

BE WHAT YOU WANT TO BE

# Dealing with housing, social and community impacts of new mine development

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# The problem being addressed

- There are similar challenges for mining firms to deal with social issues compared with environmental ones
  - keep communities on side to retain social license to operate
  - demonstrate that they are creating net benefits
  - Avoid impacts on particular groups
- Key steps
  - identify the reasons for the problems,
  - evaluate if they are worth fixing,
  - Design and implement solutions

# Mining impacts on communities

- Range and type of impacts are well known
- Understanding and designing solutions is harder
- CQU researchers have been working with a number of these issues
  - Several studies across different parts of Bowen Basin
  - Various types of studies: housing, population location, business surveys, impact assessment

# Some propositions

- Changing demographics, social changes, increased income mean fewer people want to live in mining towns
  - More services in larger communities
  - Jobs for partners, children
  - Education
- Core of people will still want to live locally
  - May depend on life cycle
  - young families likely to live locally

## Some propositions 2

- Non-resident workforce for operations will be a continuing feature
- Many of impacts of mining are now on regional centres where most employees are based
- Location choices may be path dependent
  - Initial location choice / housing availability may determine the which employees come and their long term location

## Some propositions 3

- Housing should generally be provided through private markets
  - Better choice, encourage home ownership
  - Challenge to make process work better
- Dutch Disease problems will make it very hard to diversify local economy
  - High housing and labour costs make it difficult for other business to compete
  - Regional hubs have the best chance of growing a business base in longer term

# Issues with workcamps

- Location and planning approvals not very consistent
- Dual track housing
  - 3 or 4 bedroom houses and single units
- Challenges of providing services or getting economic and social benefits at local level
- Workcamps set up for construction (short term) tend to roll over into long term use (operational stages)

# Some suggestions

- Integrate workcamps into communities where possible
  - Perhaps construction workcamps and distant operational workcamps remain separate to towns
  - Put long term operational workcamps in towns where possible
  - Develop greater mixture of workforce characteristics and backgrounds
- Vary the accommodation options to give continuum between housing types
  - encourage graduation from one type to another

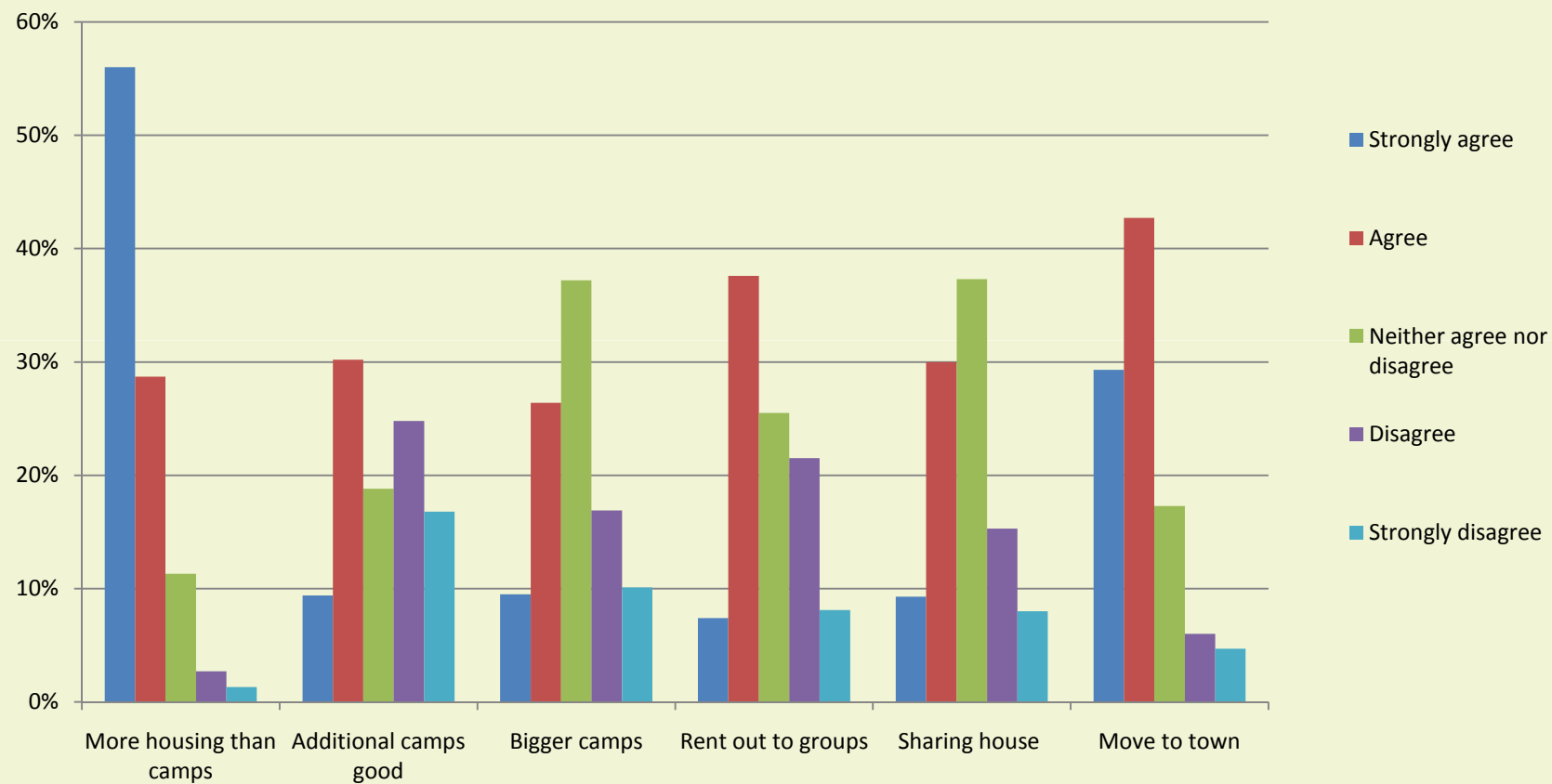
# Housing challenges

- Timing problems
  - Many projects have very short lead times
  - With planning and approvals process, housing often takes at least 3 years to provide
- Cost pressures
  - Housing markets rise very quickly
  - Transmit economic pressures through to other groups
    - High housing costs affect everyone
    - Often need low cost housing to address labour issues

# Addressing housing issues

- Stimulate private market development where possible
- Potential roles for local government and mining companies to help support development and make private markets work
  - Speed up approval processes
  - Provide longer term certainty about demand
  - Support developments

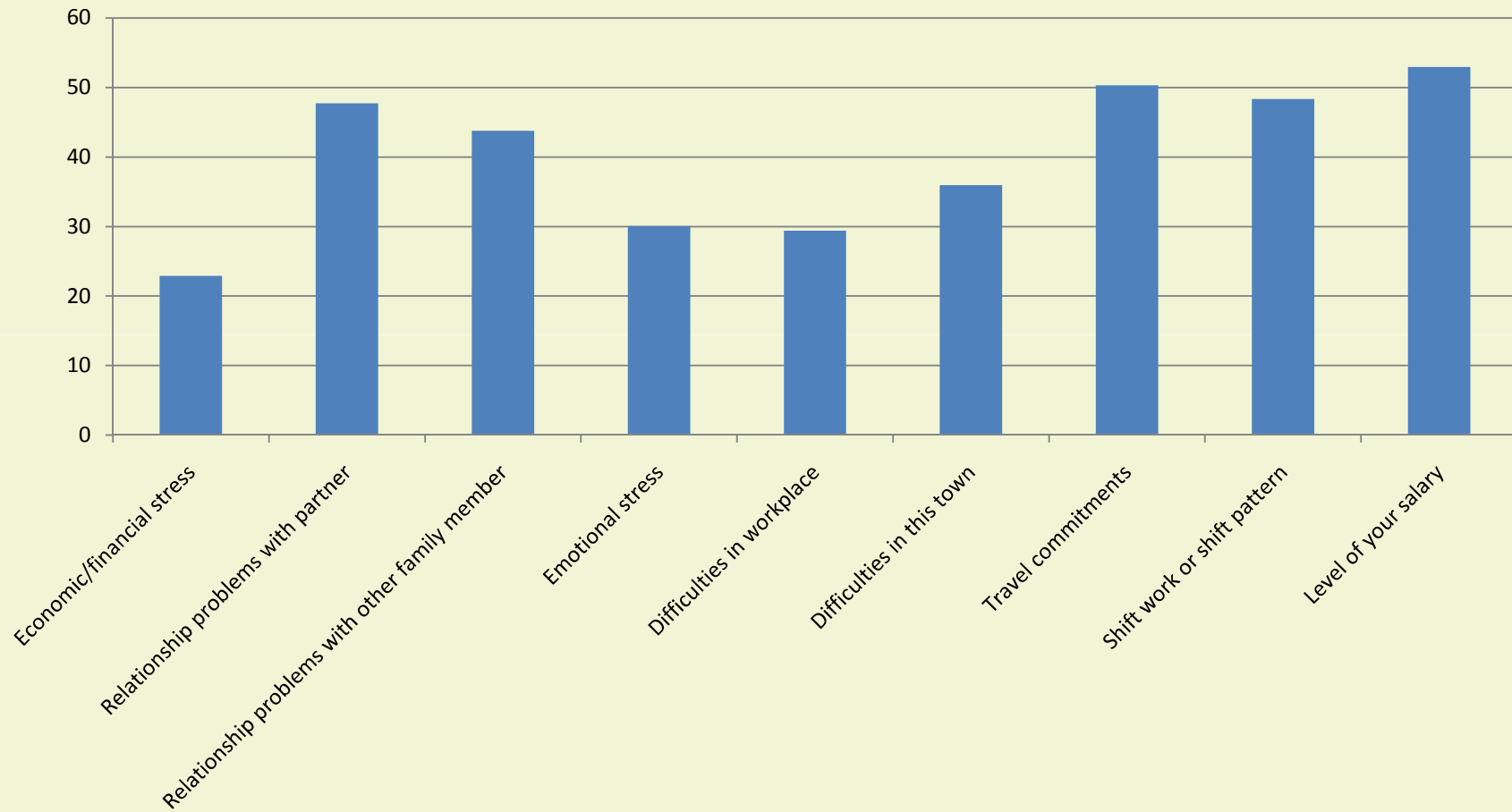
# Attitude of Moranbah residents to housing issues



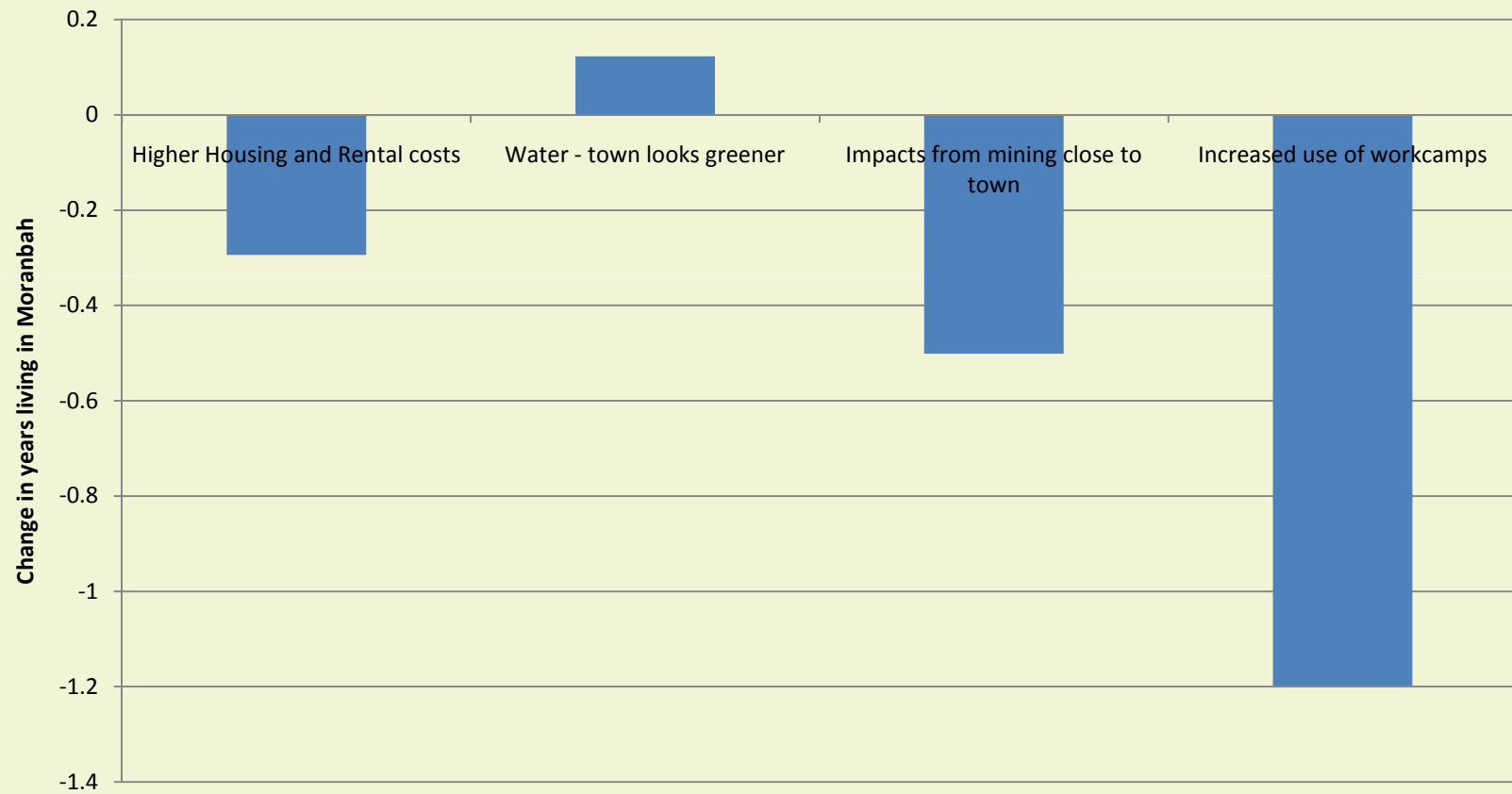
## Other impacts on communities

- Mining has some development pressures
  - Proximity of mines to towns
  - Non-resident population and workcamps
  - Often limited extent of shopping and services
- CQU has tested the importance of some of these factors in several studies
- Surveyed people and asked them about different choices for town development

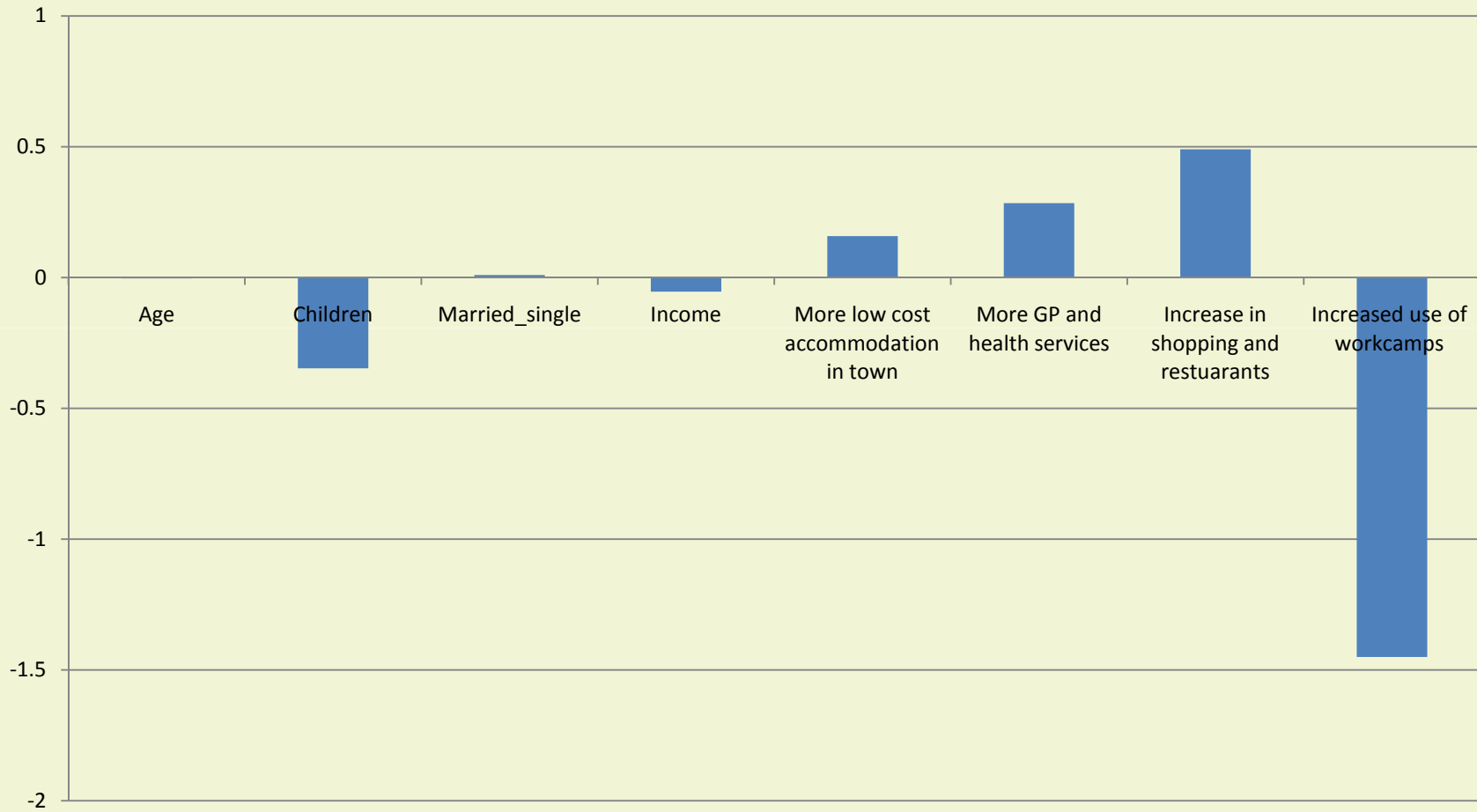
# Factors stressing Moranbah residents



# Factors affecting average length of residence in Moranbah



# Factors influencing average length of residence in Moranbah 2



# The wider policy context in Queensland

- Much greater awareness of social impacts
  - Particularly in communities and local government
- Queensland government responses
  - Framework about managing impacts on communities
  - Special funds for social infrastructure in mining towns
  - EIS now focuses more specifically on housing, cumulative impacts
  - New proponents have to have Social Impact Management Plans (SIMPs)

# The coordination challenge

- EIS and identification of cumulative impacts – how do they get coordinated across multiple projects?
- Post EIS – difficulties of coordinating with Government to address social impacts
- Post EIS – not clear how to coordinate across firms and government for multiple projects
- SIMPs – how will they coordinate them?

## One way to manage SIMPs

- Establish a single community reference panel (CRP)
  - Perhaps local government as chair
- May be a single coordinated effort to assess and report on social issues each year
- Each mine reports SIMP annually to CRP
- CRP responds to each SIMP to tailor adjustments and help coordinate activities

# Other options to deal with social impacts

- Minor spending programs for communities  
– useful but no real solution
- WA solution to allocate royalties to regional areas
- More dedicated spending on real issues
- Forced funding into social infrastructure funds (Gladstone Pacific)
- Social services levy on non-resident workers

# Concluding points

- Interesting times with social impacts
  - Challenges of managing and avoiding impacts
  - Challenges of dealing with community expectations
  - New requirements in EIS for housing modelling and cumulative impacts hard to do
  - Very unclear how to make SIMPs work
  - Very unclear how multiple SIMPs in a regional area will coordinate together

# Research opportunities – Monitoring

- Monitoring community and social impacts
  - Regular monitoring programs to assess activities and impacts on communities
  - Regular monitoring programs to assess community attitudes and needs (e.g. an annual community social survey)
  - Specific monitoring programs in areas such as housing and service needs
  - Monitoring of social impact management plans and mitigation strategies in communities, particularly where multiple industries might be involved

# Research opportunities - Management

- **Managing community and social impacts**
  - Coordination of impact assessment and social management programs
  - Review of different governance, planning and engagement mechanisms that help communities to engage proactively with new development pressures
  - Modelling to assess likely impacts of different intervention strategies and service provision in regional areas
  - Case study projects to identify the benefits of different industry and government programs to address community pressures