

SUSTAINABLE MINING FUTURES AND THE LIVEABILITY OF MINING VILLAGES

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Abstract

The boom-bust cycles within resources industries in Australia make it difficult to plan for the sustainable development of workforce locations in regional communities. A variety of logistical, financial and lifestyle factors are contributing to an increased use of non-resident workforce for both short and long term construction, operational and maintenance, raising a number of issues about the sustainability of mining village accommodation and development that this encourages. Forward planning to meet the needs of resource industries and their workforce requires knowledge of accommodation alternatives and preferences, especially when seeking to attract skilled professionals to regional areas. This requires consideration of factors beyond the simple utility of temporary worker accommodation. Planning for a sustainable mining future involves consideration of the liveability of mining villages and the preferences of mining workers for appropriate accommodation. This paper will explore these issues and draw upon a recent survey of mining villages in the Bowen Basin region to shed light on three significant issues for non-resident workforces; location choices, accommodation choices, and the impact of these on regional economic and social development within the resources sector in regional Australia.

Biography

The Institute for Resource Industries and Sustainability (IRIS) was established in 2009 and is focused on integrating research interests for the major resource industries of mining, minerals processing, energy, agriculture and tourism. IRIS is an umbrella organisation within CQUniversity that combines research capacity across several existing research centres and employs specialist and multidisciplinary approaches. Lindsay joined IRIS following three years working for the Institute for Sustainable Regional Development and six years associated with the Centre for Social Science Research's Population Research Laboratory. Lindsay is an experienced research manager with extensive hands-on involvement in large scale population research design, sample management, data collection and analysis of over thirty major projects. Lindsay has an Honours degree in Sociology and postgraduate qualifications in Information Systems Design. Lindsay has held positions at Deakin University and the University of Melbourne before moving to CQUniversity in 1999. Current research interests include liveability indices, family services in the mining sector, housing policy and regional development, social infrastructure and mining futures, attraction and retention of skilled workers in regional areas.