



Creating a Typology of Retirement Migration Flows in Australia

Nikola Sander, Martin Bell and Dominic Brown

*Queensland Centre for Population Research, School of Geography, Planning and Architecture,
University of Queensland*

Population ageing in Australia has created a need to fully understand the structure of retirement migration. This need is made more pressing with the advance of the Baby Boomers towards retirement ages. Research has shown that retirement migration is focused on areas with pleasant climate and natural amenity (Plane and Rogerson, 1991), which is also evident in the Australian context (Drysdale, 1991; Murphy, 1981). However, Australian studies in this field have been largely descriptive and focussed on the destination zone at a single point in time. Thus, as yet, there is no clear understanding of the temporal and spatial changes in interregional retirement migration in Australia. This paper begins to address this gap in the literature. Our initial research focuses on shifts in national age-specific migration intensities by five-year birth cohort using census data for the period 1981 to 2001. We then progress to advance a typology of retirement migration regions by use of a hierarchical cluster analysis of age-specific in-, out- and net-migration flows for 69 temporally consistent regions. The results show that retirement migration patterns in Australia are transitory in time and space. We conclude by suggesting implications of potential future changes in retirement migration as the large birth cohorts of the baby boomers reach retirement.