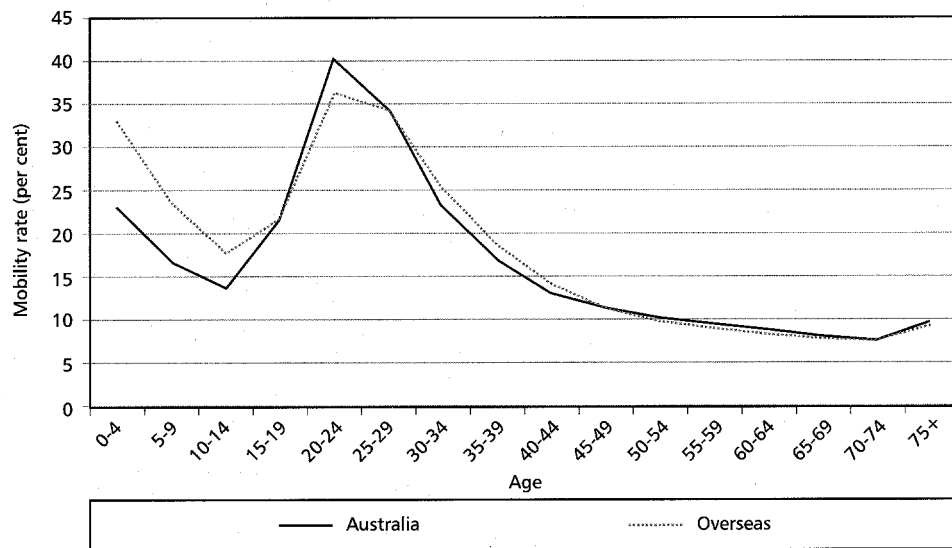
Table 5.6: Proportion of Movers by Country of Birth, 1996-1999, Victoria

Country of Birth	%
Australian Movers as a % of all Australian Born	29.91
OS born (MES countries) Movers as a % of all OS MES Born	27.00
OS born (other countries) Movers as a % of all OS other countries Born	25.82

Source: ABS, 2000, Cat. 3237.2

The pattern shown in table 5.6 resembles that found in other, previous studies of the birthplace characteristics of Australian movers (for example, Bell and Hugo, 2000). Maher and Whitelaw (1995) investigate the causes of this phenomenon, for the 1986-1991 period, and find that when specific birthplace countries are examined, that there is a strong link between the length of time migrants have been in Australia, and their mobility. After an initial period of high mobility, “a period of adjustment to a new environment” (p. 77), mobility levels of migrants generally fall. The phenomenon of lower rates of mobility among the overseas born is regarded by Bell and Hugo (2000) as largely related to the slightly different age structure of the overseas-born population, with comparatively less of the overseas-born population being in the family formation lifecycle stage. Their study standardised the mobility rates of the Australian born and overseas born populations for age, and found a higher propensity to move among the overseas born population as a result. This is presented in Figure 5.7 below.

Figure 5.7: Age-specific mobility rates, Australian-born and Overseas-born, Australia, 1995-1996.



Source: ABS 1996 Census, Unpublished Data, in Bell and Hugo, 2000, p. 56

These country of birth findings are useful for an analysis of tenant mobility because of the high proportion of public housing tenants who were born overseas. In the case of public tenants in The Parks, around 40 per cent were born overseas (SAHT, 2000a), compared to 25 per cent born overseas in the total population of metropolitan Adelaide (ABS, 1996, Census of Population and Housing). This fact, which will be detailed in Chapter Six, is likely to decrease the total mobility rate of public housing tenants slightly.

5.3.4. Housing Tenure

Tenure is a key element of Pickvance’s model of mobility behaviour; he saw mobility as a result of lifecycle, age, and income affecting mobility directly, and indirectly through housing tenure. Earhart and Weber (1996, p. 425-6) also found in their review of mobility predictors, that “housing tenure status was the most decisive housing related predictor of residential mobility”. A striking, though not surprising, feature of Australian mobility patterns is the strong association between mobility and tenure. Australian renters are almost seven times more likely to have moved in the last 3 years (ABS, 2000, cat no. 3237.2, p.8) than homeowners. Here 66.5 per cent of renters moved within the last 3 years, compared to 9.6 per cent of outright

homeowners and 30.7 per cent of purchasers. This effect is shown by Hassan *et al.* (1996) to be irrespective of household income level (p.81). More recently, an ABS survey of mover characteristics in Queensland (ABS, cat no. 3237.3, 2001) found that 75 per cent of renters had moved in the preceding three years, compared to only 14 per cent of owners. Part of the explanation for this likely comes from the instability of tenure in the rental sector meaning that renters are more often forced or pressured into movement by relatively insecure rental contracts or other circumstances such as poverty. An argument also exists that renters are less likely to become attached to the local space because they do not have the same “economic investment” (Earhart and Weber, 1996, p.426) or social attachment as homeowners (Mesch and Manor, 1998). The lack of ownership also prevents renters from making adjustments to their living environment (Earhart and Weber, 1996), and means for example, that rather than building on a room when the family increases in size, they tend to move to a house with that additional room. Related to instability of tenure, renters are also more likely to be members of the more mobile population cohorts, for example they are more likely to be unemployed or in the pre-household formation lifecycle stage, or importantly, in the pre-home ownership stage (Earhart and Weber, 1996).

Australian tenants are sharply divided in their mobility characteristics between public and private renters. The mobility patterns of public renters in Australia are very similar to those of homeowners and purchasers, and quite distinct from the mobility patterns of renters in the private sector. This is particularly interesting when considering public renters are much more likely to have economic and social characteristics similar to private renters. Public renters have greater security of tenure and lower propensity to move. For example, the 1991 Census of Population and Housing found that 49 per cent of public tenants and 79 per cent of private tenants had lived at their current address for less than five years (ABS, cat no. 4182.0, 1994, p.4). This fact is also captured in the most recent Australian Housing Survey (ABS, cat no. 4182.0, 1999) where the number of moves households made in the preceding five years is analysed by tenure. Table 5.7 shows that private renters were much more likely to have moved in the preceding five years than both public tenants and homeowners.

Also interesting is the high proportion of private renters that moved multiple times. These data have added potency when it is remembered, as stated at the beginning of this chapter, that Australians move on average eleven times during their lives. Private renters are likely to move many more times than that.

Table 5.7: Housing Tenure by Number of Times Moved in Preceding Five Years (%)

	Owner	Public Renter Households	Private Renter Households
None	37	29	9
One	33	26	22
Two	12	14	17
Three	8	9	18
Four	4	6	11
Five or more	4	13	20

Data Source: ABS, 1999, Australian Housing Survey, cat no. 4182.0

It must also be noted that the lower mobility of public tenants is probably related to constraint, as well as choice. Public renters are much more likely to have security of tenure, but are twice as likely to express dissatisfaction with the location of their dwelling (ABS, 1997, cat no 4102.0, p. 2) than private renters. Even with the policy changes discussed in Chapter One, public renters are still found to be much more likely to have security of tenure than private renters, with 83 per cent of public renters having indefinite tenure compared with only 37 per cent among all renters (ABS, 1999, cat no. 4182.0, pp. 47-49), but this situation is changing rapidly. Many of these renters with indefinite tenure possess this due to a contract made in the previous housing policy environment. Australian public housing policy no longer promises indefinite security of tenure, but instead, public housing is now being “provided for the duration of people’s need rather than for their lifetime” (Newman, 1999). This policy direction towards the provision of “housing assistance...for the duration of ... need” (Government of Australia, 1999a, Recital C) must result in a future increase in the mobility of public tenants, especially when combined with a changed policy focus on fewer and more marginal groups in our society. One side effect of the increasing focus of public housing on households with high and complex needs is that, for many, their ‘duration of need’ may last for their lifetime. In addition to central government policy

directly affecting the mobility of public housing tenants through changing the security of tenure, Australian public tenants are increasingly drawn from more marginal groups in our society. These groups often have intrinsically higher levels of mobility, such as recently arrived migrant groups, candidates for emergency housing, and the unemployed, but their mobility levels are likely to fall once housed in public dwellings.

5.3.5. Summarising Mobility Characteristics

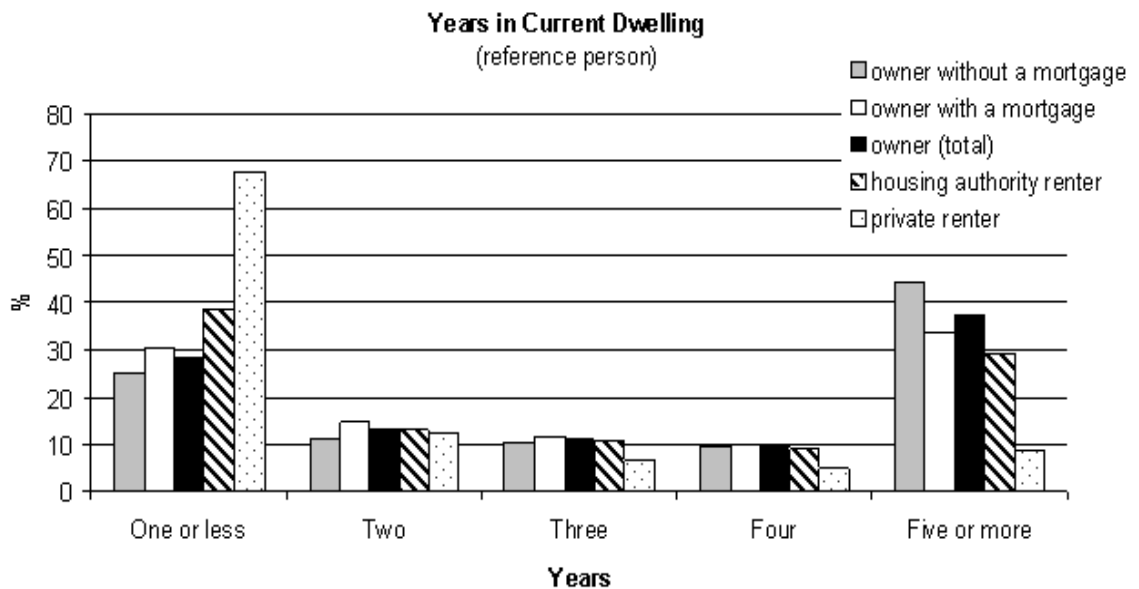
This section has presented a profile of mobility behaviour in Australia and the characteristics that influence that behaviour. Mobility has been shown to be influenced by all of the traditional factors. Age and lifecycle stage are closely related to the predisposition to mobility, as is employment status and income. Housing tenure is of special importance in the prediction of mobility behaviour, and this is especially important to this study. Housing tenure is a key predictor, but it is still a predictor, working in combination with other influences on mobility behaviour. Public housing tenants appear influenced, in their mobility behaviour, by all of the tested factors including their tenure. Public tenants also possess many of the characteristics of low mobility, and yet they exhibit behaviour of higher mobility, therefore, this points probably to the level of constraint that tenants experience. This will be further investigated later in this chapter.

5.4. Investigating Frequency and Distance of Residential Movement

Though the Australian population moves on average between eleven and thirteen times during their lives, there is a high standard deviation within this figure, with owners moving less often, and private renters moving more often. Public renters have been shown to occupy a position in between. This variation in the frequency of movement is also apparent in the number of years households are likely to have spent in their current dwelling. This is shown in Figure 5.8. Private renters again stand out as having low residential stability, with a very high proportion having been in their dwelling for one year or less, and a very low proportion in their current dwelling for

five or more years. Public housing tenants are shown to take a position between homeowners and private renters, being more similar in their residential stability to owners than private renters.

Figure 5.8: Australia, Years in Current Dwelling by Tenure

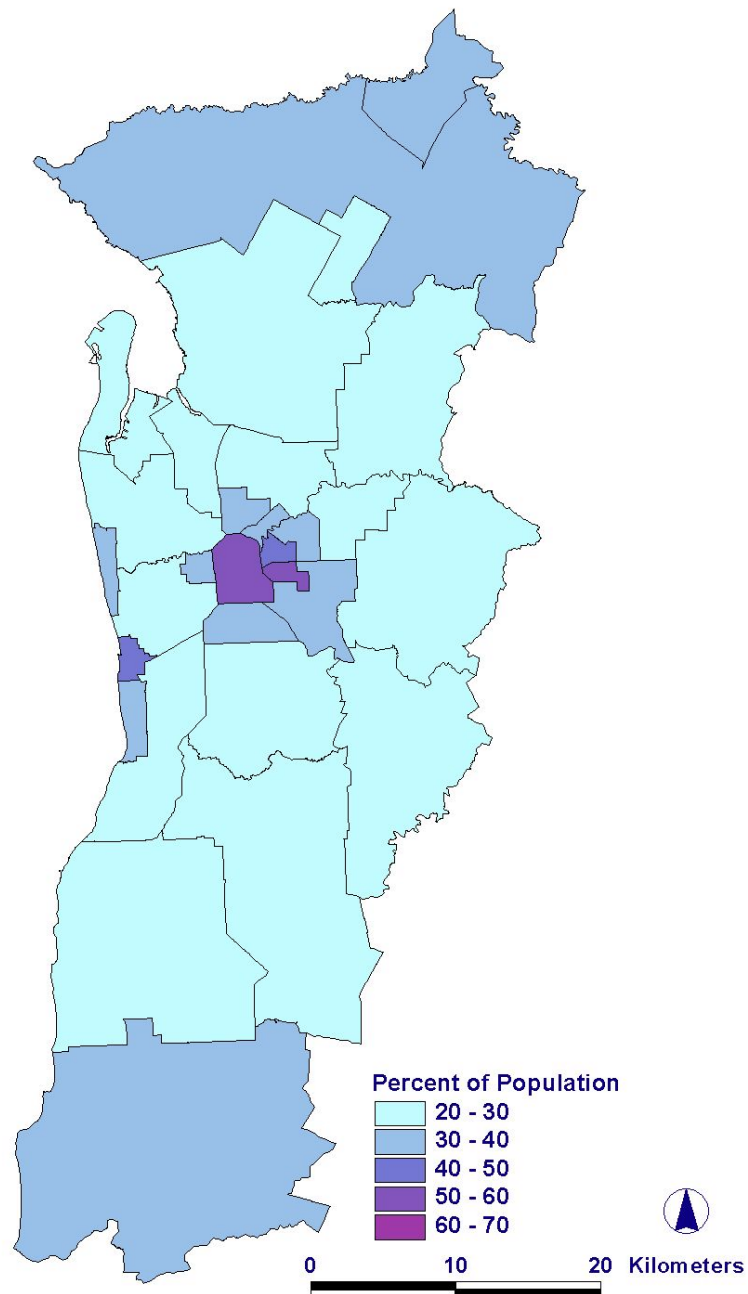


Data source: ABS Australian Housing Survey, 1999, cat no. 4182.0.

Not only does the frequency of residential mobility vary significantly between tenures, but it also varies between geographical regions within Australia. The population of metropolitan Adelaide is slightly less residentially mobile than the national average, with 58 per cent counted at the same residential address in the 1991 and 1996 censuses (ABS, Census of Population and Housing, 1996). This compares to data for the Australian population, where 55 per cent were counted at the same address over the same period. Maher and Whitelaw's (1995, p.12) analysis of the previous census shows a slight inter-censal increase in residential mobility for both the Australian and Adelaide populations between the 1986-1991 period and the 1991-1996 period. Across Australia, states such as Queensland and the Northern Territory, with a high transitory population, have much higher rates of inter-censal movement, with as few as 47 per cent of the population remaining at the same address for the two censuses. The residential mobility rate of the population within metropolitan Adelaide

is also not evenly spread. It forms a regular doughnut pattern of high residential stability in the middle ring suburbs and higher mobility in the centre and outer metropolitan area. This is depicted in Figure 5.9 below.

Figure 5.9: Metropolitan Adelaide SLAs, Proportion of Population (potential movers) in 1996 who changed SLA of residence from 1991

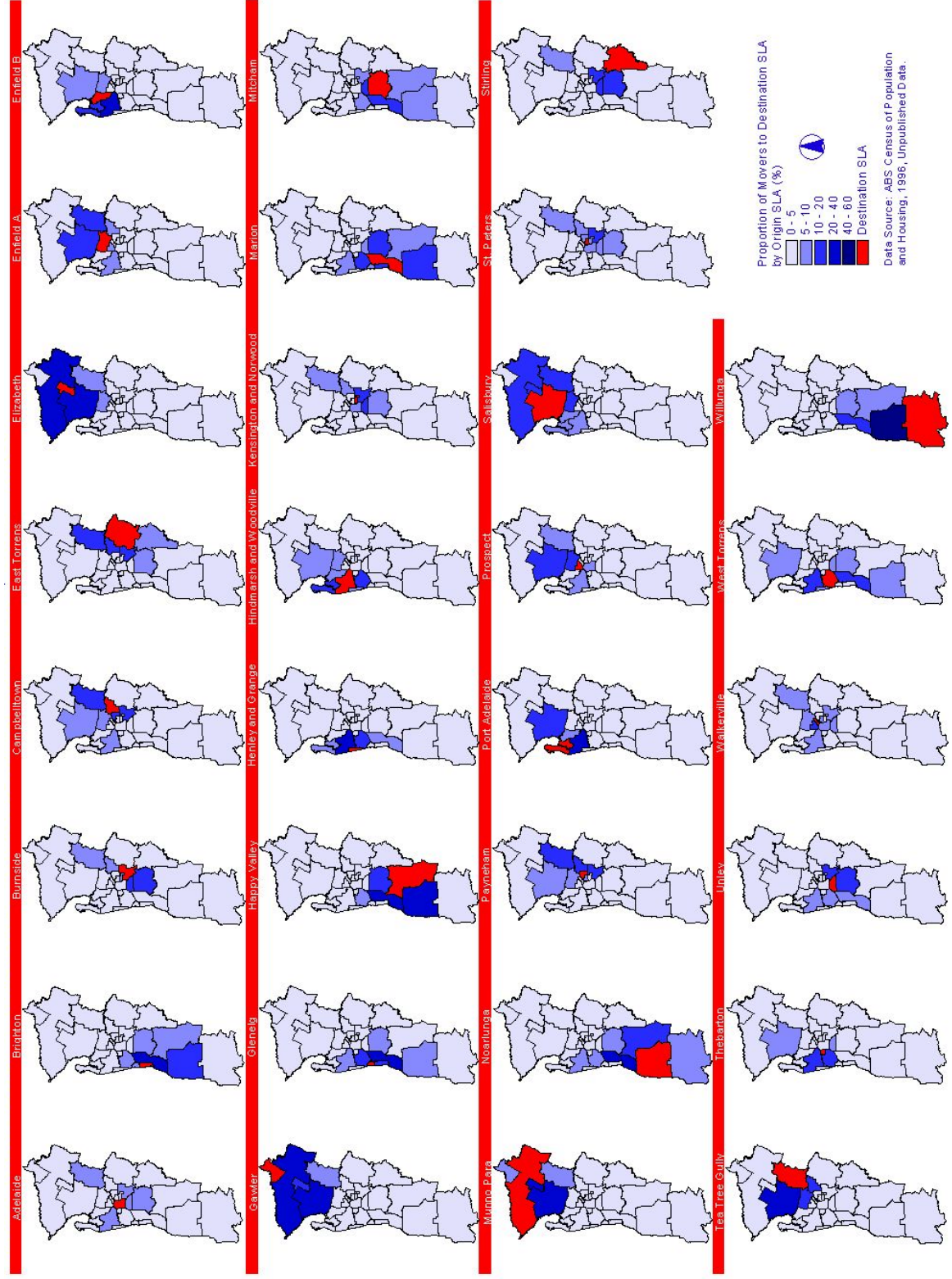


Data Source: ABS, 1996, Unpublished Census data

The high proportion of movers in the centre of the metropolitan area and along selected beachside suburbs (Glenelg, Brighton, and Henley Beach) reflects the high level of flats, units, and other rental properties and supported accommodation in these areas, and the resultant, more transient population, such as students and residents of nursing homes. Maher and Whitelaw (1995, p.24) find a very similar pattern in their analysis of residential mobility during the 1986 to 1991 inter-censal period. Ward's early discussion of the metropolitan pattern of population change in Adelaide also highlights a similar pattern of high and low mobility, concentrated around the inner city area and the beachside suburb of Glenelg. He explains the high mobility rate in Glenelg as a reflection of its historical position as an old urban nucleus (Ward, 1975, p. 72). The relatively low rates of mobility in the middle ring suburbs are a reflection of the lifecycle stage of many households in these areas, and the comparatively high levels of homeownership. The SLA of Enfield B, the location of the study population in this research, has a relatively low population mobility level, with 33 per cent of the population moving between the 1991 and 1996 censuses (ABS, 1996 Census of Population and Housing). Since the 1996 Census, the effect of the Parks urban regeneration project, with resultant large-scale relocations means that the mobility rate would be expected to be higher in the forthcoming results of the 2001 census.

At a more detailed level, residential movement between the SLAs of metropolitan Adelaide during the 1991 to 1996 inter-censal period is shown in Figure 5.10 below. This figure shows clearly that the majority of movement between SLAs occurred from neighbouring SLAs. This demonstration of movement to neighbouring areas supports the thesis that movers prefer familiar locations (McHugh, 1984), and short migration distances. An exception to this pattern is found in the Adelaide SLA, where in-migrants originated primarily from Unley, Burnside, Mitcham, Tea Tree Gully, and Hindmarsh and Woodville. This relative spatial de-concentration is likely to be related to Adelaide's small size, the fact that it is a capital city, and that it contains high levels of temporary and rental accommodation.

Figure 5.10: Metropolitan Adelaide, Residential Movement from all SLAs to Destination SLA, 1991-1996.



This stark illustration of the propensity for the population of metropolitan Adelaide to relocate over short distances, from neighbouring SLAs, is a direct reflection of the mobility distance findings of Australian-wide surveys. Australian's prefer shorter distance moves (Bell and Hugo, 2000), often limited to within the same, or neighbouring SLA or suburbs. The Australian Housing Survey (ABS, 1999) reveals that almost 40 per cent of all movers had relocated within the same suburb, town or locality. This is detailed in table 5.8 below.

Table 5.8: Residential Mobility, Area of Previous Dwelling (reference person), Australia, 1999.

	%
In same suburb/town/locality	39.20
In same State/Territory	53.26
In different State/Territory	5.41
Overseas	2.13
Total	100.00

Note: Households that have lived in current dwelling for less than nine years. Data Source: Australian Housing Survey data, ABS, 1999.

Analysis of the Australian Census mirrors these findings, with 33 per cent of all residential moves between the 1991 and 1996 censuses occurring within the same SLA (ABS, cat no 2035.0, 1998, p.32), a higher number than the 30 per cent recorded for the 1986-1991 period. The slight difference in the recording of short distance moves between these two analyses is due to a smaller areal definition in the Australian Housing Survey, which records movement within the larger suburb, town, or locality, and a restriction to households that had been in their dwelling for less than nine years. The ABS study of Victorian mobility showed more precisely how short the distances Australians moved were. They found that 76.2 per cent of all moves were within a distance of less than 20km, of these 50.7 per cent were between 5-20 km, and the remaining 49.3 per cent were less than 3km (ABS, cat no 3237.2, 1999, p.4), this means that 38 per cent of all surveyed Victorian moves were made within 5 kilometres. These very short distances selected reflect the mobility pattern for public housing tenants described in Chapter Three, here multiple studies showed that public tenants preferred

short distance moves (Kintrea and Clapham, 1986; Wulff and Newton, 1996; Bird, 1976). This fact is further evidence for the proposition that public housing tenants have similar motivations in mobility to the wider population. Public tenant mobility among the study population in The Parks also conforms to this preference for shorter distance moves, as will be shown in the following chapter (Mason, 1999-2000; SAHT, 1999a).

In Australia, public housing tenants are slightly more likely to relocate within the same local area than other tenure types, as displayed in table 5.9 below. This table also illustrates that public renters are less likely to relocate interstate or overseas than other cohorts of the population. This is probably a reflection of the lower employment rate, lower income level, and older population profile of public renters. In addition, the state-based structure of public housing means that movement interstate or overseas is, in effect, movement out of the public housing system.

Table 5.9: Residential Mobility, Area of Previous Dwelling (reference person), Australia, 1999 %.

	Owner	Housing Authority Renter	Private Renter
In Same suburb/town/locality	39	43	40
In Same State/Territory	56	55	49
In different State/Territory	4	1	7
Overseas	1	1	4
Total	100	100	100

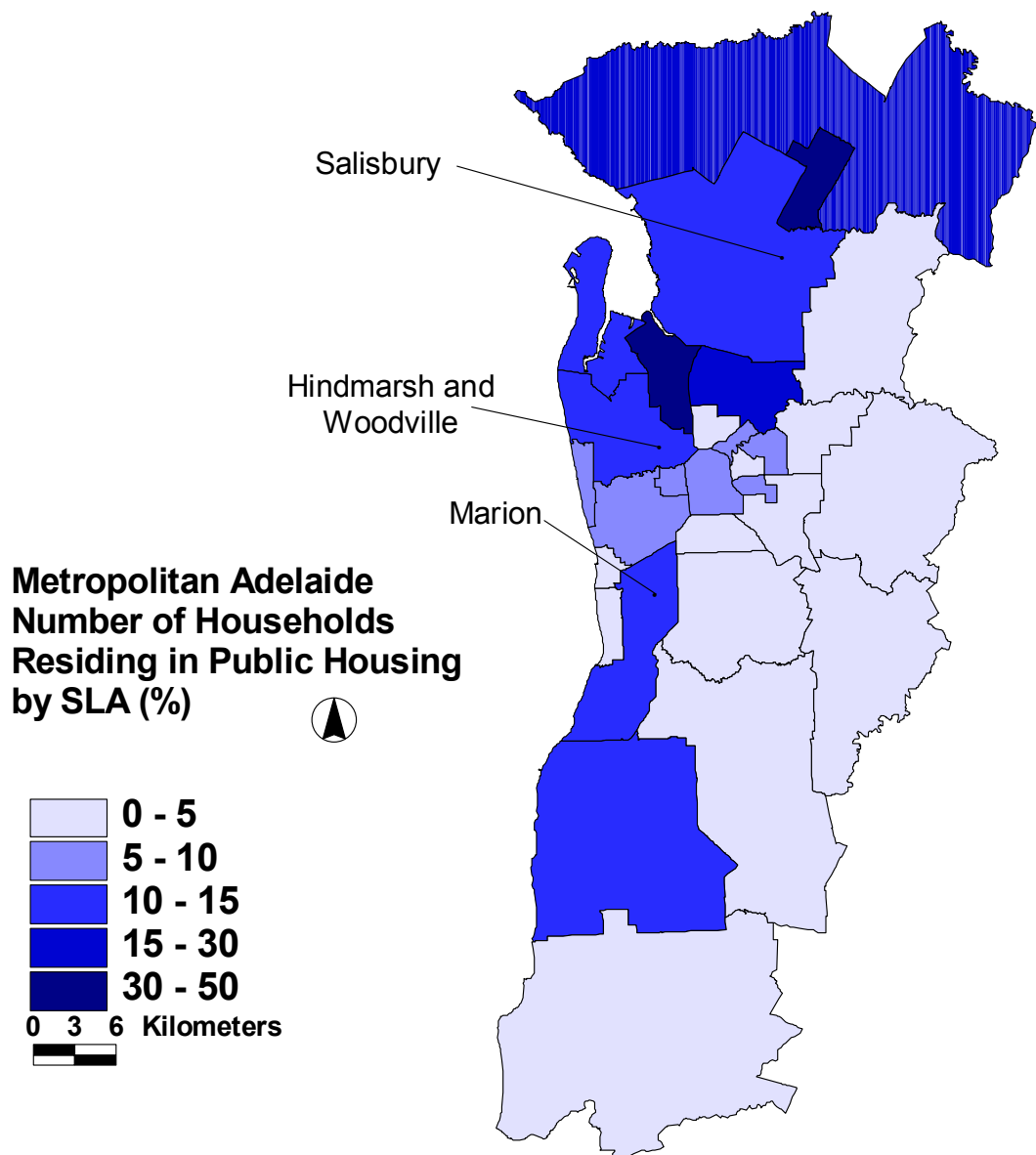
Source: ABS, Australian Housing Survey, 1999.

While the Australian Housing Survey (1999) examined the spatial patterns of public housing tenant movement at a gross level, more detailed investigation of the movement patterns of public tenants is hard to find. Australian census data from 1996, recording the movement patterns of public renters and the total population in metropolitan Adelaide is therefore analysed in this section.

The data was used to examine the relative dispersal of public housing tenants across the metropolitan area, using the index of dissimilarity (detailed in appendix 5.1). This index shows a high degree of relative dissimilarity between the distributions of the Adelaide population by tenure. The index shows that 30 per cent of public renter

households would have to change their SLA of residence in order for public renters to have the same relative dispersal across the metropolitan area as the total population. This is compared to only 5 per cent of homeowners who would have to move. This uneven dispersal of public renters across the metropolitan area, when compared to home owners points to a level of constraint in the relocation and location choices of public tenants. The distribution of public housing is a principle constraint.

Figure 5.11



Data Source: ABS, 1996, Census of Population and Housing

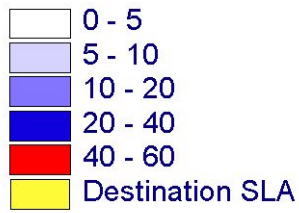
The distribution of Adelaide households resident in public dwellings is displayed in Figure 5.11. It shows a public tenant concentration in a few SLAs. Around 80 per cent of public rental households are found within nine SLAs, with the highest proportions of stock found in Salisbury, Hindmarsh and Woodville, and Marion. This concentration of public housing stock is an obvious influence on the mobility patterns of public tenants. What can be drawn from this finding is the fact that even if tenants did attempt to move in the same way as the total population, the distribution of available housing would constrain them. This reflects an established pattern in international mobility research discussed in Chapter Three, that public tenants might choose to relocate nearby, but are more likely to relocate slightly further away to obtain available housing.

Comparing the mobility choices of public tenants with those of the total population in Adelaide, it is clear that public tenants make very similar locational choices, but that these choices are constrained by the location of public housing stock. The following figures (5.12 – 5.21) compare the inter-censal movement of public tenants with the total population for each metropolitan SLA. Movement to each SLA overwhelmingly favours neighbouring SLAs, reflecting the finding in Chapter Three that residential movers tend to prefer familiar areas, close to their current home. The data reflects the current and past distribution of public housing stock. Where neighbouring SLAs have a low proportion of public housing, the tenant population must choose another neighbouring SLA or one further away.

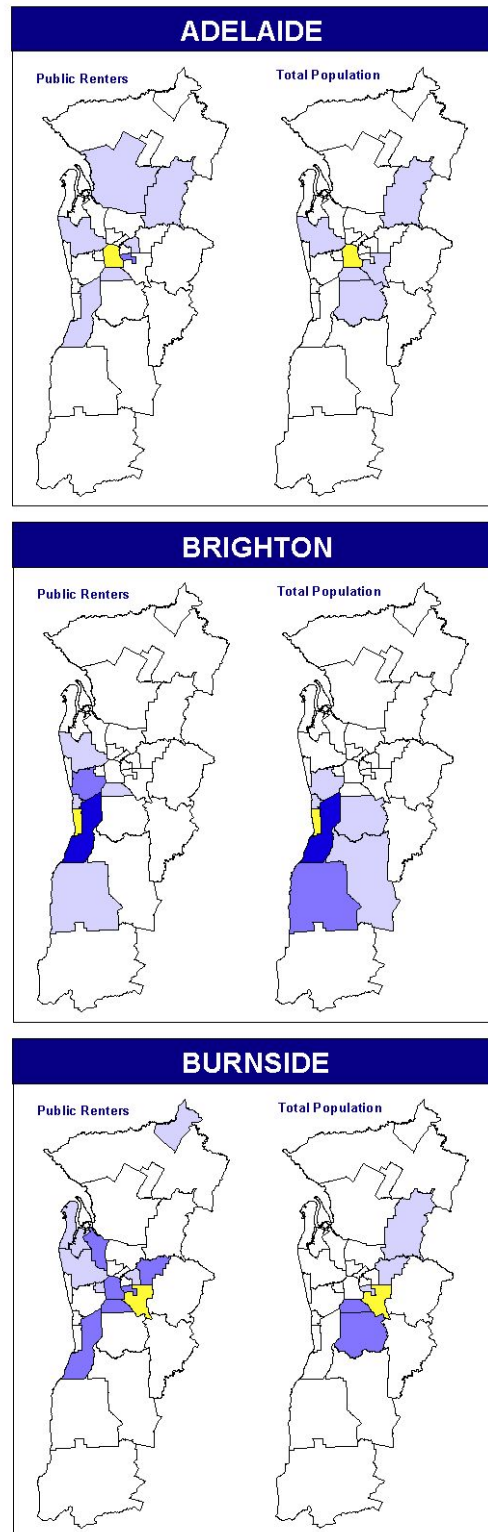
Figure 5.12:

**Metropolitan Adelaide
Residential Movement from
Statistical Local Areas
1991-1996**

Proportion of Movers
to Destination SLA
by Origin SLA (%)



0 10 20 30 Kilometers

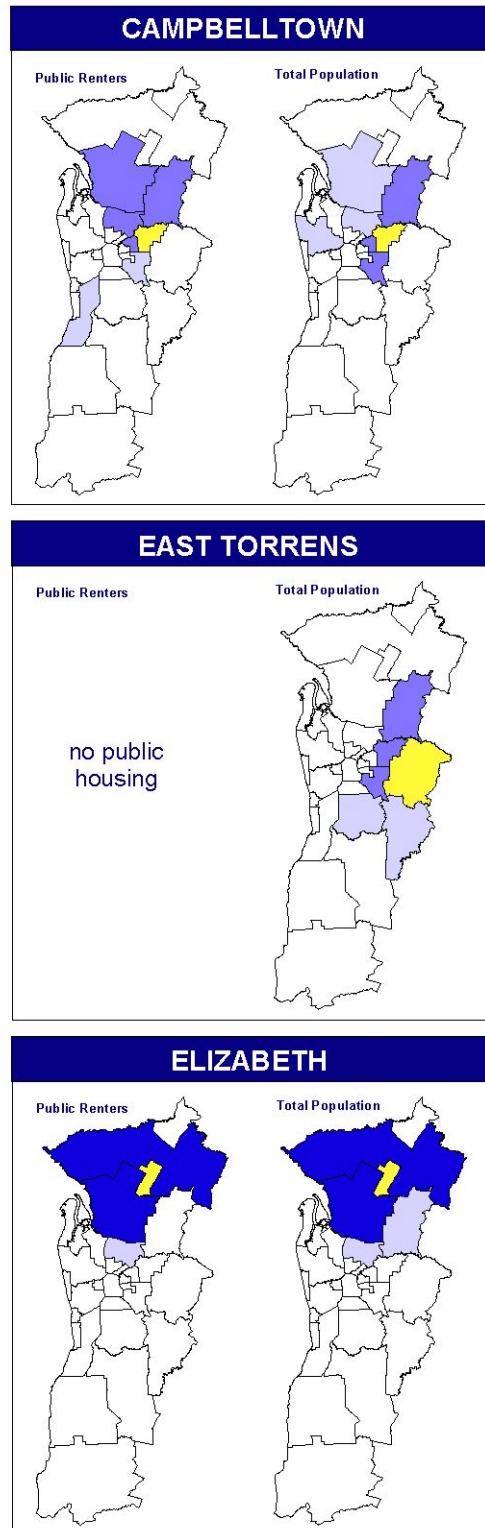
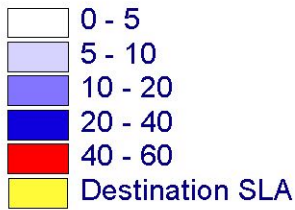


Source: ABS, 1996 Census of Population and Housing, unpublished data

Figure 5.13:

Metropolitan Adelaide Residential Movement from Statistical Local Areas 1991-1996

Proportion of Movers to Destination SLA by Origin SLA (%)



Source: ABS, 1996 Census of Population and Housing, unpublished data

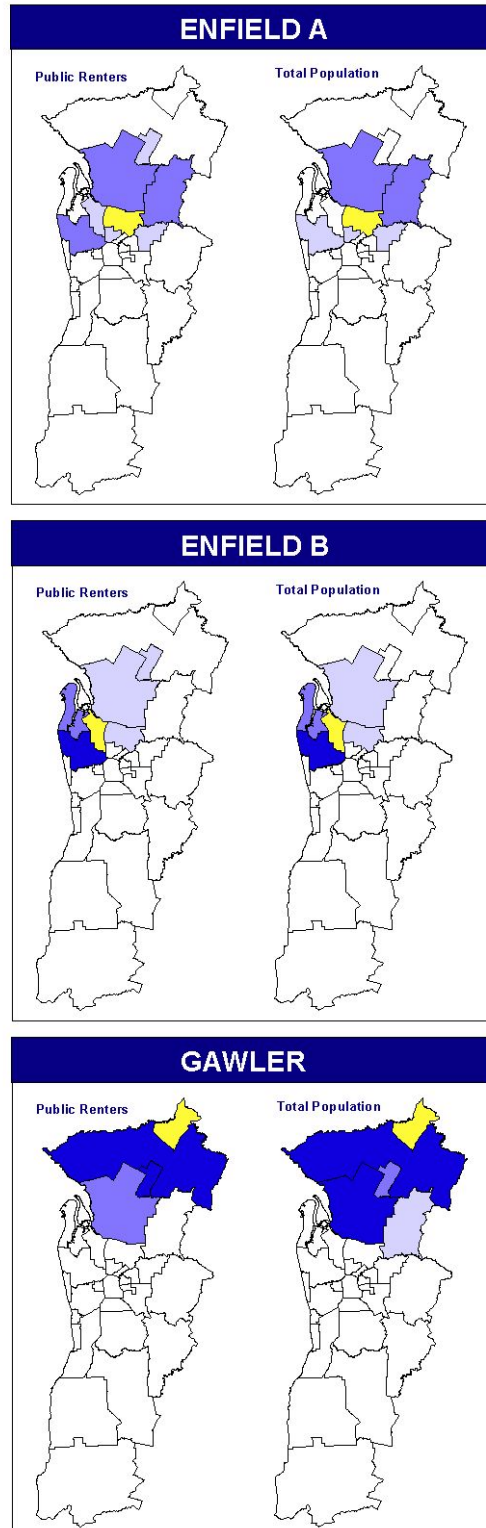
Figure 5.14:

**Metropolitan Adelaide
Residential Movement from
Statistical Local Areas
1991-1996**

Proportion of Movers
to Destination SLA
by Origin SLA (%)



0 10 20 30 Kilometers

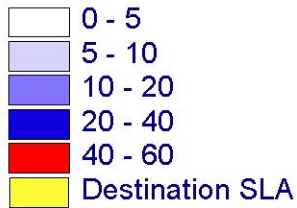


Source: ABS, 1996 Census of Population and Housing, unpublished data

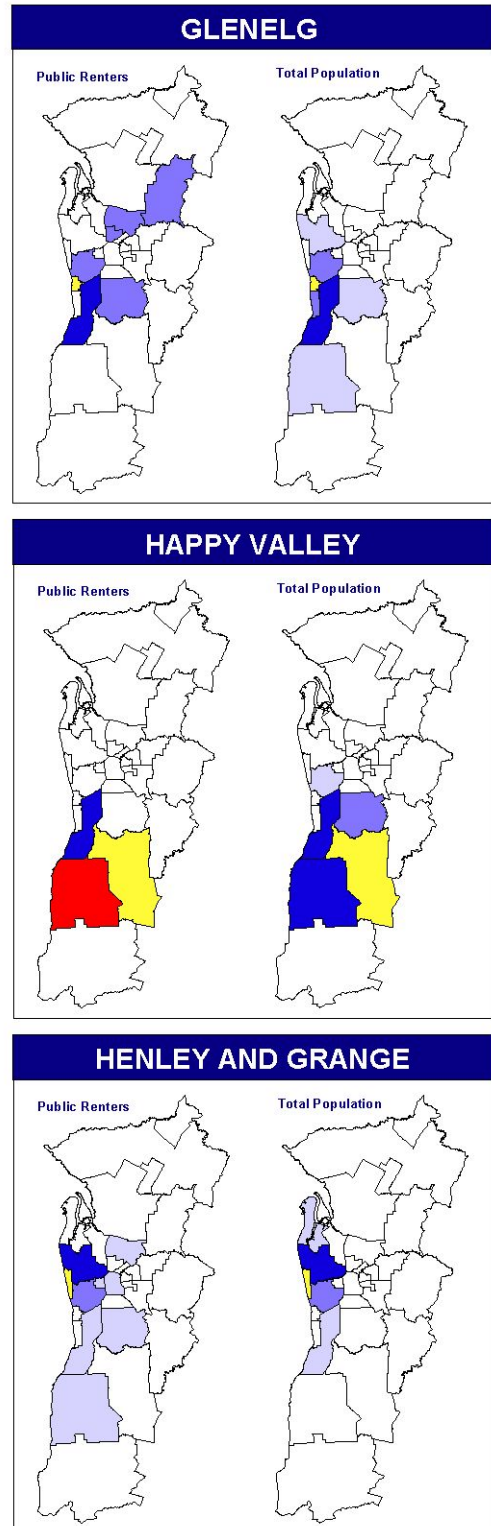
Figure 5.15:

**Metropolitan Adelaide
Residential Movement from
Statistical Local Areas
1991-1996**

Proportion of Movers
to Destination SLA
by Origin SLA (%)



0 10 20 30 Kilometers

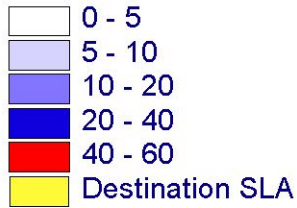


Source: ABS, 1996 Census of Population and Housing, unpublished data

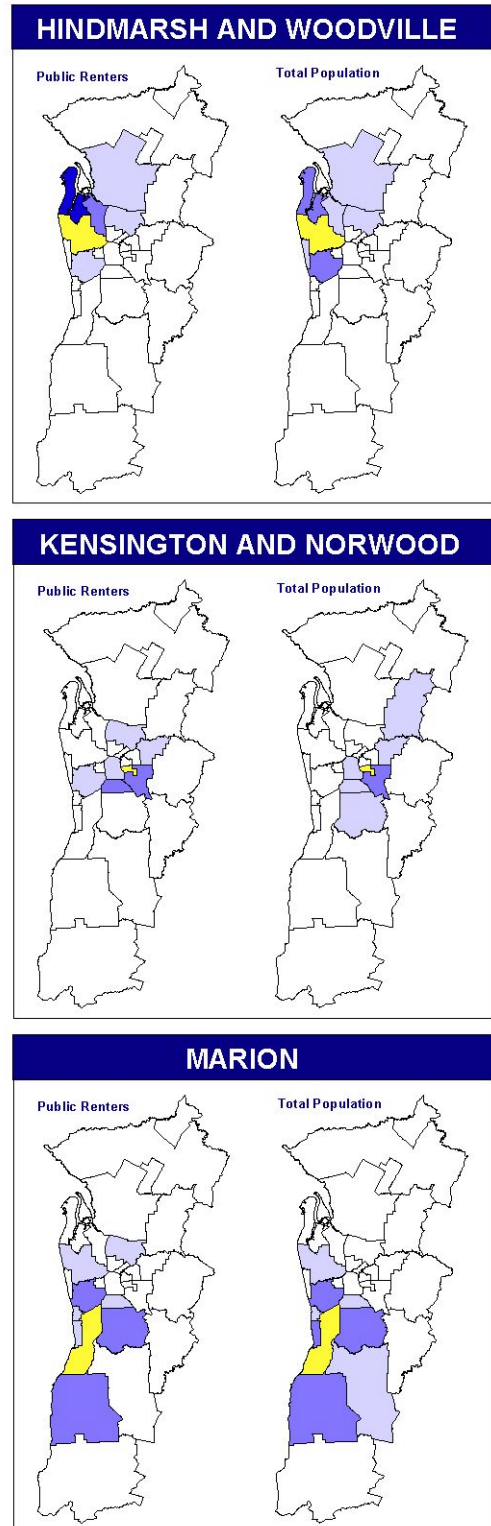
Figure 5.16:

**Metropolitan Adelaide
Residential Movement from
Statistical Local Areas
1991-1996**

Proportion of Movers
to Destination SLA
by Origin SLA (%)



0 10 20 30 Kilometers

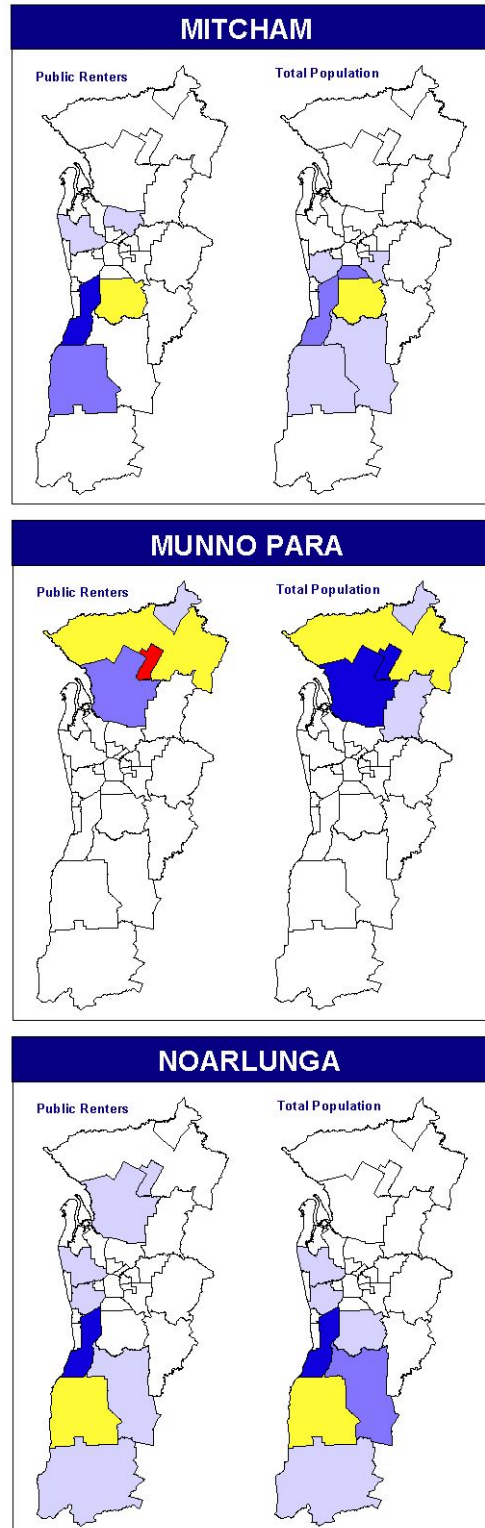
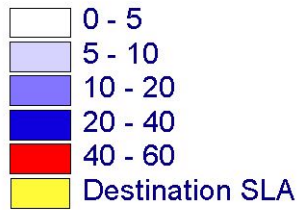


Source: ABS, 1996 Census of Population and Housing, unpublished data

Figure 5.17:

Metropolitan Adelaide Residential Movement from Statistical Local Areas 1991-1996

Proportion of Movers
to Destination SLA
by Origin SLA (%)

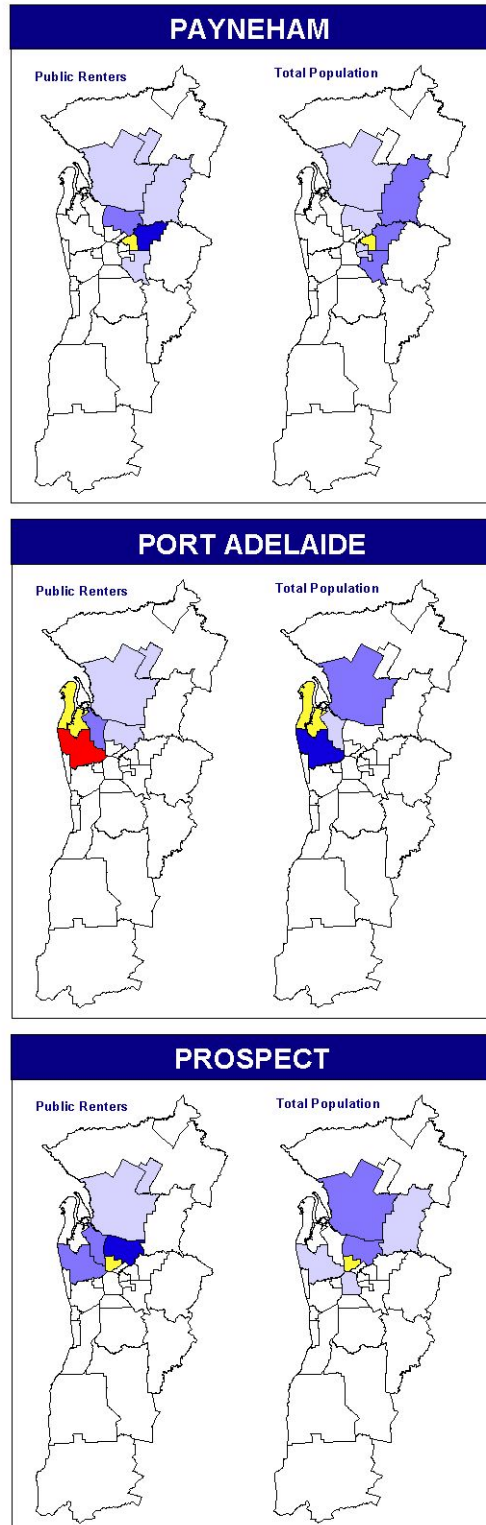
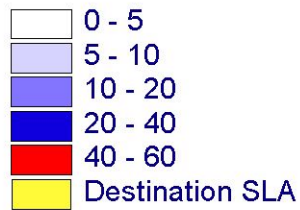


Source: ABS, 1996 Census of Population and Housing, unpublished data

Figure 5.18:

Metropolitan Adelaide Residential Movement from Statistical Local Areas 1991-1996

Proportion of Movers
to Destination SLA
by Origin SLA (%)

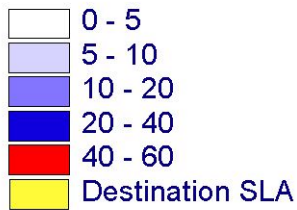


Source: ABS, 1996 Census of Population and Housing, unpublished data

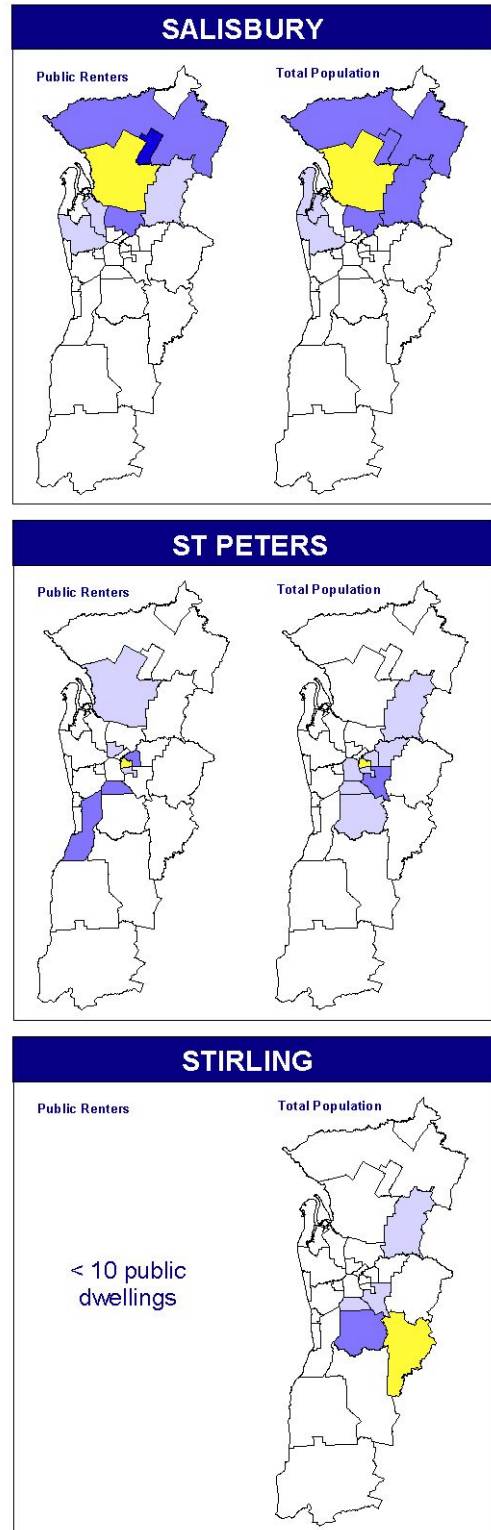
Figure 5.19:

**Metropolitan Adelaide
Residential Movement from
Statistical Local Areas
1991-1996**

Proportion of Movers
to Destination SLA
by Origin SLA (%)



0 10 20 30 Kilometers



Source: ABS, 1996 Census of Population and Housing, unpublished data

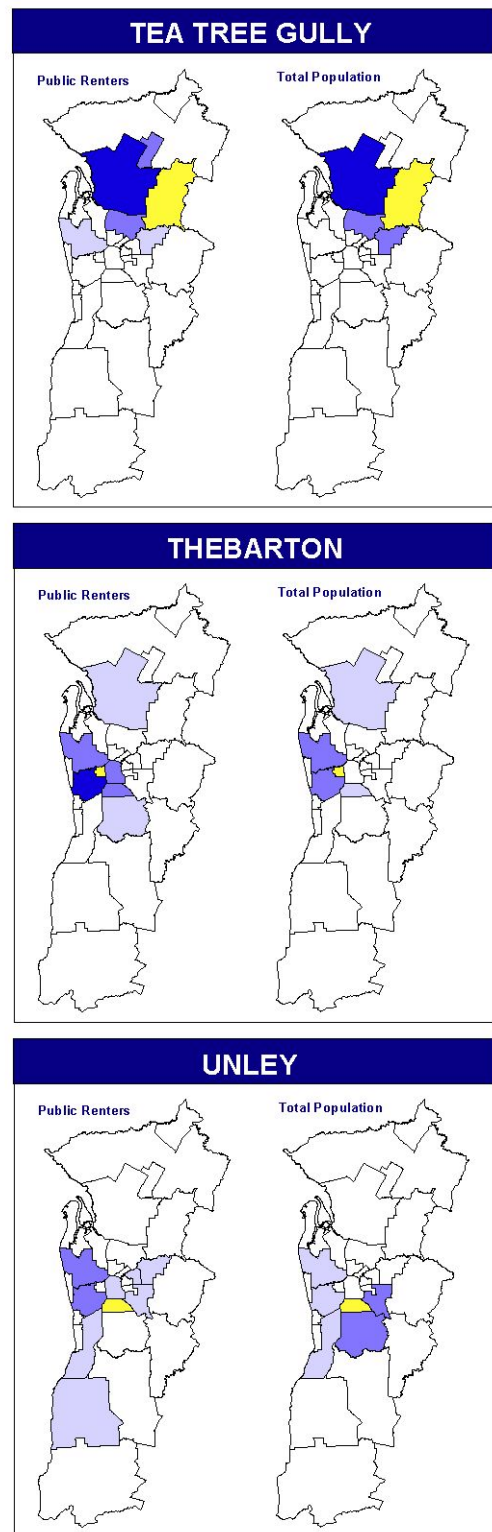
Figure 5.20:

**Metropolitan Adelaide
Residential Movement from
Statistical Local Areas
1991-1996**

Proportion of Movers
to Destination SLA
by Origin SLA (%)



0 10 20 30 Kilometers

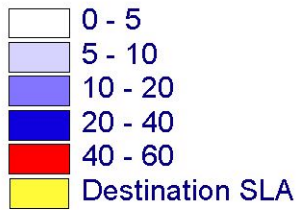


Source: ABS, 1996 Census of Population and Housing, unpublished data

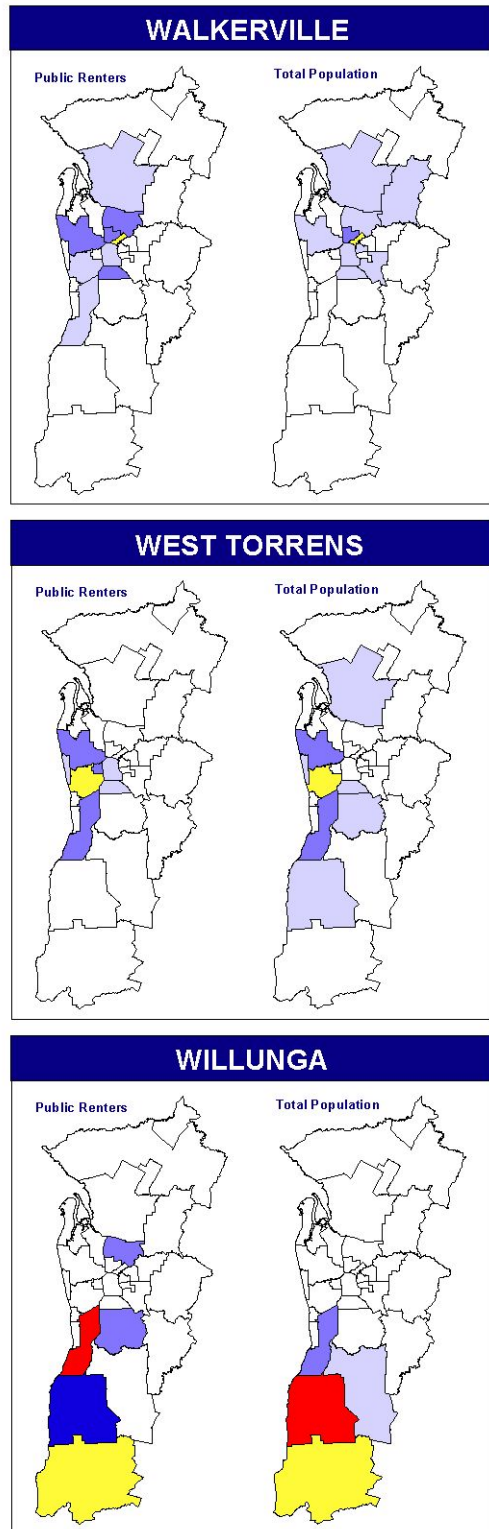
Figure 5.21:

**Metropolitan Adelaide
Residential Movement from
Statistical Local Areas
1991-1996**

Proportion of Movers
to Destination SLA
by Origin SLA (%)



0 10 20 30 Kilometers



Source: ABS, 1996 Census of Population and Housing, unpublished data

5.4.1. The Australian Residential Bundle

This chapter has argued that the mobility of public housing tenants is similar to the mobility of all Australians. There are many characteristics that influence mobility, and tenure, is a most important one. Public tenants may be more likely to be selected for, and exhibit, certain characteristics which predispose them to specific mobility effects, and it is those characteristics including their tenure, but not tenure alone, that influences their mobility. No large scale or Australia-wide survey of the residential bundle has been undertaken for public housing tenants, and this information is not collected in the census. But, as highlighted in Chapter Three, bundle composition by public tenants is much the same as for the wider population. For these reasons, the remainder of this chapter will use data and findings from Australian Bureau of Statistics surveys, to present a picture of the bundle composition of Australians, and in particular public housing tenants.

The residential bundle, described in Chapter Three, is a concept that describes the housing and residential environment that a household commands, where moves are made to maximise the components of the bundle in relation to a household's needs, within the constraints that they have imposed upon them. The residential bundle framework that was described in Chapter Three was explained in terms of five categories of bundle component; housing elements, elements of the residential environment, social networks, employment and economic opportunities, and access to facilities and services.

The ABS has recently completed two major surveys of reasons for moving residence in Queensland (cat no 3237.3, 2001) and Victoria (cat no. 3237.2, 2000). These surveys asked intra-urban movers to nominate the reasons for choosing their current residence. The responses that movers gave across these two metropolitan areas were very similar and provide significant insight to the Australian composition of the residential bundle. They are presented in table 5.10 below. The reasons for moving given by these Australian survey populations are comparable to the findings in international research reviewed in Chapter Three. Housing reasons are consistently

shown to be the most important reason for moving, contributing almost half of the explanation.

Table 5.10: Intra-urban Movers, Main Reason for Moving. Melbourne and Brisbane

	Melbourne %	Brisbane %
Housing reasons total	49.6	49.2
Buy or build house/flat/unit	16.0	15.9
Bigger home	11.8	12.4
Smaller home	3.9	2.6
Other characteristics of home/property	3.7	6.8
Reduce rent/mortgage	6.4	4.9
Notice given by landlord	7.8	6.6
Employment related reasons	8.6	9.4
Neighbourhood characteristics	3.0	6.3
Accessibility reasons total	15.4	12.4
Family/friends	6.0	6.1
Better lifestyle	6.0	3.5
Education	3.3	2.8
Lifecycle reasons	20.4	19.2
Moved with family	3.6	4.3
Be independent	6.0	6.7
Get married/live with partner	6.6	4.4
Breakdown of marriage/relationship	4.2	3.8
Other main reasons	2.2	3.0
Total movers	100.0	100
	n ~ 3800	n ~ 2200

Source: ABS Population Mobility Surveys, cat no. 3237.2, 2000; 3237.3, 2001.

Note: Both studies surveyed a randomly selected population in each state, based on this knowledge n was calculated as a proportion of the total sample that would be located in the metropolitan area.

5.4.2. Housing Components

The residential mobility of the Australian population is most commonly for 'housing reasons' (ABS, cat no. 3408.0, 1987; 1988; ABS, cat no. 3237.2, 2000; ABS, cat no. 3237.3, 2001), such as the size or cost of housing, or entry into the housing market. In all surveys examined, there was an identical pattern of housing related reasons; first of all entry into the housing market was the most common housing related reason for residential mobility; this was followed by the desire for larger housing. Housing size is an important consideration in dwelling choice for Australians (ABS, cat no. 8791.5, 1999; ABS, cat no. 3237.2, 2000). In general, Australians seek

larger housing, though a few are seeking smaller housing units. The desire for smaller housing contributed less than 10 per cent of the housing explanation in the Australia wide surveys (ABS cat no. 3408.0, 1987; 1988), and less than 5 per cent in the more recent Melbourne and Brisbane studies. As an aside, this is especially relevant to public tenants where the current policy direction is towards moving tenants from houses with excess bedroom space, based on the preconception (or justification) that excess residential space is a source of tenant dissatisfaction. This is proposed by housing authorities as a tenant-centred argument, when in fact it is more likely to be an economic one, housing authority-centred argument. The mobility literature reveals, “a surplus of space is not considered as a frustration (Rossi, 1955, p.179) because adjusting to surplus space is far easier than to a shortage of space” (Wulff and Newton, 1996, p. 281).

The general ‘appearance and layout’ of housing is also a highly important dwelling preference, as evidenced by the fact it was selected by 73.8 per cent of households as influencing their current dwelling selection in the Western Australian (ABS cat no. 8791.5, 1999) survey of housing preferences. Related to this element was the desire for households to relocate to a dwelling that was considered a ‘better quality’. Australians also have a distinct preference for separate houses with, for example, 61 per cent of respondents in the West Australian survey selecting this element as important.

5.4.3. Residential Environment and Accessibility

Though locational reasons are important to Australians in relocation, they are shown to be much less important than housing reasons (presented in table 5.10). The residential environment and the services that it provides access to are nevertheless important residential bundle components for Australians. The West Australian survey found that the most common reasons for choosing a dwelling’s location were: that the area was familiar; it was a quiet location, an attractive neighbourhood, with access to shops, and ‘central’. When respondents were asked to list the types of services and facilities that they desired access to, the most important of these were shopping,

recreational, urban areas, education and public transport (ABS cat no. 8791.5, 1999). The services and facilities that respondents nominated as important were similar to those that they had used in the three weeks preceding the survey, where 98 per cent of respondents had used shops, 51 per cent had used recreational facilities, 48 per cent had visited restaurants, and 46 per cent had used medical services.

5.4.4. Social Networks

Access to family and friends is an important component of the residential bundle. This access was selected by 40 per cent of the respondents as important among location outcomes in the Western Australian survey. Only 6 per cent selected access to family and friends in the mobility survey conducted in Melbourne and repeated in Brisbane. This large difference in response rates points to an interesting proviso in the importance of family and friends. The Western Australian survey asked respondents to list all elements that were important in the relocation decision, while the Victorian and Queensland surveys asked for the 'most important'. This points to the fact that the location of family is not important as a primary reason for residential location, but it is important as a secondary or contributing reason. That is, in general households tend to relocate for housing, locational, and accessibility reasons, and the presence of family in the area is often not important enough to encourage a certain move alone, but combined with other bundle components it influences mobility decisions. Some groups, such as the aged (Ekström, 1994) are known to place a greater importance on the location of social networks.

5.4.5. Employment and Income

The access to employment that a location provides is moderately important for Australian movers. Less than 10 per cent of movers in Melbourne and Brisbane moved primarily for employment. Worthy of note with respect to employment, the distance that movers relocated has a relationship to employment related bundle components. The ABS found in these studies (ABS, 2000, cat no. 3237.2; ABS, 2001, 3237.3), that while shorter distance moves are more likely to be related to the

characteristics of the home or property, longer distance moves are more likely to be related to financial or personal considerations. Moves made to affect the cost of housing, such as to reduce rent or mortgage costs are another consideration in moving behaviour. This is likely to affect other elements of the residential bundle. Because housing makes up such a large proportion of a household's expenditure, moves made to adjust the cost of housing contribute significantly to the amount of household income available for other household expenditure.

5.5. Forced Movement and Bundle Composition

A significant number of moves in Australia are forced, that is, “due to circumstances beyond the mover's control” (ABS cat no. 3237.2, 2000; ABS cat no. 3237.3, 2001). Table 5.10 highlighted the importance of force in Australian moves. In the two surveys that contributed to the data, force made up between 7 and 8 per cent of the total primary reasons given for movement. This data is also likely to underestimate the total number of moves caused principally by force, because some element of force is likely to be included in the definition of relationship breakdown, which makes up an additional 4 to 7 per cent of the explanation.

The principal reasons for forced movement in two earlier studies of mobility reasons were the sale by the landlord of a rental property, a lease not renewed, resumption or demolition of properties and natural calamities" (ABS cat no. 8791.5, 1987; 1988), accounting for more than 12 per cent of all mobility in the 1987 and 1988 survey. Homeowners and purchasers are excluded from many of these explanations of forced movement. Involuntary movers are largely concentrated in the public and private rental sector, which underlines the high level of insecurity that renters possess. Wulff and Newton (1996) present the most frequently stated reasons for tenants moving from one public housing unit to another, as being to “State Housing Authority decision” (18 per cent), to “Improve quality or size of dwelling” (18 per cent), and “Health or disability” (15 per cent). Though this data was last collected in the 1991 ABS Housing and Locational Survey it shows the high level of forced relocations

which would be expected, based on the policy direction described in Chapter One, to have risen even more since then.

5.6. Conclusion

This portrait of residential movement and bundle composition of Australians and Australian public housing tenants has shown Australian residential mobility to be similar and comparable to that experienced in other non-European OECD countries. The characteristics of Australian movers have been shown to be similar to those characteristics highlighted in Chapter Three as predisposing households to specific mobility behaviour. Lifecycle stage, and the related characteristic of age, is of key importance to an explanation of Australian mobility behaviour. The employment characteristics of Australians also conform to the mobility explanation proposed in Chapter Three, job seekers having much higher levels of mobility than the currently employed. Housing tenure is another key indicator of Australian mobility behaviour, renters having significantly higher levels of mobility. Interestingly, in the data analysed for renters, being a public tenant predisposes households to much lower levels of mobility than private tenants. This mobility rate is similar to that of homeowners, though, with decreasing security of tenure for public tenants, their mobility is likely to rise. The mobility rate varies within Australia, and South Australia is a state with a relatively low rate of residential mobility. Within the metropolitan area of Adelaide, population mobility was shown to be higher in the inner and far outer rings. The distance that the Australian and Adelaide populations moved during mobility was, in general, short, and often from within the same, or a neighbouring, SLA. This was also true for public housing tenants. The analysis showed that public housing tenants in metropolitan Adelaide moved in basically the same way as all movers, but were constrained by the uneven distribution of public rental dwellings. The result was that public tenants were not distributed across the metropolitan area in the same way as the total movers, or homeowners.

The Australian residential bundle has been shown to be composed in a similar way to the bundle described in Chapter Three. Important components of the residential bundle for Australians are described below. Housing elements were important, namely, adequate size and cost of housing, quality and appearance of housing, and structural features, such as detachment. Elements of the residential environment were also found to be important, especially, familiarity with the area, its amenity, and the access to services such as shopping, recreational facilities, and medical services that it provides. Access to family and friends was also shown to be an important contributing factor to residential location. Finally, access to employment and the income it provided was found to be an important consideration in relocation decision-making. Though this has been shown to be less important for population groups such as public housing tenants, because they are much less likely to participate in the workforce (Fuller, 1995).

The following chapter will introduce The Parks, which is the study area for this research, its history and future, and the population that resides within it.