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Changing Residential Landscapes

From Holiday Shacks to Retirement Resorts

Caryl Bosman

Griffith University

Change and rapid urbanisation are arguably the most significant factors that have produced the Gold Coast as we know it. It is not rocket science to deduce that it is high population growth and the residents of the Gold Coast that have played a major part in this conspiracy. The aim of this paper is to trace transformations in the city's demographic and built fabric. Drawing upon oral histories, this paper reflects upon how Gold Coast residents have considered and dealt with rapid transformation of their local environments, which face competing demands of both tourists and residents. The outcomes of rapid population growth and urban change on the Gold Coast have effectively produced two different forms of urbanisation: resident and tourist. This has not always been the case. This segregation of the city results in uneven distribution of infrastructure, services and capital accumulation, which gives rise to socio-economic polarisation. This is significant because as the population ages many of these residential areas will be ill equipped to address the needs of residents who age in place. The key message of this paper is that change and rapid urbanisation result in spatial differentiation that frequently disadvantages some residential landscapes.

The narrative I am interested in here emerges out of four decades (1950–80) of population growth and rapid urban transformation on the Gold Coast, Queensland, Australia. The boundaries of the Local Government Area, now named the Gold Coast City, have changed over the last sixty to seventy years (see Fig. 1). During this time progress and success were measured by the magnitude of change, by the extent of the re-shaping/re-moulding of the land. A local newspaper at the time, *Gold Coast Bulletin*, January



24, 1968, proudly reported the transformations evidenced in the Gold Coast area: “FROM ABORIGINAL [sic] corroboree ground and bora ring to a rapidly developing Gold Coast residential area—that is the success story of [the Gold Coast].” And in an earlier article, *The South Coast Bulletin*, September 3, 1958, it was proclaimed “All around Surfers Paradise today, there is ample evidence of foul swampy areas being eliminated and producing excellent land suitable for subdivision.” These practices initiated histories of change: from holiday shack to serviced apartment to family home; from a Queenslander (a typical timber and iron, pole construction house) to walk-up apartments to the Q1 (the world’s tallest residential tower until 2010); from a series of identifiable walkable villages (where no one locked any doors) to monotonous car reliant suburbia to a linear sprawling urban form dotted with exclusive and gated communities. During the 1950–80s the Gold Coast was perceived and experienced as a family friendly, safe environment in which to live and holiday.¹ The current (2013) resident landscapes, like many other tourist cities, are physically, socially and aesthetically different from the tourist landscapes of the city (see Figs. 2 and 3). This segregation of the city results in uneven distribution of infrastructure, services and capital accumulation, which gives rise to socio-economic polarisation.² This is significant because as the population ages many of these residential areas will be ill equipped to address the needs of residents who age in place.³

The aim of this paper is to trace transformations in the city’s demographic and built fabric from the 1980s to the early 2000s. Population growth, as with economic growth coupled with development booms, has both positive and negative consequences. On the one hand growth drives urbanisation, housing provision and economic prosperity. On the other hand social and environmental landscapes undergo significant changes sometimes with serious effects and or adverse outcomes. Drawing upon 16 interviews and oral histories with Gold Coast residents, this paper reflects upon how Gold Coast residents have considered and dealt with rapid transformation of their local environments, which face competing demands of both tourists and residents. All participants were born between 1946 and 1963 (i.e. baby boomers) and the majority of participants migrated to the Gold Coast between 1960 and mid 1980s, and others had grown up on the Coast. I acknowledge that in the use and analysis of the interviews my bias and prejudices will be reflected because as Fontana & Frey have stated, it is not possible to “lift the results

1. Jim Davidson and Peter Spearritt, *Holiday Business: Tourism in Australia since 1870* (Carlton, Vic.: Miegunyah Press, 2000).

2. Dianne Dredge and Tazim Jamal, “Mobilities on the Gold Coast, Australia: implications for destination governance and sustainable tourism,” *Journal of Sustainable Tourism* (2013), accessed May 17, 2013, doi:10.1080/09669582.2013.776064.

3. Andrew Beer et al., *Our Homes, Our Communities: The aspirations and expectations of older people in South Australia* (Adelaide: Flinders University, 2009); Allison Smith, *Ageing in urban neighbourhoods: Place attraction and social exclusion* (Bristol: Policy Press, 2009); Peter Walters, “Growing old on the suburban fringe: master planned communities and planning for diversity,” (proceedings of the State of Australian Cities Conference, Griffith University, Brisbane, November 30–December 02, 2005).

4. Andrea Fontana and James Frey, "The Interview: From Structured Questions to Negotiated Text," in *The Handbook of Qualitative Research*, ed. Norman Denzin and Yvonna Lincoln (London: SAGE, 2000), 645.

5. Chris Maher and Robert Stimson, *Regional population growth in Australia* (Canberra: Bureau of Immigration and Population Research, APGC, 1994).

6. Analysis of interview and oral history data was done using NVivo software.

7. See for example Gordon Holden, "Sense of Place and Urbanity: Challenges and Interventions at the Gold Coast" (proceedings of the 4th Making Cities Liveable Conference, Noosa, July 27–29, 2011).

of interviews out of the contexts in which they were gathered and claim them as objective data with no strings attached.”⁴ It is also important to note that the stories told by participants are subject to the time, place and particulars of the interview, also the views and experiences of the interviewees are specific to the individual. A wider body of literature supports any generalisations made. Interview analysis is framed by three primary reasons driving migration: job opportunities, cheap housing and mild climate and associated lifestyle.⁵ The analysis⁶ reveals insights into everyday life experiences of change and specifically how residents’ urban narratives have been affected by these changes. The key message of this paper is that change and rapid urbanisation result in spatial differentiation that is characterised by disadvantaged residential landscapes, in terms of infrastructure (specifically housing and lifestyle), services (specifically relating to amenity) and capital accumulation (specifically relating to job opportunities). The narratives told here are significant because they remind us of the importance of pro-active planning practices that focus on residential places that engender and harness positive urban narratives⁷ not just over a single life-course but also for future generations.

Figure 1. Map showing changes to the Gold Coast City Local Government Area. Drawn by the author, 2013.

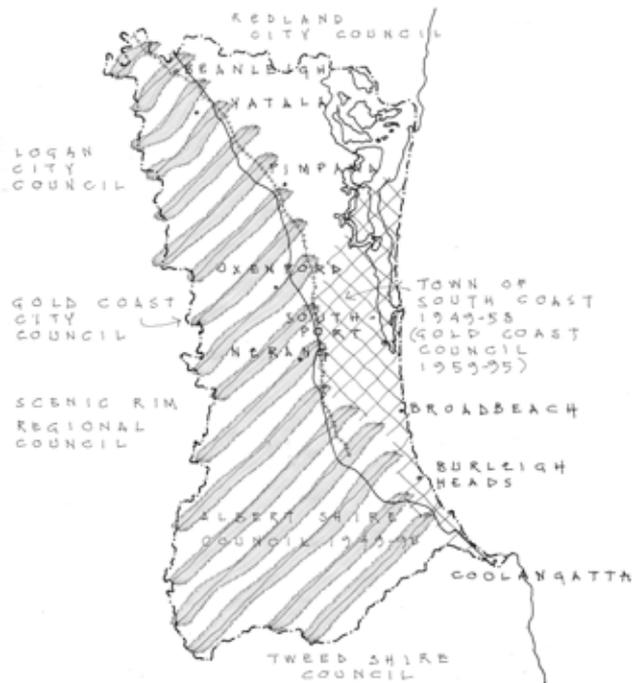




Figure 2. View of the Gold Coast City tourist landscapes, Circa 2007. Photograph by the author, 2010.



Figure 3. View of a typical Gold Coast residential landscape, Circa 1980s. Photograph by the author, 2013.

From the 1930s domestic tourism in Australia was stimulated by the prosperity of a modernising economy and a growing cultural attachment to the outdoors and the beach in particular. The Gold Coast benefited from these trends which bolstered land speculation in the area. A group of developers with shady reputations, who became known as the “white shoe brigade,”⁸ tapped into Australia’s post-war prosperity feeding a desire for every Australian to have a holiday house by the beach. This trend towards second homeownership stimulated the development of construction industries and property services and secured the Gold Coast’s property boom. By the end of the 1959 financial year the value of Gold Coast building approvals was reported in *The South Coast Bulletin*, March 16, 1959, as being an Australian record and the city has held this position almost consistently

8. Jim Forbes and Peter Spearritt, “Rum corps to white-shoe brigade,” *Griffith Review* 2 (2003); Michael Jones, *A Sunny Place for Shady People* (Sydney: Allen & Unwin, 1986).

9. Aysin Dedekorkut-Howes and Caryl Bosman, "The Unbearable Lightness of Being Gold Coast" proceedings of the Fifth State of Australian Cities Conference, University of Melbourne, November 29–December 02, 2011.

10. B. Hofmeister, "Australia and its Urban Centres," *Urbanization of the Earth Series*, Volume 6, (Berlin: Gebrüder Borntraeger, 1988).

11. Robert Stimson, et al., "Sun-Belt Migration Decisions: A Study of the Gold Coast" (N.p: Australian Housing and Urban Research Institute, 1996).

12. Dredge and Jamal, "Mobilities on the Gold Coast, Australia"; Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS), *Census of population and housing 2011 basic community profile* (Canberra: n.p., n.d.).

13. Interview 3, Experiences of Urban Change on the Gold Coast, GU Ref No: ENV/37/11/HREC.

14. Interview 10.

15. Interview 6.

16. Interview 1.

throughout the latter part of the twentieth century.⁹ At the same time the Gold Coast grew from a population of 6,600 in 1933 to 33,716 (including Tweed) in 1961.¹⁰ The city experienced unprecedented growth between 1970–80, with an overall population increase of 250%.¹¹ This growth was among the highest in Australia and the area was recorded as being one of the fastest growing in country.¹² The phenomenal population growth during 1970–80s in particular can be attributed to three key "pull" factors: employment opportunities, climate and lifestyle, and affordable housing. Many migrants to the Gold Coast moved up from the southern states of Victoria and New South Wales. By the early 1990s these 'southerners' comprised close to half of the Gold Coast population. The tropical climate and relaxed beach lifestyle are among the incentives that attracted many migrants from Melbourne and Sydney where the weather is typically colder and wetter and the pace of life faster and more frenetic. The Gold Coast offered many migrants the opportunity to live 'the good life' all year round. Anne Snowdon, talking about the Gold Coast appeal says "it's a great place to live. I think, even if you're unemployed, why not sit on the beach and be unemployed as opposed to sitting in a dark alleyway in Melbourne and homeless and freezing."¹³ And Arnie Goldberg expresses the good life as "let's just say the weather. I've never been out of work while I've been working. If you want something, it's handy, like there's service stations, shopping centres, when you having a boat, ... I can just go around the corner, chuck it into the Broadwater, and off you go."¹⁴ Arnie was drawn to the Gold Coast in the 1980s for the employment prospects. He told me during our interview that "the money down here was a lot ... I made three times as much here as I was back home. So, yeah, we stayed here." Many migrants who arrived on the Gold Coast in the 70s–80s were young professionals who had the ability and the intent to purchase a detached house. In some cases migrants bought prime Gold Coast residential real estate for a fraction of the sale price of their previous property in Sydney or Melbourne. Amanda Blake explained "younger families, like us, could buy homes for far more easily at much cheaper than where we were."¹⁵ Noel White too saw housing opportunities as an important pull factor: "Basically, it is a lot of people come up here, I guess for the money part of it, that they could actually sell their house down in Sydney, come up here, buy a waterfront home and still have money to spend and whether they retire or not. And there are a lot of opportunities up here."¹⁶



The Gold Coast population continued to increase with 33.8% growth between 2006–2011, with the largest increase in the 35–49 cohorts. Between 1961–1991 the largest sector of the population were between 15–44 years of age with the majority of residents born in Australia. This growth was fed by and fuelled processes of change which were instrumental in making the city we see today. The most recent Australian census data (2011) suggests that the Gold Coast population count in 2011 was 494,496.¹⁷ The Gold Coast City Council indicate that the population will increase to 683,568 by 2021.¹⁸ It is estimated that one third of the Gold Coast population is currently (2013) over 55 and that the over 55 cohort will increase by 68% by 2021. This means many Gold Coast residential areas will have more than double the current number of residents within this cohort. The aging of the population coupled with the predicted growth rates suggest strong real estate markets. Together these factors highlight the urgent need for understanding the housing landscapes on the Gold Coast and in particular the histories informing these landscapes.

The image of Gold Coast began to change dramatically after 1950. Up until then it had been “Brisbane’s traditional seaside resort.”¹⁹ There was nothing fancy or flash about the place, it was an affordable place for the people of Brisbane to escape to.²⁰ The beaches offered adequate camping grounds and many of the holidaymakers participated in communal games and festivities.²¹ However, by the late 1950s Surfers Paradise was criticised for being “tawdry, vulgar, clip joint, millionaire’s mile, garish, brassy, Americanised”²² and a local Gold Coast politician was prompted to remind his constituents in *The South Coast Bulletin*, March 11, 1959, of the need to “preserve decent moral standards” in the light of change and progress. This image of the Gold Coast was fuelled, in part, by the extended opening hours of shops, which were restricted elsewhere in the state. In addition, cinemas on the Gold Coast were open on Sunday nights, a practice that was not permitted in other major cities in Australia.²³ Bikini clad meter maids, surfing legends and “pyjama parties” held at a local hotel helped to consolidate the Gold Coast’s saucy reputation. According to the editor of a Special Edition of *Architecture Australia*, these practices contributed to “a chaos of the worst type of commercialisation ... [and] ... a wild jumble of indecorum.”²⁴ Jen Welsh grew up on the Gold Coast during the 60s and 70s and she remembers the coast as always being “a sort of a party place - a little bit wild, but nothing compared to how it is these days, you know with what goes on over there now.”²⁵

17. “Community Profile, Gold Coast City: Population, households and dwellings,” <http://profile.id.com.au/gold-coast/population>.

18. “Fact Sheet: Gold Coast Preliminary Estimated Resident Population (ERP) as at 30/06/07,” http://www.goldcoast.qld.gov.au/t_standard2.aspx?PID=3168.

19. Alexander McRobbie, *The Fabulous Gold Coast* (Surfers Paradise: Pan News, 1984), 81.

20. Davidson and Spearritt, *Holiday Business*.

21. Matthew Condon, “The Casuarina forest,” *Griffith Review* 2 (2003): 37.

22. Alexander McRobbie, *The Surfers Paradise Story* (Surfers Paradise: Pan News, 1982), 81.

23. Caryl Bosman and Dianne Dredge, *Histories of placemaking in the Gold Coast City* (Brisbane: Urban Research Program, Griffith University, 2011).

24. *Architecture Australia* 48 (1959): 47–48

25. Interview 4.

26. Patrick Mullins, "Hedonism and real estate: resort tourism and Gold Coast development," in *Conflict and Development, Urban Studies Yearbook 2* ed. P. Williams (Sydney: Allen and Unwin, 1984), 31.

27. Geoff Burchill, *Passion, Power & Prejudice: A Remarkable Untold Account of a Magic City in the Making Gold Coast, Australia* (Gold Coast: Burchill Strategic Projects, 2005), 126.

28. Interview 10.

29. The Priority Infrastructure Plan (PIP) is legislation that obliges developers to contribute a stipulated percentage of the development cost to infrastructure provision in the city.

30. Burchill, *Passion, Power & Prejudice*, 61.

31. Interview 2.

32. Interview 6.

In addition to the image of Gold Coast as being immoral, the changes to the physical form of the city were rapid and significant. These processes of change had significant impacts on the residential landscapes (social, environmental, economic and built). During the 1970s and 80s there were no effective town planning schemes in place to deal sufficiently with the extent and pace of growth in the city. Mullins²⁶ argues that the Gold Coast's rapid development occurred through the entrepreneurial initiatives of the local petty bourgeoisie and small local capitalists. Consequently, new residential estates flourished together with a boom in the commercial, service and light industries. Development approval was gained, for the most part, by obtaining a "single and simple" development permit²⁷ regardless of infrastructure issues such as adequate water supply, sewage disposal or roads. The infrastructure that was put in place was not planned to accommodate the rapidly growing population. Arnie migrated to the Gold Coast to work in the construction industry during these boom times and reflecting upon recent (2010) building activity he explains the problems of infill development in relation to "the buildings they're putting in there, the area, it's still a 1960s area regarding streets and the sewer system, and the water, and that sort of stuff."²⁸ The lack of adequate infrastructure planning during the early property booms is a significant concern for the viability of the city as we know it today and this was a driving motive in Council establishing the Priority Infrastructure Plan in January 2007.²⁹

The form of residential accommodation that characterised the Gold Coast in the 1950s and 60s was "fibro holiday shacks and small timber houses, wooden two-storey flats in small blocks, corner pubs, and small family motels."³⁰ Houses were often built close to the beach and constructed out of a combination of asbestos, wood, glass louvers and galvanised iron. Describing the houses along the coastal strip in the 1960s Robyn Millwood, who holidayed on the Gold Coast every year for 17 years before moving to the city to live, says that the landscape consisted of "those little old fibro shacks, no big building, no big houses, just little beach shacks all the way along."³¹ And Amanda, who migrated to the city in the 1970s, reflects "you didn't look up and down the beach and see skyscrapers and homes. It was all very low-key with either sand-hills or the odd home along there."³² This low-key urban landscape underwent rapid transformation in the 1980–90s when the Gold Coast landscape was being developed as a tourist precinct and permanent places of residency and fibro



holiday shacks were not part of the development push. During the 1970s many of the timber and iron holiday or second homes and small family motels built along the coast were demolished and replaced by the emerging apartment accommodation, high rise architectural typology. By the 1980s the new modern “American” serviced apartments proved so popular that many other holiday accommodation types, including the rapidly dated motel accommodation, were left vacant for much of the year.³³ Consequently, these units, houses and apartments were rented or sold as permanent (as opposed to holiday) accommodation.³⁴ This change of use proved significant in years to come. By the 1990s land on the coastal strip had become scarce and property prices soared, these now humble holiday units, homes mostly to elderly pensioners, became the focus of the economic growth machine; fodder for entrepreneurs and developers.³⁵ Griffin writes:

The “old” [circa 1960s] Gold Coast—or at least its beach-side strip—was a polymorphous mixture of wealthy and not-so-wealthy tourists, holiday-making families and residents, both long-term and transient . . . But now the accelerated rate of gentrification along the “new-look” [circa 1990s] coastal strip is forcing up rents, replacing the old stock of “six-pack” home units with up-market “resort-style” residential apartments . . . The other peoples of the city, who until recently have survived tolerably well in the rented beach “shacks” and blond-brick units of the 1960s and 1970s, are now being advised to move to the Coast’s more affordable outer suburban fringes [see figure 4].³⁶

33. Burchill, *Passion, Power & Prejudice*, 61; McRobbie, *The Fabulous Gold Coast*.

34. Burchill, *Passion, Power & Prejudice*.

35. Bosman and Dredge, *Histories of Placemaking*.

36. Grahame Griffin, “Where Green Turns to Gold: Strip Cultivation and the Gold Coast Hinterland,” *Transformations* 2 (2002).



Figure 4. View of a typical Gold Coast residential landscape, Circa 1990s. Source: Photograph by the author, 2008.

As already mentioned, as the landscapes of the coastal strip changed so many local residents sold their properties to developers and purchased a house further inland in the growing suburban areas which had little in common with the original pull factors perceived by many migrants. Jen's family was one of those that made the move into the booming burbs from the coastal strip and she now resides on western fringes of the city. Reflecting on the suburban landscape that has sprung up in the last four decades, she says that:

there's nothing specifically, especially living here, that smacks of the Gold Coast. It's not like you're living in the middle of Surfers and you go "whoa, I'm on the Gold Coast, I'm on the beach." This could be anywhere. I could be living in anywhere, you know what I mean? No I don't have a big sense of anything particular about living on the Gold Coast, it's just anywhere.³⁷

37. Interview 4.

By the 1990s the floodplains of the Nerang River, Coomera River and Currumbin Creek were being reconfigured into canal estates. Farm land and the native bushland fringe was being cleared and reinvented to accommodate large scale residential developments, targeted at house owners. Jack Wells recalls: "I remember the places down there that were dairy farms that now the [housing] estates are named after the dairy farms."³⁸ These new residential developments were replicas of other 1990s Australian suburban developments (see figure 4) and were not designed to reflect the lifestyle and characteristics that had come to identify the Gold Coast as a desirable place to migrate to. Often the only tribute paid to the past was in the naming of the estate as Jack recalled. The design of the houses, the choice of building materials, the subdivision layout and the landscaping (or lack thereof) were all governed by the economic growth machine.³⁹ Talking about the impact these changes had Mike Threadbare, who moved to the Gold Coast as a teenager with his parents in the 1970s, reflected:

38. Interview 5.

39. Burchill, *Passion, Power & Prejudice*.

My first girlfriend lived in a fibro house ... were there's like this high-rise now and next door there was just sand dunes ... and it's just so different. ... and Surfers went through this change and there was like—I don't know—souvenir shops, T-shirt shops um just crappy sort of real estate; sorts of time share shops and it all sort of changed as they were marketing towards the tourists more and the locals sort of didn't feel a part of that.⁴⁰

40. Interview 7.



The tourism and entertainment industries fed into and were fuelled by the development industries. These industries were big money earners and coupled with inadequate planning regulations residential landscapes were marginalised and family friendly home-places were transformed into money making ventures. Arnie explains that “it’s business orientated instead of family orientated sort of stuff as it was when we came to the Gold Coast (1980s) ... where now it’s not. It’s chuck a night club in there, and then the night clubs bring the drug addicts and drug addicts bring the police and the bashings and ...”⁴¹ The loss of public recreational facilities in the wake of rapid urbanisation and growth concerned Amanda who reflected “I guess, you know, it’s a sign of the times, too. We’ve lost squash courts and tennis courts, those kinds of things. I think we’ve even lost some bowling alleys. Most of the things we need to keep kids occupied and busy and entertained, whatever.”⁴² The change from a small town, family friendly home-place to tourist destination was due in part to the property boom, neoliberal market forces⁴³ and modes of government and also to the continued appeal of the Gold Coast as a lifestyle destination offering cheap housing and good job opportunities (mainly in the construction and service industries).

41. Interview 10.

42. Interview 6.

43. Bosman and Dredge, *Histories of Placemaking*.

The transformation of the coastal strip was seen by some residents, who experienced the effects thereof, as inevitable and as inherently part of the Gold Coast’s lifestage.⁴⁴ Residents’ acceptance of change to their home-places however was not without affect especially to their sense/feeling of community.⁴⁵ Continued population growth during the 1990s and 2000s coupled with the radical changes to familiar places, many of which evoke fond memories, meant that some residents experienced a sense of loss. Mike explains his experience of the change from small town to tourist city:

44. Results of interview analysis.

45. Community is defined as friendly social interaction, supportive and neighbourly feelings; gemeinschaft associations.

it was just like you walked through Surfers and you just knew everyone like shop owners whatever and everything. Now there is that - Surfers is perceived as, as amongst my crew as a no go zone, its just too expensive, too dangerous, transports a hassle, all these things you know. So they don’t go there anymore – I don’t know whether you would call it the globalisation of Surfers ... it’s lost its original sort of surf village identity.⁴⁶

46. Interview 7.

Bruce Braddock agrees that the social dynamics of the city have change as the population has grown and the urban fabric has been transformed. He says: “So it’s become more anonymous. The second thing is the influx of people, transient people coming and going mean a fair amount of social dislocation and a lack of community, a lack of that ‘we’ feeling.”⁴⁷ As other residents have also noted there has been a decline in feelings of community and the degree of neighbourly interaction within the city over the last four decades. The current perception and experience of the Gold Coast by some residents is that the city is now segregated into the tourist precinct, and in particular Surfers Paradise, and a residential precinct, suburbia. Anne told me she thinks

47. Interview 8.

there’s two sides of the Gold Coast. I think you have that strip that the tourists see and then it’s almost like you walk through a curtain to where the locals live. I don’t think many locals spend much time in Surfers Paradise. I think this is a totally different Gold Coast.⁴⁸

48. Interview 3.

Amanda also believes the city is segregated, she says “the population obviously live here is probably, it almost feels like it’s half the population of the Gold Coast, the other half are tourists.”⁴⁹

49. Interview 6.

50. 2011 Census shows unemployment is 7.4% almost 2% higher than the national average.

51. “The Fourth Annual Demographia International Housing Affordability survey 2008 by Pavletich Properties Limited, has identified the Gold Coast as one of the least affordable cities in the world to buy property.” See “Housing affordability crumbles,” http://www.goldcoastbusinessnews.com.au/process/myviews/gcbn_article.html?articleId=902.

52. “Community Profile”.

53. Stephen Stockwell, “Crime capital of Australia: The Gold Coast on screen,” *Studies in Australasian Cinema* 5 (2011): 281.

54. Interview 8.

55. Interview 10.

Although job opportunities may not currently be as abundant as they once may have been⁵⁰ and housing affordability is now a major issue⁵¹ nonetheless the Gold Coast climate, amenity and lifestyle continues to attract migrants from interstate and abroad.⁵² As the histories of the Gold Coast illustrate, property booms and neoliberal markets have largely governed urban and population growth with very little long term planning. Consequently the economy of the city has focused on the tourist and related industries to the detriment of some residents: housing affordability, inadequate infrastructure, segregated population (tourist and resident), suburban sprawl, loss of community and increase in crime.⁵³ Bruce explains that “the real bulk of the economy is in fact is generated not by visitors but by people who live here servicing those visitors and working here for, and building up their own businesses and identities.”⁵⁴ Arnie described it as “Stupid tourism? If I can use that word, where they’re looking at short-term gain but not thinking about the long-term happiness of the people that have lived here all their lives.”⁵⁵

This segregation of the city results in uneven distribution of infrastructure, services and capital accumulation, which gives rise to socio-economic polarisation. This is significant because



as the population ages many of these residential areas will be ill equipped to address the needs of residents who age in place. The key message of this paper is that change and rapid urbanisation result in spatial differentiation that is characterised by disadvantaged residential landscapes, in terms of infrastructure (specifically housing and lifestyle), services (specifically relating to amenity) and capital accumulation (specifically relating to job opportunities). The acceptance of change and rapid urbanisation by some residents suggests that these factors have become entrenched into the psyche of the city. Amanda observes: “it’s obvious now that it’s growing so big since we’ve been here, the traffic is worse, everything is worse due to the extra population but you can’t stop the city growing. I think it’s kind of inevitable, really.”⁵⁶ The coupling of change and home-place would seem like an anomaly, for some residents however the lived experience of rapid urbanisation, change and population growth is familiar and so allows them to create a condition that is secure and stable. As Noel says: “Well, you can’t help but love it, the Gold Coast. Despite what people say and all the things that happen, I don’t think I’d rather live anywhere else.”⁵⁷ The narratives told here are significant because they remind us of the importance of pro-active planning practices that focus on residential places that engender and harness positive urban narratives not just over a single life-course but also for future generations.

56. Interview 6.

57. Interview 1.