
Seeking a new life(style): Seachangers in Gippsland.

Sue Whyte (Supervisors: Darryn Snell & Meredith Fletcher), HUMCASS.

Abstract

Seachange, the term and the ABC television series of the same name, describes an urban Australian dream: to move from the stresses and pressures of the metropolis to a rural idyll, particularly the coast, a shift in both a physical and lifestyle sense.

This study will focus on people who choose to move from a metropolitan to a rural region for non-economic or lifestyle reasons. It will be based on seachangers who move to Gippsland.

This study will not provide data to help predict future population trends, instead it seeks to understand what people mean when they say they move for lifestyle reasons. Some of the reasons seachangers move, as identified in the literature, include: a perception of a rural region as cleaner, quieter, safer, less crowded and more conducive to a sense of community; a desire to live in a natural and beautiful environment; a more relaxed and/or alternative lifestyle; and a better place to raise a family.

This list tells us much and also very little about why people move. There has been little research that delves deeper into the meanings and values attached to such statements, nor into the way that place, in this instance a rural place, has come to represent these values.

This study of seachangers will investigate what people perceive as the values that contribute to their quality of life and in what way moving to a rural location facilitates improvements to their quality of life.