

“It’s just somewhere I’ve fell in love with”: The role of attachment in the sustainability of communities.

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Rural and remote communities are facing increasing challenges to their community sustainability and development. These challenges revolve around issues with workforce development and the subsequent reliance on fly-in, fly-out or temporary workforces which challenge the economic and social stability of the community. Therefore strategies need to be explored by which economic and social stability can be achieved within these communities. Increasing the degree of permanency of residents within regional communities is one way in which this social and economic stability can be achieved. The current research explored how attachment to place and community can influence the enjoyment of living within a community and thus facilitate greater permanency of residency. Semi-structured interviews were held with 20 (3 male, 17 female) residents of a remote Queensland mining community. Common themes were identified within the interviews through an interpretative phenomenological analytical framework which provides an in depth examination of the lived experiences of participants. The results suggest that residents who reported that they felt connected to place and community tended to report intentions to stay longer within the community. The findings highlighted the importance of considering the social and human influences on developing communities that are attractive and liveable for a growing population. This presentation will provide recommendations on the processes by which attachment to place and community can be facilitated for new residents within regional communities. These suggestions will have implications for the retention of residents within mining communities but also for other regional Australia communities.