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The Meaning of Home:
A comparison of the meaning of home as identified by samples of Victorians with, and without, an intellectual disability.

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Submitted in fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

Deakin University
(June, 2000)
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*The meaning of home: A comparison of the meaning of home as identified by samples of Victorians with, and without, an intellectual disability*

submitted for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

is the result of my own research, except where otherwise acknowledged, and that this thesis in whole or in part has not been submitted for an award, including a higher degree, to any other university or institution.

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ABSTRACT

This phenomenological study of the meaning of home from the perspectives of people with and without an intellectual disability sought to identify, (a) any common 'essence' of meaning held by and, (b) the nature of any differences of perception between, the groups. Purposive samples of 18 people with an intellectual disability and 21 non-disabled people were surveyed using a semi-structured interview to ascertain their experiences of home and 'non-homes'. Inductive analysis of the data revealed a shared understanding of the meaning of home at a fundamental level. This shared meaning of home was found to comprise: the ability to exert control over an area; having a personalised space; feeling content with the living situation; a sense of familiarity with the setting; a set of behaviours and routines usually only enacted when at home; common names and uses for rooms; socialising at home with others; the importance of a positive social atmosphere in the home; and, recognition of places as non-homes because they lacked one or more of these attributes. Further analysis revealed the essence of home is its experience as the place where stress is most reduced or minimised for the individual. The study demonstrates that the concept of stress is superordinate to previously identified concepts considered fundamental to home such as privacy, control and non-homes. Major differences between the two samples were largely differences of degree with people who have an intellectual disability reporting the same fundamental attributes of home as people who do not have an intellectual disability, but in a less elaborated form. Principal among these differences of degree was the notion of control over the home and its derivative elements which encompassed the whole dwelling including its setting for people without an intellectual disability but was very restricted for people with an intellectual disability being largely confined to the person's bedroom. Socialising in or from the home was also very limited for people with an intellectual disability in comparison with that experienced by non-disabled informants with the former group conveying an impression of leading significantly socially isolated lives at home. The major implications of this study are related to the meaning of home per se, to residential service provision to people with an intellectual disability, and to future research.
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This work would not have been possible without the support and encouragement of my wife, Sandra. It could not have been undertaken without the expertise and advice of my Supervisors, Dr Joe Graffam and Dr Jo Jenkinson, and my long-time friend and mentor, Dr Michael Steer. It also owes its completion to the support and encouragement given by my colleagues at Deakin University and particularly that of Professor Lawrence St Leger, Professor Barrie O’Connor, and Emeritus Professor Simon Haskell. I gratefully acknowledge my indebtedness to the people who informed my study by agreeing to be interviewed and to those anonymous agency staff members who assisted in putting people with an intellectual disability in contact with me. I pay tribute to the scholarship and dedication of those whose work I have drawn upon in forming and writing this thesis and in particular I humbly recognise the insights provided by the work and writing of the late Professor Jack Tizard which were the primary inspiration for this research.
CONTENTS

List of Tables (ix)
List of Figures (x)
List of Appendices (xi)

I  INTRODUCTION  1

Chapter 1.  The issue: Background  1

1.1.  Us and them - The historical 'otherness' of people who have an intellectual disability.  2

1.2.  The ancient art of spin-doctoring in human services - The deceptive use of language.  3

1.3.  Up the spiral staircase - The evolution of residential services for people with an intellectual disability.  3

1.4.  Home? - The meaning of home in relation to residential services for people with an intellectual disability.  4

Chapter 2.  The issue: Its exploration  6

2.1.  The aim and focus of the study.  6

2.2.  Introducing the research question.  6

2.3.  The research approach.  7

2.4.  Organisation of the study.  7

II  HOME - A SEARCH FOR MEANING  9

Chapter 3.  Other people's homes - The concept of home to people without an intellectual disability.  9

3.1.  Overview.  9

3.2.  The concept of home as a physical construct.  9

3.3.  The concept of home as a social construct.  16

3.4.  The concept of home as a psychological construct.  17

3.5.  The concept of home as a metaphysical construct.  19
3.6.  Home as a unified concept 20
3.7.  Summary 28

Chapter 4.  "Emohruo" - The nature of residential service settings for people with an intellectual disability. 29

4.1.  Approaches to identifying the physical environment in residential service settings for people with an intellectual disability. 31

4.2.  Approaches to identifying the social and psychological environment in residential service settings for people with an intellectual disability. 33

4.3.  Approaches to identifying the concept of home in relation to residential service settings for people with an intellectual disability. 36

4.4.  Summary. 39

III  METHODOLOGY 40

Chapter 5.  The research question(s) 40

Chapter 6.  Rationale for the approach adopted in this study 43

6.1.  Rationale for a qualitative approach 43

Chapter 7.  The samples. 47

Chapter 8.  The interview instrument 54

8.1.  Structure 54

8.2.  Content 55

Chapter 9.  Procedures 58

9.1.  Recruitment of informants 58

9.1.1.  Informants without an intellectual disability 58

9.1.1.1.  Sample construction 58

9.1.1.2.  Recruitment 59
9.1.2. The sample without an intellectual disability 62
  9.1.2.1. Sample construction 62
  9.1.2.2. Recruitment 65

9.2. Interview procedures and issues 66
  9.2.1. The non-intellectually disabled sample 66
  9.2.2. The sample with an intellectual disability 68
  9.2.3. Issues 70
    9.2.3.1. The non-intellectually disabled sample 70
    9.2.3.2. The sample with an intellectual disability 71

Chapter 10. Data analysis 79

IV HOME - THE FINDINGS AND THEIR ANALYSIS. 85

Chapter 11. Home - The perspectives of people without an intellectual disability 85
  11.1. The results from the analysis of the interviews 85
    11.1.1. Dissecting a frog - Findings from the interviews with people who do not have an intellectual disability 85
    11.1.2. The thematic framework 85
  11.2. Summary: The essence of home? 120

Chapter 12. Home - The perspectives of people with an intellectual disability. 122
  12.1. The results from the analysis of the interviews. 122
  12.2. Summary: The essence of home for people with an intellectual disability? 157

Chapter 13. Discussion: The meaning of home from the perspectives of
people with and without an intellectual disability.

13.1. What are the attributes which together make a home?


13.1.2. Differences.

13.2. Conclusions

13.3. Comparisons with the literature

13.3.1. Comparison between this study’s findings and previously identified perspectives concerning home per se.

13.3.2. Comparison between this study’s findings and previous work concerning the meaning of home for people who have an intellectual disability.

13.4. The emergent theoretical perspective

13.4.1. Validating the theory

V SUMMING UP.

Chapter 14. Limitations, recommendations and conclusions

14.1. Limitations

14.1.1. General considerations

14.1.2. The composition of the samples

14.1.3. Process issues

14.2. Recommendations

14.2.1. Concerning future research procedures

14.2.2. Recommendations for future research

14.3. Conclusion

14.3.1. Implications of this research
14.3.2. Summary

REFERENCES

APPENDICES
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>List of Tables</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>Features of the home according to their frequency</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>Analysis of characteristics of non-intellectually disabled informants required</td>
<td>49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>Profile of non-intellectually disabled informants</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.</td>
<td>Profile of potentially available, but unobtainable, non-intellectually disabled informants</td>
<td>51</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.</td>
<td>Profile of informants who had an intellectual disability</td>
<td>52</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.</td>
<td>Structured interview guide - Conceptualisation and questions</td>
<td>56</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.</td>
<td>Conceptual framework derived from analysis of interviews</td>
<td>87</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8.</td>
<td>Room or distinct area names identified by non-disabled informants</td>
<td>99</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9.</td>
<td>Names of rooms identified by informants with an intellectual disability</td>
<td>137</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10.</td>
<td>Home-related tasks identified by informants with an intellectual disability: (i) living with their parent(s); (ii) those living away from the family home, but not in a residential service; and, (iii) those living in residential services</td>
<td>146</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## List of Figures

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Figure</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Theme: The Self-private components - Non-disabled informants who raised this theme or its sub-themes, or both.</td>
<td>88</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Theme: The Self-public components - Non-disabled informants who raised this theme or its sub-themes, or both.</td>
<td>95</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Theme: The Environment - Physical - Non-disabled informants who raised this theme or its sub-themes, or both.</td>
<td>98</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Theme: The Environment - Social - Non-disabled informants who raised this theme or its sub-themes, or both.</td>
<td>101</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Theme: The Metaphysical dimension - Non-disabled informants who raised this theme or its sub-themes, or both.</td>
<td>107</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Theme: Non-home attributes and alternate meanings of the word “home” - Non-disabled informants who raised this theme or its sub-themes, or both.</td>
<td>113</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Theme: The Self-private components - Informants with an intellectual disability who raised this theme or its sub-themes, or both.</td>
<td>123</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Theme: The Self-public components - Informants with an intellectual disability who raised this theme or its sub-themes, or both.</td>
<td>134</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Theme: The Environment - Physical - Informants with an intellectual disability who raised this theme or its sub-themes, or both.</td>
<td>136</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Theme: The Environment - Social - Informants with an intellectual disability who raised this theme or its sub-themes, or both.</td>
<td>140</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>Theme: The Metaphysical dimension - Informants with an intellectual disability who raised this theme or its sub-themes, or both.</td>
<td>149</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>Theme: Non-home attributes and alternate meanings of the word “home” - Informants with an intellectual disability who raised this theme or its sub-themes, or both.</td>
<td>154</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## Appendices

| A | Initial recruitment package for non-disabled informants distributed to specific census collector's districts. | 205 |
|   | 1. Demographic details questionnaire | 205 |
|   | 2. Covering letter and plain language statement | 206 |
|   | 3. Consent form | 208 |
| B | Recruitment package for people who have an intellectual disability | 209 |
|   | 1. Demographic details questionnaire | 209 |
|   | 2. Covering letter and plain language statement | 211 |
|   | 3. Consent form | 213 |
| C | Set of common questions followed in interviewing informants | 215 |
Chapter 1. The Issue: Background

He fed Rex, and while the dog ate, he stumped at the kitchen table, his head against his arm. Through the window he could see the dog kennel and the Summer Damask's house. His wife had planted between the pad for the garbage can and the wall of the neighbor's house. A few leaves were left on them, and the unpicked blossoms had turned to hips. The plants were tall now, profuse.

Ben turned up the heat in the house and made his way to the bedroom, where he had left the copy of Scientific American open on the side table. He propped his boots, settled back on the bed. He curled up as comfortably as he could. His dusty hunting clothes smelled of sage. There were bloodstains on the front of his coat and feathers in his pockets.

Rex limped in, looked at him, and lay down on the throw rug beside the bed. Ben rested a hand on his flank. "I guess you can stay," he whispered.

After a while he took the telephone receiver and punched in his daughter's number. "Hello," she said. "Renee Givens-Kane."

"It's me," said Ben. "I'm home."

(Guterson, 1999, pp. 276-277)

Nearly all of us experience at least some time in our lives when we live in what we regard as our 'home'. What the essential elements of this home are however, is another matter; individual, complex, and perhaps dimly recognised by most people. For many it is most strongly felt by its absence, by the yearning to get home at the end of an extended holiday overseas, feeling 'homesick', or by finding oneself in a place which lacks that quintessential essence of 'home'.

This study seeks to determine what it is that transforms a house, a place, into a home. It also seeks to reveal what is missing when people say, "Oh, I never felt that place was a home to me" or any of the many variations on this theme.

More than these two aims, this study also seeks to determine whether there is any difference in the ways in which people with an intellectual disability feel about, use or regard where they live: whether their experience of home is the same as, or different from, the experience of others who are not intellectually disabled. Despite many volumes of research about intellectual disability and aspects of the lives of people who have that condition it was found that the
people themselves are very rarely given the opportunity to comment directly on whatever issue is under examination. This study provided an opportunity for this to happen.

Before launching into the study proper it is necessary briefly to set the scene and to answer several questions such as: "what gave rise to this study?"; "why look at people with an intellectual disability as a distinct group?"; "why should home be any different for people with an intellectual disability than it is for anyone else?"; "why is this topic important?"; and, "what are the potential benefits of this study?"

1.1. **Us and Them - The Historical 'Otherness' of People Who Have an Intellectual Disability**

People who have an intellectual disability have always been considered a separate group in most societies, and this remains so, even today. Down through history they have been cast out of society in many ways. The continuum of this separation ranges from killing, through exile, confinement and segregation, to being socially ignored (Cocks, Fox, Brogan, & Lee, 1996; Johnson, 1994, 1998; Scheerenberger, 1983, 1987; Sloan, & Stevens, 1976, Trent, 1994; Wolfensberger, 1975). People with an intellectual disability have also been portrayed to and by society as different from the rest of humanity. In part this has been to justify their separation from society and the less than human treatment they have often received as a result.

Having been imaged as, and imagined to be, different, less than human, or of lower social status than the rest of society it is therefore small wonder that attempts to provide suitable living arrangements for people with an intellectual disability have taken unusual forms. Rarely, if ever, do we find in history examples of residential service accommodation for groups of people with an intellectual disability that mirror closely those of the general populace. They tend to be regarded as being more different from the rest of the population than they are similar, and therefore the accommodation provided proceeds from this assumption.

This study proceeds from an acceptance of the fundamental proposition that people with an intellectual disability have more in common with the rest of human kind than they have different, and this commonality includes the moral right to a 'home'. (It is not intended here to argue in philosophical terms for the moral right to a home, simply to assert that, given its centrality in the lives of most people and its shared meanings and common usage in everyday language, home is a fundamental element in people's lives and therefore its existence and enjoyment has, or ought to have, the status of an important moral right.)

However, history does not seem to bear witness to this assumption. Not
only have people with an intellectual disability been cast as different from the rest of the population, but their needs and the ways of meeting those needs have been similarly characterised as different, unique, ‘special’.

1.2. The Ancient Art of Spin-doctoring in Human Services - The Deceptive Use of Language

Language is a particularly powerful tool in defining reality (Berger & Luckmann, 1966) and in the oppression of minorities by the majority (Cocks, 1996; Freire, 1972). As a group which, by the very nature of its disabling condition, lacks cognitive abilities and expressive and receptive language skills, people with an intellectual disability have been largely at the mercy of others when it comes to defining their needs and deciding the best ways to meet those needs.

It is little wonder then, that historically language has been used to establish, maintain or reinforce perceptions and treatment of people with an intellectual disability as: eternal children or children again, objects of pity, charity or ridicule; as social menaces, as animals, objects, vegetables or sub-human; as chronically sick, dying, or already dead (Wolfensberger, 1972, 1975). These labels have impacted considerably on the treatment received by people with an intellectual disability particularly in the area of residential accommodation. For example, those (adults) described as children (i.e., ‘boys’ or ‘girls’, ‘Billy’ rather than Mr Smith, etc., ) are denied adult roles (e.g., tenant, householder) and an adult level of privacy in the home. In addition, in such cases the decor of their residences frequently resembles that of children rather than adults. Similarly, those described as sick when they are not (e.g., ‘patients’) are housed in ‘wards’ in ‘hospitals’ where privacy is denied and segregation by gender is the rule.

This deceptive use of language has legitimised many violations by the majority in society of powerful age-related and cultural norms concerning one’s residential setting in regard to people with an intellectual disability. This, in turn, has served to make residential service provision an elaboration of the ‘otherness’ of people with an intellectual disability as perceived by the rest of the population. Furthermore, despite the evolution of service systems, little of fundamental importance has changed in this regard over the last one hundred years or more.

1.3. Up the Spiral Staircase - The Evolution of Residential Services for People With an Intellectual Disability

In examining the evolution of any phenomenon there are two fundamental perspectives which one can take. A Judeo-Christian perspective visualises time as a straight line with points marked on it from the past (towards the left end of the line), through the present (at the centre of the line), to the future (at the right end of the line). This linear view accords well with a view of history as progress,
coming from an inferior past and leading towards a superior future. There is a
tendency to portray residential services for people with an intellectual disability
in such a fashion: we have come from large, segregated and isolated institutions,
through hostels and smaller settings to houses in the community, and we are
headed towards more individualised models of residential service provision in the
future.

The Chinese perspective on time sees it as circular, rather than linear. The
Chinese years run in a circle so that the Year of the Rat, Cat, Monkey or any of
the others, comes around on a regular cycle, in the same sequence. This circular
view of time portrays history more as a cycle of events; war followed by peace,
followed by war again, or a cycle of prosperity-poverty-prosperity similar to the
trends in the stock market and other commodity markets. When applied to
residential service provision several cyclical themes emerge such as exclusion-
inclusion-exclusion; financial adequacy-stringency-adequacy; larger congregations-
smaller congregations-larger congregations. Sometimes one or more of these cycles
may overlap so that (for example) we are currently seeing the construction of
cluster housing for people with an intellectual disability which can be interpreted
as a move away from smaller congregations of people somewhat excluded from
society in community residential units to a larger congregation (not as large as
those in the former institutions but still larger than normal for the non-disabled
population) partially inclusive and driven in part by cost minimisation
considerations (i.e., cheaper to staff than independent houses).

The evolution of residential services for people with an intellectual
disability may therefore be characterised as akin to a spiral staircase rather than a
straight stairway in that things keep returning to a similar (but not the same)
point in many ways even though one has advanced from where one started.
Therefore, although many people are living in residential service houses in the
community there is a very real concern that the defining characteristics of the
previous large congregate settings described by Goffman (1961) may re-emerge or
are re-emerging in these new settings (Annison, 1992). The identification of the
essential attributes of a home is one way of seeking to guard against this
happening or continuing to happen.

1.4  Home?- The Meaning of Home in Relation to Residential Services for
People With an Intellectual Disability

Given the historical perception of people with an intellectual disability as
different from the general population and the deceptive use of language to subtly
reinforce and justify this perception together with the consequences that flow
from its acceptance, it is hardly surprising that the evolution of residential
services has generated a plethora of misleading concepts and forms of residential
service. For example, in Victoria, Australia, “Children’s Cottages Kew” was, in
fact, an institution which at one time accommodated some 900 adults as well as
children (Mental Health Authority, 1976); “Sandhurst Boys’ Home” was a
collection of Nissen huts around a common dining hall and recreation facility which accommodated about 100 adolescent males and young men (Mental Health Authority, 1960). Terms such as ‘theJanefield family’, ‘home’ and ‘homelike’ have been used to describe phenomena which were anything but families, homes or homelike (Jones, 1997).

It was while attempting to discern the evolution and future of the community residential unit model of service provision in Victoria (Annison, 1992) that I became more fully aware of the confusion and obfuscation surrounding the concept of home as applied to residential services for people with an intellectual disability. In my exploration I came across a definition of a residential service as home by Tizard written in 1964 which described the essential features of such a home as providing: affection and interest in its constituents; a realistic but positive view of the individual’s disability and its consequences; a sense of being wanted and a valued member of the household; a sense of stability and personal security until the individual decides to leave; the opportunity for each member to contribute to the group according to his or her skills and interests; and a sharing of the common life of a small group of people. It was this early attempt by Tizard (1964) to define the essential features of a home for (unrelated) people with an intellectual disability which set me on a path to clarify and define the meaning of home from a contemporary Australian (albeit Victorian) perspective and apply this insight to residential services for, and the situation of, people who have an intellectual disability.

The driving notion behind this research was to strip away the cant and the deception and try to reveal as clearly as possible what it really is that makes a place a home and then to compare this with the experiences of people who have an intellectual disability. This is the journey on which we now depart.
Chapter 2. The Issue: Its Exploration

This chapter orientates the reader by giving an overview of the aim and focus of the study and what it was that led to the formulation of the research questions. The chapter continues by describing briefly the research approach adopted and concludes by outlining the organisation of the more detailed description of the study which follows.

2.1. The Aim and Focus of the Study

The aim of this study is to explore the concept of home as experienced and understood by people with and without an intellectual disability. It seeks to determine what perceptions and understandings of home are commonly shared between people with an intellectual disability and compare these with the perceptions and understandings shared by people who do not have an intellectual disability. It will endeavour to identify those perceptions, understandings and experiences concerning the notion of home these two groups of people have in common and, if they differ on any aspect, to reveal where.

The focus of the study is therefore on the concept of home: - how this concept is defined and lived; and the nature of this experience for people both with, and without, an intellectual disability.

2.2. Introducing the Research Question

In order to examine the meaning of home in a systematic and deliberate fashion it is necessary first, to formulate a succinct research question. Such a question should guide the researcher and inform him what is relevant for consideration and what is not. The nature of this study is qualitative, more specifically, it is phenomenological in its approach. As such, this study seeks to develop grounded theory (Glasser & Strauss, 1967; Strauss & Corbin, 1990) based on an inductive analysis of qualitative data. It is, therefore, not so much theory driven, as it is a phenomenology in search of a theory. In this way, it seeks to distil the understandings of its informants regarding the nature of home. These understandings are the result of the informant’s experience, reflections and actions. As a result they are somewhat fragile like any mementos one holds. Sir Thomas Beecham, the famous orchestra conductor and impresario once advised a friend appalled at the quality of his whistling, “I know it may not sound much to you but inside my head I’ve a symphony orchestra playing which I’m accompanying.” So it is with any attempt to share another’s experiences. The problems of translating the lived experience into words limit or distort it into something other than what is or was actually felt, smelt, seen, sensed, or remembered in its entirety. Consequently, when exploring people’s understanding of the concept of home, whatever is revealed to the researcher is but an inferior fragment of the totality of meaning created by the individual for him or her self. Importantly though, it is the individual’s own perspective which is paramount,
not that of the researcher, and therefore whatever the informant considers relevant on the subject must be, by that fact, considered relevant by the researcher also. Thus the research question explored in this study must remain simple and broad in order not to constrict any answer to it, therefore the fundamental questions this research seeks to answer are: "What is a home" and its logical extension, "Are residential service settings for people with an intellectual disability, homes?"

2.3. The Research Approach

As stated previously, the intention of this research is to discover what people consider to be the nature and meaning of home as a result of their lived experience of it. Such lived experience is, by its very nature rich in diversity, unique in its encounter, idiosyncratic in its revelation, and individual in its telling. To capture and hold such an ephemeral construct requires a suitable technique. The random sampling of air space achieved with a shot gun discharge may be well suited to capturing large birds, but is of little value if one wishes to capture butterflies in which case a gossamer net is probably the instrument of choice. So it is also with the experience of home. A rigid, forced choice questionnaire is unable to capture the delicate variations of meaning unique to each person on the subject of home. For this task an individualised interview based upon a framework of open-ended questions divining the interviewee's experience of home was used.

Home, being an experiential phenomenon, was therefore explored from a phenomenological perspective, grounded in the experience of the researcher and his informants and readers of that same phenomenon and in the existing literature on the topic. The analysis of the interviews was inductive in that it proceeded from consideration of each unique interview towards an identification and distillation of common themes across interviews.

2.4. Organisation of the Study

In this study the concept of home is explored from the perspective of the available literature relating first to the general population and then to the situation of people with an intellectual disability.

Next, the overall design and implementation of the study are explained. This section includes detailed coverage of the origin and definition of the research questions and the rationale for the choice of a qualitative approach. A justification for the composition of the two sample populations (one, people with an intellectual disability and the other, non-intellectually disabled people) is then given together with a description of their recruitment and interviewing. The remainder of this section is taken up with a detailed description of the structure, content and conduct of the interviews with both groups of informants and a discussion of the issues identified as arising from those interviews.

In the next section the findings are presented and analysed. This is done
by first considering each group of informant interviews in isolation and then attempting to discern the commonalities and differences between the two groups' perspectives on home. It is in this section that discussion occurs around the essence of home and a tentative theory of home emerges.

In the final section, after acknowledging the limitations of this study, recommendations for future research on the meaning of home and its various constituent aspects, theory as well as applications, are made. The section proceeds to consideration of the implications of this study for providers of residential services for people with intellectual disabilities or other types of disability before concluding with a summary of the study.
II HOME - A SEARCH FOR MEANING

Chapter 3. Other People's Homes - The Concept of Home to People Without an Intellectual Disability

In this chapter the meaning of home from the perspective of people without an intellectual disability is explored by means of a short, general overview of the topic followed by a more detailed exposition and discussion of the literature concerning home as a physical, social, psychological and metaphysical construct and as a synthesised whole, respectively.

3.1. Overview

The concept of home can be considered from a variety of perspectives. "Not only is it a place, but it has psychological resonance and social meaning" (Sagi, 1985, p. 287), and it also has time and spiritual dimensions. In this section the concept of home and the meanings ascribed to it will be examined from the perspectives of home as; (a) a physical construct, (b) a social construct, (c) a psychological construct, and (d) a metaphysical construct. Both Australian and overseas perspectives will be reviewed. This examination will conclude with an analysis of overseas and Australian studies on the concept of home as home. The literature pertaining to residential services for people with an intellectual disability will be reviewed in the following chapter.

3.2. The Concept of Home as a Physical Construct

The characteristics of a person's home may be considered from a purely physical perspective; what does a home look like, how many rooms, what type of rooms and what amenities within those rooms? As Dovey (1985, p. 36) has noted, "To be at home is to know where you are, it means to inhabit a secure center and be oriented in space." The physical aspects of a home may also be extended to include consideration of the context within which the home is placed (Simc, 1993); for example, what grounds form part of the home and what contribution do they make to the use of the home, what is the surrounding neighbourhood like, what facilities are nearby (Suchars, 1992)?

Housing design has been determined by a complex mix of cultural, historic (Mandoki, 1998), climatic, regional resource (e.g., the availability of suitable building materials and skilled artisans), economic and regulatory considerations (Lawrence, 1985, 1991). For example, in terms of the physical layout and composition of a dwelling, the provision of a laundry separate from the kitchen is required by building regulations in all Australian states. In England however, the kitchen and laundry functions may be combined in the same room and therefore separate laundries are less typical (Lawrence, 1987). Similarly, Bernard (1991) reported that 9.5% of respondents to a national survey of homes in France did not own a bathroom.
Gender also plays a role in the use of space within the home (Glyptis & Chambers, 1982). Ahrentzen, Levine and Michelson (1989) found that women spend more time in the kitchen than men and, while both sexes spend the same amount of time in the bathroom and bedroom, women share more of this time with another person than do men. However, these use-forms may be more related to the individual's sense of identity than gender per se (Kroska, 1997).

The physical nature of the home can vary according to the age, marital/relationship status, and stage of life, of the occupants (Giuliani & Barbey, 1993). The socio-economic status and ethnic or cultural background of the occupants can also have a profound impact on the nature of the physical environment of the home. A newly-married working class couple with an infant and one wage earner will probably have less in the way of furnishings and fittings than a middle class couple with no children who are approaching retirement. Both may however, regard their homes as a financial investment (Davison, Kendig, Stephens & Merrill, 1993).

The style of furnishings will usually reflect something of the ethnic or cultural background of the householders (Joy, Hui, Kim & Larocche, 1995). For example, Rococo style furniture tends to be bought by people with an Italian or Adriatic cultural background rather than by those with an English cultural background.

Not only does the physical nature of the home vary according to the occupant's socio-economic status but also the names used to identify certain rooms and the use of those rooms (Giuliani, 1987; Giuliani, Bonnes, Amoni & Bernard, 1988) (e.g., Drawing room/ Sitting room/ Lounge room/ Family room).

Australia is a diverse mix of peoples from a variety of social and ethnic backgrounds. It is therefore difficult to define any one particular example of a household\(^1\) as, "the typical Australian home". There are, however, some features which are statistically common in Australian homes regardless of the individual variables exhibited by any single household.

Two publications, Housing characteristics and decisions (National Housing Strategy Secretariat and Australian Bureau of Statistics [NHSS/ABS),

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\(^1\) A household is defined by the ABS (1992) as: "A group of people who live together (in a single dwelling) as a single unit in the sense that they have common housekeeping arrangements; i.e. have some common provision for food and other essentials of living. Persons living in the same dwelling but having separate catering arrangements constitute separate households. A single household occurs when only one household usually resides in a selected dwelling. Where more than one household usually resides in a dwelling, for example a family unit and a lodger with separate eating arrangements, such dwellings are termed multiple household dwellings" (p.105).

Between 66% and 76% of all houses in Sydney, Melbourne, Canberra and Adelaide are either occupier owned or being purchased with rental housing accounting for the other 24 - 34%. The proportion of homes rented from State government housing authorities varies between four and fifteen percent of all households. A large proportion of those living in public rental accommodation are single parents and older people (NHSS/ABS, 1991).

The majority of all households, whether renting or buying/bought, are in dwellings more than eleven years old (NHSS/ABS, 1991). The overwhelming majority of home owners/purchasers live in detached dwellings while:

In all cities, renters are more likely than owners to live in flats or units, particularly multi-storey units, rather than separate houses.

In general, renters in Sydney and Melbourne are more likely to live in flats or units, particularly multi-storey units, than in Adelaide or Canberra (NHSS/ABS, 1991, p. 2).

Owner-occupiers are most likely to live in three bedroom dwellings while those in private sector rental dwellings usually have one or two bedrooms. Bed-sitter accommodation is more common in public sector rental accommodation than any other (NHSS/ABS, 1991). "On the whole, rental dwellings are smaller than owner-occupied dwellings" (NHSS/ABS, 1991, p. 2).

While private sector renters surveyed in the NHSS/ABS (1991) study saw the option of choosing where they lived as an advantage, those renting in the public sector considered they had little choice in this area although they felt they had cheaper and more secure tenancy than those in private rental accommodation. The study also noted:

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2 Readers should note that *Housing characteristics and decisions* is based on a comparative study of Sydney, Melbourne, Adelaide and Canberra and therefore cannot be said to represent either an Australia-wide perspective, or one which includes rural Australia. Nonetheless, given that the populations of these cities total at least half of the Australian population, the study is useful for the purposes of this research. *Housing Australia: A statistical overview* is based on Australia-wide data.

3 According to the Australian Bureau of Statistics (1992), a dwelling can generally be defined as: "... a self-contained suite of rooms for a household, that is intended for long term residential use, and has facilities for cooking and bathing" (p. 35).
Over half of private rental households in Sydney and Adelaide and just under half of those in Melbourne and Canberra express interest in renting from a public housing authority (NHSS/ABS, 1991, p. 20).

Interestingly, public renters wanting private rental accommodation reported the stigma of public housing as a disadvantage of public sector renting.

A major conclusion reached in the NHSS/ABS study is that,

... most people seek to own their own home. Renters say they are renting because they cannot afford to buy. Public renters in Sydney and Melbourne look to the lower cost and security of public tenure as the reason for being in the public sector. Private renters look to the choice of location as the reason for being in the private sector. Owners and buyers cite the ‘security of ownership’ and ‘freedom to do their own thing’, but lament the ‘cost of the mortgage’ (particularly in the first five years after the purchase), the ‘costs of keeping up the home’, rates, and generally the fact that they have little money for anything else. These laments (sic) have to be viewed against the background of the high 90 percent of owners who judge the advantages of ownership outweigh the disadvantages (p. 20).

It appears from the NHSS/ABS (1991) study that the majority of owners/purchasers consider the characteristics of the neighbourhood and the price and availability of a dwelling when contemplating a move. The particular neighbourhood characteristics considered most important were the scenic or environmental nature of the area or the movers’ familiarity with the area. Closeness to where people worked was also a consideration in a significant number of cases however, for those renting privately, this was the most important reason when deciding on a move. In addition to the above, in 20% or more of cases one of the reasons given for choosing a particular area was; good access to public transport (Melbourne and Sydney), closeness to shops (Melbourne, Sydney and Canberra), and family and/or social contacts. The perceived safety of the area was of greater concern in Sydney and Melbourne than in Canberra or Adelaide.

According to Housing Australia, (1992) some 86% of the Australian population live in urban areas (as at 1986) with approximately 64% of the population being in the various capital cities. The average number of persons per dwelling in 1986 stood at 2.7 and this figure has been steadily decreasing for some years. There are some significant variations to this figure however, as the Australian Bureau of Statistics [ABS] (1992) points out;
Age structure is an important factor in determining the housing requirements of a population, as different age groups have varying housing needs. For example, the elderly are the group most likely to live in one person households (p. 26).

It then goes on;

In 1986, 40 per cent of all people who lived alone were at least 65 years old. Unlike some overseas countries, the extended family concept is not a generally accepted way of housing elderly people in Australia. Despite the subjective value of ‘home’ to elderly people (O’Bryant, 1983), there has been a significant increase in the development of retirement villages in an attempt to address rising demand for aged accommodation (p. 27).

And further;

The number of households with six or more people decreased between 1976 and 1986. Households with five or less people increased, with the number of one person households increasing by nearly 60 per cent over the decade to more than one million. In 1986, households containing one person accounted for nearly one fifth of all households (p. 28).

This existence of one person households which many, if not most, of their occupants would regard as homes, runs counter to the overlap between the concepts of “home” and “family” posited as (almost) synonymous by some authors (e.g., Bowlby, Gregory, & McKie, 1997).

Given that in 1986, 30 percent of all households had only two persons in them, this means that at least half the households in Australia are comprised of one or two people. The ABS (1992) also reports that of the 1.2 million non-family households in Australia, 220,000 were group households\(^4\) and the rest were one person households. While one person households are likely to be elderly people, most group households consist of young people with over 40% of these comprising people in the 15 to 24 year age range (ABS, 1992). The ABS also reported a persistent increase in the proportion of non-family to family households.

Family households are also reported to be changing with the number of sole parent families increasing to 9% of all families in 1986 (ABS, 1992). However, the most prevalent family type is still the two parent family (86% of all families - ABS, 1986 Census).

\(^4\) A group household is defined by the ABS (1992) as: “A non-family household consisting of two or more unrelated persons” (p.105).
Although the ABS (1992) survey showed that Australian women expect to maintain the current norm of two children and that this should (logically) lead to a reduced demand for houses with more than three bedrooms, it suggested that, "... demand for such houses is probably linked more to economic circumstances" (p. 30).

More than seventy-five per cent of Australian dwellings are detached houses although other forms of residence such as flats, form an increasing proportion of the total available housing. Approximately half of all dwellings have three bedrooms, a lounge and a dining room plus a kitchen, laundry and bathroom. Most of these dwellings are built of either timber or brick or some combination of the two.

... nearly all households possess a refrigerator, an oven, hotplates or burners and a hot water system, while over 90 per cent have a washing machine. While the proportions of households which have a freezer or clothes dryer have increased since 1980, by 1985-86 they were only found in half of Australia’s homes. Also, while the proportion of homes which had a microwave oven (30 per cent in 1985-86) or a dishwasher (nearly 20 per cent in 1985-86) were quite low compared with other appliances, the increase since 1983 was substantial. For microwaves, this growth was sevenfold, while the proportion of homes with a dishwasher increased by 25 per cent ... while the ownership of appliances such as refrigerators, ovens, and washing machines ... [appears] ... to vary little with increasing household income, ownership of dishwashers, clothes dryers and microwave ovens [is] far more prevalent in higher income households (ABS, 1992, pp. 39-40).

Virtually all dwellings in Australia have electricity connected, many have gas (especially in the cities) and often both (ABS, 1992). A comparative listing of salient features of the home and their frequency of occurrence is given in Table 1.

The contents of Melbourne houses are described in detail by The Age’s (1988) geo-demographic segmentation of the Melbourne metropolitan area.

This study found that people setting up new residences are the biggest buyers of electrical goods while those who are renting tend to purchase portable essential items such as refrigerators, television sets and washing machines. Home owners tend to buy more in the way of outdoor furniture and equipment.

A problem in cataloguing the contents of a typical home is that the nature of the contents will change over time. For example, pine furniture seems to be less
Table 1: Features of the home according to their frequency (ABS, 1992).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Most frequently encountered</th>
<th>Frequently encountered</th>
<th>Less frequently encountered</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Owner/purchaser</td>
<td>private sector renter</td>
<td>public sector renter</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Building 11+ years old</td>
<td>Regional city - urban</td>
<td>Rural or non-urban</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>neighbourhood</td>
<td>neighbourhood</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Detached dwelling</td>
<td>Flat or unit</td>
<td>Multi-storey flats</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 bedrooms</td>
<td>Less than 3 bedrooms</td>
<td>More than 4 bedrooms</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Less than 1 hour from work</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>by public transport</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Difficulty accessing:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- beach</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- recreation areas</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>- relatives’ and</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>friends’ homes</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bought for reasons of:</td>
<td>No money for:</td>
<td>No desire to own a dwelling</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- security of</td>
<td>deposit</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ownership</td>
<td>repayments</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- increased autonomy</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- pride in ownership</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- privacy</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Key purchase motivators:</td>
<td>-closeness to work</td>
<td>-good public transport</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- price</td>
<td></td>
<td>-close to shops</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- neighbourhood</td>
<td></td>
<td>-close to family</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- availability</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.7 persons in household</td>
<td>One person</td>
<td>5 or more persons</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Family/related</td>
<td></td>
<td>Group household</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Appliances:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- refrigerator</td>
<td>freezer</td>
<td>-microwave oven</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- oven</td>
<td>-clothes dryer</td>
<td>-dishwasher</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- hot plates</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>- hot water service</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>- washing machine</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Electricity supply</td>
<td>Gas supply</td>
<td>Solar energy use</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
fashionable today than it was some five to six years ago. Similarly, leather furniture was relatively uncommon before the later 1980’s. The same can be noted of any new products in the electrical goods area such as digital video disc players or computers.

In general terms, the ABS (1992) study revealed that the main reasons for choosing a particular dwelling are (in rank order of importance): price; availability; general features of the dwelling (e.g. architectural style, privacy, scope for renovation, and detached nature); particular features of the dwelling (e.g. lots of room, physically secure, easy upkeep, high quality of finish), and outdoor features (e.g. private outdoor space, private garden area). Despite the perception of Australia as an out-of-doors society, the outdoor features of a dwelling were the most important reason for choosing a particular dwelling in only 3-4% of cases.

3.3. The Concept of Home as a Social Construct

The nature of the home can be ascertained by cataloguing its physical features. However, the social functions or uses of the home also give clues to its nature.

Various aspects of the social function of the home have been identified. Saile (1985) noted the importance of what he termed ‘rituals of the home’. Canter (1977) also notes the important association of specific activities and places in regard to the home. The house, as a symbol of the social structure of the world and as the centre of the social world for its occupants, has similarly been documented by Duncan (1985). This view concerning the central role of the home in a person’s life is reinforced by Fried (1963) who noted significant positive attachments to their homes and surrounds among slum dwellers in Boston. This attachment has also been evidenced in situations of both neighbourhood renewal (i.e., the demolition and redevelopment of buildings surrounding the person ‘at home’) and the re-location of the individual to another dwelling altogether (Ekstrom, 1994). Likewise, Davison et al., (1993) noted elderly people who expressed strong social and emotional ties to their homes, for example, as a place where their family celebrated Christmas.

Privacy is a key reference point in the literature on home (Altman, 1975; Bernard, 1991; Brown, 1992; Canter, 1977; Davison, Kendig, Stephens & Merrill, 1993). For Altman (1975) the key ordering concept defining the use of the environment in the course of social interaction is privacy. This need for privacy has lead Mackay (1986) to identify the need of some for an inner sanctum, “...a ‘home’ within the home - a personal cocoon within the familial cocoon” (p. 26). From privacy, subsidiary or privacy-dependent concepts of personal space, territoriality and crowding can be derived. Altman postulated that the extent of one’s satisfaction with the degree of privacy one enjoyed was a direct outcome of whether the amount of privacy achieved was in balance with the amount of
privacy desired. More privacy than desired lead to feelings of social isolation while less privacy than desired lead to feelings of crowding.

This notion of the importance of privacy as a defining facet of home is echoed in the work of Rapoport (1982) on the home as an organiser or regulator of communication between the person-at-home and visitors, and in the work of Korosec-Serfaty (1985) who found that when people were burglarised they felt that the boundaries between inside and outside, and the distinction between that which is visible to others and that which is hidden, had been violated (This finding is also confirmed in the work of Van den Bogaard and Wiegman, [1991]). People who had their homes burgled also experienced a feeling of having had their dwelling appropriated by others. Such people invariably felt the need to restore the boundaries.

In a study of residential satisfaction experienced by people living in high-rise apartment blocks in Madrid, Amerigo and Aragones (1990) found that the degree of variation of subject satisfaction correlated with their degree of attachment to the neighbourhood and the extent and cordiality of their relationships with their neighbours.

The Age (1988) survey included an analysis of social activities. This revealed significant differences between the geo-demographic segments of the sample population. Those with more education and a higher socio-economic status were found to be more likely to entertain at home, or go out to cinemas and restaurants. Families were found to be more likely to have picnics and to own a dog. Reading was a more common leisure pursuit of those born in Australia or of English-speaking families. Those without families tended to be regular users of convenience stores suggesting that most meals prepared in the home were of a snack or convenience food (e.g. frozen meals) type. The overall patterns of beverage consumption suggested that the more affluent segments drank more alcohol while those less affluent drank less alcohol.

3.4. The Concept of Home as a Psychological Construct

The physical nature of home can be fairly readily distinguished from its social functions however this demarcation becomes more difficult to identify when differentiating the social functions from those which are predominantly psychological. The study by Korosec-Serfaty (1985) described above is an example of the complex interrelationship between social and psychological aspects and functions of the home. The visible : hidden dimensions of the home reflect and are part of, the public and private facets of people’s lives and make a significant contribution to individual mental health by allowing an opportunity for one to relax more fully or indulge in private or intimate behaviours (Dovey, 1979). These same visible : hidden dimensions of the home also form a social boundary which others usually only cross by invitation and which, once crossed, signify a more intimate relationship with the person concerned (Bernard, 1991). This
aspect of home is linked to Dovey's (1985) identification of home as providing a sense of order, identity and connection to place ("rootedness" if you like). Home as a place where one "belongs", an extension of the self (Belk, 1991) and a place of familiarity, stability, security and routine (Barclay, Johns, Kennedy, & Power, 1991). Related to feelings of attachment, Dovey (1979) observed that the notions of security, refuge and safety are indicative of home. This attachment to a place (home) has also been noted by Worman (1989) and was graphically described by Fried (1963) who observed the extreme grief reactions of former slum dwellers experienced in response to the physical and social losses attendant to enforced relocation. These reactions took the form of intense, sometimes overwhelming feelings of sadness and depression.

The interdependence of people's identity and their physical environment has been noted in a positive fashion (Cherulnik & Bayless, 1986; Jin, 1993), and in the negative impact of homelessness on individual's self-respect and self-determination (Baumann, 1993). One study, (Bernard, 1991) noted the interdependence of identity and environment in students living in single room accommodation in a university hostel who reported that they regarded their room as 'homelike' after only three weeks occupation.

Possessions are important contributors to a sense of home as well as a sense of self-identity and self-expression (Cram & Paton, 1993). The significance of personal objects displayed within the home as contributors to the maintenance of personal identity and repositories of memories of relationships or events, has been well documented (Rubinstein, 1987). Likewise, the act of transforming the dwelling into a personalised home by the incorporation and arrangement of objects and possessions and the modification of other aspects of the environment (e.g., by changing the colour scheme) to reflect personal choice and thereby oneself, contributes to a sense of home (Dovey, 1979).

In an extensive Australian study of the attitudes of elderly Melbournians towards their homes, Davison et al (1993) found that they considered their homes to be: repositories of memories of people and events (some happy, some not); an extension of their personality and sense of identity; an outlet for their need for control over their environment; a major factor contributing a sense of belonging to a place; and something which gave them a sense of ownership and notions of themselves as autonomous and independent. Their homes also gave them a sense of familiarity with their routines, known characteristics, and perception as a safe environment. To Davison et al's cohort, home provided for "...the need for a sense of control and an ability to retain...possessions in order to make meaning of a new space (p. 63)" (should they shift to a retirement setting or small dwelling).

Giuliani (1991, p. 134) describes an "...affective bond of attachment" between a person and her home via some object(s). This bond is defined by Giuliani (1991) as:
i) the state of psychological well-being experienced by the subject as a result of the mere presence, vicinity or accessibility of the object and, conversely,
ii) the state of distress set-up by the absence, remoteness or inaccessibility of the object (p. 134)

This attachment bond is further distinguished as being: not necessarily consciously held by the subject; possibly related to a group of reinforcing behaviours; and, not directly observable to others except through an interpretation of the subject’s behaviours or through reports originating from subject.

The reasons for owning/purchasing a home were revealed by the NHSS/ABS (1991) study as being primarily related to feelings of, “security of ownership” and “freedom to do your own thing in your own space” (p. 19). Other significant reasons for home ownership identified included: pride in achieving home ownership; having one’s privacy (a sentiment reinforcing Pawley’s [1978] findings in the United Kingdom); that purchasing was cheaper than renting in the long term; and, having an asset in old age. Nearly all owner/purchasers believed the advantages of home ownership outweighed the disadvantages while most of those who were renting (particularly those renting public sector accommodation) did so because they either could not afford the repayments or had never amassed enough money for a deposit on a dwelling. A significant number of people renting (more so those renting in the public sector) did so because they had never wanted to purchase a dwelling. The view of private, purchased or owned housing as economically or personally more desirable than public, rented housing is strenuously refuted by Kemeny (1983) and seriously questioned by Mandic and Clapham (1996). In contrast, Adhikari and Yik (1997) reported that, in the case of indigenous Australians, those who own their home are more likely to be employed and less likely to experience family violence and police arrest than those who don’t own their home.

3.5. The Concept of Home as a Metaphysical Construct

There are some aspects of ‘home’ which are not physical. They are also neither psychological nor social but rather more abstract.

Many Christians believe in “God the Father” and also believe themselves to be “children of God.” In such cases, they may regard each church building as the house of God and therefore as a spiritual home. This sense of being “at home” may be experienced whenever and wherever these people enter a church, even if they had never previously entered that particular church.

The concept of home may also be rendered in the abstract by consideration of it in time (Werner, Altman and Oxley, 1985). A past home, one’s present home, or a future home are all temporal considerations of home (Dovey, 1985) as are the notions of leaving home or returning home. Fried (1963) cites a
significant number of people forced to relocate from a slum area in Boston who tended to "...idealise the lost place" (p. 151). Consideration of a place as home may also be affected by the duration spent there, the intensity of the experience of a home, the pace of the life there or its rhythm, or it may simply be a place which stands out from among others as an experience of home. Davison et al. (1993) reported elderly people who conceptualised home as being formed by a succession of historical events.

A somewhat similar result of the passage of time has been the experience of home as a dynamic experience, changing continuously throughout life as the individual's needs and circumstances evolve and change, thereby requiring the individual to make the transition from one life stage to another (Sixsmith & Sixsmith, 1991). This concept of home as a dynamic experience has been described by Dovey (1979) as a dialectic process with the meaning of home for the individual derived, "... from that which it is not" (p. 92). For Dovey, the meaning of home lies in its contrast to the world beyond the home; security in the midst of insecurity; certainty and order where outside there is doubt and confusion; familiarity in contrast to the unfamiliarity experienced outside the home.

Alternately, Heller (1994) contrasts two views of home: that of a waiter who has never known anything other than a square and its immediate vicinity in Rome and regards that as home; and that of a person almost continually travelling the world on business who regards home as being "where her cat is". In both, the sense of home is related to the sense of attachment to somewhere or something, a pivotal point at the centre of the person's existence.

This idea of home being related to a sense of attachment to somewhere or something is further extended by Kaiser and Fuhrer (1996) who, in their analysis of dwelling (defined by them as the manipulation of one's physical environment and, through this manipulation, the investing of the environment with emotional significance for the individual) conclude that this definition of dwelling enables, "... dwelling (to be) no longer bound to a specific place, enabling dwelling to take place anywhere" (p. 233). Home being the principle place of the act of dwelling, this suggests that a sense of home can be created and experienced wherever the individual happens to be at the time, even temporarily.

3.6 Home as a Unified Concept

A clearer appreciation of the meaning of the concept of home may be obtained from disciplines investigating the notion of person-environment relationships.

Sixsmith (1986) has explored the meaning of home from an environmental psychology perspective. In common with the discussion above, she found that different types of home exist. She also found that different meanings of home co-
Sixsmith identified twenty types of home, namely:

(Home) town
friend's home
owned home
room
childhood house
ideal home
future home
family home (person still feels is her/his main residence)
marrried home
country (homeland)
parents' home (person has left and doesn’t see it as her/his main residence)
county
shared house/friends
shared house/partner
area
miscellaneous
hall of residence
campus
temporary accommodation
"digs" (rented bed and breakfast) (p. 286).\(^5\)

Given such a wide and diverse range of "homes" Sixsmith concluded that: there are wide individual differences in meaning, that home has a variety of existential levels of meaning and may be concrete (e.g. a house), less concrete (e.g. a region or locality), or totally abstract (e.g. a spiritual home), what is considered a home by one may not be considered a home by another; and that a home may be transitory or enduring in nature.

Sixsmith then went on to identify twenty categories of interdependent meanings attached to the concept of home, together with any support for the category concerned in the literature, as follows:

1. Happiness - the experience of happy events and general feelings of happiness are an integral part of home.

2. Belonging - comfort, relaxation, familiarity contribute to a sense of belonging to home (cf. Tuan, 1975).

3. Responsibility - stability arising from ownership and

\(^5\) To this list one might add one's 'long home' or final home - the grave. "... man goeth to his long home, and the mourners go about the streets" (Ecclesiastes, 12, 5. King James Version).
responsibility for the home (Haddon, 1973).

4. Self-expression - behaviour in and manipulation of the place are closely tied to ideas of home. At home you can do what you want, and personalisation (cf. Becker, 1977) allows expression of self identity.

5. Critical experiences - learning to be independent, formative experiences, lived through a stressful period are formative of deep associations (cf. Proshansky et al., 1979) with home.


9. Meaningfull places - because of specific but not necessarily critical events taking place there.

10. Knowledge - tied to familiarity, this aspect of home emphasises physical and social knowledge.

11. Preference to return - i.e. in terms of a locus in space (Gelwicks, 1970; Tuan, 1975).

12. Type of relationship - type of relationship and personal choice over being with particular people is the essential focus of this category (Hayward, 1977).

13. Quality of relationships - the quality of relationships.

14. Friends and entertainment - people visiting the home who form the core of social entertainment in the home.

15. Emotional environment - a place where there is love often signifies a home.

16. Physical structures - enduring physical characteristics.

17. Extent of services - lighting, heating, household equipment, garden, telecommunications, etc., (cf. Canter, 1984) are sometimes seen as a necessary part of home.
18. Architectural style - some homes were meaningful because of their architectural style.

19. Work environment - working at home is sometimes a defining aspect of home, e.g. students often have no division between work places and living places. Work is part of home because this is the only quiet place available to them.

20. Spatiality - spatial properties and the activities that those spaces allow, as well as their location, are an important aspect of home for some people (p. 287, references as cited by Sixsmith).

From her research and analysis, Sixsmith (1986) developed a tripartite model of home composed of three experiential modes: the personal home; the social home; and, the physical home.

The personal home is the concept of the home as the centre of meaning, as the central emotional and sometimes physical reference point in life. These notions are encapsulated in feelings of security, happiness and belonging. The categories of: happiness, belonging, responsibility, self-expression, critical experiences, permanence, privacy, time perspective, meaningful places, knowledge, and preference to return, described above, all form part of this experiential mode.

The social home is the concept of home as a shared place where relationships are transacted, a place with the presence of others, a place of acceptance. These ideas are found in the categories of: type of relationship, quality of relationships, friends and entertainment, and the emotional environment described above.

The physical home incorporates the physical structure and architectural style of the building together with consideration of the human space available and the conveniences and services or amenities available. This takes in the categories of: physical structures, extent of services, architectural style, work environment, and spatiality described above.

Sixsmith's model of the home as having personal, social and physical properties and meanings, and modes of experience is a useful one for the purposes of this research because of its empirically determined, existential nature. It is this subjective experience of "home" which transforms the objective description of a place.

Another approach to defining the meaning of home, and yielding similar results in part to those of Sixsmith, has been taken by Despres (1991). Despres identified a number of studies which sought to define the concept of home by sample population interviews. She concluded that ten general categories of
meaning of home had been identified by this approach. These ten categories of ascribed meaning were:

1. Home as security and control in the sense of the individual’s feeling in control of the area and physically secure.

2. The home as a reflection of one’s ideas and values. “...how people see themselves and want to be seen by others” (Despres, 1991, p. 98).

3. Home as acting upon and modifying one’s dwelling. The individual’s extent and nature of involvement (e.g. emotional or financial) with his/her dwelling. “Depending on the age and gender of the occupants, it provides a sense of achievement ... a place for self-expression, and/or a place for freedom of action” (Despres, 1991, p. 98).

4. Home as permanence and continuity. This meaning marries the concept of home with the time dimension whereby home may be a place of memories or an environment which has become intimately familiar over a period. “This dimension of home is also a function of how much the dwelling unit fits one’s changing life objectives, aspirations, and future goals” (Despres, 1991, p. 98).

5. Home as relationships with family and friends. That is:

   Home as a place to strengthen and secure the relationship with the people one cares for, emerged as a powerful category of meaning. Home is perceived and experienced as the locus of intense emotional experience, and as providing an atmosphere of social understanding where one’s actions, opinions, and moods are accepted. Ideas such as a place to share with others, to entertain with relatives and friends, and to raise children, are related to this dimension (Despres, 1991, p. 98).

6. Home as centre of activities. These activities may be related to simple physiological needs such as eating or they may include pastimes or the support of other activities conducted away from the home such as work or sport.

7. Home as a refuge from the outside world. This relates to the need for privacy and independence; the need to ‘get away’ from external pressures and seek solace or at least be able to control the level and nature of demands upon one.

8. Home as an indicator of personal status.
Although ranked among the least important categories of meaning for the home, it is relatively important for people that their home show their economic status, status being mostly understood by individuals’ socio-economic position (Despres, 1991, p. 99).

9. Home as material structure. Interestingly, this dimension includes not only consideration of the physical attributes of the actual dwelling and its aesthetic features, but also the physical characteristics of its surrounds and the neighbourhood.

10. Home as a place to own. Ownership is imbued with connotations of freedom, permanency, pride and significant economic investment.

Despres (1991) noted that while these categories of meaning enabled people to talk about their homes, they did not give any indication of the theoretical frameworks which shaped these meanings. She posited four commonly encountered behavioural/human theoretical approaches which supply various frameworks according to the particular preferences or inclinations of the researcher. Despres labelled these theoretical approaches:

the territorial model;

the psychological model;

the socio-psychological model; and,

the phenomenological and developmental model.

The territorial model is adapted from animal studies and provides an explanation for why people like to feel in control of their life space by marking its extent and proscribing the range of behaviours permitted therein or repeating certain behaviours. This personalisation of one’s life space may extend to the surroundings of the home.

The marking of the neighbourhood territory, of the boundary of their house, of the family territory, and of individual territories within the home respectively communicate information about the identity of the family in the neighbourhood, about the family in its home, as well as about individual members of a household (Despres, 1991, p. 100).

The psychological interpretation takes two major forms: a psycho-analytic perspective, and a Maslowian perspective. The psycho-analytic
perspective sees the home as a subconscious expression of the self allowing for the;

...definition and maintenance of three different levels of the self: the Ego, the Id, and the Superego. The home provides enough arenas for everyday life activities, for sensuous experiences, and for spiritual experiences (Despres, 1991, p. 100).

This approach has also been given a Jungian focus in the work of the architect, Cooper Marcus (1997).

The Maslowian perspective is based upon Maslow’s (1943) need hierarchy. Thus the home enables individuals to achieve psychological well-being through providing for their physiological and safety needs; provision of a suitable environment for the fulfilment of security and love needs; a medium of expression for self respect and social respect needs; and a means of meeting their need for achievement.

The socio-psychological interpretation is based on the notion that the home is a significant component in defining one’s self-identity. It also symbolises the person’s social identity and acts as an interlocutor between the individual and the larger community by means of the messages about the resident it embodies and conveys.

The phenomenological and developmental interpretations suggest that home is a dynamic process, changing over time and influenced by events in a person’s life. It serves to connect a person with his/her past, present and future. Further to this, the following comment by Despres (1991) on the significance of one’s residential history is of importance when researching the meaning of home for those who may have been institutionalised for considerable periods of their lives.

People’s residential history was found to have a strong influence on their motivations, ideas, and images about home (Lawrence, 1983; Seamon, 1985; Tognoli & Horwitz, 1982) (p. 102).

In an Australian study on, “The essential qualities of a home” (Smith, 1994) an attempt was made to discover what caused a house to become regarded as a home. The study also sought support for attributes of a residence previously identified in the literature as contributing to the development of attachment to the place as home. In particular, the study focused on Tognoli’s (1987) five general attributes of centrality, continuity, privacy, self-expression and personal identity, and social relationships, which Tognoli suggested distinguish a house from a home in the mind of the occupant. Other attributes identified in the literature were also described including, personal and social warmth, physical attributes of the home, and occupant gender. In regard to the physical environment Smith (1994) suggests
that, in the minds of its occupants:

... a home is a complex multi-dimensional concept, which is experienced simultaneously as a physical environment, a social environment, and a place for the satisfaction of personal needs (p. 33).

Smith (1994) then goes on to argue:

... that the act of dwelling is an integral part of human experience, and that the home is a significant place for most people. As defined by Altman and others, home is the most basic and potent of the environments classed as primary territories, and accordingly, users expect near-total control of this environment in order to perform the important social and personal behaviours which define their residence as a home for them (pp. 33-34).

Smith explored subjects’ responses to a series of questions concerning their current home, other homes, “non-homes”, and the process of establishing a home. While Sixsmith (1986, p. 283) included consideration of “places never thought of as home” in her interviews, there is no mention of this aspect of home in the study’s report and therefore Smith’s study appears to be the first to make distinct use of informant’s views on non-homes to illuminate the meaning of home. Smith’s (1994) subjects’ responses confirmed the essential contribution to a sense of home of:

- a suitable physical environment;
- positive social relationships;
- a positive atmosphere engendering feelings of warmth, care and cosiness;
- personal privacy and freedom;
- opportunities for self-expression and development;
- a sense of security; and,
- a sense of continuity.

In regard to the question concerning environments not considered to be homes the most common characteristics identified were:

... a lack of personal freedom and privacy, dissatisfaction with the internal social relationships, a poor physical environment, and a negative atmosphere within the home. Over half the sample expressed these characteristics of places not viewed as homes. The lack of personalization, permanence, security and ownership were also associated with these environments (Smith, 1994, p. 42).

Many of these non-home attributes have been extensively documented in the reports of people monitoring residential services for Victorians with an
While Smith's study is useful in affirming the applicability of overseas studies to the Australian situation and in introducing a new dimension to the theory (the identification of attributes incompatible or antagonistic to a sense of home), the smallness of the sample (11 couples and one single female), its relative homogeneity (one member of each of the 11 couples and one other person were students in the University of Queensland psychology student subject pool), and the use of interview notes rather than full transcripts as raw data, all make it unacceptable as a substitute for a major component of this study (see method, below).

3.7. Summary

The concept of home appears to be a dynamic one in that it is living or lived. In this sense it is like the concept of life itself. There are certain things which are essential for life over the medium to longer term such as air, water, food, health and a reasonable degree of certainty or predictability. Likewise it appears from the literature that there are certain essential ingredients of home: a sense of belonging to a place and a degree of control over that place which is expressed in some way (e.g., restriction of access by others; manipulation of the environment; or the specific use of some areas). However, it also appears that it is the synthesis or blend of these ingredients which determines whether a place is home or not, rather than the presence or absence of any one particular ingredient or category of ingredients. For example, one's office or work space may satisfy criteria for personal space, territoriality, optimum level of crowding/social isolation, and control of inside/outside boundaries and public/private aspects, but it would not necessarily be considered a home by virtue of all of this.

The search for the meaning of home thus appears to require contemplation of the synthesis of ingredients, the sum of the parts, rather than the identification of a single catalyst which transmutes a place into a home. In this regard, the work Sixsmith (1986), Despres (1991) and Smith (1994) offers the most promising path to explore further in this study.

Before continuing this journey however, it is useful at this point to trace a parallel path concerning the nature of residential services for people who have an intellectual disability.
Chapter 4. Emohruo - The Nature of Residential Service Settings for People With an Intellectual Disability

This chapter identifies and examines the variety of ways in which the residential environment of services for people with an intellectual disability has been conceptualised in the disability literature. It commences with an identification of the various factors considered significant by a number of social scientists when discussing or evaluating the physical aspects of a residential service. Likewise, those elements considered significant by social scientists when examining the social and/or psychological environment of a residential service are identified and discussed. The chapter concludes with an overview of the available intellectual disability-specific literature concerning the concept of home as a unified construct and its application to residential services.

Residential services for Victorians who have an intellectual disability have been progressively moving away from large, congregate care facilities towards smaller, community-based accommodation since the 1950's (Annison, 1992). The newer style of accommodation may be located in ordinary houses, on ordinary streets, but are they homes?

The fundamental questions this research seeks to answer are: "What is a home" and its logical extension, "Are residential service settings for people with an intellectual disability, homes?"

Despite the deceptively simple appearance of these (complementary) questions there are no equally simple answers. Consider the following:

Australia is the small house. Ownership of one in a fenced allotment is as inevitable and unquestionable a goal of the average Australian as marriage (Robin Boyd, Australia's Home, 1952).

She thought of the Housing Commission home with the bare boards and the scanty furniture (Dorothy Hewitt, Bobbin Up, 1959).

[A character, David, looking at his brother-in-law's house in the Adelaide Hills] It's so very Australia: an English garden, Japanese tea rooms, an American designed house, Danish furniture and our very own fairy lights. An Aussie Disneyland (Louis Nowra, Sunrise, 1983).

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Blenheim Palace in Oxfordshire ... is a monument rather than a house. The architect, Sir John Vanbrugh, sacrificed convenience and comfort for symmetry and pomposity.

(In reference to Blenheim Palace, one guest of the late Sir Winston Churchill, noting that the kitchen was in a wing of the Palace some considerable distance from the dining room and that the food was consequently near-cold when served, remarked, "It is a fine house, but not a home!")

King et al. (1971) investigated the management of three types of institutions: mental deficiency hospitals, ranging in size from 121 to 1,650 residents, voluntary homes, ranging in size from 50 to 93 residents; and group homes, ranging in size from 12 to 41 residents.

O’Connor (1976), in a national survey of group homes for people with an intellectual disability, found that facilities housing fewer than 20 residents were more likely to be "normalized" than facilities housing more than 21 residents.

What then, are the essential features which constitute one’s “home”? A flat, house (free-standing or semi-detached), hut, caravan or even a tent, may be considered home by various individuals. A person living alone may regard where he or she lives as his or her home. Yet another may consider home to be where his or her family live and, for example, although living alone in a flat during the University semester, may regard him or herself in that situation as, “living away from home”. Again, a Christian might regard a church building as “the house of God the Father” and therefore, regarding himself as a “child of God”, his Father’s house and consequently, his spiritual ‘home’.

Agreement about the nature and meaning of home has been a long-standing problem in regard to residential services for people who have an intellectual disability. An Australian study (Packer & Wright, 1983) defined group homes as: “... self-contained residential facilities for two to twenty residents with staff support of at least eight hours per day, five days per week” (p. 3).

Baker, Seltzer and Seltzer (1977) identified ten types of residential services operating in the United States at that time including:

- small group homes of ten or less adults with an intellectual disability;
- medium group homes for eleven to twenty adults;
- large group homes for 21 to 40 adults;
- mixed group homes where people with other diagnostic categories are also serviced; and,
- group homes for elderly people both intellectually disabled and non-intellectually disabled.
Hill and Lakin (1986) proposed several classes of community residence based on type of support given rather than resident numbers including:

- foster homes where one or more persons with an intellectual disability live with a (non-related) family in that family’s home; and,
- group homes where staff provide assistance and training in accordance with resident needs.

Other proposed classifications of residential services have been based upon:

- individual versus group care (Vitello & Soskin, 1985);
- family living versus group living versus congregate, therapeutic care situations (Janicki, Jacobson & Schwartz, 1982); and,
- agency directed versus client directed versus family directed residences (Campbell & Bailey, 1984).

While each of these approaches is useful in differentiating one type of residence from another, none provides a framework which enables exploration of those critical factors which make any setting a home for those living there. There seems to be an almost total absence in the intellectual disability literature of an active consideration of where people live as being first and foremost their home. (Consider, for example, O’Connor and Sitkei’s [1975] definition of a community residence as “… [a] facility that operates 24 hours a day to provide services to a small group of people who are presently or potentially capable of functioning in a community setting with some degree of independence”). Instead, it is typically conceptualised as a service setting and the service aspects tend to dominate any further consideration of its nature and purpose as the following review of the literature demonstrates.

4.1. **Approaches to Identifying the Physical Environment in Residential Service Settings for People with an Intellectual Disability**

The physical environment has been regarded by some researchers as the main determinant of whether or not a residential service setting can be considered a home. For example, Thompson, Robinson, Graf and Ingegrmnny (1990) have examined the physical design and use of residential settings to determine the degree to which specific architectural settings were judged home-like (sic) or institutional by a sample of non-disabled adults. Similarly, Roteard, Hill and Bruininks (1983) examined the question of whether the size of the residence influenced its perception as home-like (sic) and found that the larger the residence the less home-like (sic) it was perceived to be. Others (e.g., Dalgleish, 1983) have combined consideration of the home-like (sic) nature of the residence environment with that of the residents’ quality of life.
A number of instruments have been developed to measure various aspects of the residential service setting in the intellectual disability area. Some of these instruments take the form of standards which seek to identify and describe a number of significant attributes of the physical setting (among other aspects). Scales which focus on particular aspects of the setting have also been developed along with a variety of other data collection instruments such as questionnaires, observation schedules and data abstracting systems which focus on some aspect of the setting.

While many of these instruments purport to measure the social environment as well as the physical, the physical component can be usefully extracted and examined here.

Feinstein (1985) developed a questionnaire examining the extent of compliance with legislative requirements concerning life safety in the home including fire, medical and other emergency procedures and equipment.

A significant range of instruments that have been developed is based upon the principle of normalisation (Nirje, 1969, Wolfensberger, 1972). The physical environment is a major consideration of this principle and has been incorporated in the instruments of: Flynn and Weiss (1977), Flynn and Heal (1981), Gunzburg (1973); MENCAP, (1986); Rotegard, Bruininks, and Hill (1981); Wolfensberger and Glenn (1975); and, Wolfensberger and Thomas (1983). Aspects identified include:

- comfort (Flynn & Weiss, 1977; Wolfensberger & Thomas, 1983);
- physical features such as the presence or absence of thermostatic water mixing valves (Gunzburg, 1973);
- the presence, size and access to specified areas such as bedrooms, bathrooms, living and dining rooms (Reynolds, 1978; Rotegard, Bruininks, & Hill, 1981); and,
- whether the setting is domestic in scale and appearance including the residence’s contents (MENCAP, 1986).

The other major approach to the design of instruments to measure residential settings is what could be characterised as “the institution-antithesis approach”. Goffman (1961) identified several key characteristics of a total institution namely, combination of usually separate life activities (e.g. work, leisure and sleep) in one place, with the same people, under the one authority, the one rigid time schedule and to meet the aims of the institution. Consequently, such institutions are marked by: a high degree of regimentation and a lack of individuality; significant social distance between staff and residents; and, near-total rigidity in routine. The “institution-antithesis approach” is therefore a resident-centred approach at the other end of the continuum from an institutional
approach.\textsuperscript{2}

Using this institution-antithesis approach instruments have been developed to measure \textit{(inter alia)}:

the nature and extent of furnishings and decorations in the living, dining and bed rooms together with those in the kitchen, toilet and bathroom (Hampson, Judge, & Renshaw, 1984a);
the size and available amenities in living rooms, occupancy levels of bedrooms and the amenities, adaptations and materials available in bathrooms and toilets (Hampson, Judge, & Renshaw, 1984b);
opportunities for privacy, control of environmental elements, room size, number and location and relationship of rooms to each other, and the non-standardisation of interior decor (Mazis & Canter, 1979);
the quantity and variety of furniture, furnishings and other amenities, personal versus communal areas and amenities, and amenities in bathrooms, toilets and laundries (Rayncs, Pratt, & Roscs, 1979; Pratt, Luszc, & Brown, 1979); and,
the features of rooms and furnishings, toilets, bathrooms and laundries (Simons, 1986).

However, this institution-antithesis approach is discounted as a valid framework for examining community residential service settings by Janicki (1981) who notes:

The appropriate residential alternative for an individual should be defined by comparing it with a normal domicile environment. A community living alternative should not be measured against a more restrictive setting, such as an institution, but rather against the kind of home an individual would have had in a normal family or cooperative living setting. Therefore, a community residence should be defined in terms of how well it approximates or moves toward an idealized normal environment (p. 62).

4.2. \textbf{Approaches to Identifying the Social and Psychological Environment in Residential Service Settings for People With an Intellectual Disability}

The work of Moos (1974, 1987a) and his colleagues in developing a variety of social climate scales contributes to an understanding of the social environment of a home. These scales measure social climate which is defined as a product of three, interrelated elements or dimensions. These dimensions are: the

\textsuperscript{2} The antithesis approach is also used by Davison (1993) to explain the suburban nature of Australian cities as a reaction to the British slums. “While the slum was seen as dense, dirty, unnatural, disorderly, and disease-ridden, the suburb was seen as open, clean, natural, orderly and healthy” (p. 3).
relationship dimension, the personal growth or goal orientation dimension, and the system maintenance and change dimension.

Social scales have been developed for a variety of settings (i.e., community settings, educational settings [Moos & Trickett, 1987; Moos, 1987d], residential care and treatment settings, and total institutions [Moos, 1986b; Moos, 1987c]). Within each of these setting types a number of sub-settings have been identified and sub-scales developed. For example, in the community settings domain the different sub-settings identified include: families (Moos & Moos, 1986); work milieus (Moos, 1986c); social, task-oriented, and therapeutic groups (Moos, 1986a). Similarly, the residential care and treatment sub-settings are: hospital (Moos, 1987c) and community programs (Moos, 1987b); and, sheltered care settings for the elderly (Lemke & Moos, 1987; Moos & Lemke, 1987).

In the case of the families sub-setting, Moos & Moos (1986), noted:

Our final version of the (Family Environment Scale) has 10 subscale dimensions, which fall into the three categories of dimensions. We do not yet know whether these dimensions will adequately characterise families, although our initial data on approximately 200 families looks quite promising. The initial subscales are as follows:

1. Cohesion measures the extent to which family members are concerned with and committed to the family; it includes items designed to reflect enthusiasm, support and constructive activity.

2. Expressiveness measures the extent to which family members are allowed and encouraged to act openly and to express their feelings directly.

3. Conflict assesses the extent to which open expression of anger and aggression and generally conflictual interactions are characteristic of the family.

These three subscales assess Relationship dimensions.

4. Independence assesses the extent to which family members are encouraged to be self-sufficient and to make their own decisions; it includes items related to personal development and growth.

5. Achievement Orientation assesses the emphasis on achievement, getting ahead in life, setting high
goals, and so on.

6. Intellectual-Cultural Orientation assesses the emphasis on intellectual and cultural activities, such as going to lectures, plays, and concerts; reading books; playing musical instruments; and engaging in artistic or craft activities.

7. Active Recreational Orientation assesses the extent to which family members are encouraged to have hobbies, to be involved in a variety of activities outside work or school, and to have diverse interests.

8. Moral-Religious Emphasis assesses the extent to which the family emphasises and discusses ethical and religious issues and values.

These five subscales assess Personal Development dimensions.

9. Organisation measures the emphasis in the family on such variables as neatness, structuring family activities, financial planning, and punctuality.

10. Control assesses the extent to which the family functions by relatively strict "rules and regulations" or procedures.

These two subscales assess System Maintenance dimensions (pp. 346-347).

While this analytical framework is valuable in providing measures of family life, it is of limited use in analysing the concept of home. Given that a home may be for only one person, Moos' (1974) social climate measures are not valid for measuring homeness as they pre-suppose more than one person living in the dwelling. This caveat also applies to using other approaches measuring social interactions as an indicator of the extent or otherwise of "home" present in a given environment such as Barlow and Kirby's (1991) survey of resident satisfaction. As the Australian Bureau of Statistics' (1992) overview of housing in Australia has shown, in 1986 approximately 20% of households were comprised of one person. For many of these solitary inhabitants their dwelling would be regarded by them as their home, therefore what constitutes a family does not, ipso facto, constitute a home.

Moos' (1974) work on families may be useful when examining the dynamics of group homes for people with an intellectual disability. However, it
must be borne in mind that such households are non-related and therefore, while all the aspects in the Family Environment Scale are relevant, the extent to which any single aspect may be applied, may be less than in a nuclear family. For example, in a group home conflict may be more difficult to tolerate as there is not the strength of blood-bonds between individuals placed together by agency decision, to supply and reinforce the commitment to the individual found in a large number of parent-child relationships.

4.3. Approaches to Identifying the Concept of Home in Relation to Residential Service Settings for People With an Intellectual Disability

The recent development of a body of literature focusing on supported community living (Hayden & Abery, 1994) is predicated on the premise that, “Like others, persons with mental retardation and other developmental disabilities want homes of their own...” (Lakin, Hayden, & Abery, 1994, p. 7). Indeed, as Janicki (1981) has noted; “The purpose of a community residence is to provide a home” (p. 60).

However, as Rovins (1990) has cautioned in regard to the evolution of residential services for people who have an intellectual disability,

The demise of the institution has not necessarily coincided with the demise of institutional thought. Institutional thought will often manifest itself within the (community residential) environment and generally increase as the needs of individuals increase (p. 46).

Many authors writing of residential settings for people who have an intellectual disability refer to those settings as either home(s), or home-like, without defining what they understand of, or mean by, these concepts. As Balla (1976) demonstrates, even a domicile for 96 non-related people may be labelled a home. This raises the fundamental question: how much of a home can a dwelling housing 96 non-related people and staffed by rostered support personnel, really be? Such usage of the concept of home creates ambiguity and confusion as to what constitutes a home for people with an intellectual disability or, given that the concept has a common societal meaning, anyone at all.

Parmenter (1993), in an analysis of emerging trends in the provision of community-based residential options for people with an intellectual disability speaks of home and home ownership. He then goes on to issue the challenge;

...as we move to new community living options let us, from the beginning, set up evaluative mechanisms to help us ensure we do deliver what we claim we are trying to achieve (p. 8).

There are a number of instruments which measure various aspects of the
residential environment (e.g. Feinstein, 1985; Hampson, Judge, & Renshaw, 1984a; Lemke & Moos, 1987; Moos, 1986a, 1987a; Moos & Lemke, 1987; Moos & Moos, 1986; Wolfensberger & Thomas, 1983) however none have been identified as defining and measuring the quality of homeseness in a given setting. Even approaches which appear to address the concept of home, such as Bradley, Caldwell, Brisby, Magee and Whiteside’s (1992) HOME Inventory actually turn out to measure some other factor(s). In the case of Bradley et al, this is the extent of developmental stimulation afforded by a child’s family and household environment.

The concept of quality of life for people with an intellectual disability living in residential service settings and elsewhere has been a major focus of research in recent years both in Australia (Cummins, 1992; Parmenter, 1991) and overseas (Schalock, 1990).

Goode (1990) has defined quality of life as the outcome of the relationships an individual has with others in a given setting. This dependence on the nature of the individual’s social relationships must logically render quality of life a peripheral, and perhaps unrelated, factor to the concept of home by virtue of its inherent discounting of people living alone as having any quality of life in that (solitary) environment.

Coulter, (1990) in a chapter entitled, “Home is the place: Quality of life for young children with developmental disabilities” (in the same volume as Goode, above) defines quality of life as;

...a sense of personal satisfaction with life that is more than just pleasure or happiness and yet something less than “meaning” or fulfilment (p. 61).

Despite the title of his chapter Coulter does not define home, but refers extensively to the family and family relationships as if these were synonyms for home.

Quality of life is a broader concept than home. In as much as a sense of home can contribute to one’s identity, self-esteem and other aspects of living it can be considered an essential part of one’s quality of life. However, at this stage it appears unproductive and confusing to link the concepts of quality of life and home.

O’Brien (1994) has focused attention on the situation of people living in residential service settings. O’Brien takes issue with the pre-occupation he perceives in the literature with facilities and argues that people with a disability should be supported to live in their own homes. He then proposes that the meaning of home for such individuals is contained in three dimensions: a sense of place; control over the home and necessary supports for living there; and, security
of place through tenancy or ownership. These dimensions are described in greater detail (pp. 2-5) to include the following:

**Sense of place:**
- comfort;
- personalisation of the home;
- choice in matters of time use, routines, money, possible improvements, ways of supporting the household economy;
- safety concerns;
- personal security;
- recognition in socially valued roles (e.g. tenant, neighbour);
- provision of a physical and emotional base for life;
- separation from the public; and,
- provision of opportunities for hospitality.

**Control:**
- choice in selection of place;
- choice in selection of co-residents;
- some control over the number of co-residents; and,
- control over funds and support staff.

**Security of place:**
- home ownership;
- pride of ownership;
- personal stability and security; and,
- the valued social role of home owner.

O'Brien's analysis corresponds quite closely to two aspects of Sixsmith's tripartite model of home, namely the personal home and the social home. However, the O'Brien analysis omits consideration of the physical home and assumes ownership is an essential component in the experience of home.

The evolution of residential services for people with an intellectual disability appears to have been driven during the initial move out from institutions into community-based settings by a recognition of what was not a home and the imperative to avoid 'non-home' features. Extensive identification and cataloguing of physical and programmatic features of the residential setting continued the evolutionary momentum without attempting to relate the presence or absence of such features to the experience of the setting as a home by its residents. The concept of quality of life has emerged more recently as a more global approach to evaluating service outcomes experienced by people with an intellectual disability. However, this approach appears too broad or diffused a concept to be used to determine the presence or absence of a sense of home in the lives of people with an intellectual disability.
O'Brien has focused attention on the experience and meaning of home for people with an intellectual disability but his approach contains unsubstantiated assumptions and lacks consideration of important attributes of home as identified in the non disability-specific literature. The issues therefore remain: what is the meaning of home; what are its essential elements; and are residential service settings for people with an intellectual disability, currently authentic homes? If they are not, can those essential elements of home be incorporated into them in order to make them true homes for those people living in them?

4.4 Summary

With the exception of O'Brien’s (1994) work, the approaches taken to date by those examining residential service provision in the intellectual disability area appear fragmented and to have little in common with the mainstream literature concerning the concept of home. The concept of home for non-disabled people has been studied to date in terms of its attributes or component parts and from theoretical and holistic perspectives. On the other hand, the concept of home in relation to residential services for people with an intellectual disability appears to have been fragmented in its conceptualisation and the tension between providing a service and providing a home unresolved. A focus on the residence as a service setting has led to people experiencing a programmed existence and, as a consequence, having very little freedom, autonomy or even privacy to relax in their own homes and follow their own interests. It has also lead to a view that, if non-homelike attributes are removed from the mix of residential setting factors, what remains is a home. Clearly, this is not so. It is akin to saying that the removal of painful stimuli will, of itself, produce pleasure for the person so treated.

An intended outcome of this study is the development of a more integrated and coherent understanding of home from the perspectives of people with an intellectual disability and the general population. In order to achieve this, the views of both groups will be identified and discussed. But first, the method used to gather these views will be explained.
Chapter 5. The Research Question(s)

"(I want the Wizard of Oz) ... to send me back to Kansas," said Dorothy.

"Where is Kansas?" asked the man, in surprise.

"I don't know," replied Dorothy, sorrowfully; "but it is my home, and I'm sure it's somewhere." (Blum, 1960-1965, p. 72).

This chapter briefly describes the considerations which shaped the final research questions.

The review of the available literature highlights two distinctly different approaches to determining the meaning of home. One way is to investigate the overall significance of some particular attribute such as a home's physical features (e.g., Bernard, 1991; Davison et al., 1993; Lawrence, 1987), or privacy (e.g., Altman, 1975; Brown, 1992; Korosec-Serfaty, 1985); or one's identification with home (e.g., Dovcy, 1985; Fried, 1968); or even temporal abstractions concerning the home (e.g., Cherulnik & Bayless, 1986; Werner et al., 1985).

The other approach is to adopt a holistic stance and contemplate the meaning of home derived from the totality of one's experience (e.g., Despres, 1991; Sixsmith, 1986; Smith, 1994). As argued in the office example given previously (p. 27), many places which are clearly not homes can possess one or more attributes of home, even in abundance and of the highest quality, but that does not make the place a home. Therefore, it is logical to conclude that one requires sufficient of the right pieces to constitute a home rather than the individual pieces themselves or even random groups of them. An analogy to this situation can be found in a jigsaw puzzle: the puzzle is only completed when the last piece is put in place. Each piece is important and makes a vital contribution to the total picture and in relating one piece with another. Therefore, although completion of a major segment of the puzzle, such as the sky or the borders of the puzzle, may give a clearer idea of where the other pieces might fit, it is not the complete picture.

The first question to be answered by this study is, therefore:

What are the attributes which together make a place a home? (i.e., What is the big picture?)

To take the jigsaw analogy further, subsidiary questions which are explored from this beginning are:

How do these component attributes relate to each other? (i.e., How do they fit together?)
Are any of these components commonly encountered across a significant proportion of people in the samples? (i.e., What major pieces are typically present?);

Are any components typically clustered together? (i.e. , What common major images are usually found in the picture?);

What are the essential elements of home? (i.e., What are the minimum number of critical pieces and/or clusters necessary to give a gestalt of the finished picture?);

How many components can contribute to the meaning of home? (i.e., How many pieces in the jigsaw?); and,

What are the most common meanings ascribed to a home? (i.e., What is the jigsaw all about, what ‘message’ does it convey?).

Turning to the situation of people with an intellectual disability, the review of the literature has, with few notable exceptions (e.g., Janicki, 1981; O’Brien, 1994; Tizard, 1964), revealed a preoccupation with the physical and service aspects of residential settings rather than their primary function as a home for those who live there. As the literature has shown, the language used to describe residential settings as “homes” of various types and as “home-like” is imprecise at best and, more often than not, deceptive or erroneous. Furthermore, the attribution of the descriptor ‘home’ to something which would not typically be conjured up in most people’s minds by the term further reinforces the perception of people who have an intellectual disability as ‘other’. Many residential service providers who pride themselves on an adherence to the principles of normalisation (Wolfensberger, 1972) and social role valorisation (Wolfensberger, 1983) fail to define clearly their service’s legitimate program purview (i.e., the function it fulfils in an individual’s life) (Wolfensberger & Thomas, 1983) as the creation and maintenance of a home.

The question as to what constitutes a home will be answered by the questions identified earlier. The secondary set of research questions generated by consideration of the situation of people who have an intellectual disability which are of importance to this study are:

What are the components identified by people who have an intellectual disability as contributing to a home?

Which of these components are commonly shared by people who have an intellectual disability when they contemplate the meaning of home?

Are the answers to these questions different from those given by people
who do not have an intellectual disability?

What experiences of home have the sample of people who have an intellectual disability had and do these differ in any significant way from those of people who do not have an intellectual disability?

In summary, what this study seeks to achieve is to identify and compare the conceptualisations of home and the meanings attributed to home by a sample of people who do not have an intellectual disability and a sample of people who do.

The next chapter describes the rationale behind the methodology chosen as the most appropriate to explore these research questions in depth.
Chapter 6. Rationale for the Approach Adopted in this Study

On the fourth day, to her great joy, Oz sent for her, and when she entered the Throne Room he said, pleasantly:
“Sit down, my dear; I think I have found the way to get you out of this country.”
“And back to Kansas?” she asked, eagerly.
“Well, I’m not sure about Kansas,” said Oz; “for I haven’t the faintest notion which way it lies. But the first thing to do is to cross the desert, and then it should be easy to find your way home.”
(Blum, 1900 1965, p. 129).

In this chapter the search for the most appropriate methodology to explore the research questions is discussed and a rationale given for the decision to choose a qualitative approach.

6.1. Rationale for a Qualitative Approach

The central subject of this research is the concept, ‘home’. What constitutes a home; what do people regard as the essential elements which make up a ‘home’; what do people consider is not a home, and why? Fundamentally, what do people mean when they refer to ‘home’? Only when this is understood in a Victorian or Australian context, can an attempt be made to gauge how closely community residential settings for Victorians who have an intellectual disability approximate the norm or how they might endeavour to do so.

The answer to the central question, “What is a home?”, lies in the shared meaning attributed to the phenomenon of ‘home’ by the general population. How can this shared meaning be revealed and explored? Research offers two major approaches to any question; the qualitative and the quantitative. The quantitative approach requires;

…the use of standardized measures so that the varying perspectives and experiences of people can be fitted into a limited number of predetermined response categories to which numbers are assigned (Patton, 1990, p. 14).

This use of predetermined response categories requires that meaning(s) be ascribed to the phenomenon under investigation before the sample is surveyed. Responses to the survey then either confirm or deny the validity of these predetermined meanings. The meanings ascribed a priori constrain the analysis and the range of possible responses.

On the other hand, the qualitative approach offers a more open, non predetermined means of exploring the phenomenon under study. As Patton (1990) has noted,
Qualitative methods permit the evaluator to study selected issues in depth and detail. Approaching fieldwork without being constrained by predetermined categories of analysis contributes to the depth, openness, and detail of qualitative inquiry (p. 13).

It therefore seems logical for two main reasons to use a qualitative approach to investigate the meaning of 'home'. First, in order to provide the richest possible set of data from which to distil that meaning. Second, to capture data as free as possible from the constraint of being forced to fit pre-conceived meanings; data which are not formed from, or shaped by, assumptions of the phenomenon under investigation. A qualitative approach is therefore the most methodologically appropriate one to answer the question, “what is the meaning of 'home'?” and the subsidiary questions arising from it.

Within the general framework of qualitative research, this study will adopt an inductive analysis design in that it will explore the open question, what is the meaning of 'home', rather than test a theoretically derived (deductive) hypothesis. As Patton (1990) explains:

Inductive analysis begins with specific observations and builds towards general patterns. Categories or dimensions of analysis emerge from open-ended observations as the evaluator comes to understand ... patterns that exist in the empirical world under study ... The strategy of inductive designs is to allow the important analysis dimensions to emerge from patterns found in the cases under study without presupposing in advance what the important dimensions will be. The qualitative methodologist attempts to understand the multiple interrelationships among dimensions that emerge from the data without making prior assumptions or specifying hypotheses about the linear or correlative relationships among narrowly defined, operationalized variables ... Where the focus is on individuals, an inductive approach begins with the individual experiences of those individuals, without pigeonholing or delimiting what those experiences will be in advance of fieldwork (data collection) ... general patterns across cases may be identified when case materials are content analyzed, but the initial focus is on full understanding of individual cases before those unique cases arc combined or aggregated. This means that the findings are grounded in specific contexts; (therefore) theories that result from the findings will be grounded in real-world patterns (pp. 44-45).

Thus, this study seeks to develop grounded theory (Glaser & Strauss, 1967; Strauss & Corbin, 1990) concerning the meaning of 'home' based upon an inductive analysis of qualitative data.
In conceptualising what it is that is important to ask and consider in revealing and understanding the empirical world, a phenomenological approach (Baraglotti, 1983; Colarizzi, 1978; Giorghi, 1970; Husserl, 1962, 1973; Oiler, 1982; Pollio, Henley & Thompson, 1997), seems to be of greatest benefit. Patton (1990, p. 69) characterises this form of inquiry as summarised by the question, “What is the structure and essence of this phenomenon for these people?” Husserl (1962) proposed phenomenology as the study of the way in which people describe the world around them and experience things by means of their senses. This takes as its basic proposition that people can only know what they experience. This knowing is derived from perceptions and interpretations which give meaning to, and awareness, of the world around them. However, our perceptions and the meanings we attribute to them are frequently fused to form a world view. People know what their experience is and what it means and this subjective experience is reality as far as each person is concerned (Berger and Luckmann, 1966). This study adopts a phenomenological perspective in that it seeks to determine what people experience and how they interpret the world in regard to the concept of ‘home’. This approach to the study of “home” has been well-argued in the work of Dovey (1979) and it is not intended to repeat those arguments here.

In addition, as Patton (1990) notes:

There is one final dimension that differentiates a phenomenological approach: the assumption that there is an essence or essences to shared experience. These essences are the core meanings mutually understood through a phenomenon commonly experienced. The experiences of different people are bracketed, analyzed, and compared to identify the essences of the phenomenon... The assumption of essence... becomes the defining characteristic of a purely phenomenological study (p. 70).

Despres (1991) in her review of the literature identifies a significant body of work interpreting the meaning of home from a phenomenological perspective. In addition, Sixsmith’s (1986) study on the meaning of home adopted a phenomenological perspective, as did the major portion of Smith’s (1994) study.

To arrive at an understanding of the meaning of ‘home’, it is necessary to discover whether there is some common, shared ‘core’ of meaning inherent in most people’s experience of places or circumstances they consider as home. An essential feature of this study is the attempt to distil the various ‘essences of meaning’ uncovered by the process of inquiry in order to discover the main ingredients and their relative (proportional) contribution to a shared meaning.

In determining the common, shared pattern of meaning of the concept of ‘home’, this study is basic research. The potential contribution to theory arising
from this study is a more complete understanding of the nature of a common and significant physical, social, environmental, economic, metaphysical and personal construct, namely 'home'.

We now proceed to a explanation of the informant sample required for this study.
Chapter 7. The Samples

Having decided to use a qualitative approach to explore the research questions, the important requirement was to construct samples which would be representative of the wider population and enable the distillation of a shared meaning of home, as well as being efficient in terms of using the minimum number of interviews possible. This chapter discusses how this problem was answered. A later chapter describes the selection and recruitment of a suitable sample cohort from the non-intellectually disabled population together with the selection and recruitment of a sample of people with an intellectual disability.

The study required two small and rigorously constructed samples (one comprising/representing people who do not have an intellectual disability, and the other comprising/representing people who have an intellectual disability) because of time and cost constraints. These samples had to give reliable and valid results from the minimum possible number of participants.

The solution of choice to this challenge was considered to be the use of maximum variation sampling (Patton, 1990; Goetz and LeCompte, 1984). This method aims at capturing and describing the central themes or principal outcomes that cut across a great deal of participant variation. Any common patterns that can be distilled out of great variation are of particular value in that they can be logically understood to be core experiences and shared understandings of the phenomenon under study. Thus, if the sample population is comprised of extremes on a number of socio-demographic variables then the perceptions, experiences and meanings they hold in common around the concept of ‘home’ are, logically, fundamental perceptions, meanings and experiences shared by the majority of the population from which the sample is drawn.

As Goetz and LeCompte (1984, p. 74) point out:

There are two basic types of sampling: probability and non-probability sampling. Both types have been used in case study research, but non-probability sampling is the method of choice in qualitative case studies. Briefly, the difference between the two types is that in probability sampling “one can specify for each element of the population the probability that it will be included in the sample,” whereas “in non-probability sampling there is no way of estimating the probability that each element has of being included in the sample and no assurance that every element has some chance of being included” (Chein, 1981, p. 423). Probability sampling (of which simple random sampling is the most familiar example) allows the investigator to generalize results of the study from the sample to the population from which it was drawn. Since generalization in a statistical sense is not a goal of qualitative research, probabilistic sampling is not necessary or even justifiable
in qualitative research (Honigmann, 1982, p. 84).

Thus the most appropriate sampling strategy is non-probabilistic - the most common form of which is called purposive (Chein, 1981, United States General Accounting Office, 1990) or purposeful (Patton, 1980). Purposive sampling is based on the assumption that one wants to discover, understand, gain insight; therefore one needs to select a sample from which one can learn the most. As Merriam (1990) has noted:

Purposive sampling is the same as what Goetz and LeCompte (1984) call criterion-based sampling. Criterion-based sampling requires that one establish the criteria, bases, or standards necessary for units to be included in the investigation; one then finds a sample that matches these criteria (pp. 47-48).

Both Patton (1980) and Goetz and LeCompte (1984) have identified several types of purposeful or criterion-based sampling including maximum variation (Patton, 1980) or what Goetz and LeCompte describe as extreme case sampling where, after the norm for a typical case is established, the researcher seeks instances indicative of the extremes.

Trost (1986) has devised a method of creating a varied sample for the purpose of qualitative data analysis suitable for maximum variation sample construction which, "...will not be representative in a statistical sense, but will guarantee a variation along some of the independent variables" (p. 55). This method was used (the procedures employed are described in a subsequent chapter) to generate both samples. The sample profiles theoretically possible using Trost's method are given, on the following pages, in Tables 2 and 4 while the profile of the actual samples used in this study are given in Tables 3 and 5 respectively. The reasons for the differences between potential and actual samples are discussed in the later chapter on procedures.

The uniqueness of each informant in the resultant samples obtained for this study, and particularly the non-disabled informant sample, address the criticisms of Despres (1991), who noted in her review of the literature:

The majority of the reviewed studies have investigated the meaning of home in the context of nuclear families -- married couples with young children -- tending toward middle class standards and living in owned single-family detached houses (p. 102).

Despres then went on to argue for the recognition of alternate household compositions such as single parent families, childless couples, adults living alone, and renters, in research on the meaning of home. Furthermore, she argued for research on the meaning of home from the perspectives of "non-traditional
Table 2

Analysis of Characteristics of Non-intellectually Disabled Informants Required

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>RENTING</th>
<th>LIVING WITH ONE OR MORE</th>
<th>PURCHASING</th>
<th>LIVING WITH ONE OR MORE</th>
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<tbody>
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<td>UNEMP&lt;10K</td>
<td>EMPLOY&gt;45K</td>
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<tr>
<td>UNEMP&lt;10K</td>
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<td>65</td>
<td>18/25</td>
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<td>EMPLOY&gt;45K</td>
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</table>

Key:

Renting = renting dwelling in which subject currently lives

Purchasing = purchasing/own dwelling in which subject currently lives

Living alone

Living with one or more other people

Unemp<10K = Employed outside dwelling less than 21 hrs/week, income less than $10,000 p.a.

Employ>45K = Employed outside dwelling more than 21 hrs/week, income more than $45,000 p.a.

18/25 = aged between 18 and 25 years

65+ = aged over 65 years

C = living with one or more children under 16 years

NC = not living with children

A = born within Australia

O = born Overseas

NB: * indicates cells unlikely to be filled with subjects for either logical or empirical reasons.
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<th>Criteria</th>
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<td>D. Living alone</td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

NB: Informants 16 and 17 differ in that Informant 16 was a long-term resident in his current dwelling whereas Informant 17 had only recently relocated to his current dwelling from his previous dwelling of many years.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Householder status</th>
<th>Presence of others</th>
<th>Employment/income</th>
<th>Presence of children &gt;16yrs</th>
<th>Place of birth</th>
<th>Likely?</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>18-25 years</td>
<td>renting</td>
<td>+ living alone</td>
<td>+ unemployed/earning &lt;$12K</td>
<td>+ not living with children</td>
<td>+ Overseas born</td>
<td>??</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18-25 years</td>
<td>renting</td>
<td>+ living alone</td>
<td>+ employed/earning &gt;$45K</td>
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<td>+ Australian born</td>
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</tr>
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<td>+ employed/earning &gt;$45K</td>
<td>+ living with children</td>
<td>+ Australian born</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
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<td>renting</td>
<td>+ living with others</td>
<td>+ employed/earning &gt;$45K</td>
<td>+ living with children</td>
<td>+ Overseas born</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
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<td>renting</td>
<td>+ living with others</td>
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<td>+ not living with children</td>
<td>+ Overseas born</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
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<td>renting</td>
<td>+ living with others</td>
<td>+ unemployed/earning &lt;$12K</td>
<td>+ living with children</td>
<td>+ Overseas born</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
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<td>renting</td>
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<td>+ not living with children</td>
<td>+ Australian born</td>
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<tr>
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<td>renting</td>
<td>+ living with others</td>
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<td>+ Overseas born</td>
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<tr>
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<td>+ Australian born</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
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<td>renting</td>
<td>+ living with others</td>
<td>+ employed/earning &gt;$45K</td>
<td>+ living with children</td>
<td>+ Overseas born</td>
<td>??</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&gt; 64 years</td>
<td>renting</td>
<td>+ living alone</td>
<td>+ employed/earning &gt;$45K</td>
<td>+ not living with children</td>
<td>+ Australian born</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>&gt; 64 years</td>
<td>renting</td>
<td>+ living alone</td>
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<td>+ not living with children</td>
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<tr>
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<td>renting</td>
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<td>&gt; 64 years</td>
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<td>+ living with others</td>
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<td>+ not living with children</td>
<td>+ Overseas born</td>
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<td>&gt; 64 years</td>
<td>renting</td>
<td>+ living with others</td>
<td>+ employed/earning &gt;$45K</td>
<td>+ living with children</td>
<td>+ Australian born</td>
<td>??</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&gt; 64 years</td>
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<td>+ living with others</td>
<td>+ employed/earning &gt;$45K</td>
<td>+ living with children</td>
<td>+ Overseas born</td>
<td>??</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&gt; 64 years</td>
<td>renting</td>
<td>+ living with others</td>
<td>+ unemployed/earning &lt;$12K</td>
<td>+ living with children</td>
<td>+ Australian born</td>
<td>??</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&gt; 64 years</td>
<td>renting</td>
<td>+ living with others</td>
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<td>+ Australian born</td>
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<tr>
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<td>+ living with others</td>
<td>+ employed/earning &gt;$45K</td>
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<td>+ Australian born</td>
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<tr>
<td>&gt; 64 years</td>
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<td>+ living with children</td>
<td>+ Overseas born</td>
<td>??</td>
</tr>
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<td>Criteria</td>
<td>Informant A</td>
<td>B</td>
<td>C</td>
<td>D</td>
<td>E</td>
<td>F</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>----------------------------------------------</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. Age 18-25</td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
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<td>X</td>
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<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td>3. Renting</td>
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<td>X</td>
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<tr>
<td>Owner/purchaser*</td>
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<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Live alone</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
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<td>X</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>With others</td>
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<td>5. Not employed</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Employed &lt;21 hours</td>
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<td>Employed &gt;20</td>
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<tr>
<td>6. Income &lt;$12,000 pa</td>
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<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
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<td>X</td>
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<tr>
<td>Income &gt;$12,000 pa</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Living with child(ren)</td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
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<tr>
<td>Not living with child(ren)</td>
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<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Australian born</td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Overseas born</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. Previously in city residential serv.</td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Currently in city residential serv.</td>
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<td>X</td>
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<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
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<tr>
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<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. Previously in seg. congregate care</td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Currently in seg congregate care</td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
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<tr>
<td>Neither applies</td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*They or their family members with whom they live are purchasing/own the house in which they currently live.
populations such as single-parent, divorced and widowed women” (p. 103). This argument can be extended to include people who have an intellectual disability as a 'non-traditional population' also.

The sample of the non-disabled population used in this study is also more representative of the broader society than: (a) the sample used in Sixsmith’s (1986) study of 22 postgraduate students ranging in age from 22 to 29 (14 female, 8 male), all without children and living in university accommodation on campus at the time of her study; and, (b) Smith’s (1994) sample of 11 couples and one single female in which one member of each couple and the single female were students in a university psychology student subject pool.
Chapter 8. The Interview Instrument

One of the issues which all qualitative researchers have to address is the extent to which they impose a framework on their informants and their answers to the topic under consideration. The more structured the interview, the more constrained the informant's answers and the more the researcher's frame of reference suppresses that of the informant. In this chapter this issue is explored and the framework for the interviews revealed and explained. The actual conduct of the interviews with each of the samples is described in a later chapter together with a description of the interview process and the manner in which specific issues were addressed.

8.1. Structure

As Patton (1990) has noted: "Qualitative interviewing begins with the assumption that the perspective of others is meaningful, knowable, and able to be made explicit" (p. 278). He goes on to observe:

The task for the interviewer is to make it possible for the person being interviewed to bring the interviewer into his or her world. The quality of the information obtained during an interview is largely dependent on the interviewer (p. 279, italics in original).

There are three main approaches to interview design in qualitative research (Patton, 1990): the informal conversational interview which is the most open-ended and relatively unstructured; the interview guide which is a list of questions or issues to be followed in the interview; and, the standardised, open-ended interview in which the exact questions and their sequence is pre-determined (including possible questions seeking elaboration of responses) and followed for all interviews.

The design of the interview for both sets of informants followed the general interview guide approach (Patton, 1990; US General Accounting Office, 1990). In this way, the basic framework of the interview was determined ahead of time, while the opportunity to follow emergent information fully in order to uncover additional meanings, remained uninhibited.

The purpose of the interview was to identify the perspectives, meanings and experiences each informant had of the concept of 'home'. Therefore, the interview strategy adopted was the strategy of choice because it:

Made best use of a once-only, time-limited interview with each person;

Asked essentially the same questions of each informant, particularly as a maximum variation sampling method was being used where the common patterns identified across the sample were of critical significance;
Allowed for exploration of unanticipated themes which emerged during the course of the interview;

Made the instrument available for review by the University Ethics Committee;

Made the analysis of data easier because it grouped questions and responses in the same fashion for each interview.

As a further safeguard for the reliability of the data, all interviews were tape recorded and transcribed in full. Informants were given a copy of the transcript of their interview and asked to check that it accurately reflected their views and to amend it where necessary. If any informant was unable to read the transcript, a copy of the interview tape recording was supplied instead. In this way people were able to confirm the accuracy of the record of their interview.

8.2. Content

A significant body of theory already exists concerning aspects of the nature and meaning of home. While this knowledge should not be ignored it was not the intention of this study merely to confirm what is already known, albeit from an Australian perspective. In order to provide sufficient framework for the design of interview questions which enabled the exploration of the phenomenon under study in some depth and detail while avoiding replication of existent studies, it was decided to create a framework drawing on some basic notions of the essence of humanness and semantics. Accordingly a framework was constructed using Plato's divisions of the human psyche (i.e., cognition/thinking, affect/feeling, and behaviour/doing) on one axis and sources of meaning (i.e., definition, synonyms, antonyms, common usage, previous experience, and personally synthesised definition) on the other axis. The framework provided a precise focus for a series of questions covering each of the eighteen distinct aspects of home identified (see Table 6).

This approach enabled past, present and possible future homes to be considered by the informants including 'non-homes', a conceptualisation found most illuminating by Smith (1994) using a critical incident approach in her study. The only other addition to the framework was a question exploring the impact of any burglary upon informants. This aspect was included in order to explore the antonym of privacy (non-privacy, if you like) an attribute considered central to the meaning of home by Altman (1975) and Altman and Werner (1985). (A full set of questions commonly used for all interviews is given in Appendix C).

The resultant question list was open-ended enough to provoke a wide range of answers while remaining focused on specific aspects of the topic under consideration. It was also succinct and enabled an efficient collection of rich data
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Plato's divisions of the human psyche</th>
<th>Cognition/ thinking</th>
<th>Affect/ feeling</th>
<th>Behaviour/ doing</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| **Definition**                      | What, to you, is a home? How do you come to perceive it that way?  
Do you regard where you currently live as a home - why/why not?  
Can you describe each of the rooms and the outside of your current/most recent home? | What is it about a home that makes it feel a home for you?  
Are any of the areas in or around your current/most recent home 'special' for you? In what way(s)? | What do you do at home that you don't, or rarely do, anywhere else?  
How do you use the various areas in your current/most recent home? |
| **Synonyms**                        | Can you identify some places which you regard as 'homes'?  
What qualities make/made them homes? | What is it about other places that makes/made them feel like homes?  
What do you like about them? | What do you do to make other places seem more like home to you? |
| **Antonyms**                        | Can you identify places which you did/do not regard as homes? Why were/were they not homes? | What is it about a place that gives you the feeling that it's not a home?  
What do you dislike about them? | What do you tend to do if you find a place is not a home to you?  
What do you do away from your home that you don't do at home? |
| **Common usage**                    | When you use the term 'home' what does it mean to you?  
Can you think of some other ways in which the word 'home' is used? | Can you describe for me the way(s) a home should feel? | What sorts of things do you do when you're at home?  
What areas would you use to socialise with visitors/friends/close friends? |
| **Previous experience**             | Of all the places you have regarded as homes, which gave you the strongest sense of home and why? | What sort of feel did that home have, can you describe it? | What sorts of things did you do there which contributed to its sense of home? |
| **Personally synthesised definition** | If you lost your current/most recent home (say, because of fire) what memories would you have of it? What would you miss most about it? | If you lost your current/most recent home (say, because of fire) how would you feel?  
Why would you feel that way? | If you were shifted to another city, how would you set about creating a home for yourself, what would you do? |
in a relatively short interview. The same questions, with some adaptation to suit individual circumstances, were used for both the non-disabled and intellectually disabled groups of informants. In a number of interviews of people with an intellectual disability some of the questions had to be broken-up into a series of ‘sub-questions’ in order to reduce the complexity or degree of abstraction of the original question (see chapter dealing with the interview procedures, below).
Chapter 9. Procedures

9.1. Recruitment of Informants

9.1.1. Informants without an intellectual disability

9.1.1.1. Sample construction.

Trost’s (1986) method of creating a varied sample for the purpose of qualitative data analysis consists of seven steps. The first step is to identify a number of “independent” variables relevant to the purpose of the study. The identification of these variables can be made using the available theoretical literature, one’s own experience with the phenomena under examination, or some other relevant measure. After this, the list is simplified leaving only those which are more readily recognisable in order to make for ease of administration of criteria in initial selection of potential informants. Important criteria which may be less immediately recognisable, such as income status, would remain criteria to be used at a second level of screening. Next, a decision is made as to how much each variable should be sub-divided and where the cut-off points are to lie. With maximum variation sampling this is somewhat easier with respect to certain variables, for example age, where one would choose polar positions (youth - old age). The process then involves creating a table showing a different cell representing each possible combination of variables. Trost (1986) recommends that “For most purposes 30 to 40 cells are both sufficient and manageable” (p 55). Finally, Trost (1986) points out that a number of cells may, logically, be empty (for example; people living with one other person x households with two or more children) while others might be empirically empty and therefore a waste of time to try and fill (for example, informants with infants x elderly informants). Lastly, each cell is ‘filled’ with an informant or case to construct a sample in which each informant represents the combination of traits for that cell and may also represent traits identified, in part or in total, in other cells. As Trost (1986) explains:

“The sample will not be representative in a statistical sense, but will guarantee a variation along some of the independent variables (p 55).”

A number of socio-demographic variables suggest themselves from the literature. Some of the major variables noted in the review of the literature are:

- the difference between tenancy and ownership (NHSS/ABS, 1991);
- the number of people sharing the same dwelling (Altman, 1975; Brown, 1992);
- the influence of employment outside the home (NHSS/ABS, 1991; Pennartz, 1986);
- income levels (Czikzentmihaly & Rochberg-Halton, 1981; Guiliani,
1987; The Age, 1988);
- the age of residents (Davison, Kendig, Stephens & Merrill, 1993; Kron, 1983; Rubenstein, 1989);
- the presence or absence of children in the home (Fenstermaker Berk, 1980);
- gender (Ahrentzen, Levine & Michelson, 1989; Madigan & Munro, 1991; Wekerle, Peterson & Morley, 1980);
- and differences between cultures and countries experienced by those establishing home in a new country (Bernard, 1991; Lawrence, 1987; Smith, 1994).

9.1.1.2. Recruitment.

In light of the above considerations, the sample population was identified by the following means.

Criteria for selection of informants were devised using the following extremes of commonly encountered major variables surrounding residential status. To be considered for inclusion in the study informants had to be currently living in a house or flat/apartment in the greater Melbourne metropolitan area and be;

- renting, or purchasing/own the dwelling in which they currently live;
- living alone, or with one or more people;
- currently not in paid employment outside the home for more than 20 hours per week with a personal annual income from all sources of less than $12,000, or in paid employment of 21 or more hours per week outside the home with a personal income from all sources of more than $45,000;
- aged between 18 and 25 years, or over 64 years of age;
- living with one or more children, or not living with any children;
- people born within Australia, or people born overseas.

In addition, at least 33%, and no more than 66%, of participants chosen for interview had to be male.

Using Trost's (1986) method a table showing these variables can be constructed to identify a series of 'cells,' one for each informant required (see Table 2). It should be noted that of the 64 cells mathematically available, only a maximum of 48 are likely to be filled by informants for either logical or empirical reasons. Of these, 12 situations where the informant is under 25 but earning over $45,000 per annum are relatively rare and therefore very hard to find as are the (potentially) eight cases where the informant is aged 65 or over and living with children. This leaves a more likely total of 28 potential informants.

It should be noted that these criteria represent extremes on a continuum for each attribute rather than an attempt to provide a complete range of informant
categories across each attribute. It should also be noted that dwellings other than a free-standing or semi-detached house or flat or apartment have been excluded (e.g., caravans, boarding houses, hotels, motels, barracks, etc.).

The initial approach to recruiting informants involved examining a demographic atlas of greater Melbourne compiled from the 1991 ABS Census. Areas above average on a number of key variables were identified (viz. home ownership, household size, income level, age, presence of children and country of birth). Detailed ABS maps of these areas were then obtained and the individual collector's districts comprising 200 dwellings each, highest in the incidence of certain key variables were identified. It was then a simple matter of overlaying a number of these areas of concentration to identify those districts which contained the widest range of variables in high concentration (e.g. high levels of home ownership plus high income levels plus a concentration of people over 64 years of age plus living with others).

By this method, seven census collector's districts were chosen and an initial questionnaire seeking demographic details according to the variables listed above was delivered to each household in each of the districts. This questionnaire was accompanied by a covering letter explaining the nature and purpose of the study and inviting the reader to indicate a willingness to participate by completing the enclosed consent form and demographic details questionnaire and returning them in the reply-paid envelope supplied (see Appendix A for examples of these). In addition to this, potential informants were given a written assurance that their name and personal details would be recorded by the researcher only and that they would be assigned a code number which would be used to identify all records of their interview. They were also assured that the list of names and codes would be kept separate from the data gathered and secured. Furthermore, their surname would not be mentioned on any record of the interview and data would be presented only in aggregated form or as unattributed quotations. The letter also gave contact details for both the researcher and his supervisor.

Potential informants were offered thirty dollars to compensate for any inconvenience involved in their participation in the study, should they be selected for interview.

Altogether some 1,400 letters were hand delivered to individual households in seven collector's districts. After returning any unusable offers from people who did not fit the selection criteria, ten potential informants remained. Each of these was contacted by the researcher and a mutually convenient time and place arranged for an interview. None of these people subsequently chose to withdraw from the study or failed to complete the interview. All of these interviews took place in the individual's homes.

In order to recruit an adequate number of informants between the ages of 18 and 25 years, the study was advertised on several student notice boards at a
Melbourne university campus. Any students making further inquiries were given a copy of the explanatory letter by the researcher together with a copy of the consent form and demographic details questionnaire and invited to read these in their own time and chose whether or not to respond. A further four informants were recruited in this fashion. The interviews for these four took place in the researcher’s office.

After implementing both of the recruitment strategies described above, it became obvious that as a recruitment method, it was inefficient. The use of a marketing consultant was considered to be a more efficient and effective way to recruit informants, particularly those in hard to find combinations of variables (e.g., aged over 64, plus living with children, plus overseas born) and, after obtaining ethical clearance on this, two marketing recruitment agencies were commissioned to find potential informants. As a result of this method of recruitment a further seven informants were interviewed, all in their own homes.

As a result of the approaches described above, a total of 21 interviews was recorded out of a potential of 28 likely informants. However, the sample interviewed did include: two people over the age of 64 living with a child and two people under the age of 26 earning $45,000 or more per annum. In addition, two informants with the same set of variables were interviewed (i.e., over 64, plus income more than $45,000 per annum, plus home owner, plus living with one or more others, plus Australian born, plus not living with children) however one of these informants had been living in the same house for many years while the other had only just moved into a unit after selling the family home of many years. It was therefore felt that these two informants were likely to be sufficiently different in perspectives for both to be included in the sample. Subsequent interviews confirmed this to be the case.

Of the 21 interviews, eight informants were male (38%). Details of their individual profiles are given in Table 3.

While each of the people interviewed was unique in one or more of their variables, a number of potentially obtainable informants were not able to be recruited for this study. Details of these possible, but unobtained informants are given in Table 4. Of the 27 identified, 23 are considered to be highly unlikely to obtain because of the combination of variables involved.

After taking all the above considerations into account, this study was successful in recruiting informants in 13 highly likely sets of variables (with two in one set - see above) and seven from unlikely sets of variables. It failed to recruit five likely and 23 unlikely informants from a potential 48 sets of informant variables. Given that this study sought to use maximum variation sampling and that, with the exception noted, all informants were different in one or more significant home-related variables, the sample obtained was considered both sufficient and satisfactory for the purposes of this study. It was a more
heterogeneous, purposive sample than the only other Australian study to date on the topic of home (Smith, 1994) in the relevant section of which, all interviewees were either first year psychology students or their partners. The sample was slightly smaller in the number than Smith's study (21 informants compared with Smith's 23). The use of full transcripts as raw data rather than the use of interview notes (as was the case in Smith's study) also made the use of the sample in this study more rigorous.

9.1.2. The Sample With an Intellectual Disability

9.1.2.1. Sample construction

One of the major outcomes of this study was intended to be a comparison of the perceptions, meanings and experiences of 'home' by people who have an intellectual disability with the perceptions, etc., of those who do not. Determining the composition of the sample of people who have an intellectual disability was, in one way, bounded by the nature of their disability as defined in the Victorian Intellectually Disabled Persons' Services Act, 1986, (viz: Intellectual disability refers to significantly sub-average general intellectual functioning existing concurrently with deficits in adaptive behaviour and manifested during the developmental period). Generally, the greater the degree of disability the less able the person is to deal in abstractions and the less likely the person is to be able to converse freely. For this reason it was considered prudent to limit the sample to people who have an intellectual disability who were identified by carers or service providers who knew them well as able to formulate and describe their own feelings and subjective opinions on their domicile.

Given this degree of expressive ability, a maximum variation sample can be constructed. The criteria for the sample is similar to that for the non-disabled sample in that it comprises people who currently:

- are renting either as tenants or sub-tenants, or they or their family members with whom they live are purchasing/own the house in which they currently live; and,
- live alone, or with one or more people whether related or in a relationship or not; and,
- are not engaged in either unpaid or paid employment¹ outside the home at all, or are engaged in either unpaid or paid employment outside the home for less than 21 hours per week, or are in paid or unpaid employment of 21 or more hours per week outside the home; and,
- are aged between 18 and 25 years, or between 25 and 65 years of age, or are over 65 years of age; and,

¹ Paid employment would here be taken to include occupation for which any payment was received. This would include sheltered work situations where the person received minimal or token payment, or even 'payment' of some portion of their own pension money.
- have an annual income of less than $12,000 per year, or have an income over $12,000 per year, and,
- are living alone, or with one or more others; and,
- are living with one or more children, or do not live with any children; and,
- are people born within Australia, or people born overseas; and,
- are former residents of residential service settings in the community, or are currently living in a residential service settings in the community, or neither applies; and,
- are former residents of a segregated congregate care residential services, or are currently living in a segregated congregate care residential services, or neither applies.

In addition, at least 33%, and no more than 66%, of participants should be male.

These criteria differ from the criteria for the non-intellectually-disabled sample in the following areas:

Annual income. Virtually all people who have an intellectual disability are eligible for the Commonwealth Disability Support Pension ($8,637 p.a. at the time of conducting this study). Other allowances such as a mobility allowance may also be received, however, it would be highly unlikely for the pension and allowances to total more than $10,000 per annum. Because of the nature of their disability it is also highly unlikely that a person with an intellectual disability would have an annual income of $45,000 or, if they did, it would most likely be under the control of some form of trustee or administrator. For these reasons the financial criteria have been revised for this sample.

The experience of living in either a community-based residential service setting or a segregated congregate care setting in the past or at present is one which is not common to non-disabled people. It is more likely to be an experience of people with an intellectual disability, either for a prolonged period or as short term respite service. It was therefore considered important to identify people who may live, or may have lived, in residential service settings as this experience may or may not be considered a home to them. Whether it was regarded as home or not, this study is intended to capture their thoughts and feelings on the topic.

Using Trost's (1986) method a table showing these variables can be constructed to identify a series of 'cells', one for each informant required. This would generate 5,184 unique 'cells'. It should be noted however, that of these 5,184 cells mathematically possible, many would be unable to be filled for logical or practical reasons. For example, informants living on their own cannot logically also be sharing their dwelling with children. Furthermore, given the nature of
intellectual disability, it is highly unlikely that informants will be found who match other criteria such as a home owner over age 65 and living alone.

For reasons which are detailed both above and below, it is difficult to recruit vast numbers of people who have an intellectual disability and match a distinct set of variables identified using Trost's (1986) approach. Furthermore, given the qualitative nature of this study it was not considered either necessary or desirable to attempt to do so. The final sample used was numerically close to that used for the non-intellectually disabled sample and each informant differed enough from all of the others to ensure the required variation across the sample. Table 5 details the profile of the informants.

This approach is a slightly different form of maximum variation sampling (Patton, 1980) identified by Taylor and Bogdan (1981) as analytic induction. As Taylor and Bogdan explain it:

In using analytic induction, researchers generally choose subjects in such a way as to maximise the variation in their samples. Throughout one's research, one looks for subjects who are different from those one has already interviewed or observed in an effort to cover all sectors of a population. This procedure enables researchers to identify universal patterns among their subjects or, where appropriate, typologies reflecting the range of differences among them (p. 78).

While at a general level of analysis, similarities in profile appear to exist between informants B, M, N, and R, and also between informants D, F, and I., and again with informants K and Q, further examination introduces unique variations sufficient to warrant their inclusion. In the BMNR cohort, only one person shares a house with just one other - a person of the opposite sex who also has an intellectual disability; another one, and only one, has their own room in a setting shared with more than six other people who have an intellectual disability; another one, and only one, shares a room with another person in a setting shared with more than six other people who have an intellectual disability; and another one, and only one, shares a community residential unit with three others of the same sex. The DEL cohort differ in that: one lives in a house in which a younger sibling also lives; one lives in a house in which two older siblings, one male, one female, live; and one lives in a house in which only one older sibling of the same sex lives. As regards the KQ pair, one lives for part of the week in one location and part of the week in another location on a regular basis while the other remains at the one location for the whole week.

These subtle, but important, differences between members of this sample were considered sufficient to justify their inclusion in the study without compromise to the rigour of the methodology.
9.1.2.2. Recruitment

Generation of all but two of the sample group of people with an intellectual disability was by indirect approach to agencies providing services to people with a mild intellectual disability who were likely to be suitable informants for the study. One person not recruited in this fashion was a person known to the researcher who expressed an interest in participating in the study during social conversation with the researcher around what he was currently doing. After being given a copy of the plain language statement and the consent form the informant agreed to an interview which was subsequently conducted at the informant's home. The other person was a friend of the researcher who was aware of the study and had spoken to the person about it. As a result, this person indicated a willingness to consider becoming involved in the study and a copy of the plain language statement and consent form was forwarded to them, and returned to the researcher when completed, via the friend. Contact was then made directly between the researcher and the informant and a suitable time, date and location arranged for the interview which took place at the informant's dwelling.

Contact with the remainder was achieved by contacting senior managers at two large day services for people with an intellectual disability located in different regions of suburban Melbourne. The nature of the study and the need for suitably articulate and willing informants was explained to each separately. The nature and likely duration of any person's involvement was also explained as was the payment of $30 to compensate all informants (whether those with an intellectual disability or those without one) and the manager's assistance requested in publicising the study. Both managers agreed to assist.

At one agency a covering letter from the agency expressing support for the study and encouraging participation was attached to a copy of the plain language statement and consent form (both suitably modified for easier reading and comprehension by people who have a mild to moderate intellectual disability - see Appendix B). After an initial talk to potential informants by agency staff explaining the study, interested service users considered suitable as informants by agency staff were given the documentation to take home with them and discuss with whomever the individual chose. Completed consent forms were collected by the agency and the researcher contacted to advise how many people were willing to be interviewed. The advantages of such an approach were: the research was first explained by someone known to the potential informant; confidentiality was maintained until and unless the person agreed to participate; the person did not feel pressured or obligated to participate; and, stress at the initial interview was reduced as it only proceeded at the request of the informant. The disadvantages of this approach (i.e., the potential informant's response being influenced by their relationship with the third person; the lack of full control over the initial presentation of the research by the researcher; the researcher's absolute reliance on the intermediary to actually present the research to the potential participants
and faithfully convey their response to the researcher; and, the risk of having the research identified in the minds of potential informants as being conducted by the third person’s human service agency where that person is employed by an agency used by the potential informant [Booth & Booth, 1994]) were considered to be outweighed by the advantages. These interviews were then arranged by the researcher in consultation with an agency staff member at an appropriate and mutually convenient time and date when the informant would be at the agency.

The other agency operated at two locations. At one location a centre-based program was conducted while the other was mainly the base from which service users went to a variety of agency-auspiced jobs in the general community. The researcher was given the opportunity to meet with a suitable group of service users at each location and explain the purpose of the research and the form, confidential nature, and anticipated duration of the interview, and answer any questions on those matters and how individuals could become involved as informants, if they wished. Copies of the plain language statement and consent form were left with any person requesting a set. At the centre-based program a covering letter from the agency expressing support for the study was attached to the plain language statement and consent form and given to selected service users to take home and discuss with anyone they wished. Those choosing to participate returned the completed consent form to the agency staff at their usual location and the agency manager contacted the researcher to arrange a suitable time and date for him to go to the agency to conduct the interviews. The procedure then followed the same course as that adopted in the other agency.

No offer of involvement by any person with an intellectual disability was refused. This was not an indiscriminate acceptance of any person with an intellectual disability as an informant but rather a wish on the researcher’s part not to further reject any person who might previously have experienced significant or repeated social rejection. Rejection of an offer of assistance by a person with an intellectual disability was felt to be unconscionable, if not unethical, by the researcher. Had any person volunteered and their interview presented any problems for the researcher for any reason (e.g., lack of understandable speech or duplication of the profile of another informant) then the interview would have been conducted and used, as much as possible, in compiling the report of this study. As it turned out, all interviews were acceptable for the purposes of this study.

9.2. Interview Procedures and Issues

9.2.1 The Non-Intellectually Disabled Sample

Informants volunteering to be interviewed were contacted by telephone. The purpose of this call was to introduce the interviewer personally, to confirm their continuing willingness to participate in the study and to arrange a convenient time, place and date for the interview. The choice of venue was always left at the
discretion of the informant. The conversation also allowed the interviewer the opportunity of making a preliminary assessment of the informant’s level of language proficiency and clarity of speech.

Four interviews were conducted in the researcher’s office as this suited the particular informants. In all of these cases only the informant and the researcher were present for the interview. Two of the four interviews were with informants previously known to the researcher. The other two interviews were with informants previously unmet. In all cases light refreshments were offered to the informants but declined, and preliminary pleasantries concerning the weather or comments of a similar nature were briefly exchanged before proceeding.

The remaining interviews were all conducted in the informant’s residences at their suggestion. The researcher made a point of offering to meet in some area of ‘neutral territory’ (e.g., a coffee shop, public library, or at Deakin University) however informants preferred to be interviewed where they obviously felt most comfortable. From the researcher’s point of view it was important that the informants felt as much at ease during the interview as possible so the individual informant’s preference for any particular location for the interview was facilitated without question. In order to promote this sense of ease and relative informality more, the researcher made a point of dressing casually. In four of the interviews with this cohort other people were present during all or part of the interview with the agreement of the informant. In three cases the other person was the informant’s spouse or partner while in the fourth case it was the informant’s infant children who were present.

In the case of the interviews conducted in the informant’s residence sometimes refreshments were offered to the researcher but most often not. Unless the informant was also partaking, these offers were politely declined. An initial and brief exchange of pleasantries was undertaken usually about the weather or the attractiveness of the neighbourhood, garden, house, or some other aspect of the environment.

In both sets of circumstances the initial preamble to the interview was minimal. There were several reasons for this: the recruitment process for the interview was semi-contractual in nature with formal written consent and demographic details being sent to the researcher and an appointment being made for a specific time, place and date for the conduct of the interview; the researcher was conscious of the undertaking given in the recruitment letter that the interview would take “up to an hour” of the informant’s time and did not want impose on informants by enraging their time commitment; the researcher had not previously met the informant and would probably not meet them again after the interview and so it was not seen as the beginning phase of a longer term relationship which would require a period of “getting to know each other”; and, the researcher was reluctant to engage informants in too much conversation about their house or its environment outside the recorded interview in case valuable data was revealed but
The approach taken was therefore somewhat functional and 'to the point'. Informants were thanked for their time and willingness to assist in the research, the nature of the study was briefly explained and the interview question framework described in broad terms. The informants were reminded of the specific conditions of their voluntary consent and their right to withdraw at any time or to refuse to answer any question without having to explain their reasons for doing so reaffirmed. In view of the personal nature of home and the sensitivity of meanings and memories the interview might have evoked, all informants were reminded at the commencement of the interview of their right not to answer any or all questions, and to make whatever response they felt was appropriate to any question. The researcher was also required to remain sensitive to the informant's psychological/emotional comfort levels throughout the interview.

Payment of $30 as compensation for their inconvenience in undertaking the interview and reviewing the transcript was made at the commencement of the interview by passing over a Deakin University envelope with the researcher's business card attached and containing $30 in bank notes. Only one informant declined to accept this money for the reason that it was "not necessary". It was made clear to informants at that time by the researcher that the payment was not conditional on their completing the interview, answering all or any questions or revising the interview transcript.

Informants were advised that the draft transcript of the interview would be forwarded to them for them to amend in any way they saw fit and that this amended transcript would be the one used in the study.

None of the informants declined to continue with the interview or subsequently declined to answer any question. After this, the tape recorder was produced and the informant asked again if they agreed to the interview being tape recorded. All agreed to this and the interview commenced. The first question invariably was the obvious one of what, to the informant, is a home. The questions concerning any experience of burglary or the possibility of the loss of the residence through fire were left until the conclusion of the interview in order to allow the informant to feel as comfortable as possible with the interview and the researcher before broaching such potentially sensitive topics. The interviews took between 35 minutes and an hour from the initial greeting to their completion.

Typed transcripts of all interviews were posted to the individuals concerned for their comment or for any amendments they might care to make. Only one informant chose to avail themselves of the opportunity to make revisions and did so by adding several extensions to answers which made their meaning clearer. The transcript was amended accordingly.

9.2.2. The Sample With an Intellectual Disability
The two informants with an intellectual disability who were recruited independently of a day program were interviewed at their respective places of residence. The remaining informants with an intellectual disability were all interviewed in private at their day program at a time and date mutually convenient to them, the day program staff and the researcher. No other person was present during any of the interviews with informants who had an intellectual disability.

As all the interviews were conducted in settings where the researcher was a visitor it was not possible to offer any refreshments to the informants. All informants, with one exception, were as previously unknown to the researcher as he was to them. It was therefore not possible to spend time establishing anything other than a superficial, but adequate, rapport with informants during the preliminary stages of the interview.

The researcher dressed casually for all of these interviews in order to minimise any perceived status differential between himself and the informants and to avoid looking like a member of the agency’s staff (where interviews took place at the informant’s day program) or an authority figure of any sort. It did not matter if the informant was more formally dressed than the researcher however, it could adversely affect the interview by making the establishment of rapport more difficult or putting the informant socially at ill-case if the reverse was the case.

The reasons for the initial preamble to the interview being minimal were basically the same as those underpinning the interviews with informants who did not have an intellectual disability. Additional considerations were that it was felt that a prolonged general conversation could be of limited value as many people with an intellectual disability have poor social skills in developing and maintaining a conversation, or, are shy or hesitant in spontaneously conversing with someone they’ve only just met. Alternately, such a conversation could give rise to confusion in the informant’s mind as to why they were there and what it was all about. For all of these reasons it was felt prudent to get to the interview as soon as seemed appropriate.

This was done by the researcher introducing himself and thanking the informant for their time and willingness to assist, and explaining where the researcher was from and why he was there seeking to talk with them. The researcher’s independence from the day program or any other service agency with which the informant might be involved was stressed as was the confidentiality of anything said to the researcher by the informant. The purpose of the research and its potential outcomes were simply explained. Informants were told that an intended outcome of the research was the improvement of residential services for people with an intellectual disability - an aim all could relate to, either because of their own experiences or because of their knowledge of others who lived in such settings. The sorts of issues to be discussed were broadly identified and the willingness of the informant to be interviewed was re-confirmed.
Informants were then given an envelope identical to that given to the non-disabled informants containing $30 for their time and any inconvenience experienced. None refused this payment. Informants were reassured that they did not have to undertake the interview or answer any questions, if they did not wish to do so. They were told it was "their interview" and that, as far as the researcher was concerned, they were "the boss" of the situation. After this, the tape recorder was produced and the informant asked again if they minded the interview being tape recorded. All agreed to this. The commitment to provide the informant with a copy of the tape recording of their interview as soon as possible after its occurrence was reconfirmed and the interview commenced. The offer of a copy of the tape rather than a typed transcript was chosen for interviews with people who had an intellectual disability in order to overcome any need for potentially embarrassing disclosures by them about the extent of their literacy as it was not known to the researcher how many of the informants could read without assistance or be able to interpret a literal transcript of their interview with all its umms and ahhs and incomplete or disjointed sentences.

As with the interviews of non-disabled informants the first question invariably was the obvious one of what, to the informant, is a home. The questions concerning any experience of burglary or the possibility of the loss of the residence through fire were left until the conclusion of the interview in order to allow the informant to feel as comfortable as possible with the interview and the researcher before broaching such potentially sensitive topics. The interviews took between 25 minutes and three quarters of an hour from the initial greeting to their completion. The reason some interviews were shorter than those conducted with the non-intellectually disabled informants was that many of the answers given by people with an intellectual disability were short, yes/no, or other very succinct responses.

Copies of the tape recording of the interview were sent to each informant. None chose to request any amendments to their recording of the interview.

9.2.3. Issues

9.2.3.1. The Non-Intellectually Disabled Sample

A few of the informants approached the topic of the meaning of home in a relatively concrete fashion initially (e.g., "a home is a home" as one responded). Some had never before contemplated their homes in depth and therefore their initial responses to some questions were very brief. One of the major techniques employed by the researcher for getting informants to elaborate on any answer given was the use of silence. Informants would make a brief reply to a question and then stop. The researcher would, when appropriate, silently count to ten before speaking. Usually by the count of seven, informants would recommence answering the question by expanding on the previous answer. This was not so
much a piece of interview 'gamesmanship' on the researcher's part but rather allowing an opportunity for informants to reflect more deeply on the question and their response to it. In most of these situations the supplementary information provided was richer in detail and description than that previously obtained. Where it appeared an informant had taken a very limited interpretation of the question asked and had provided only a minimal response, supplementary probing questions were used.

Another approach which proved successful in encouraging informant's answers was for the researcher to indicate understanding of what was being said by responding, "yes", or "I understand".

Where informants queried the correctness of their own answers to a question they were reassured by the researcher that there were no right or wrong answers to any of the questions being asked. What mattered was their perceptions on the issue raised.

In order to introduce some topics in the interview, examples were given. However, the questions following on from those always asked whether informants had ever had a similar experience rather than the same experience. Where the researcher was seeking to summarise and interpret what informants had said in reply to particular questions, the informants were always cautioned against allowing the researcher to put words into their mouths before inviting their comments on the interpretation or summary.

9.2.3.2. The Sample With an Intellectual Disability

As noted previously, direct, open-ended interviews with people who have an intellectual disability are relatively uncommon in the research literature. The researcher was aware of this and the need to approach the interviews for this part of the study with care and the benefit of the available advice from the literature on people with intellectual disabilities as research informants. Therefore, the following discussion of issues encountered in interviewing informants with an intellectual disability acknowledges the guidance provided by the literature wherever relevant.

Informed consent was recognised as a critical and sensitive issue (Bray, 1998; Tustin & Bond, 1991; Wyngaarden, 1981). Where the researcher had any doubts about the informant's level of understanding of what they were being asked to consent to, the informant was asked to describe what they understood of the nature and purpose of the research, their role in it, and their rights in this regard. Only after the researcher was reasonably confident that the informant understood what they were consenting to did the interview process commence.

In keeping with Atkinson's (1989) identification of five major issues researchers should consider when interviewing people who have an intellectual
disability the remainder of this section will follow these issues.

(a) Informant characteristics.

Carers or service providers nominated as (potential) informants only intellectually disabled adults they believed had sufficient communication skills to participate in this study. They were considered, "... more able to answer questions ..., and less likely to acquiesce in response to yes-no questions than are lower IQ persons" (Sigelman et al., 1980, pp. 511–512).

The researcher has worked with people who have an intellectual disability for some 25 years and therefore felt confident to assess the degree of structure each informant might require in order to have a reasonable understanding of the interview questions. The informant’s ability was assessed during the preliminary remarks and fine-tuned by the researcher during the early stages of the interview.

The researcher found that the informants with an intellectual disability were more or less cautious in volunteering information than the non-disabled informants in keeping with the advice of Bogdan & Taylor (1982). Whether or not the individual had lived in a residential service setting for any significant period of time appeared to make no difference to their willingness or reluctance to talk, or to promote any discernable tendency to please the researcher. In order to guard against the latter the researcher stressed his independence from the informant’s service agency and the confidential nature of the interview (Atkinson, 1989; Biklen & Moseley, 1988). Questions regarding hypothetical future homes were always introduced by emphasising that they were indeed hypothetical.

Although the questionnaire was not trialled before its use with people who have an intellectual disability it was modified somewhat on an as needed basis when interviewing individuals (Heal & Sigelman, 1990). Questions concerning time and frequency were avoided where possible (Flynn, 1986) as were questions using complex concepts or questions seeking comparisons of magnitude (Minkes et al., 1994; Wyngaarden, 1981). The interview comprised mainly direct questions concerning the informant’s own experiences which were phrased in ‘concrete’ terms (Minkes et al., 1994). Simply worded, open-ended questions were used as much as possible in order to avoid the impression that there was a ‘correct’ answer (Wyngaarden, 1981). Informants were assured that there were no right or wrong answers to any questions. Occasionally suggestions were given to aid informants in answering questions however, they were mostly encouraged to answer in their own words. Where necessary, questions were reworded along the same line as the original, in order to elicit a clearer response (Wyngaarden, 1981).

Futuristic or speculative questions probing wishes or preferences were posed as hypothetical situations and the person encouraged to respond (e.g., If your house burnt down and all your things were burnt in the fire, would there be
any of those things that you’d really miss?) This approach seemed to pose minimal difficulty in comprehension or require re-wording and further clarification of the concepts involved.

The responses of people with an intellectual disability covered a wide range as identified by Sigelman & Werder (1975). In some situations the informant was asked to describe how a third party might experience things (e.g. “How would someone know this was your room? What would they see that would tell them that? [Keane, 1997]).

A mixture of semi-structured informal and conversational interviewing (Fido & Potts, 1989) and more direct questioning (Booth & Booth, 1996) was used to elicit answers to questions according to the needs of the informant as perceived by the interviewer.

In order to overcome a degree of inarticulateness on the part of a small number of informants the interviewer consciously sought to use:

an instrumental rather than an expressive vocabulary; a present orientation; a concrete rather than an abstract frame of reference; a literal rather than a figurative mode of expression; a focus on people and things rather than on feelings and emotions; and a responsive rather than a proactive style (Booth & Booth, 1994, p. 36).

In addition it was found that repeating the informant’s answers back to them not only helped make transcribing the tape recording easier and reinforced to the informant that they were being listened to, but also assisted in forming a link between the previous answer and the next question in many cases. Prolonged silences encountered when interviewing were addressed by re-phrasing and re-asking the question or, approaching the topic in a less direct or challenging fashion or, moving on to some other topic, or posing a direct question requiring a simpler yes/no response (Booth & Booth, 1996).

A mixture of open-ended and short, closed questions, some seeking a yes/no response, was found to be effective in recording the subjective reality of the informant. The yes/no questions used were framed in both positive and negative terms to minimise acquiescence bias (Sigelman, et al, 1982), or asked in a manner requiring a reverse response for consistency with other answers. Either/or questions were not used, nor were multiple or forced choice questions, or photos or pictures.

Interviewing inarticulate informants proved extremely difficult. Sometimes the interview seemed to take the form of an interrogation and sometimes the researcher had great difficulty in distinguishing between a silence which is waiting to be broken (an expressive silence) and one which is waiting until the
conversation moves on (a closed silence) (Booth & Booth, 1996).

The presence of speech problems did disrupt or distort the communication between researcher and informant on occasions during the interviews (Atkinson, 1989) despite the use of a less structured approach allowing discretion in seeking information from informants (Minkes, Robinson, & Weston, 1994). As mentioned above, in order to minimise this risk and to make it easier for the person transcribing the tape recording of the interview the researcher would frequently summarise and repeat the answer given back to the informant. Even using this approach it appeared that on several occasions that the informant did not seek to further explain or clarify the researcher’s understanding even when it was subsequently found to be incorrect.

There was a risk of bias in interviewing several inarticulate informants who were unable to tell their story in their own words and the researcher then became an interpreter or biographer thereby running, “... the risk of ... imposing (the researcher’s) own assumptions, understandings and ambitions upon the stories that emerge” (Goodley, 1996, p. 345). In at least one case, while the informant did not articulate much about what they did do they were very clear about what they didn’t do and so the researcher was able to build an understanding of the person’s use of home almost as clearly as if the informant had said directly, “I never go out socially, I don’t entertain at home and I have only one interest which is listening to music in my bedroom.”

Several of the informants with an intellectual disability appeared to have a concrete frame of reference and therefore questions were reworded to probe the informant’s own experience directly rather than requiring their interpretation of experiences (Minkes et al., 1994).

The risk of creating a context-dependent effect on responses to questions was not considered significant as the interview guide questions were short and not always asked in the same order for all interviews (Flynn, 1986; Turner, 1984). Where the topic changed, the interviewer also took care to re-orient the informant before proceeding with the next question (Biklen & Moseley, 1988). The interview was structured so that questions at the beginning were simple and/or easy and less challenging or intrusive so as to develop the rapport between interviewer and informant (Neumayer & Bleasdale, 1996). Difficult, sensitive or threatening questions (e.g., concerning any experience of being burgled) were placed towards the end of the interview (Sudman & Bradburn, 1974; Wyngaarden, 1981).

In keeping with Booth and Booth’s (1996) finding, a number of informants with an intellectual disability were found to be oriented to the present, rather than the past or future, and therefore had difficulties with dates and numbers. Where such information was required the use of an approximation or a chronological marker (e.g. before or after you moved house) was found to be the
best solution (Booth & Booth, 1994).

The question of the innate truthfulness or otherwise of informants was not considered important as the major concern was to understand how people perceive their home and the meanings they attach to it, not why they do so or the 'truth' of their understanding (Goodley, 1996). The interviews, by their very nature, covered a mixture of subjective and objective aspects of people's residences. Some of the major influences on the informant's subjective responses may well have included: the informant's ulterior motive(s); the presence of any real or imagined bars to spontaneity; the informant's desire to please or impress the researcher; or, other idiosyncratic factors such as mood, question wording, individual connotations of specific words or concepts (including parallel associations), and the presence and strength of any extraneous distractors (Dean & Whyte, 1978). However, in keeping with Dean and Whyte's (1978) advice, the possibility of these influences was minimised by: carefully structuring the interview; sensitively conducting the interview and being aware of the factors identified above; staging the interview at a time and place which offered minimum distractions; reducing ulterior motives by emphasising the researcher's inability to apply influence which could assist the informant in some fashion; reducing bars to spontaneity by emphasising the confidentiality of the interview; and, minimising idiosyncratic factors by being aware of their possibility and by asking questions on a given topic in a variety of ways where informants gave answers which seemed at odds with the researcher's experience and expectations (e.g., a person with apparent poor communication and self-help skills who told the researcher they were living, with no assistance whatsoever, with another person who had an intellectual disability) the answers were tactfully queried and, if repeated, left unchallenged.

(b) Informants' perceptions of the study.

No informants gave an impression of holding a fear of negative consequences resulting from any answers given (Atkinson, 1989). Several people from quasi-institutional backgrounds (i.e., large congregate care hostels housing more than twelve unrelated people) participated of their own volition. None gave the impression of feeling compelled to participate. In fact, several participants gave the impression that they wanted and valued an opportunity to talk to someone who would take them seriously and value their views on matters. Informants were advised at the commencement of the interview that one of the intended outcomes of the study was the improvement of community residential services for people who have an intellectual disability (Booth & Booth, 1994). Perhaps it was the nature of the topic but no informants appeared reluctant to discuss topics, or to hide their feelings on sensitive issues, or to harbour any mistrust of the guarantees of confidentiality given. The use of the advice, "This is your interview. You do not have to answer any of my questions if you don't want to. You don't have to talk to me at all if you don't want to. You're the boss. You're in control of this interview," seemed to strike an appreciative chord in
most informants and several repeated, “I’m the boss” before proceeding further with the interview. Informants were given a copy of the tape recording of their interview within a month of its completion, together with the advice that it was theirs and that they did not have to let anyone else listen to it if they did not want them to do so. As mentioned elsewhere, it is planned that feedback from the study will be given in the form of a suitably written and illustrated summary of findings important to people with an intellectual disability as recommended by Townsley and Gyde (1997).

(c) Informants’ perceptions of the researcher.

The researcher was acutely aware that informants’ perceptions of the researcher may be coloured by differences between their own and the researcher’s social class and education. Consequently the researcher was at pains to dress in a manner which de-emphasised any social differences and to endeavour at all times to use language which was common to informants and as easy as possible for them to understand. Telling informants that they were in charge of the interview aided in their feelings of empowerment in the interview and also lessened the perceived power of the researcher. Paying the informants the same amount of money regardless of whether they were intellectually disabled or not gave a message of sincerity to agency staff who assisted and appeared to assist informants in accepting as genuine the request for their assistance with the study. For a person on an invalid pension of approximately $350 per fortnight, $30 of discretionary spending money is a considerable amount and served as a significant signal of the importance and value placed upon their contribution by the researcher. Only one informant seemed unaccustomed to handling money and therefore uncertain as to its purpose. When speaking to groups of potential informants or during the initial stages of an interview, the researcher went to considerable lengths to emphasize his independence from any agency involved in the people’s lives. None of the informants objected to the use of a tape recorder to record the interview. On the contrary, for several it seemed to emphasize the importance of what they were saying because it was being recorded.

Only one informant regarded the researcher as a ‘potential helper’ with various problems in their everyday lives, in which case the researcher’s independence from the service system, and consequent inability to act as an effective helper was re-emphasised and subsequently accepted. The ethical dilemma this situation presented was minor because of the nature of the request and therefore the informant was encouraged to take the matter up with their agency keyworker which they accepted.

Interactions.

Establishing rapport commenced for some informants when the initial contact was made to recruit interested people and set-up an interview. For others it occurred at the first and only interview. When contacting informants to arrange
a suitable time and place for the initial interview, the nature and likely duration of
the interview was described and a reassurance regarding confidentiality was given.
At the commencement of the interview further assurances around issues of:
privacy, confidentiality, the absence of any ‘correct’ or ‘incorrect’ answers to
questions or any resultant judgement of the informant were given; and any mis-
perception of the researcher as an employee of an agency assisting the informant
was clarified.

A few people readily volunteered the most personal details at the
commencement of the interview however most required a little time to begin to
respond openly to the questions (Biklen & Moscley, 1988). Sometimes it was
very difficult to make conversation. In these situations the interview was
constrained and tended to become more like an interrogation despite attempts to
engage in social conversation upon being introduced by admiring and commenting
positively on, or asking questions about, aspects of the person or their program
to ‘break the ice’ and discover more about the person’s life (Atkinson, 1989;
Biklen & Moscley, 1988). Informants were asked whether they minded the door
to the interview room being closed and this small acknowledgement of their
control over the interview seemed to aid in building rapport (Wyggaard, 1981).
Only the one interview was conducted with each informant and therefore there
was little opportunity to build up rapport over several meetings apart from when
one came across people when visiting the agency to conduct interviews with other
informants.

For some informants the gap between the initial contact to explain the
study and invite participation and the return of their consent forms signifying
their willingness to participate provided the opportunity for potential informants
to decide if, where and when they wished to meet further with the researcher
thereby giving them control over their involvement in the study and assisting in
the development of rapport between the parties.

(d) The interview environment.

The interview site was chosen by neither the researcher nor the informant
in all except two cases where the interview was conducted in the informant’s
home. All the other interviews were conducted in the informant’s day placement
agency’s tea room or a staff member’s office which was vacant at the time. In the
latter situation the researcher was very careful not to sit in the desk chair or use
the desk in any way as it was felt this might be counterproductive in establishing
rapport with the informant. The chair for the informant was chosen by them
wherever possible although this became less likely when more than one interview
was being conducted on the day as the researcher’s pad and papers tended to
mark his spot for all interviews after the first. Although the use of an office or a
staff tea room could be construed as a place where authority may have been
exercised over the informant it did not appear to be a source of discomfort for any
but two informants. In their case the office was the only available private space
on the site so necessity prevailed and the informants gradually seemed more comfortable as the interview progressed (i.e., they sat back in the chair rather than remaining on the edge of it). In all interviews only the informant and interviewer were present and the interview was suspended if, for any reason, another person came into the room to get something (Card, 1983; Sudman & Bradburn, 1974).

As this study sought to record the subjective reality of the informant, verification of the information given via other sources was not required.

(e) The relationship between both parties.

One possible harm was that the informants might come to expect more than a simple contractual relationship with the researcher and might instead, misperceive his interest as indicative of the commencement of a longer term friendship (Johnson, 1994, 1998; Wyngaarden, 1981). This possibility was averted by the advice given at the initial contact and subsequent interview and by the payment of a fee for the interview. The limited nature of the relationship was never queried by any informant.

Having described the recruitment and interview procedures in detail, a description of the data analysis procedures will be given in the next chapter.
Chapter 10. Data Analysis

In this chapter a brief review of the design of this study will be represented together with a short description of the consequences for data analysis stemming from this choice of design. The use and limitations of the literature review as an aid to data analysis will follow next and the actual process of data analysis will then be described together with observations of a general nature arising from the data. These observations are of the most immediate and generalisable conclusions which could be drawn from an initial examination of the data. A more detailed description and discussion of the study’s findings in regard to each of the sample populations is presented in succeeding chapters. The purpose of this chapter then, is to give the flavour of the main findings and how these were derived.

As noted previously, this study seeks to build theory using a grounded theory (Glaser & Strauss, 1967) approach.

A grounded theory is one that is inductively derived from the study of the phenomenon it represents. That is, it is discovered, developed, and provisionally verified through systematic data collection and analysis of data pertaining to that phenomenon. Therefore, data collection, analysis, and theory stand in reciprocal relationship with each other. One does not begin with a theory, then prove it. Rather, one begins with an area of study and what is relevant to that area is allowed to emerge (Strauss & Corbin, 1990, p. 23).

An inductive analysis constrains the process of making sense of the data by requiring that the meanings obtained (in the form of patterns, themes and categories of analysis) “... come from the data: they emerge out of the data rather than being imposed on them prior to data collection and analysis” (Patton, 1990, p. 390). In other words, the task is for the researcher to discover whatever unique message may be embedded in the data, not simply use it as a tool to verify the veracity or otherwise of messages already recorded in the research literature. However, the pre-existing body of literature does have important uses. In following the path of inductive analysis the researcher may use two types of concepts to illuminate thinking: indigenous concepts and sensitising concepts (Patton, 1990).

Indigenous concepts are, “... categories developed and articulated by the people studied to organise presentation of particular themes” (Patton, 1990, p. 390). Such categories might be discerned for example, by examining the responses to the question, “What, to you, is a home?” People may respond using physical concepts such as space and objects, or they may use social concepts of friendship, entertaining or privacy.
Alternately, sensitising concepts (i.e., "... concepts the analyst brings to the data" [Patton, 1990, p. 391]) have their roots in social science theory and literature. These sensitising concepts provide the researcher with some guidance on what might be found in the data. However, it is important to note that it is just guidance and the researcher is not obligated to confine his thinking to those pre-existing concepts found in the literature. As Patton (1990) advises (p. 391), "The inductive application of sensitizing concepts is to examine how the concept is manifest in a particular setting or among a particular group of people." Thus, for example, the researcher might look carefully to find how informants actualise the concept of privacy in their experience of home. Do they focus on: private spaces; private (intimate or personal) behaviours; privacy vis-à-vis others in the home or others outside the home; etc.? It follows that the use of sensitising concepts requires that the concepts be broader rather than highly specific (e.g., 'privacy' as distinct from its various constituent elements such as 'the confidentiality of correspondence') if they are to be sensitising rather than definitive in their own right. While Strauss and Corbin (1990) encourage the review of available literature and advise that:

The interplay of reading the literature and doing an analysis of it, then moving out into the field to verify it against reality can yield an integrated picture and enhance the conceptual richness of theory (p. 55);

they also issue a caution, namely:

All kinds of literature can be used before a research study is begun: both in thinking about and getting the study off the ground. They can also be used during the study itself, contributing to its forward thrust ... We remind you, however, that categories\(^1\) and their relationships must be checked against your primary data. You can use all types of literature judged as relevant, but must guard against becoming a captive of any of them (p. 56, emphasis added).

Therefore, for the purposes of this study the data were used to stimulate the discovery of the concepts they carried, they were subjected to an inductive analysis. The resultant concepts and categories derived from this analysis were then compared with the concepts and categories found in the existing literature in order to discern any similarities or differences. While the \textit{a priori} review of the

\(^1\) The term 'categories' as used by Strauss and Corbin (1990) appears to be synonymous with Patton's (1990) term, 'typologies'. Both appear to refer to a second level of analysis whereby concepts are clustered into meaningful groups under the heading of a broader concept. This process may be repeated until a classic conceptual pyramid, organised in a logical hierarchy of meaning, is formed. Therefore, the terms categories and typologies are treated here as interchangeable in this study. The term 'taxonomy' will be used to refer to the overall conceptual pyramid.
literature gave guidance to the analysis, care was taken not to 'force' concepts into the existing 'boxes'. Thus, the typologies formed were derived by arranging various concepts into meaningful groups or arrangements. These typologies, like the concepts from which they were constructed, were built using either indigenous concepts derived from the informants' own language, or using sensitising concepts obtained by the researcher from the literature, or some combination of the two. In addition, some typologies were researcher constructed from his own thinking and reflection on the data. Where this latter was done, care was exercised not to distort concepts or the data in order to fit the particular typology.

As stated earlier, this study adopts a phenomenological perspective, - it endeavours to ascertain the unique reflections and experiences of informants on the meaning of home to them. The adoption of this perspective requires that, as a first step, the researcher must, "... look inside to become aware of personal bias and to eliminate personal involvement with the subject material" (Patton, 1990, p. 407). Given the closeness of the researcher's lived experience to the topic under consideration in this study, this was difficult, but not totally impossible. The researcher has a fundamentally existential philosophy of life and therefore acknowledges that each person is unique in their perspectives and values and the experiences which have shaped them. Therefore, each informant was considered to have a unique perspective on the meaning of home, different from that of all others including the researcher and, accordingly, the researcher suspended judgement about what was, "... 'real' or 'most real' ... until all the evidence (or at least sufficient evidence) ... [was] in" (Dhde, 1977, p. 36).

The next step in this phenomenological consideration of the data was bracketing. This is best described by Denzin (1989) in the following terms:

In bracketing, the researcher holds the phenomenon up for serious inspection. It is taken out of the world where it occurs. It is taken apart and dissected. Its elements and essential structures are uncovered, defined, and analyzed. It is treated as a text or a document, that is, as an instance of the phenomenon that is being studied. It is not interpreted in terms of the standard meanings given to it by the existing literature. Those preconceptions, which were isolated in the deconstruction phase, are suspended and put aside during bracketing. In bracketing, the subject matter is confronted, as much as possible, on its own terms. Bracketing involves the following steps ....
(1) Locate within the personal experience, or self-story, key phrases and statements that speak directly to the phenomenon in question.
(2) Interpret the meanings of these phrases, as an informed reader.
(3) Obtain the subject's interpretations of these phrases, if possible.
(4) Inspect these meanings for what they reveal about the essential, recurring features of the phenomenon being studied.

(5) Offer a tentative statement, or definition, of the phenomenon in terms of the essential recurring features identified in step 4 (pp. 55-56).

After this process has occurred, the data are arranged into meaningful clusters and honed down to fundamentals by removal of repeated, overlapping and irrelevant items. The researcher then identifies the core themes in the data and uses his imagination to explore these from several perspectives. Next, the researcher creates a:

... textural portrayal of each theme. The textural portrayal of each theme will be a description of an experience that doesn't contain that experience (i.e., the feelings of vulnerability expressed by rape victims) (Patton, 1990, p. 409)

The last step in a phenomenological analysis requires the description of: “the true meanings of the experience for the individual” (Patton, 1990, p. 409). The revelation of these deeper meanings of an experience lead to an appreciation of its essence.

So much for the process of ‘distilling the data’. What of the data themselves, what is the most appropriate way to collect them? The advantages of the interview strategy chosen for this study were reflected in the data analysis and interpretation.

Interviews may be analysed in two main ways; on a single case basis or using a cross-case (cross-interview) approach. Standardised, open-ended interviewing lends itself to the cross-interview approach whereas the interview guide strategy facilitates the grouping of answers by topic but may not have those answers in the same sequence for every interview, making them more difficult to identify. As Patton (1990) has noted in this regard, “The interview (strategy) actually constitutes a descriptive analytical framework for analysis” (p. 376). Patton goes on to advise that, “It is appropriate to begin with individual case studies where variations in individuals are the primary focus of the study” (p. 376). Therefore, given the use of maximum variation sampling in this study it was logical to adopt this approach as a first step before moving on to cross-case analysis to determine the commonalities and differences in conceptualisation evident within, across and between each of the two samples.

The content of each interview was analysed using NUD|IST (Richards & Richards, 1991, 1994). The data from the non intellectually disabled population and data from the group of people with an intellectual disability were kept separate, but treated in the same manner. Interviews were transcribed literally and in full. After review and authentication by both the respective interviewee and the
researcher, a number of interviews were coded by the researcher and an assistant, acting independently of each other, according to the perceptions, interpretations, meanings, and experiences of 'home' revealed by each interviewee. The objective here was to avoid 'shoe-horning' interviewee observations into pre-determined categories of meaning. Rather, the researcher and his assistant were seeking to identify common clusters of meaning present in the interview transcripts. Results of these codings were compared and discussed before agreement was reached on the final coding and a satisfactory degree of agreement between the two reviewers acting independently of each other over the interpretation of several interviews was achieved. In this way, a form of "investigator or analyst triangulation" (Patton, 1990, p. 468) was obtained which rendered the analysis more rigorous than if just one person had coded the data.

What was sought initially were the fundamental meanings, perceptions and experiences of 'home' noted by each interviewee. By analysing each interview to identify these attributes before comparing responses across all interviews, the widest possible range of meanings, etc., should have been revealed. Comparing attributes revealed across all responses enabled recognition of clusterings within the scatter where broad consensus prevailed (i.e., shared meanings, perceptions and experiences).

Finally, when considering the perspectives of people who have an intellectual disability in regard to the concept of home and comparing them with the perspectives of people without an intellectual disability, there was a need to decide whether people who have an intellectual disability were so distinctly different from the non-intellectually disabled population as to constitute a separate, culturally distinct, sub-group. Many people within the intellectually disabled group lead significantly segregated, human service-mediated existences (McKnight, 1995), and this provided a basis for arguing that their experiences were so wide of the mainstream of society as to constitute a separate, or at least sub-, culture. If this view was accepted, then any comparison of concepts between those held by non-disabled people and those of people who have an intellectual disability was likely to be challenged on that basis. As Pelto and Pelto (1978) have noted in regard to the 'emic' (i.e., 'insider') approach to analysis in anthropology:

... cultural behaviour should always be studied and categorized in terms of the inside view - the actors' definition - of human events. That is, the units of conceptualization in anthropological theories should be "discovered" by analyzing the cognitive processes of the people studied, rather than "imposed" from cross-cultural (hence ethnocentric) classifications of behaviour (p. 54).

Having acknowledged the existence of this as a possible issue, it is worthwhile to note that the sample used for this study included people currently living in the community with family or independently, as well as those living in
residential service settings. Furthermore, many of those living in service settings retained strong memories of living with their families.

An ‘etic’ (i.e., ‘outsider’) perspective can also be justified by arguing the benefits that accrue from comparing a phenomenon’s expression across a number of alternative groups, settings, cultures, etc. Thus, there is utility in (say) comparing people’s gender and their use of rooms across different cultures to determine commonalities and differences and the reasons for them.

Whether people who have an intellectual disability are culturally distinct as a group, or just a section on the continuum of human experience in our society is as much a matter of (the observer’s) values as anything else. In this study, the validity of the experiences of people who have an intellectual disability was taken as given and accepted as equivalent to the experiences of any other member of society. They were regarded, for the purposes of this research, as integral members of society and not as an alien group, or a distinctly different sub-culture. Conversely, just as people with an intellectual disability were not treated in this study as a sub-cultural group, neither were non-disabled people treated as the dominant cultural group.

Data from the intellectually disabled and non-intellectually disabled informant groups were analysed independently of each other. The data from the non-disabled group was analysed first and the rich set of underlying concepts forming the meaning of home for this group revealed. The intellectually disabled group’s data was analysed next and many of the same concepts emerged, albeit in a less extensive and less-elaborated form. Just as importantly, no new concepts emerged from the data generated by informants with an intellectual disability. The comparison between the two sets of emergent concepts and perspectives on the meaning of “home” (reported and discussed below) was conducted as a comparison of independently derived concepts. It was not a comparison driven by a desire to check the “closeness-of-fit” of the conceptualisations of the intellectually disabled informant group with those of the (presumed correct) conceptualisations of the non-disabled informant group. When describing any phenomenon there are only so many different concepts which can be applied. The fact that both groups used many of the same concepts says as much about their sharing a common language as it does about their experiences of the same phenomenon, - “home”.

In the next two chapters, the results of this process of analysis will be reported and summarised.
IV HOME - THE FINDINGS AND THEIR ANALYSIS

Chapter 11. Home - The Perspectives of People Without an Intellectual Disability

The detailed perspectives distilled from the data supplied by informants who did not have an intellectual disability are described in this chapter. After a presentation of results, perspectives held in common by a significant number of the sample informants are then identified (regardless of whether these perspectives are unique to this study or not) in an attempt to distil some “essence of home”.

11.1. The Results From the Analysis of the Interviews

11.1.1. Dissecting a Frog: - Findings From the Interviews With People Who do Not Have an Intellectual Disability

One of the lessons of the school biology laboratory involved discovering what made a frog a living creature. In order to do this however, the first thing one had to do was to prepare the frog for dissection by killing it. Once dead the frog could be examined to determine what made it a living creature, at least that was the intent. Being a frog seemed to be a lived experience. The nature of “frogginess” lies in the ability to croak, swim, catch prey, and jump, among other attributes. Dead frogs can do none of these things. Likewise, what follows is the analysis of an approximate total of 25 hours of interviews with 21 different, unique people. For each of them ‘home’ is a lived experience. While their explanations and answers to a limited range of questions may shed some light on their experience of home, it must be remembered that their experience of ‘home’ is very much an ongoing, ever changing and central part of their life. Therefore what follows is, at best, a dissection of a frozen moment in each of their experiences.

11.1.2. The Thematic Framework

The 21 transcribed interviews with the informants in this set were each assigned a code number. The demographic profiles of the informants are given in Table 3 given earlier (see Chapter 9).

A total of 83 concepts or themes were identified across the interviews in this set. After further examination and reflection, these concepts were reduced and refined to five broad themes, three of which had sub-themes and, in some cases, further sub-sub-themes. (A complete schematic list of the concepts identified from the data and their grouping under sub-themes and themes is given below).

It would be extremely confusing for the reader if what followed was a detailed definition and discussion of each of these concepts and only after that was the coherent analytical framework revealed. This would be akin to being given
a street map of a suburb without any larger map of the city from which to orient oneself. Therefore, although the process followed required the identification of a multitude of concepts concerning home before they were able to be distilled into a coherent framework, it is clearer for the reader if this framework is presented in reverse order of evolution. In other words, what follows is a revelation of the end point of the process (i.e., the over-arching conceptual framework) which is then taken back in stages to the various individual concepts out of which it arose.

Five broad themes emerged from the analysis. Two of these themes were based on a phenomenological approach to the world which recognises as major aspects the self and the environment. The other three themes are: the recognition of the metaphysical nature of the world with its time and spiritual dimensions, non-homes (e.g., dwelling places which informants clearly identified as lacking some essential attribute of a home); and, alternate meanings to the concept of home which have little or nothing to do with the notion of dwelling per se (e.g., hitting a ‘home run’).

The theme of self can be further broken down into private and public sub-themes. Likewise, the environment can be considered from two sub-theme perspectives; the physical environment and the social environment. The major framework to emerge from the analysis of the data therefore can be depicted as follows:

Home, as related to -

A. the self
   A1 private
   A2 public

B. the environment
   B1 physical
   B2 social

C. the metaphysical dimension
D. non-homes
E. alternate meanings of the word ‘home’.

This framework can be amplified further by the sub-concepts, and their derivatives, identified as significant which emerged from the analysis of the interviews. Thus the framework is expanded to become the following:
Table 7

Conceptual Framework of the Meaning of Home Derived From Analysis of Interviews

Home, as related to -

A. the self

A1. private components
   i.e., control
   territoriality
   ownership
   privacy
   security
   autonomy
   private behaviour
   contentment
   refuge
   place of happiness
   familiarity
   stability
   'rootedness'

A2. public components
   i.e. personal expression
   approval of others

B. the environment

B1. physical
   i.e., names and uses of rooms
   physical features of setting
   physical appointments and attributes

B2. social
   i.e., family home
   place of nurturance
   raising own children
   surrogate family home
   home socialising
   gathering place
   external socialising
   base
   social atmosphere
   felicity
   place of love
   contributing
   compatibility
   social context
   knowing, and being know by, others

C. the metaphysical dimension

C1. time aspects
   i.e., past or former homes
   "synthesised" homes
   future homes
   time-related qualities
   continuity
   meaningful events and experiences
   meaningful possessions

C2. spiritual aspects

D. non-home attributes.

E. alternate meanings of the word 'home'.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Informant code</th>
<th>Territoriality</th>
<th>Ownership</th>
<th>Privacy</th>
<th>Security</th>
<th>Autonomy</th>
<th>Control</th>
<th>Contentment</th>
<th>Place of happiness</th>
<th>Refuges</th>
<th>Familiarity</th>
<th>Home behaviour</th>
<th>Relaxation &amp; leisure</th>
<th>Stability</th>
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Figure 1. Theme: The Self - private components - Non-disabled informants who raised this theme or its sub-themes, or both.
A. **The self.**

The self theme refers to the personal aspects of home. Its two sub-themes are: (1) the private and ; (2) the public. The private sub-theme of the self concerns the introversion needs met by home. Here the term introversion is used in a Jungian, rather than a Freudian sense as in the Myers-Briggs personality inventory (Kirby & Myers, 1993) where the term refers to the inward-focused aspects of the person. The public sub-theme of the self concerns the extraversion needs met by the home. Here the, “... focus is on the outer world of people and external events” (Kirby & Myers, 1993, p. 4).

Among the introversion needs identified by informants as being met by home were the needs for control, contentment, stability, and “rootedness”. The need for control and the need for contentment were the most commonly shared needs among all informants.

A1. The private sub-theme.

(a) Control.

Control needs took a number of significant forms for the informants with *territoriality* being the foremost. This concerned the need to exert significant control over, or the ability to modify, an area, to create a ‘personal space’ for oneself, perhaps even marking that place by the placement of one’s possessions.

> It’s our place, it’s sort of our little patch that people can’t just come into and say that this is their place and they take over. It’s just ours.¹

> ... We decorate a lot ourself² already, because that cupboard doesn’t belong here, I made that ourself. That heater is ours, we put it in ourselves, and all those things. We wallpapered over here, we painted everything up here.

> What do you do to make places seem more like home to you? Do you do anything in particular? Oh, furnish it the way you want and have the things in it that you want and that you like.

---

¹ The interviewer’s questions or comments are shown in plain font with informant answers or comments in italics.

² All quotations from the interviews are given verbatim. No attempt has been made to correct grammar, syntax, or other elements of any person’s comments.
What do you do to make other places seem more like home to you? Is there anything you do? Mainly place my own personal things around the home or in a room or whatever. Things like, I barrack for (a) Football Club so I will place my scarf around and big pictures of them and photos from home, photos of my friends, family, that sort of - place those around the home, so you are reminded of those people that you have special relationships with and also makes it look more homely.

Interestingly, while ownership, or the need for the greatest possible control through owning the physical setting or its contents, or both, was clearly identified as a need by many informants it was less well noted than the unanimous need expressed for territoriality.

Privacy also loomed large in informants’ control orientations whereby people wanted to be able to experience the degree of solitude they desired, when they desired it. Too much solitude can lead to feelings of isolation and loneliness whilst too little solitude can give rise to feelings of being overwhelmed or of unwelcome intrusion.

You mentioned when you were talking about your future home, that one of the things that you would be looking for in that was privacy. What do you mean by that? Being able to go somewhere and either close the door or just go into a room and be separate and be able to do what you want by yourself and things like that, see I went to boarding school for six months and I couldn’t stand it, because there was no privacy at all, like there were dormitories and things like that, it just wasn’t nice. You couldn’t just disappear, because always people always questioning me, “Where are you going?” “What are you doing?” You need your own space.

... as we established our family and brought up five children in a rather large home, I had to find places away from the family, like a workshop and a den and so on, so a home suddenly became a place where it’s had to have a workshop and a den.

One aspect of privacy strongly linked to control, was the permitting of access to the various rooms and areas within the home. This was clearly in direct relation to the degree of friendship or intimacy between the person at home and his or her visitor as was evidenced time and again in the interviews.

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3 Items or elements which could identify individual informants have been modified in order to ensure the greatest possible level of confidentiality for informants.
So if you had a stranger who came to the house you would show them into this room. Would you typically show them into any other rooms? Not a stranger, no. Our families have both always had formal areas for receiving visitors and we haven’t, as a married couple in our life so far, because we haven’t been able to afford a home of our home that incorporates those areas - we want one that has a formal and a family area. I would not show a stranger into any other part of my house except for maybe the kitchen if they wanted something to drink but I would generally bring that in here anyway because this is probably the most comfortable room of the house. It’s warmer than anywhere else and it’s got the couches. I see no other reason. What about friends? My friends that drop by - depending on the children that they have, if we are just sitting and chatting or doing girlie work, we will be in here - probably together on a couch or close to each other. If it’s about lunch time, everybody will be out in the kitchen and we will be chatting there or having something hot to drink. So those are the two areas all the kids generally just tear around the house. But friends I have no problem if they need to use my bed - they use my bed. They are often in the kitchen with me when we are doing things but again, when it gets into the winter we don’t generally leave this room because it’s so cold in the rest of the house. But I’m quite comfortable with friends in the kitchen.

Other types of control needs noted included the need for security or the need to feel personally safe and ensure one’s security in the home environment.

What sort of feel should a home have to you to be a home? As I was saying earlier like, well, knowing what’s around you like. What people are around you. Your neighbours, security. What the noises are during the night and during the day. What happens in the streets.

It has been said your home’s your castle, well this is true in this sense and to me then, home is a place where you feel at home and you feel secure...

Another need associated with control which was identified was the need for autonomy (i.e., the need to exercise a level of independence in decisions and actions affecting one’s home which is acceptable to oneself) or, as one informant succinctly put it:

It’s your place to do what you want to do.

A derivative of the need for autonomy identified by informants was the ability to undertake private behaviour in the home, that is, to behave as one wishes
without having to seek the approval, or avoid the censure, of others.

I get home, you know, no, whatever is there you grab you put on as long as you are dressed if there is someone in the house and just totally veg out and you can comfortably do nothing whereas anywhere else you can’t do that.

What do you do at home that you don’t do, or rarely do, anywhere else? I just like to, perhaps, not, you know, shower and dress too early in the morning. If I want to just sit in my dressing gown or something, things like that, you can just be comfortable and please yourself, you know. That’s the thing isn’t it, about being at home.

(b) Contentment.

Contentment (in its various sub-sub themes) was another universally identified need. The need to feel appropriately at ease, relaxed and comfortable among familiar surroundings seemed to be one of the hallmarks of home for informants. Informants’ considerations in this regard included the role of the home as a refuge from stressful stimuli.

*When I’m at home I relax - I walk in the door and I can just stop worrying about anything - if I’m uptight I don’t have to worry about being uptight anymore, I can just relax and stop being anything else but just me, so it’s a real haven for that kind of thing.*

Although informants also noted the experience of home as a place of happiness (both at present and in the past) as a contributing factor to their contentment they were chiefly concerned with familiarity and its constituents. Informants identified familiarity as a major source of, and pre-requisite for, contentment. Familiar objects, settings, routines and people make for contentment it seems and in the home this includes not only the setting itself but also those tasks, actions, activities and routines usually done only at home and indicative of a person being ‘at home’. These do not have to be the essential business of daily living, but may also extend to recreation and leisure pursuits.

What is it about those places that makes them feel like home? Is there any particular feeling that you get or anything that you particularly like about them ...? Um. It’s hard to know...It’s so hard to describe the feeling of a house except to say that it feels familiar and you can feel the welcoming of it. Like, other places, they don’t, - even if you’ve been there quite often, nothing about what’s actually in it is familiar, as in you don’t know where everything came from, why it’s there. Generally the positioning of all the furniture and stuff is how you are used to, how you like it, and that creates a certain atmosphere if you know what I mean.
Yeah, there is definitely a feeling ... but it's just like a warm feeling. It's hard to describe.

If you find a place isn't a home to you what do you tend to do? I guess you for the time that you are there you would try and make it more like your own. Like, last time I went to my sister's, I couldn't believe I did this actually, but she was quite tired and her husband was off in his study and we had just done the dishes and I saw her floor looking a bit dirty so I decided to wash her floor and that's something I would never have done before. I guess I'm just making myself at home there doing the things that I do at my own home and, I mean, I don't mind cleaning and things, it's become something I have to do so I enjoy it when I do it, so I guess that's why I did it. It's just doing those things that you would do at your own home I guess. If you are staying the night just throw your clothes around and make it a familiar place. "Oh yes, this is my room. That's where all my clothes are." So yeah, just do common things that you might do at your own place. Also do little things like place your toothbrush in the same spot as it is in your own bathroom.

(c) Stability.

Stability featured as an important need supplied by the home in several informants' lives as they experienced ongoing certainty and predictability there to a much greater extent than in the outside ('non-home') world. As one informant summarised it, home is:

Somewhere that you go to each day that's stable, doesn't change day-to-day.

(d) "Rootedness".

A significant number of informants also expressed a need for what can best be described as "rootedness" which was met for many by their home, or for some younger informants, the home where their parent(s) still lived, and in which they, themselves, grew up. This rootedness incorporated the need to feel anchored in the currents of life; to have some constant reference point from which to gauge the world and one's place in it; to feel a sense of belonging to a specific place; to have a base from which to transact one's day-to-day living; and, to have a place to which one can return at any time and gain ready admission.

When I come home and I think, lovely, I'm home. It's home.

Is there any way at all that your current place you live has some home like qualities or qualities of home? Yeah, because all my
possessions are there, like, I go there and I know that it's mine and I can treat it the way I want to, and I don't have to feel bad about doing anything with anyone else's things, like that's OK because I know that's where I'm supposed to be, but it's not where I go to like for conversation or anything because there's no one else there.

I'm getting to feel that this is home. It's a place that you go from work, come home from work. It's a place where you are all the time. It's a place where you're contacted, where your address is if people send you mail and stuff. I guess you'd class that as home. Something that has got feeling to you.

What to you is a home? I'd have to say a home was the basis of my life. Basis of my life, because that's what everything centres around. If I go away from home I'm delighted to come back at the end of the eight or ten weeks' holiday that we are able to take now. In thinking of this place, why do you think of it as home - what makes it home to you? I would say one thing confirms that it's home. I'm delighted to come home to it. And so you know if I'm travelling back, as I did for most of my life, working life, it was, I could tell from my feelings that as I got closer to this suburb, I was getting closer to home.

This notion was especially strong for one informant whose younger years had been marked by the transience of a seafarer.

A home in the ship, that's not a home. I never owned something. ... I usually, when I was overseas, spent hours and hours looking for accommodation and it wasn't very easy and I had the money to pay whatever it cost. But it wasn't very easy unless you go to a hotel and they book you at night, they want a week, a day and so on. Then I used to go to what they call, like a neighbour houses and they want you in the evening, not in the morning. You can book at the time but you can't get into your bed or get rid of your clothes. So I know what it is actually, something, to want a home because I lived, and I know what it means.
A2. The public sub-theme.

The public components of self concern the extraversion needs met by home.

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**Figure 2.** Theme: The Self - Public components - Non-disabled informants who raised this theme or its sub-themes, or both.

(a) Personal expression.

The major need unanimously shared in this regard was the need to use the home as a means of personal expression. This could involve either expressing oneself through the style or substance of the setting and the extent of its appurtenances, or by the (conscious or unconscious, intended or unintended) messages embedded in those of one's possessions on display.

Does this house act as a home for you? Oh yes. Yes it does. And, ah, ... one tries to put into it, as far as the rooms and the furniture and the bits and pieces around, the things that bring happiness and
joy to one’s self and family and friends. But talking ... about the house, we originally designed it ourself and we’ve had one, ah, two or is it three extensions, no two, two major extensions to it in its time. ... Given that you’ve had a fair hand in designing it, do you feel the house is an extension of yourself or an expression of yourself in any way? Yes. When I look at the Ti-tree fence that needs to be re-made and I haven’t got around to it. In that regard. But, no, I see it more as an expression of, my wife who has been equally, or in some instances, particularly with the kitchen, has been more involved than I have been, in that it’s been a joint ... ah ... Yeah, I guess it’s an extension of one’s self.

When you came to this home, was there anything you did especially when you arrived to make it yours? Yes. We had a dirty big glass divider here and it was the first thing that was moved. I think you feel you decorate it to suit yourself, you put your own personality into the place, I think.

Is your bedroom special to you? Yes, yes. Because I have all my belongings there, everything I probably I’ve worked for, right now, like the computer’s fixed but, um, my clothes, um, I have my history, I’ve been playing (sport) professionally since I was 16, I have all my albums, like cuttings from newspapers, my medallions, my trophies, my pictures from my friends overseas, all my letters from my parents I have in my bedroom, so probably all the special things to me are in my bedroom.

What do you do to make places seem like a home to you? Paint it - I put out so many belongings that just are reminders of things that have happened, photos, pictures, just generally things that are of interest you know, to me or um ... I suppose... memorabilia or stuff like that, that just remind you of little things and you can just look around and there are like certain things that will even make you laugh just to look at them and that you want there to just remind you of certain things... When you use the term ‘home’ what does it mean to you? Somewhere I can go where I often go not somewhere like um ... It’s not somewhere I go once in a blue moon sort of thing. Somewhere where I regularly, like I stay and I’m allowed to and it’s got me written all over it.

(b) Approval of others.

Related to the need to express oneself through one’s home is the need for the approval of others regarding the physical aspects of the home. This was evident in a number of interviews. For example, one informant spoke with pride of the admiration her garden received.
... the lass across the road has got a few shrubs in but nobody else has got a garden at all and when the flowers are out people stand outside and look at all the flowers because I have a lot of flowers in this part here. I just like country garden got all sorts of old flowers in the spring time. It's beautiful.
B. **The environment**

The next major theme identified in the analysis of data was the environment. This refers to the contextual aspects of the home. This theme can be further divided into two sub-themes; the physical and the social environment.

B1. The physical environment.

The physical environment refers to the physical context of the home.

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<th>The Environment - Physical</th>
<th>Physical appointments and attributes</th>
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*Figure 3.* Theme: The environment - Physical - Non-disabled informants who raised this theme or its sub-themes, or both.
(a) Names and uses of the individual rooms.

For many informants the names of the individual rooms in their home and the uses to which these were put was an important aspect of the physical environment. Most had a kitchen, bedroom(s), bathroom (which may also have included a toilet), and a central room sometimes described as a lounge room, a family room and a dining area. The full list of rooms or separate areas identified by informants is given in Table 8.

Table 8

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<td>Office</td>
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<td>Den</td>
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<td>Storage room</td>
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However, not all informants had a separate dining room and, even where they did, it was not necessarily the room in which all meals were taken. This was especially so with breakfast which tended to be eaten in the kitchen by many, but not all, informants. Rooms in which informants regularly ate meals besides breakfast were identified as: kitchen; kitchenette; breakfast corner room; dining room; dining area; living room; lounge room; lounge area; family room; lounge/dining area;

(b) Physical features of the setting.

The physical features of the setting played an important role in the creation of home for many informants with the grounds around the dwelling, the street, neighbourhood and even, in some cases, the district or city being regarded
as significant contributors to a sense of home.

Are there any areas in or around the home that are special to you, in any way, shape or form? *The backyard is probably the bit I enjoy most out of the whole house. Why is that? That's because the dogs are there. Because you can go out there and forget; you know, if anything is bothering you at all, you go out and forget it out there. It's nice, the sun, when the sun's out, it covers the whole backyard, there's really nice trees out there, and there's a bungalow which gives shade as well so you can sit just under the bungalow roof thing. Yeah, it's very relaxing outside.*

What would you miss most about (your home if you had to shift)? *I would miss the solitude. Being at the end of a road, it's nice and quiet and peaceful. Yes, that's about it, the location I suppose would be it.*

Of all the places you've lived in, which gave you the strongest feeling of home? *(Name of suburb).* *(Name of suburb).* Do you mean (name of suburb) the place or do you mean a specific house somewhere in (name of suburb)? *In (name of suburb). I would never live anywhere else. So it was really (name of suburb) the suburb and not any one particular property? Because you could shop here night time when you needed something. I don't smoke now but I smoked in the early days. You could buy a packet of smokes at 2 o'clock in the morning, you could do anything in (name of suburb). It's lovely to live here. You know there are a lot of people around, all sort of nationalities, it's lovely, it's lovely, ... So, it's really the suburb of (name of suburb), it's not any one particular house or anything that you've lived in? No... It's the area that to you is home? *This area. I really like to live here. If I had bought a house, I would have bought a house here.*

(c) Physical appointments and attributes.

The physical appointments and attributes of the home were also identified as major contributors to a sense of home by a significant number of informants. Examples of these appointments and attributes include: air conditioning; heating; security systems; lock-up garage; garden/front garden; shed; barbecue; orientation to the sun; high ceilings; size of rooms; and the layout and number of rooms.

B2. The social environment.

The social aspects of the home environment featured strongly in the descriptions of home elicited from informants. Principal among concepts
identified in this regard were the family home; socialising in the home; the social atmosphere of the home; and its social context.

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Figure 4. Theme: The environment - Social - Non-disabled informants who raised this theme or its sub-themes, or both.

(a) Family home.

The experience of living with one's family in a family home was an experience of lifelong significance for all informants. However, for many of the younger informants this meant their experience of living with their parent(s) and growing up in a nurturing environment.
What qualities make that a home? I think that's because that's where my parents are - they are the carers of the whole family - they both look after myself and my sisters even though they are both married and left home certainly when I go there I still strongly feel like that's my main home and that's where I belong.

In terms of the house you lived in there, did that feel like a home? Yeah, it did, because I had the warmth from my family. It was actually my home yeah. I guess you need some, you always need your family to be, ... to give you support, to give you confidence, to give you everything as their son, they want the best for you, and they try to give it to you, and in that way, yeah, I felt at home.

For the older informants however, this was more likely to mean the experience of raising their own children within the family home they had established as well as their own childhood experience of growing up with their own parents in the parent(‘)s(’) home.

What memories do you have of that place (the informant’s previous home)? Well the kids were all home. Five kids. There are seven of us. I think it was really home up there. Yeah. It seems that the thing that gives you the strongest feeling of home about that house was the fact that it was your family there, your children? Yeah, family together. Now you are only the two of you. Still got the kids around here, but they’ve got their own life. So this is a home and that was a home but in this home you don’t have your children living with you whereas there you did - Does that make your feelings for the other home, when you think about it, stronger than this one? Yeah. Definitely yes.

What makes this a home for you? Is it the fact that you built it yourself, or is it the fact that you’ve been here so long, or is it that you’ve had a family here, and perhaps raised here? Is there any one particular thing? Not that I only live in it and my family lived in it. That’s what makes it more treasured or more something special to me because all my children was raised in this house and nearly, I’ve spent nearly all of my life in here too. So that’s something that I always treasure, me and my wife, this is our home, right?

For a number of the older informants, this feeling of a family home continued after their children had left to live independently.

I'd hate it if my children felt they couldn't come home. Even though they are married and grandchildren and all, they still, this is still home to them, you know.
(b) Surrogate family home.

For some informants, the experience of the original family home was so significant that they identified a surrogate family home which comprised living in a social setting which gave a sense of home and family among non-related individuals.

What qualities made that a home? *I think the feeling of home you got there because you had so many other people around. You were like a big family. You were certainly leaving your other family behind but you were also coming into a new one where you've got a lot of other people aged your own age, people with similar interests and that makes you feel comfortable in another living environment.*

*Well, I always lived with my parents until I was ... 20, I suppose, and I'd done a primary teacher's course by then and was sent to the country teaching and I had to board with a family. I was at one school for two and a half years and another one for a year and both times I was with really nice families, who didn't take boarders, but just accommodated the school by having the teacher at their house and, y'know, I was treated like family there. So, I regarded both of those homes as a home because they were so nice to me. Like another mother and father really in both places.*

(c) Socialising in the home.

Socialising in the home was a major function of the home for many informants. This socialising seemed to be more casual, one-to-one, spontaneous and day-to-day than to be referring to dinner parties and other, more formal, events. However for many informants, especially those who were born overseas, the home was very much a *gathering place* for family and friends.

*To me a home is a place where family and loved ones gather.*

Did that give it (the informant's previous home) a special feeling of home to you? *Yeah because the kids brought girl friends and boy friends home, and you know, always easy. And the first one to have ourselves a television at that time and sometimes twelve or twenty people at home on a Saturday night all watching the television.*

(d) External socialising.

On the other hand, socialising outside the home was considered an important aspect of home for many informants too. These included those who valued socialising in the home as well as those who, almost exclusively, socialised
outside the home. For these latter informants the home was the base of their social activities. It was where they prepared to go out, where they could be contacted by friends, where they performed the basic functions of daily life such as eating, personal hygiene and grooming, and self maintenance (e.g., laundry tasks).

(1) Just go out and enjoy yourself and like with a large group of people. I don’t like large groups of people in my home ’cause I feel they’re invading my privacy.

I go out a lot though. I try to keep on the move. I belong to several clubs, widows’ clubs, and they have outings and so forth so I don’t spend a lot of time here. ...I read and sew and knit and listen to audio tapes, and, um, that’s when I’m here. But as I say, I’m not very often here. Often my friends ring me and say oh you’re home today. So obviously they ring lots of the time when I’m not home. ... So, you talk about the clubs, would you do more socialising there, than you do at home? I think so, yes. I don’t go looking for social events at home. The only time I would have anyone here to entertain would be a couple of very close friends or my children and their families. So a lot of your socialising would be outside? Yeah.

(d) Social atmosphere.

In its role as a social environment the social atmosphere of the home was regarded as very important by many informants. Felicity was a major component of this atmosphere. By felicity they meant the experience of social comfort or ease imparted to visitors and the pleasantness, hospitality and welcome offered. This was seen as a significant factor also in distinguishing homes from the experience of non-homes (see below).

My wife’s (family’s) place up in the other part of the country, up the other end of Victoria. I regard that as more or less another home as well. Somewhere you can relax with friendly people and enjoy yourself and do things you want to do ...

In terms of what makes a place feel like a home for you, what is it that gives it that feeling then? Just warmth, like personal warmth, you feeling as though you’re welcome, not insecure and not out of place, where you want to be.

Those places that make you feel like they’re a home for somebody, what do you like about them? Well, just that you feel comfortable when you walk in, and it’s sort of bright and happy and you just feel, you know, this is peaceful or nice, you know. You
could sit, it wouldn't matter, it could be quite an ordinary little house or somewhere but, you know, I have one or two friends where I go and I feel at home and I'm welcome, and I think it's the welcome; the atmosphere that you feel welcome ...

While felicity may refer to the feelings imparted to visitors and guests the experience of the home as a place of love was the main, and very important feeling which made the place a home for many informants. This love was love in its broadest sense. It meant being in a place where one loved or cared about, or had an affinity with and was supportive of, others living in the same setting (whether they were blood relatives, related by marriage, or unrelated in any way) and having this love (in whatever form it took) reciprocated.

In ideal terms you can think the way a home should feel? Should be feeling of love and care there.

What was it that made that (a) home? Was it the place itself or the people? The love in it. My grandparents were beautiful people - real old style lady and gentlemen. My grandfather never sat down until he'd held grandmother's chair for her to sit for the table. Even in their 80's it was just the same. It was just the love in it, full of love.

How would you define a home? Well, I don't think it's the actual building. I think it's your possessions around you and I do think there would have to be somebody there that you cared about or who cared about you, for it to be a real home.

For several informants the notion of contributing to the overall running of the household by sharing chores or other essential tasks or roles formed a part of this idea of reciprocity. Compatibility, or the ability to get along with others in the home (whether related or not) without argument or strife was also considered an important adjunct to felicity and the experience of the home as a place of love.

If you do move in (to a new house) with strangers what particularly will make it seem un-homelike? Strange people to begin with - I mean that's not to say I won't form friendships with them - it depends who they are as to whether I become - if I became friends with the people that I lived with and they were in my social group and all of that, then it would feel more homelike to me because I could be more relaxed, more myself, and therefore it would be more homelike because it would be that place you come to, to just take a load off. But if I didn't feel comfortable there then it wouldn't feel like a home.
In some ways this concept, compatibility, can be conceived of as a
‘hygiene factor’ (Hertzberg, 1968) in that its presence may not necessarily
guarantee an experience of felicity and love but its absence renders the attainment
of felicity and/or love highly improbable.

(e) Social context.

The social context of the home refers to the external ‘people’ milieu in
which the home exists. The critical contributions of: friendly, or at least non-
nintrusive, neighbours; of knowing and being known by others in the
immediate locale (even if not by name), were seen as strongly reinforcing the
feeling of home by many informants. As one informant put it:

I think if you know the people that you are living around or with, it
makes it a lot easier to be there. Even in one of our apartments we
had friends upstairs and friends across the way and friends around
the corner and it felt like a community. Here we have friends next
doors, friends around the corner but we really don’t know anyone
else but still that’s pretty good. In my mother-in-law’s old house
they knew everyone on the block and we couldn’t walk down to the
end of the street without being greeted and that was a sense of
larger family for us. So it’s always nice to be somewhere where
everybody knows who you are. I think that helped a lot for us to
feel like that was home.
C. The metaphysical dimension.

The metaphysical dimension of home refers principally to its time and spiritual aspects. The time aspects include not only past, present, and possible future homes, but also the time-related elements associated with home such as continuity and considerations of meaningful constituents of home.

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Figure 5. Theme: The metaphysical dimension - Non-disabled informants who raised this theme or its sub-themes, or both.
C1. Time aspects.

(a) Past or former homes.

Past or former homes were identified by informants as including both family and non-family homes. In the case of the family home, it may or may not be still occupied by members of the family (usually a parent or parents). The important consideration in regard to it as a past home was that the informant no longer lived substantially there. Non-family former homes were places where informants had lived which they regarded, either at the time or subsequently, as being their home during that period of their life. The identification of present and former homes also evoked descriptions of places which embodied the strongest sense of home for a number of individuals. This strong sense of home arose from the strength of feelings or memories around a specific place.

Of all the places you regard as home which gave you the strongest sense of home? Probably my parent's home. ... What sort of things did you do there that made it feel a home to you? All your memories or your childhood memories from when you are growing up. All the birthday parties that your parents organise, or friends have come over, or the Christmases where all the relatives get together, times like those where everyone is at the house and you can remember all those memories and that's probably what makes it more like a family environment. That's where everything has happened throughout your life so far. The big main events like Christmas and being at boarding school you are still coming home for Christmas so yeah, those things are still happening at home there. Growing up - we can't escape our pasts.

(b) Future or "synthesised" homes.

Informants also described what can be classified for the purposes of this analysis as 'synthesised homes'. These synthesised homes involved the informant's attempts to re-create former homes by incorporating elements of previously experienced homes. They might even be considered surrogate family homes in that they incorporated a significant number of physical features from, or reminiscent of, the individual's childhood family home.

What do you do to make other places that you go to seem more like home to you? Places that we live in? Yes. When we first got married we didn't have a whole lot of material things but everywhere we go we take a certain number of objects that are important - the picture that is above the mantle I got as a birthday present when I was quite young and that's always been in a room that I've been in - my bedroom when I was young or the bedroom that we lived in, in my partner's parent's house, so that has a sense
of continuity to it. So we put up things that we have ties to, to make things feel like home.

**Future homes** were imagined homes. These were frequently identified when informants were asked what actions they would take in order to create a new home for themselves. Such future homes often contained significant attributes of current or former homes as links with the past. This seemed to reflect, and somewhat reify, the idea of the home as having a timeless quality.

If you were to shift from here to say another city or something like that, how would you set about creating a home for yourself? *I suppose the first thing I would do would be to put up all my things I’ve got here - that would be the first thing. That would make it feel a bit like home. I think if you’ve got your personal things you can make a home anywhere as long as you’ve got all your personal things...*

... what would you do to establish a new home there? *Probably, buy a few plants or something I like which perhaps, probably reminded me of here. Have some of my possessions around me again, I suppose...*

(c) Time-related qualities.

The analysis of the data also revealed a number of responses to questions which drew heavily on an appreciation of home as transcending the present. These time-related qualities included a sense of **continuity** brought about by feelings of permanence and awareness of an unbroken course of events associated with a particular place.

... *I can go home to my mother’s house and there are things there from when I was a little girl and that has a continuity for me.*

... *I’ve been here since I was 16 so this is actually my mother’s house - she doesn’t live here but it’s my Mum’s house so it went from when I was 16 living at home with her here to her moving away and then (my brother) and I taking over looking after the house so it’s home...*

*I’ve lived here for 35 years and raised my four children here.*

*All my married life, my children have been born here, it’s part of my life if you like.*

They also included memories of significant or **meaningful events and experiences** associated with a particular place which existed for the informant, in
the informant’s mind, regardless of whether the original setting remained unaltered by time or not.

The family home is now owned by yourself and your siblings, and you’re renting that. Do you ever see yourself going back there to live? No. So in a sense it is to you now, and always will be, a past home? Yeah. What sort of memories would you have of that, that you carry with you? A lot of them of growing up, just being happy there. I also have not so fond memories of it because my mother was sick in that house for a long time.

Just seeing it how much (a previous home has) changed and how much it isn’t your home anymore because it’s somebody else’s home now and it’s got their energy about it - it looks kind of distant and strange in a way, but you know all the rooms in there and the colour on the walls if they haven’t been changed, so you can identify with it but it’s strange at the same time because it’s different if somebody else is living in it. ...I guess it stays - well it stayed in my memory as our last family house as a family unit and it had a very, very nice energy about that house and then when I went back there I thought that that was all gone, that it was just a bit of a dead kind of - just a house like every other house. I guess the house was always really beautiful to me and they had changed it and ruined it and it wasn’t going to be like it was ever again, type, thing. When you think of that house now what sort of memories do you have? Do you have memories of what it was when you lived there, or what it was when you went back and saw it before it got auctioned? Definitely the way it was when we lived there. God only knows what it looks like now I don’t know probably even worse but I will always remember it they way it was when I was there.

In a similar vein, the interviews revealed a veritable cornucopia of memories embedded in meaningful possessions in the home which served to maintain the connections between many informants and events and characters from their past and impart a deep sense of continuity and, at one level, timelessness. As a informant said when remarking on a picture she had hung in every home she’d lived in since a small girl, “... It’s something that ties me to a lot of different places.”

Did you plant the azaleas yourself? Yes. Every one has a meaning, when anyone’s passed away, ... then I always planted an azalea in memory of them, you know - a brother, a nephew, a dear friend or something like that, you know. And when they’d flower I’d think of others - that’s Anne or that’s Phillip, you know. They’re looking quite happy and blooming well this year... I notice, a number a photos and things around the place. Do they
help to make it a home? Yes, I think so. Actually, my daughter has a thing about getting them framed and it appears with one when I was 17 and it brings back a story of my younger or older sister sitting on a little cardboard suitcase. We'd come up to the city for the day while I was sitting and having my photo taken, and this was during the war, and I had a frock my mother had made me, it had been dyed many colours. I even won a Belle of The Ball in it once would you know, and things like that. And I can look at them and it's all, you know, nostalgic and all tells a story. It's memories? Yes, the memories. Yes. And that was a man, he was my husband, who was a great cricketer. He's about two there. That's, what, 70-odd years old that photo, which just fascinates me.

... there is so many things here what I'm really attached to. Even, you know, a little old vase and I look at it you know, and I say that man is already dead too or that lady or that family. I've got it now. They didn't really have much money but they did give me that little vase. So is it the memory more than the thing itself? Yeah, no, I would get attached to it. You know there are things here, they are not replaceable any more. There is photos, there is things that I have brought with me but, see that old thing down there, there is an old tobacco box standing down there, that is one for cigarettes and one is the little, where they put the pipe tobacco when they smoke pipe. Now that is from my (late) father in law. Now, I would hate to lose that.

There is another element of the time dimension of the home in which, while the over-arching concept of 'a home' remains constant, many attributes, (emphases if you will) of home are dynamic and therefore change in accordance with one's stage in life to a greater or lesser extent depending upon the person. This dynamic nature of home was most graphically revealed by the following informant interview excerpt.

I guess in terms of a discussion on home, the first obvious question is, really, what to you is a home? Yes, well, home varies I think, depending on the stage of life. Home to me is now quite different from the home I left, when I was a young man before marrying at 28 years of age. Home then, was a place of safety and food and a place to sleep an ordered life as far as parents were concerned. Then of course, when I got married, home became something of my own domain, certainly shared with my wife. But a lot more freedom, to please yourself, but it was your own place, your own space wasn’t it? And as we established our family and brought up five children in a rather large home, I had to find places away from the family, like a workshop and a den and so on, so a home suddenly became a place where it's had to have a workshop and a
C2. Spiritual aspects.

Beyond all of the foregoing there was also a purely metaphysical or spiritual sense of home identified by four informants. This was the notion of home as existing within oneself and not necessarily residing in any physical setting or building or in any constellation of people around one as explained by one informant:

*Home is something that is within each one of us. That to me is what home is. Home really is not really the building one lives in, well it is a building one lives in, but it's the spiritual concept of what is. It's something that no one else can give you. Home, you've got to establish it yourself.*
D. **Non-homes.**

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<tr>
<th>Informant code</th>
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<th>Non-familiarity</th>
<th>Sense of isolation</th>
<th>Sense of impermanence</th>
<th>Place to escape from</th>
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**Figure 6.** Theme: Non-home attributes and alternate meanings of the word "home" - Non-disabled informants who raised this theme or its sub-themes, or both.

It is often useful, when seeking to discover the essence of some phenomena, to illuminate the search by identifying the antithesis of what is sought. Therefore, informants were also asked to identify any non-homes they had experienced and to recount what it was that made those settings non-homes. This approach uncovered a wealth of experiences most of which re-affirmed the concepts of home identified elsewhere during the same informants' interviews. Those experiences of non-homes covered almost the full range of characteristics indicative of home, but in the negative. Many of the aspects cited by informants were of a generalised nature although some specifics did shine through from time to time.
(a) Generalised non-home qualities.

Dissatisfaction with not owning the dwelling or the furniture or both, or not having one’s own possessions and having to use other people’s possessions was a non-home characteristic for some informants.

Did you ever regard any of those as a home? No, Sort of a place where sort of I was. Because I didn't have any furniture or any of my belongings there and I was just starting to build it up.

For others it was lacking any personal space and any privacy or solitude when required which they found unconducive to feeling ‘at home’ as was constantly having to behave in a public manner because of the continual presence of others.

Being able to go somewhere and either close the door or just go into a room and be separate and be able to do what you want by yourself and things like that. See, I went to boarding school for six months and I couldn't stand it, because there was no privacy at all, like there were dormitories and things like that, it just wasn’t nice. You couldn’t just disappear, because always people always questioning me, “Where are you going?” “What are you doing?” You need your own space.

Being under the direction or rules of others or feeling pressured to conform to their ways was also a non-home experience for a number of informants.

If you go to a place that’s not a home, what do you dislike about it? Perhaps you’re frightened to feel, you’re frightened to sit on a seat or something, you know. And then, I’m a non-smoker, but I think people perhaps should respect others and, you know, say, “Do you mind if I smoke?” But I’m always, I say, “Not at all.” But then there’s other people who say, you know, “You can’t smoke in here ...”

The disconcerting experience of feeling insecure or unsafe and unable to relax made certain places non-homes for some informants.

There was a particular apartment that we lived in for only a short time. That was horrendous and the neighbours were horrendous and the location was awful and we hated it and it was such a non-home that we didn’t - almost like this - we didn’t want to put anything up to make it better because we didn’t like the feeling of it. We didn’t want to stay there.
(b) Non-familiarity.

Being in unfamiliar surroundings or away from their real home was a major issue for several informants. This feeling of impermanence, of being in transition and unable to settle-in made a number of informants unhappy and feeling 'out of place'. For some it was the feeling of being out place because they felt they were intruding on the lives of others, or they found themselves in a fastidiously maintained environment.

Have you lived in other places that you feel weren’t homes? Um...
My other one was eleven or twelve, I lived in my Dad’s girlfriend’s house but that wasn’t home at all, because it was her house with her three daughters and son and I was put into a bedroom with one of her daughters. It had one of those fold out beds and that was now my bedroom but I didn’t have anything of mine. Felt like an intruder basically. So I was there for about a year but I don’t think I’ve ever called it home.

For others it was the disruption of personal routines and the absence of common home-making tasks - the loss of the familiar - which caused the discomfort.

A dwelling which was not personalised in any way, even by the inclusion of one’s personal possessions or by modifying the environment in some way meant several informants had little identification with, investment or interest in, that place and therefore it was not a home to them.

Did you find any of the Air Force houses that were provided - did you regard them as homes? Not really, no, because they were somebody else’s - they were the Air Force’s. I don’t know if you’ve ever been into a married quarter (but they’re) very standard and all of them look the same so there is nothing individual about it. That’s the other thing about having a home is that every home is individual, simply because the people who live in it are individual. From the way it looks and then to the way it feels when you walk in it. So a married quarter is just the same as every other married quarter. There is very little that you can do with it decorative wise - you can’t put in new carpet or anything like that so you can’t really make it an individual place just for you and your family. It was just like everybody else’s.

(c) Sense of isolation

Physical isolation or an unpleasant or unfamiliar environment was considered by some informants to be incompatible with their notions of home.
You lived, you said, for some years in a caravan ... Did you regard that as a home? Not me ... I was the only one sitting home, half an hour walk from the bus stop, they all went to work, and half an hour of walking to the bus stop and I only could look at the sheep and the cows in the paddock I could fight with. There was nobody to talk to, it was about half a kilometre let's say, from the street and if was three cars passed during the day I thought there was a party going on. It was so quiet. After two years I couldn't stand it anymore up there so I said to my husband you can stay in the caravan I'm going back to (the city). Which I did. So it was the isolation then, that made it feel it wasn't a home to you? Yeah, that was what I want to move. It was too quiet up there. I couldn't stand it.

Can you identify any places that you've lived that you regarded as not being home? Oh yes. One place in Footscray I didn't like that one. What was it that made it not a home? Didn't have a feel for home. It was a big place. ... We only stayed there a couple of years. What was missing? Atmosphere it was just a - we used to say it was a horrible place just didn't have anything warm about it anything nice about it. It was four walls that's all.

(d) Sense of impermanence.

In regard to the metaphysical aspects of non-homes, some informants recalled places which bore unpleasant memories or experiences or which lacked any significant memories for them. The absence of any enduring link with the place or people made places non-homes for some informants also.

Before you went to the flat (in 1939) ... , you had a room I think you said and a kitchen. Was that a home or was that not a home? No, no, I hardly regard that as being a home. What was missing? What was missing from that? What made it not a home if I can put it that way? ... In a sense that I suppose it was home, but it's sort of rather ... er ... transient, you don't feel anchored is what I'm trying to say, ... (And) in a while we thought this is pretty poor you know, this (bed-sitting room) so we looked for something better, and paid a bit more rent and got something a bit better and so this is why I say rather transient, you just weren't anchored to a place.

Of course, living in a place with an uncertain future hanging over one as regards security of tenancy or employment or both, made for non-homes in the minds of informants.

I don't see it as a home because we are only renting the house and
because this is not the house that I want to stay in for more than another five or six months - it's not something that I'm willing to put a lot of time and effort into making it more like a home. Getting the little personal things around - buying the extra furniture and making it the place that I really want to stay in, because it's not.

(c) Place to escape from.

For some informants it was the presence of unsatisfactory facilities or the absence of desired facilities which made the place a non-home.

"I paid two pound ten a week rent and the only thing we had, one lounge room, very small bedroom and another small bedroom, no bathroom or bath, there was just the sink and tub in there and I had to borrow a gas stove because that little thing I couldn't cook on, and then I had to heat it up with pots and pans, trying to get a hot bath. Ah, that's different. And was that a home to you? No. Why wasn't it a home? Just coming from overseas and you get in there and you got no convenience or nothing.

Memories of a dwelling as a place of hardship enabling only a minimal (basic) existence were synonymous with non-homes to some informants.

Have you been through any migrant experience? Like, for instance, sometimes when people migrate they live somewhere in a, - In a hostel? Hostel? Something like that. Yeah. Have you lived in that sort of place? I have. Oh, I forgot about that, yeah. Well we came in 1988, we lived in a hostel, down in Springvale, we lived there for about a month, a month, two months maybe, um. Did that seem like a home to you? Not really, no. There was an awful scenery because we used to like, I'm not racist or anything, but we used to live around so many people, different cultures and everything, that first of all the language was another language, when we came down it was Spanish, so the language was a big barrier. Then we used to live with, like, it was a huge hostel and we used to live with people who had bad manners, like, not manners at all, and we used to like, live with, what you might call cannibals, they used to like, catch rats, and put them in the fryer, because we had, it was a, where we used to eat, it was like a whole dining room for the whole hostel, and there was big toasters, and I remember you used to see the rats toasting, it was so horrible, we couldn't adapt to that kind of living. I mean, who could? Smells everywhere, um, ... Gardens, didn't have any gardens. Um, broken windows, two rooms, my family is six, so we used to have just two rooms for the whole family and, no. No, that obviously wasn't like living in a home.
OK, so what was the feeling there then, how did you feel in that environment? Oh, We felt like, ... like some, God was probably punishing us for something right? Um, I was young, I was ten years old, but I could still remember little things, like in my long term memory, you know, little things that really makes me think how can a human being be exposed to that kind of living?

The lack of a sense of family or the absence of love (or loved ones) and living with strangers were identified by a number of informants as characteristics of non-homes. So too were the lack of any social relationships or even courtesy and respect from strangers or the presence of ongoing social tension within the dwelling.

... When I was younger, my parents got divorced when I was nine, and we had a lot of family troubles so it stopped feeling like a home, even though I still lived there.

Non-homes were frequently reported as unwelcoming places where no hospitality was proffered and the person consequently felt uncomfortable and ill at ease.

Any places you visited where people live and you felt they weren’t home, or wouldn’t be a home to you? Yes, some of like, ... my uncle’s house, I could never go there, I just wouldn’t feel comfortable, like family members, like that. Why not? He just distances himself since, oh he’s been remarried recently, in the last couple of, two years, and he’s not a very welcoming sort of person. What do you mean by a welcoming person? He just always makes me feel uncomfortable and he doesn’t make you feel as though you are supposed to be there, it’s like everything you do or you touch, you know you’re invading his privacy in everything you do, so you just don’t feel welcome in the house.

One informant’s sense of social alienation arose from an inability to communicate with others in the locale because of a lack of a common language. This made the place the informant was living at that time a distinct non-home in the informant’s mind and, in common with other informants who experienced non-homes, somewhere to escape from as quickly or as frequently as possible.

With the places you have lived in overseas, ... What was it about them that made it feel as if they weren’t homes to you? What was missing? Well to start with, I lived in two places mostly. One was in New York and one was in Detroit. I used to live almost in the middle of the city, or in the slums of the city, which were kinds of unsatisfactory for me. But I didn’t mind at the time because when you are single. What was unsatisfactory about it? Unsatisfactory?
The atmosphere. The place itself. ...With the noises and so on, I
used to work three shift works there and you could hardly sleep or
things like that. The other handicap of course, was the mixing of
nations that you find here. You find all kinds of people. Not that I
like discrimination or anything like that but it's very hard to
communicate with them. Here you might find some but there you
have the South Americans, the Mexicans, the Puerto Ricans, many
different cultures and so forth. I don't hate, the discrimination, all
black and white, it's to me, we are all people but to communicate
with them is very hard. Plus my knowledge of English is not very
good, so at the time was worse than it is now.

E. Alternate meanings.

Informants identified several alternate meanings of the word 'home'. (The
individual informants are identified on the previous chart of responses). These
were:

- home groups (groupings of students at school);
- other people's homes (whether they regard them as homes or not);
- second home (one's workplace);
- home land (country of origin);
- home town/city (town/city of origin);
- home runs (in softball);
- coming home (returning to the family fold though not necessarily
  physically returning to the family dwelling);
- (family) home; and,
- home state/country.
11.2. Summary: The Essence of Home?

It is acknowledged that this study is qualitative rather than quantitative and therefore the data cannot be treated in the same fashion as quantitative data. They cannot be summed in some fashion and analyzed or accorded meaning by reason of the percentage agreement demonstrated, or other similar empirical measure. Not all informants were asked exactly identical questions in a set order of presentation. Not all informants may have understood similarly phrased questions as having the same meaning or intent.

However, having made these important caveats, it is also useful to remember that the sampling method used to construct the panel of informants was purposive maximum variation. Each informant is different from any other on at least one of the attributes considered relevant such as age, income, or whether the current dwelling is rented or being purchased or owned outright. Therefore, there is some attraction in the logic that whatever the informants unanimously perceive as a meaningful aspect of home should also be shared by the general population. In other words, the informants’ commonly held views are the essence of ‘home’.

The distillation of the data to this end reveals the following:

1. Home, *per se*.
   - The experience of ‘home’ is common among all people. It may, however, take very different forms for each individual and may refer to a past home, present or metaphysical ‘home’.

2. Home as related to the self, particularly the private components of the self.
   - The ability to exert significant control over, or modify, an area (either the total dwelling or some specific part of it).
   - Part of this control is having a sense of territoriality by means of a personal space or creating a personalised space by marking it in some way by the (re)arrangement of its contents or by the placement of one’s possessions. This was regarded as an essential attribute of home.
   - In addition, for all but one informant, control involved a sense of privacy within the home to the degree one desired.
   - The home is experienced as a place of contentment, primarily through recognition of its familiarity.
   - An important contributor to this sense of contentment intrinsic to home is certain behaviours which are commonly done by each person only, or usually only, when that person is at home. These tasks, actions, routines and activities may vary from person to person but, for the individual concerned, they are indicative of ‘being at home’.

3. Home as related to the self, particularly the public components of the self.
   - The capacity to express one’s self through the home environment in
some way as an indication or extension of one’s personality is an essential component of home.

4. Home as related to the environment, specifically the physical environment.
   • The use of a common or shared language concerning the names and uses of rooms within the home was an obvious characteristic here.
   • The physical features, appointments and attributes of the home and its context were major contributors to its recognition as home for informants.

5. Home as related to the environment, specifically the social environment.
   • The use of the home for socialising with others is an essential component of home. This is regardless of whether such socialising is intimate or superficial, frequent or occasional.
   • The experience of living as a family, either as a child with one’s parents or as an adult with one’s own children or partner may also constitute a major source of a sense of home. (Logically however, people who were raised in an orphanage, or who lived alone as adults, or both, would not share this view so the criticality of this experience to one’s perception of home can be queried).
   • The social atmosphere within the home, the feelings of welcome, concern, or love conveyed to and by others entering or living in the home were mentioned by all but one informant as integral to a home.
   • The social context of the home, the relationship of its occupants to others around the home, was an important contributor to a sense of home to all but one informant.

6. Home as related to the metaphysical dimension.
   • The time-related aspects of the home were significant in the minds of all informants in transforming a place into a home.
   • A specific time-related aspect shared by all informants was the retention of memories, either of significant or meaningful events and experiences associated with a particular place or embedded in the person’s possessions, or both. These were identified as an essential set of ingredients of home.

7. Non-home attributes
   • All informants had experienced, or could conceive of, places which they regarded as ‘non-homes’ and, although the reasons for this judgement varied from person to person they were fundamentally the negative form, or absence, of those characteristics which were considered essential to render a place a home.
Chapter 12. Home - The Perspectives of People With an Intellectual Disability

As in the previous chapter, the detailed perspectives distilled from the data, in this case those supplied by informants who have an intellectual disability, are described. Perspectives held in common by a significant number of the sample informants are then identified (regardless of whether these perspectives are unique to this study or not) and an attempt is made at discerning the major themes on the concept of home which emerge from an analysis of the data generated by this sample.

12.1. The Results From the Analysis of the Interviews

The process used in analysing the interviews with the eighteen people with an intellectual disability who were informants to this study was independent of, but essentially the same as, that used in the analysis of the responses from non-disabled informants.

The 18 interviews were transcribed in full and each informant assigned a code letter. The demographic profiles of the informants concerned were given earlier in Table 5 (see Chapter 9).

A total of 60 concepts or themes were identified across the interviews in this set. A further 3 conceptual categories were also created to cover answers which were: ambiguous or unclear; demographic details about the informant; or, digressions and irrelevancies not focused on the question or around 'home'. These 60 concepts fitted within the same five broad themes and their underlying sub-themes identified in the analysis of non-disabled informant interviews, namely:

Home, as related to -
A. the self
   A1 private
   A2 public
B. the environment
   B1 physical
   B2 social
C. the metaphysical dimension
D. non-homes
E. alternate meanings of the word 'home'.
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**Figure 7.** Theme: The Self - private components - Informants with an intellectual disability who raised this theme or its sub-themes, or both.

**A. The self.**

As explained in the previous chapter, the self refers to the personal aspects of home. The private components of self concern the introversion needs met by home, the "inward-focused" aspects of the person. The public components of the self concern the extraversion needs met by the home, "... the outer world of people and external events" (Kirby & Myers, 1993, p. 4).

**A1. The private sub-theme**

As with the non-disabled group, the private or introversion needs identified by the group of informants with an intellectual disability were the needs
for control, contentment, and “rootedness”. The need for stability was not expressed although the expression of a need for familiarity and security may, to some extent, incorporate the need for stability. The need for control and the need for contentment were the most commonly shared needs among this group of informants.

(a) Control.

Regardless of whether they lived at home with their parent(s) or in a community residential service, nearly all of the informants with an intellectual disability appeared to have an external control orientation (i.e., they were subjected to, and had learnt to seek, direction from others, in preference to finding it within themselves).

One of the major aspects of home life for them was not so much control over the setting, but the control of others over them in that setting. This limitation on their autonomy was usually imposed by the actions of one or both parents or, for those not living with their family, the residential service staff. Parents or staff made the important rules governing the setting and were generally perceived or acknowledged by the informants as ‘the boss’ in the home.

Who’s the boss at home? Sometimes it’s my Dad, sometimes it’s my brother. Are you ever the boss? No, never.

How do you feel at home? Sometimes I get grumpy at home. What makes you grumpy? My Dad gets grumpy with me every time he tells me to everything - Mum tells him he’s - ‘cause my Dad, I’m supposed to run after him all the time - yeah, and I said to my Dad, nah, it’s no good saying make a cuppa. I can’t make cups of tea all the time.

Who’s the boss in your house? (Staff members’ names). So you’re not the boss? No.

Sometimes however, regardless of whether they were parents or staff, their being the ‘boss’ was preferred by informants.

Who’s the boss in the house? (Name), because she’s a house worker. So who makes the rules? (Name). Do you and the others have any say in the rules? Yes, we follow her. How do you feel about (name) being the boss in your house? Great. Fantastic. You like that? Yes.

The one exception to all of this was an informant who described the home as a cooperative with shared tasks and responsibilities. However, this informant also mentioned a number of well developed domestic skills which the informant
enjoyed practising but was prevented from doing so in the family home by parental pressure and expectations. Others expressed a wish for greater autonomy.

*I would be good to have my house, do my own thing and share the things with my boyfriend like the chores and everything.*

*I'd like to learn a few things... About washing and cooking or doing that... Got to do the cleaning too.*

Is... independence important to you? Yes. So if you went to live with a relative or somewhere else? *I'd want to do things for myself.* You know, I mean, they could tell me if I do something wrong, *I wouldn't mind, you know? But I'd want to do things like cooking or do things like that, you know, go out myself sometimes, you know? Not with all the family of course.*

For many informants, whether they lived with their family or in a residential service, the *territorial* aspect of their sense of control was confined to their bedroom. It was here that they kept most, if not all, of their valued possessions and expressed their choice of furnishings and accessories (e.g., doona covers or curtains) and activities (e.g., choice of music, TV channel, or leisure pursuits).

*Do you have much control over what goes on at home? No. I just go in my bedroom.*

*If you decided to live somewhere else, what sort of place would you live in? I would like a new place... Nice big room to myself... Put my TV in there.*

For many it was the place where they had the degree of solitude or *privacy* they desired.

*If you want some peace and quiet at home, where do you go? Bedroom... And listen to tapes.*

What do you particularly like about where you are living at your home? *Oh, all the peace and quiet. Having the room to myself.*

*It was also, for several, the only area where they could control the intrusion of others.*

*So nobody comes in your room and touches things or anything? No. So you feel that's your room? *Yeap. That's good – do you like having your own room? Yeap. And does that feel private? Your*
things are private in your room? *Yeap.*

What do you particularly like about where you are living at your home? ... *Having the room to myself.*

If you want to talk to someone in private or you’ve got something you want to keep private – is that hard here with so many people? *No. Mention my private in my room.* So that works out alright? No body interferes with anything of yours? *Um ... Sometimes?* *Sometimes.* Sometimes, but not often though? *No.*

Three informants reported eating their main meal in their bedroom alone, two because it enabled them to watch a different choice of TV program at that time and the other for no discernible reason.

*Do you eat at the table or in the lounge or in front of the TV?* *No, I eat in my room.* What about your (parent) and your (sibling), where do they eat? *Lounge room – tea and that in the lounge room.*

So, do you watch TV when you eat? *Yeah. So you take your tea and go to your room and watch TV and have your tea there? Yeah.* And your (parent) and (sibling) have tea in the lounge? *Yeah. Do they watch a different program from you? Yeah, and I watch something else too.* So they watch a different TV channel than you? *Yeah, they do – Channel Seven.*

The issue of privacy is central to any sense of control over one’s environment. Some enjoyed a level of privacy desired.

*Is your bedroom private for you?* *Yeah ... Do people go into your bedroom? No. Only if you say they can? Yeah. Yeah. OK, so you feel that’s your private room? Yeah.*

*What do you do when you want peace and quiet by yourself? By myself.* *Yeah. What do you do when you want that? Oh, ... Do you go in your bedroom? Yeah. And can you close the door of your bedroom? Yeap. ... So if you want to be by yourself you can go to your bedroom and close the door. Is that right? Yeap. And people won’t disturb you? No. You feel that’s your room? Yeap. ... Do you like having your own room? Yeap. And does that feel private? Your things are private in your room? Yeap.*

However, for some informants living in residential service settings, privacy, or the lack of it, was a major concern.

*There’s not too many people trying to use the bathroom at once for you is there? Oh, it bothers me, - it bothers me a lot.* ...
(Especially) in the morning. And what about your things in your room, - are they safe? Do other people interfere with them or take anything? Yeah, steal things. ... Because I got no key. ... So you can’t lock (your bedroom door)? Do you get much stuff taken? Yeah. They pinch my money, my wallet.

There’s only one bathroom, there’s two showers. So, with eight to ten people that must get crowded? Yeah, it does. I will be glad when I move out.

Are you happy where you are at present? Not too bad, but I should have been out elsewhere. What’s missing from where you are now? Well, there’s nothing missing but I will be glad to get out because then I won’t have so many people around me. ... Do you feel you’ve got enough privacy where you live? No, not enough I don’t think. ...I’d like it just to be on my own or be with other friends.

Sometimes, people living in residential service settings obtained privacy in unusual, and limited ways.

Where do you go if you want to talk to (your visitor)? I have a talk with him. I say, I tell him everything. He understands what I say. OK. But where do you go at your place to do that? Do you talk to them in the lounge or in your bedroom, or in the kitchen, out the backyard? No, no, in the flat. In the flat? We shut the door. Yeah. So is the flat – does anybody live in the flat? Yes (staff member) does. Does she mind you using the flat? No, She don’t mind. She says yes. So if you want to talk privately with people that’s where you go? Yes. That’s a good idea. And if you want some peace and quiet for yourself – if you just want to be by yourself – where do you go for that? Um, ... um ...Oh I don’t remember.

For others, privacy is hard to obtain in a residential service setting.

Are there things you don’t like about living there? I don’t like one lady’s loud voice. She talks. How does that affect you? Yap, Yap, Yap. I see. Talks all the time? Yeah. Drives you crazy. So what do you do when she drives you crazy? Ignore her. Is there anything else you do? Walk away from her.

Sometimes, for those living with their family, privacy is made difficult by the intrusion of other members of the immediate or extended family.

If you want to be private, if you just want to be by yourself can
you do that at home? No, I can’t. (Always) a (my) family surrounds me.

Sometimes, you know, like family and all them things. You know sometimes I do like them to come, but sometimes I want, you know, a bit of quiet. ... You want to be on your own sometimes.

In regard to physical security matters informants seemed to adopt a reasonably pragmatic approach. Some did not feel safe in certain areas of their neighbourhood and so avoided going there.

(Do) You feel, with those sort of people ... (Nearby) ... , you feel safe? Well, ... (where we are) ... I feel safe, but if I was to go over the other side I wouldn’t feel so secure.

Others wanted locks which they could operate to secure items.

I (would) know I had ... secured windows. Sometimes I look around the place and I go and spend some money on window locks and stuff.

In the few cases where people had experienced being burgled, they regarded it as a temporary annoyance which was only briefly upsetting. None seemed to harbour lingering fears or insecurities of concern to them as a result of being burgled.

I was watching television and a man took things. It wasn’t the telly but tape recorder. Do you feel safe where you’re living now? Yeah. So that’s not a problem for you? (No).

The ability to undertake private behaviours in the home (i.e., to behave as one wishes without seeking the approval, or avoiding the censure, of others) seemed largely restricted to solitary relaxation and leisure in their bedroom for most informants.

Do you feel you have enough privacy for your needs? Yeah - no-one barges in (to my bedroom) ... So you’ve got somewhere where you can do your own thing in peace and privacy without interruption? Yeah, and that relaxes me, and that’s what I like doing ...

Have you got enough privacy where you are? Yeah, in my own bedroom I have. So, if you want some peace and quiet where do you go for that? I just go to my room listen to my TV or the stereo.

A few had other areas they used to get away from other people and be on
their own.

There's (a number of) people living at (your) home. If you want some peace and quiet for yourself, where do you go for that when you're at home? In the backyard. In the backyard, that's where you find it's quiet? Yeah.

Given most informants' lack of autonomy in their home and the limitation of a sense of their personal space to the confines of their bedroom, the control of access to certain parts of the home as a measure of privacy was only able to be explored with two informants. One of these was living at home with family and followed conventional norms in regard to allowing visitors access to various areas of the home according to the degree of closeness of the relationship with the person concerned.

Where do you go with your friends when they come to visit you? On Sunday. On Sunday. And whereabouts in the house do they go? Do you talk to your friends in the lounge room, or kitchen, or bedroom, or go out the back in the backyard, or? Where do you talk to your friends in the house? In the kitchen. In the kitchen. What do you do? Do you make them a cup of tea or a cup of coffee, or something to drink? Cordial.

The other informant lived alone in his own home and the physical layout of this dwelling minimised his options.

When people come to your home, what areas do you use to socialise? This area, and the dining part of the area. So, you've got the lounge, the dining, and I guess, because it's all one room, the kitchen too? Yeah. I can just do coffee making. I don't have to just go out to another room and come back again. I can do it all around here.

Together these two descriptions provided little insight into this aspect of privacy and control in regard to people who have an intellectual disability. However, the absence of any other descriptions on the control of access to areas of the home from the other informants seems indicative of a common lack of privacy in this regard for this informant group.

Only one informant actually had ownership of his dwelling however, several were living with their family in a house owned by the family or their parent(s). For most informants, except the one actual home-owner, their sense of ownership was largely limited to their possessions, particularly major items such as bicycles or colour Televisions.

Have you got your own bedroom? Yeah and stereo recorder. Yeah.


Nevertheless, several informants regarded the family home as theirs.

What makes you proud of where you live? I'm proud of my own home and what I'm doing.

(b) Contentment.

Contentment was a common need among informants with an intellectual disability. Nearly all reported being content with where they currently lived although some had difficulty describing exactly why they were content.

Do you like where you live with (name of person)? Yeah. Are you happy there? Yeah. What do you like about it? I don't know. Okay, can you think of some things that you really like? No. Are there things about where you live at the moment that you don't like? No. Are you happy, very happy, with it? Yeah.

For some, home provided a refuge from others or from noisy day-time settings, and this aided their contentment.

Do you like going home there at night, after you finish work? Yeah, sometimes I go and have a lie down when I go home. It's a good place to go home to? Yeah. What do you like best about it? It's quiet, no noise. Do you find it noisy here at work? Yeah, when the clients come in.

For some this extended to include the home and its external environment.


For others, the home was a place of general happiness.
Do you like where you live now? Yeah, I do. What do you like about it? I like working out, planting stuff. Planting stuff around the garden? Yeah. And what else do you like about it? I go for walk all that sorts of stuff I like. Yeah – and are you happy there? Yeah my home and (parent) make me happy.

Part of people's feelings of contentment also seemed to be derived from the familiarity of the home routines followed. Most informants had specific chores they performed around the home which assisted in its day-to-day operation and these seemed to provide a set of at-home behaviours which informants found reassuring.

Describe for me the way a home should feel? Um, how do you make a home comfortable? You have to survive, you have to cook, you've got to keep healthy, you've got to clean it, dust it, wash your clothes.

What sorts of things do you like about your home? I like to stay home and can go out. Sometimes I go with mum shopping. Mum goes one way, I go a different way. And what sorts of things do you like about living at home? Doing my bedroom up and help with the dishes. I do dishes by myself.

Sometimes the people for whom the chores were performed were integral to the informant's sense of contentment in this area.

Do you like where you live, when you're at home with your folks? Yes. Are you happy there? Yes. What sort of things about it do you particularly like? Everything. Can you think of any thing in particular or any things in particular? I just like being with my parents and I like doing things for them. that's all.

It was noteworthy that the routines and tasks mentioned by informants mostly centred around maintenance of oneself or the day-to-day home environment. While a number are very active outside the home, for quite a few their principal form of relaxation and leisure in the home seemed to be watching television, sitting around, or playing music.

What do you do after tea? I just play my stereo.

Do you go to the movies much or anything like that on the weekend? Not much. Do you ever get a video and watch that? Oh. sometimes. So most of the time on the weekend you sit around? Yeah, sit around.

Very few people mentioned hobbies and, where they did, they were
mainly solitary activities such as listening to music or using a computer. Only one person maintained a (vegetable) garden.

(c) “Rootedness”.

Informants expressing a sense of ‘rootedness’ were mainly those living with their family, an informant living independently, and two informants in co-residencies with other people who had disabilities. For some the feeling of rootedness was readily apparent.

OK, if I can ask you, what to you, what’s a home to you? How do you come to think of it that way? A home to me is a place you need to live in. A home where I can be on my own or with somebody who I choose, and how to find a person if I want somebody to live with me, if I did it, it would be by a proper relationship or something. If not I would just be single and not have anybody around. OK, do you regard where you currently live, this place, as your home? This is my home, yes. Why do you regard it that way, as your home? As my home? Well, ... well, it’s easy to be at home, paying it off, not rent, paying it off and no one gets anything, like bonds and stuff, like I mean you’ve got a stated account. And ah, it’s a place to come home to. It must at times be a place where I sleep and I’m not sleeping in the streets. People need a home to go to. It’s alright to go out and do things and that, having a good time and doing things, like going away on holidays, but you’ve really got to have a house to go to. What is it about a home that makes it feel like a home for you? What sort of feeling that you get? Just somewhere I can be to relax after a while. Yes, to do cooking and things and cleaning up. Have somewhere to live, not in the streets, like others. I like going out and doing sociable, going to meetings and things, but ah, but home is a place to be.

For others however, this feeling of ‘rootedness’ was less apparent or less tangible.

Do you think you’ll live (where you currently are) for a long time? Yes. Would you like to live there for a long time? Yes. Would you like to move somewhere? No.

Only informants living in residential service settings vocalised feelings which could be considered expressions of “rootlessness”.

People got no place and no order, nothing. You see I’ve got a problem with that, I’m not happy with the hostel, it’s not home.

For some of these people this “rootlessness” was imposed.
You're shifting out of this place soon? Yeah, and so is (a female resident). Why are you shifting...? Everybody is moving out.
Moving out of here? Some have moved out. One man's moved out already. He's living in another suburb, - he's gone, another's gone. Why is everybody moving out? I don't know.
A2. The public sub-theme.

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Figure 8. Theme: The self - Public components - Informants with an intellectual disability who raised this theme or its sub-themes, or both.

(a) Personal expression.

The public sub-theme of the self revealed by the group was confined to the need to use the home as a means of self expression. This self expression never extended to include the major living areas of the home as a comprehensive embodiment of the individual’s personality, sense of the aesthetic, or other forms of personal expression. It was mainly evident in aspects of the furnishings and decor of the individual’s bedroom or the display of possessions in the bedroom.

Can you tell me something about your bedroom? What sorts of things are in it? A TV, a bed, a table with some flowers on it, a seat to sit on. I don’t know, I’ve got a good view of the backyard from my bedroom and nothing much else. Do you have any pictures on the wall? Oh yeah, I’ve got family pictures and one’s of ducks and a calendar. Who chose the pictures? Well Mum and Dad, Dad took the photo of the ducks and I had something up there, but I got
sick of it and Dad thought I might like the one of the swans. So Dad chose that one and I got the family photo’s together. And you chose which photos you wanted to put in that? *Yeah Mum and Dad just put them together for me.* And what about your bed – do you have a doona? *I have a doona.* And who chose your doona covers and things? *I did.* So what sort of patterns are they? *One’s got flowers on it and one’s got ... Oh, I can’t remember the other one.* But you chose them both and you like them? *Yes.* Did you choose the furniture in your room? *Yes, I did.* What did you choose, all of it? *Yeah. I chose the bed and the chair that I sit on and the stool that I’ve got by my bed.*

In terms of your bedroom, you’ve got your bed in there obviously ... what else do you have in the way of furniture and things? *Oh, ... Do you have a wardrobe? *Yes.* Any chair or desk? *Yes.* And any dressing table? *Yes.* And other furniture? *My mum got some.* But in your bedroom? *Yes.* Do you have any pictures on the walls? *No, not really.* Who chose the furniture in your bedroom? *I do.* And what do you use? Do you use a doona on your bed? *No, I don’t like them.* *I get, yeah.* Are your walls painted? *Yeah, painted.* Who chose the colour? *I did.* Did you do the painting of it? *No, my uncle does.* He comes some time and does it. ‘Cause really the ceiling’s too high, so we can’t really do it.

What’s in your room? What things have you got in your room? *Football.* What, a football, pictures or what? *I barrack for(name of football club).* So you’ve got any pictures of (that club’s) players? *Yeah, some.* And where do you keep them? *In my drawer, away from one of the other women.* Does she like (that club) too? *Yeah.* So you’re frightened she might take your pictures? *Yeah.* What else is in your room you’ve got a bed there? *Yeah.* Have you got a doona or blankets? *Doona.* Did you choose the doona? *Yeah, I chose it.* What’s on it? *Flowers.* And what else have you got in the way of furniture in your room? *A dressing table.* *Yeah, has that got a mirror? No.* And what else, anything else? *Books.* What sort of books do you have? *Enid Blyton.* Famous Five or Secret Seven? *All different.* You like Enid Blyton? *Yeah.* What else have you got? *You’ve got your dressing table, your books, your bed, your doona cover, your doona.* *Clock radio.* Do you have a wardrobe? *Yeah.* Is that one that’s part of the wall or is that one you can move around? *Move around.* And have you got a chair or desk or anything? *No.* It sounds like a reasonable sized room for the two of you, but not too big? *No.* Have you got any pictures on the wall? *Oh, some.* What sort of pictures do you have on the wall? *Pictures of my Dad and Stepmum.* Any others? *That’s all.*
B. **The environment.**

B1. The physical environment.

The environment refers to the contextual aspects of the home, in this case, the physical context of the home.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Informant code</th>
<th>Names and uses of rooms</th>
<th>Physical features of setting</th>
<th>Contents or possessions</th>
<th>Physical appointments and attributes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
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<td><strong>17</strong></td>
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<td><strong>5</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Figure 9.** Theme: The environment - Physical - Informants with an intellectual disability who raised this theme or its sub-themes, or both.

(a) Names and uses of rooms.

The macro-level physical environment did not feature prominently in informants' descriptions of their homes other than as room names and a cursory description of the exterior aspects of the property (e.g., Barbecue, garden/plants, swimming pool, garage).

Outside the house have you got a front yard? *Yes*. What sort of things are in the front yard? *Trees, all trees*. You got a back yard too? – What’s in the back yard? *Shed, trailer, dog.*
Frequently this description was predominantly task-related.

*Outside, like out the back, I've got a rubbish bin. At the moment I'm not using that. That's due to, eh, until we get other things sort of settled and the place done up, so I'm just waiting for a few things being done, but that's going to be slow. What about out the front? Out the front? I'll do it in good time. I'm due to go out there soon. Because we've had a bit of rain, and I can get the family tools from my brother's place and bring them over and I'll dig out some of this stuff.*

What did you like about (where you lived before)? ... I got all plants. You got all the plants? You know, everything like pot plants, water them every week.

Rooms identified by name are listed in Table 9 including those which seem peculiar to residential service settings only.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Room Type</th>
<th>Description</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Bedroom</td>
<td>Living area</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Living room</td>
<td>Lounge room</td>
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<tr>
<td>Kitchen</td>
<td>Bathroom</td>
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<tr>
<td>Toilet</td>
<td>Laundry</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Office</td>
<td>Passage</td>
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<tr>
<td>Passageway</td>
<td>(my) room</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sun room</td>
<td>Dining room</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Family room</td>
<td>Study</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Computer room</td>
<td>Sparc room</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Games room*</td>
<td>TV room*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Telephone room*</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Only mentioned in reference to residential service settings.

(b) Physical features of the setting.

The physical features include the appointments and attributes of the home. Few informants remarked upon these apart from listing the various rooms and external facilities such as a garage or barbecue, when asked to do so.

Can you tell me something about your bedroom? What sorts of


things are in it? A TV, a bed, a table with some flowers on it, a seat to sit on. I don't know, I've got a good view of the backyard from my bedroom and nothing much else.

Was there anything else you liked about the place besides having your own plants and being able to do your own garden? I suppose, yes. I like this, the glass bits. (The windows??) You know what's here. The filing cabinets? Yeah. I like that too. I could put all my paperwork, and papers in there as well.

(c) Contents or possessions.

The physical contents of the setting or the informant’s possessions featured strongly in their descriptions of their homes. Usually it was the informant’s possessions which were emphasised with other items owned in common with the other members of the household being largely unmentioned.


Detailed listings of (mostly the informants’ own) possessions were often elicited along with other shared amenities including: billiard table; table tennis table; Optus (cable television); video recorder; multiple televisions sets in the same house.

(d) Physical features of the setting.
Most informants mentioned the external physical features of their home when questioned. Their responses were largely confined to a minimal listing of what was in the back or front yard (or both) of their home and infrequently, a brief mention of the neighbouring properties or the street.

Has your house has got a front yard? Yes. What’s in the front yard anything? Lawn. What’s out the back? Lawn and a garage. Do you have a barbeque or anything like that, or a swimming pool? No, we don’t.

Tell me about where you live. It’s an ordinary house in the street? Yes pretty much, it’s near the golf course and it’s where I like to stay. I like to play my tapes a lot and I enjoy being at home. And you’re surrounded by other houses in the neighbourhood? You’ve got houses either side of your house you live in? I got the neighbour’s house and the golf course. What about outside the house on the property? Have you got a front yard and a back yard? Yeah we’ve got a garden if that’s what you mean. I call it a jungle actually. I don’t do gardening at home because I don’t like it. And have you got anything out there that you’d use – like a bbq or a swimming pool? No, nothing like that we’ve got an aviary but no swimming pool. No vegetable garden or anything like that? No. Who looks after the birds? No-one because they’ve all “carked it”.
B2. The social environment.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Informant code</th>
<th>Family home</th>
<th>Home socialising</th>
<th>External socialising</th>
<th>Social atmosphere</th>
<th>Social context</th>
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<td>Felicity</td>
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Figure 10. Theme: The environment - Social. Informants with an intellectual disability who raised this theme or its sub-themes, or both.

(a) Social context.

The social aspects of the home environment were mentioned by informants however, the social context of the home (i.e., the external social or 'people' context within which the home exists and functions) was rarely remarked upon. The few informants who did mention the social context of their home were those who lived with their families and they commented on their family's relationship with their immediate neighbours.

What sort of street do you live in? ... Do you have people living either side of your house? Yes we do. And what are they like? Very nice. Who lives each side of your house? Do you know their names? One person's name is (name) and the other person has the same name as me.
I don’t like the neighbours. I don’t like them, sticky nose. You don’t like the neighbours? Next door neighbours, he’s nice, and the next one, but the one on the end, he’s nasty. He knocked our tree down.

Informants living in residential service settings mentioned their social context even less than those living independently or with their family.

(b) External socialising.

The use of the home as a base from which external socialising (i.e., socialising outside the home) was conducted or its use as a venue for socialising with others, was probed during the interviews. External socialising ranged in frequency from several times a week, through weekends only, to a few times a year.

Once a month I go to, I usually go to (a) self advocacy meeting. I go to a (service club) meeting every second and fourth Thursday. I go to (an intellectual disability-related meeting) once a month, instead of going to (another meeting), because they’re on the same nights. The (intellectual disability-related meeting’s) once a month, (the self advocacy meeting) meets every night of the week, oh, Wednesday nights, every Wednesday night of the week because a lot of people find that good for them, because they’re learning quite a bit, and we listen to, try to do more and get, look at ways of making better and help other people get better at things.

What sort of things do you do on the weekend at home? I basically just play with my tapes. I record video hits and put that music onto a cassette. I basically do the same thing over and over. Sometimes (my parent) and I will go to my (sibling’s) place.... We only do that what, maybe every three or four weeks. So, do you go out much at all on the weekend? No.

What about the weekends? Weekends? On the weekends sometimes we go out but not too much.

Do you go out to friends much at all? - Do you go visiting much? No, not much.

Last weekend – did you go out at all? All day inside. All day inside? – And what did you do inside? – Talk to mum, watch TV? Watch TV, music, TV, all that sort of stuff. Sounds good! I want to go out somewhere – I’m sick staying home all the time, ...

Most seemed to go out socialising a moderate amount although, for many
living with their parent(s), this seemed to be largely confined to outings with, or to, relatives or other members of their immediate family.

And what do you do on the weekends? *This weekend I’m going to my brother’s house. You know, I might stay for tea. And then what, sleep over at your brother’s or come back? No, come back.*

You said you had a birthday coming up soon. Will you have a party for your birthday? *Well I don’t have a party but normally I go out with Mum and Dad for dinner ... Do you have any other celebrations at home? Birthdays, anniversaries, that’s about all ... And what do you do for the celebrations? For birthdays we normally get together with the family that are around. We usually go out to restaurants and stuff like that and celebrate our birthdays and if Mum and Dad are celebrating an anniversary we go out with them and Christmas, we all get together with our family and her family as well, – my brother’s wife.*

A small number had a more varied social life.


However, the nature and extent of this social life was unclear in several instances.

Do friends come to your house to visit you? *Yeah. And what do you do when you have friends come to visit you? I got people and kids. And where do you entertain them? Oh, hang around my mate’s. You hang around your mate’s place? Yeah.*

(c) Home socialising.

There appeared to be no discernible difference in the frequency, amount or type of socialising in the home reported between those living with their family and those in residential services. Socialising in the home ranged from almost none at all, to infrequently. For those living with their family this socialising was often restricted to other family members, while for those living in residential services, it
was typically other service users, more commonly living in the same setting, with whom informants socialised at home. This restricted pattern of socialising in the home (for both residential service and family home dwellers) was particularly notable with regard to special events such as Christmas or birthdays.

Do you have people over? Do you have your family over, or anybody else over, to your place? *(Sibling) hasn’t come to our place for donkey’s years. He used to come over unexpected without ringing up and they haven’t done that for a while. So, no, the only time we get people is when Dad gets customers for his business.*

Do you ever have friends over to your parents’ place? *I used to a long time ago but they’ve all got older and got married or gone off and done their own thing, so I don’t have as much as I used to.*

Do you ever have friends over to (the residential service setting) to visit you? *No.*

You go to your friend’s place. Docs your friend ever go to your place? *No, he doesn’t come. No. Do you have any friends come over to your place? No. Do you invite people to where you are now? No. Why don’t you invite people there? I don’t think I ever did. You didn’t think of it? No. Do you have any special occasions where you are now, - any celebrations or parties? Sometimes we have parties. What sort of things do you have parties for? Like birthdays and things. So when it was your birthday, did you have a party? Yeah, we had a party. And who went to that, - was it just people that live with you? Yeah, just in the (residence). Nobody else from outside? No.*

Do you ever have over at your place, - you said you don’t have friends over there, - (but) do you have family get-togethers? *Yes.* Do they happen regularly or on special occasions? *No, only on special occasions.*

You said your birthday is (soon). Do you have any special parties or anything for your birthday? *Last year I did. At home? Yeah, my place. I invite; my Mum and Dad come, my oldest (sibling) come, my youngest (sibling) come, my second (sibling) couldn’t make it because something else was on.*

(d) Family home.

The experience of living with one’s family, either as a child, or as a child then an adult, contributed significantly to the sense of home as a social environment for several informants.
(Your family home) gave you the strongest feeling of home? Well it did, it was enjoyable times, we had our moments. So is one of the reasons why that gave you a strong feeling of home, the times you had there that were enjoyable? Yeah, there was times there. We had some friends come around and we had a large family room where we were able to have some parties. Being a big family of six, you need somewhere to play, do things like play pool, and table tennis maybe. What sort of feeling did that home have for you? Um, ... um. Good times, relaxing somewhat.

Do you like where you live, when you're at home with your folks? Yes. Are you happy there? Yes. What sort of things about it do you particularly like? Everything. Can you think of any thing in particular or any things in particular? I just like being with my parents and I like doing things for them, that's all. So everybody gets on well at home? Yes.

(e) Social atmosphere.

The role of the home as a social environment and in particular, its social atmosphere, was of importance to many informants with an intellectual disability. This importance was especially marked in relation to the ability to ‘get along with’ others in the home (compatibility) and in contributing to the overall operation of the household by sharing in chores or other essential tasks (contributing). The importance of the home as a place of love was less commented upon than the notions of compatibility and affinity with others in the home.

The ability to get along with others in the home without argument or strife (compatibility) was particularly important for those living with non-related others in a residential service.

You watch what, a big TV in the lounge? Yeah. How do you get on if you don’t want to watch the same program as everybody else does? Does that happen much? No. It doesn’t? That's good. So everybody agrees on what TV programs they want to watch? Yeah.

Were the people there good to live with? Yeah. Do you like sharing your bedroom? Yeah. Would you like to have a bedroom just for yourself? I like sharing.

What do you like about living here? They are my friends.

Do you get on well with the other people? Yeah, I get on OK.
They alright? They're good. But I'll miss them when I move. ... Do you like the people who live with you? Yeah, I like the people who live with me. Are they all friends? They are good friends, yeah. You get on well? Yeah, I do. Do the people you live with like you? Yeah, they're like me, same as me. Do they enjoy being with you? Yeah, they enjoy. So, if I went to them and I said to them, "Is (the informant) your friend," What would they say to me? They'd say, "Yes."

The importance of compatibility and affinity with others to informants did not, however, always guarantee its presence.

Are you happy where you are at present? Not too bad, but I should have been out in the sun. What's wrong or what's missing from where you are now? Well there's nothing missing but I will be glad to get out because then I won't have so many people around me. So really then, you sound to me like you're reasonably happy where you are, but you're saying you'll be glad to move out because there's too many people where you are? That's right. What do you find difficult about having so many people around? Well, like they talk a lot. They shout a lot sometimes. So it's not a very, - they talk a lot and they shout a lot, - what's wrong with that as far as you're concerned? Well, there's nothing wrong with it but sometimes they have fights and arguments. Does that upset you? Yeah, a little bit, yeah. Does the talking and shouting upset you? Yeah, sometimes, yes. What would you prefer? What would you like instead? Well, to be in a unit (with less people).

For the majority of informants, the sense of contributing to the overall running of the household by sharing chores or essential tasks or roles was a significant feature of home life. The chores, tasks or roles involved covered a wide range as the lists of tasks identified in Table 10 shows.
Table 10

**Home-related Tasks Identified by Informants (i) Living with Their Parent(s); (ii) Those Living Away From the Family Home, but not in a Residential Service; and (iii) Those Living in Residential Services.**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>i</th>
<th>ii</th>
<th>iii</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Laundry</td>
<td>All cooking</td>
<td>Major cooking</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Simple cooking (snacks)</td>
<td>All cleaning</td>
<td>Vacuuming</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Food preparation</td>
<td>All laundry &amp; ironing</td>
<td>All cooking</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tidying</td>
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<td>Sct/clear table</td>
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<tr>
<td>Vacuuming/sweeping</td>
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<td>Messages &amp; errands</td>
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However, from the interviews, it seems these tasks may not necessarily be done on a daily or regular basis in a number of cases.

Make pizza. Make pizza, do you make pizza at home? My mum helps. Your mum helps you make pizza – and that’s for everybody in the family? Yeah... I cook it myself... Help my mum with shopping... What, go to the grocery store supermarket? No big market... Which market do you go to...? City market... Do you help mum and dad with the jobs around the house? I wash mum’s car.

Do you help around the house with some of the jobs to be done? Yeah. What sorts of things do you do? Clean up the house. What sort of cleaning up? Sweeping or vacuuming or dusting? Dusting. Dusting. OK, – and do you help with the meals? Yeah. How do you help with the meals? Um make potato wash the vegetables and help mum put potato peel on the garden... Who sets the table? Me.

The concept of felicity (i.e., the experience of social comfort, pleasantness, hospitality and welcome which is given or received in a home) was largely absent from the discussions with informants who have an intellectual disability. Perhaps this is because these informants feel less in control of the total dwelling (see above), regardless of whether they live in a residential service or with parent(s), and therefore, their notions of control being largely limited to their bedrooms, their perception of their ability to offer hospitality is reduced. Another reason may be that felicity is too subtle or abstract a concept for people with an intellectual disability to perceive.

What gives... a feeling of home? Oh, probably where some people sit and relax..., sometimes it may be a party in a house, near places, just depends on how they treat you, I don’t know why, the way they do things. I think you might feel comfortable, you may feel not comfortable.

Alternately, felicity may be too difficult a concept for them to describe spontaneously and extended questioning may be the only way to reveal it.

Your brother’s place is a home to you too? Yeah. Is there anything special about it besides the fact that your (brother’s hobby is the same as yours) and you can talk there? I watch TV with him. Is it because it’s your brother’s place? Yeah, You get on well with your brother? Yeah... When you go there you watch TV and things like that – you feel relaxed there? Yeah, relaxed. Do you feel welcome? Yeah. How do they make you feel welcome? They say, ‘come in’. And do they do anything to make you welcome? Make me a cup of coffee. And talk with you? Yeah.

Very few informants identified their home as a place of love (i.e., a place
where one loves, or cares for and about, or has an affinity with and is supportive of, others in the same setting, and these feelings are reciprocated). One of those who did, did so only in respect of his former home.

Was there anything special about living at home with Mum and Dad? They always looked after me. Do you feel that happens now (that you’re living in a residential service)? No.

Another informant regarded a sibling’s place as home and as a place of love for her.

Where’s home for you? Oh, ... I’ve got a brother. And he lives away from your parent? Yeah. Do you visit him much? Oh, sometimes. ... His place is home to you? Yeah. Why is it home to you there? Because I go to see him sometimes. ... What’s special about his place that makes it home for you? I like company. But not just any company? Yeah. What sort of company? Talking. You get on well with your brother? Yeah.
C. The metaphysical dimension

The metaphysical aspects of the home cover its time-related and spiritual dimensions.

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<th>Informant code</th>
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<td>Previous homes</td>
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Figure 11. Theme: The Metaphysical dimension - Informants with an intellectual disability who raised this theme or its sub-themes, or both.

C1. Time aspects.

(a) Previous homes.

In recalling aspects of previous homes the family home featured strongly for a number of informants. Sometimes this remembrance was positive and sometimes it was not. These remembrances usually related solely to the social aspects of the home, rarely the physical aspects.
And that one (i.e., the family home) gave you the strongest feeling of home? Well it did, it was enjoyable times, we had our moments.

Was there anything special about living at home with Mum and Dad? They always looked after me. Do you feel that happens now? No.

What was good about moving out from home for you? What did you like about it? Not having Mum on my back or my sister on my back so much.

If you could go back home to your Mum and Dad would you like to do that? Not much. Why not? Making more arguments.

This emphasis on the social aspects of former homes was also found when homes other than the family home were mentioned.

You lived in another home? Yeah. And what was that like? I liked it; ... What did you like about it? I liked it 'cause you see, there's more people, it's a lot of people.

It was difficult to ascertain if informants had one place in particular which gave them the strongest sense of home. Possible reasons for this might include: little or no experience of other homes; difficulties in forming comparative judgements among present and previous homes; and, difficulty with the concept of 'a sense of home' as the gestalt of a number of variables.

(b) Creating a home or future homes.

Another dimension of the metaphysical aspects of home is the consideration of possible future homes. A number of informants were able to envisage shifting to a new place and creating a home for themselves there. The focus in creating this new home was varied. For some informants the physical aspects were of primary concern.

If you had to shift to another place, how would you go about creating a home for yourself? I would have to think about it. I would look very carefully. I wouldn't look on my own. Look very carefully. I find if people ... What sort of things would you look for? Good quality. Make sure nothing would be left at a place, and just make sure it's something there in good tack and it was good. And if I'm happy, and I feel I could, it's affordable at the time, and it's a good set-up for, not just a house but for working layout, because I will need somewhere to lay out things, an area to do some different things, to do my peeling of potatoes and carrots, and stuff for food, and I use that as an ironing board, so that's another
good thing.

Do you think you’ll live there (at current home) for a long time? Oh, too long. In the future though, will you live there for a long time or will you move on? Oh, I’ll move on. Move on to what? I’ll move on to, you know, in (Suburb), I’ll go up there. That’s what, a smaller house? Yes, with a nice white gate. You’d like a house with a nice white gate? Yes.

For others the focus was on the social aspects of the new home.

What if you had to move out of home, what sort of place would you like to live in? In a flat. Share with someone, not like a straight person, just, like a friend.

Yet, for others it was the financial aspects and the sense of ownership which paying rent imparts that was the main focus.

How would you make it your home rather than say, somebody else’s? Pay the rent. Go halves with someone. Pay the rent - I pay half and the other person pays half.

For virtually all informants who had an intellectual disability though, their dreams and aspirations surrounding a new home were modest.

I’d like to go into a flat. I’d like to be around (this area) or somewhere close to public transport because (the informant and partner) don’t drive ...

What sort of place would you like to live in? A unit. With anybody else or on your own? Oh, mostly by myself. Are you happy being by yourself? Yes. What would be different between living in a place such as that and where you live now? I would just do just the same things as I do at home. So you’d be able to maintain your lifestyle? Yes. Would you do anything to make that sort of place your home? Anything special? No.

could move. Say if somebody said to you, you can move tomorrow, you can have the house you’ve always wanted, and you can have as many people come and live with you as you want - you’d have a whole lot of people I take it, - but you’d like your own room? Yeah, that’s right. What else, is there anything you’d like. Just imagine, would you have anything else different. Would you have your own bathroom or something? TV. You’d be pretty happy if you had your own room with your TV in it, all to yourself? That’s right. Everything else you’d keep the same pretty much? Yeah.

(c) Time-related qualities.

Several informants spoke of past places they regarded as homes and a number spoke of living in their current home for very long periods giving them some sense of continuity.

So you live at home with Mum and Dad? ... Have you lived there all your life? Yeah. Since you were a (small child)? Yeah. ... What’s your plans for the future, - do you want to live there for a long time? Yeah.

How long have you lived there (in your current home)? For 43 years.

So you’ve lived here all that time, fifteen years? Yeah. Just in your room (i.e., using the same bedroom)? Yeah, I usually go in that room you know, my TV area. Yeah. That room there used to be mine my room, long time ago. My hair was long, back ten years ago. So how many rooms have you had as your bedroom then? I used to have, you know others had this room, I moved from there to here. So you’ve only ever ... (occupied the) two (bed)rooms? Yeah.

A sense of timelessness may be engendered through memories of meaningful events, involving experiences with people and places, or the memories embedded in meaningful possessions or in certain settings. When asked if there was anything they would particularly miss if their current residence was destroyed, most of the informants mentioned personal items which would normally be replaced in the natural course of events by becoming worn-out or obsolete, - things like television sets, furniture, clothing. Some also mentioned items of particular relevance to their specific interests and leisure pursuits such as a computer or bowling trophies or a cooking appliance. One person mentioned aesthetic and social considerations.

... The nice back yard to look at, and all the barbecues we used to
have there...

Only one other informant also mentioned social memories of meaningful events attached to their home.

What sort of memories would you have (of your current home if it were destroyed)? Happy memories. ... Of what sort of things? Oh, birthday parties. My brother when he got married and all that and my little niece.

Several mentioned other people such as neighbours or fellow residents while one made general reference to missing his bedroom and cat. Apart from the person who mentioned trophies, only one other person mentioned memorabilia as such.

Anything special that you'd really miss? My book, my family book. I don't want that burnt now either. That's my family one, ... (a family member) made that book for me, that's special.

The notion of the spiritual aspect of home (i.e., a home transcending the physical reality) was not identified in the interviews with people who have an intellectual disability.
D. **Non-homes.**

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<th>Informant code</th>
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<th>Alternate meanings</th>
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**Figure 12.** Theme: Non-home attributes and alternate meanings of the word “home”. Informants with an intellectual disability who raised this theme or its sub-themes, or both.

Informants were also asked about places they may have lived, even for a short time, which they regarded as non-homes. While such places were not the experience of all informants, for those who had experienced non-homes, they were quite clear why they regarded those places as non-homes.

(a) Non-specific non-home qualities.

For a number of informants, they were quite definite in regarding some places as not being homes for them, but were not able to state precisely what it was that made such places non-homes.

You were saying you don’t see group homes as being like homes. You don’t regard them as homes? Some people need them. Some people need more support, some people are severe, but somebody like myself, I don’t feel I need it.
So you go to the beach for Christmas? - Do you like it there? Yeah. Is that like home? No. What's different? What's missing? Don't know ... Do you have your own room there? Yeah. But it's not the same? No, it's not.

Did you like the house in (suburb) - you didn't? No. Why didn't you like it? Because I was naughty. You were naughty ... You weren't happy living in (suburb)? The house...? Too old. The house in (suburb) was too old? You didn't like it there? Was there anything else about it you didn't like? No. Just the fact that it was an old house? Yeah.

(b) Lack of autonomy.

In most cases non-homes were marked for the individuals concerned by a significant and unacceptable restriction or lack of autonomy.

What seems to come through to me is that you like being independent. That's right, yeah. And you'd lose some of that independence in a group home is that a ...? Yeah, there is not much independence in some group homes ...

I went to a respite residential service and didn't like it. ... What didn't you like about that? They closed the door and they don't let you out. So you're locked in? Yeah. Anything else you didn't like about the place? Didn't like the staff there. One staff was grumpy with me, said, "where are you going?" I said, "I want to get out of my room." He said, "No, you can't. They lock you in here." I didn't like it there.

Who makes the rules in the place where you live? Rules like (Staff members) A, B, and C. So it's mainly the staff? Yes. They make the rules? Yes. So do, - what do the people who live there think of that? What do you think of that? Not too happy. You're not too happy with that? No, - I don't like living there. ...I'm not happy with the place, it's not home.

... I was living with a girl who owned her own place and she thought she owned me and wanted me to do all the chores and everything and I only moved out (of my previous home) to share things and she didn't see it that way and I was getting to the stage where I couldn't take it any more so I moved back home. When you were living ... With the other woman, was that a home for you? Did it feel like a home? It did for a while there, then after a while it didn't. What then made it not seem like a home to you?
What was missing? What was wrong with it? Oh, ... Just the things that I wanted to share with her and do things with her, and she just didn’t want to that way like, to share and stuff like that. She wanted you to do all the work? She wanted me to do all the work.

E. **Alternate meanings of ‘home’**.

No informant could suggest an alternate use of the word, ‘home’ when asked to do so.
12.2. **Summary: The Essence of Home for People With an Intellectual Disability**

The analysis of the interviews with the people who have an intellectual disability revealed a number of attributes of significance to most, if not all of the group. These shared views of the meaning of home for them appear to be limited to:

1. Home, *per se*.
   - The experience of ‘home’ is common among all people. It may, however, take very different forms for each individual and may refer to a past, present or future ‘home’.

2. Home as related to the self, particularly the private components of the self.
   - A feeling of *contentment* with where they live, regarding it as generally being a place of happiness and familiarity, were important attributes of a home.
   - A major component of this feeling of contentment was generated by certain *behaviours* which are commonly done by each person only, or usually only, when that person is at home. These tasks, actions, routines and activities may vary from person to person but, for the individual concerned, they are indicative of ‘being at home’.
   - The ability to exert significant *control* over, or modify, an area (typically restricted to their bedroom rather than the total dwelling or some other specific part of it), to have a personal space or to create a personalised space by marking it in some way by the (re)arrangement of its contents, or by the placement of one’s possessions, or through the ability to restrict the access of others to it, is an essential attribute of home.
   - The ability to exercise *privacy* and *autonomy* were major contributors to a sense of control for all but one (different) informant in the case of each of these factors.

3. Home as related to the self, particularly the public components of the self.
   - No commonality was identified concerning this potential aspect of home. For this set of informants it was not regarded as a contributing factor.

4. Home as related to the environment, specifically the physical environment.
   - The use of a common or shared language concerning the *names and uses of rooms* within the home was a feature here, but only at a core level. For instance, those living in residential service settings used room names peculiar to such settings (e.g., Telephone room, games room, TV room). Additionally, the use of the bedroom for one’s meals other than breakfast, was noted in several cases but not others.
   - *Room contents or possessions* featured extensively in informants’ discussions concerning their homes. However, this was more a cataloguing of items than a remembering of the events and activities which those
contents or possessions might evoke.

5. Home as related to the environment, specifically the social environment.
   • The use of the home for home socialising or as a base for external socialising with others (or both) were essential components of the home. This was regardless of whether such socialising was intimate or superficial, frequent or occasional, and, confined to the (extended) family or included friends as well.
   • The social atmosphere of the home was considered an essential contributor to making a home, particularly the ability to get along with others. However, the importance to a sense of home of its being a place of love was largely unmentioned.
   • The ability of the people in the home to contribute to its operation and the well-being of others in the home was also considered essential to the social atmosphere necessary for a home.

6. Home as related to the metaphysical dimension.
   • No commonality was identified concerning this potential aspect of home. For these informants, although a range of time-related aspects were mentioned by some, they were not consistently regarded as contributing factors.

7. Non-home attributes.
   • Many of the people have experienced places which they regard as ‘non-homes’ and, although the reasons for this judgement varies from person to person they were fundamentally the negative form, or absence, of those characteristics which render a place a home.

In the next chapter the data generated by the interviews with both samples of informants will be compared and discussed.
Chapter 13. Discussion: The Meaning of Home From the Perspectives of People With and Without an Intellectual Disability

The intention with this study was to make some contribution to the body of theoretical knowledge on the meaning of home. Having designed and conducted a rigorous study it is worthwhile reflecting on the significance of its findings and their potential contribution to a better or more informed understanding of the concept of home. To this end this chapter begins by recalling and answering the primary research question and its subsidiary questions. It then brings the two sample populations together for the purpose of comparing and contrasting their respective, collective sample views on the meaning of home. Those perspectives which are shared between the two samples are identified and described as are those perspectives which are not shared by the majority of one of the samples but appear commonly held by the other sample. In concluding, the chapter identifies and describes the new perspectives which have emerged from this study and which were previously undocumented as far as could be ascertained before comparing these and the other findings of this study with the literature on home.

In making comparisons between the responses of the two subject groups in this study, one was not being characterised or treated as inferior or superior to the other. It was assumed they are both expressions of experience of the same phenomenon, home. In addition, where there were identifiable differences in that experience between the informant groups when taken as groups, these differences were considered and treated as such rather than as deficits in experience. The sampling method used in this study was maximum variation and therefore every informant was unique. Consequently, the dichotomy, intellectually disabled/non-intellectually disabled, can be regarded as simply another variable in the mixture used to construct informant profiles, in the same fashion as gender or place of birth.

As the reader will recall, this study was designed to answer the essential question: What are the attributes which together make a place a home for both people with and without an intellectual disability? In addition, secondary research questions were identified as being of importance to this study. Both these primary and secondary questions will be answered before moving on to a comparison of the answers generated by this study with those found in the existing literature. The next section therefore commences with the primary question: What are the attributes which together make a place a home?

13.1. What are the Attributes Which Together Make a Place a Home?

13.1.1. Commonalities

Importantly, this study confirms that all informants, intellectually disabled and non-disabled alike, share the experience of 'home'. The individual forms of this experience may vary, but for all informants, home is a meaningful
concept, and each would recognise and acknowledge at least some commonality in any other informant’s description of home.

All informants reported having, or having had, the experience of home. Home was a concept recognised by all informants and therefore had meaning to them. Informants without an intellectual disability typically described their home experiences in rich detail and at length. On the other hand, informants with an intellectual disability were generally more succinct, almost taciturn, in their description of home. In these descriptions there was less detail, and they were more concrete and lacking elaboration, perhaps in part because of differences in verbal fluency between informants with an intellectual disability and the non-disabled informants. Informants who had an intellectual disability shared a fundamental core of conceptualisations and experiences regarding home with the non-disabled informants. The non-disabled informants however, went beyond this shared fundamental core to a more detailed construction of the concept of home which was rarely, (and then only partially), shared with informants who had an intellectual disability. These elaborated conceptualisations shared the same root understandings and similar experiences as those of the informants with an intellectual disability, but they were more richly described and contained a wider variety of experiences.

For nearly all informants, home was typically somewhere characterised by a familiarity of routines, objects, and people. Home was conceived as a place where one could obtain valued privacy to the degree desired and a place which provided a refuge from stressful stimuli. Relatedly, virtually all informants experienced some degree of in-home socialising however, the extent of this varied tremendously both within, and between informant groups.

A sense of timelessness imparted by continuity of residence and having the one place at the centre of one’s life for an extended period of time, also made for a home for most informants. Future or imagined homes, reflecting aspects of current or previous homes, were mentioned by both groups of informants with the descriptions given by the non-disabled informants tending to be much richer in detail.

Many informants from both sets, shared the notion of ownership of the dwelling or its contents, or both, as a major contributing factor to the realisation of home. Both groups of informants identified possessions as significant contributors to a sense of home.

Although informants with an intellectual disability had greater difficulty identifying the specific characteristics of non-homes they had experienced, they shared the experience of the non-disabled informants in having encountered domiciles they considered clearly not homes. In this regard, the experience of a lack of autonomy was identified by both groups of informants as a significant contributor to a sense of ‘non-home’.
In summary, the attributes of home which all informants share are:

- The ability to exert control over, or modify, an area (either the total dwelling or some specific part of it);
- Having a personal space or being able to create a personalised space by marking it in some way by the (re)arrangement of its contents or the placement of one’s possessions;
- A feeling of contentment with where they live;
- A sense of it being a place of familiarity;
- Certain ‘home behaviours’ which are typically done by each individual only, or usually only, when that person is at home (These tasks, actions, routines and activities may vary from individual to individual, but for the person concerned, they are indicative of ‘being at home’);

- The names and uses of rooms was shared by all at a core level (i.e., bathroom, bedroom, dining room, kitchen, laundry, living area, toilet);
- Socialising at home with others;
- A sense of the importance of the social atmosphere of the home;
- An appreciation of places which could have been homes as ‘non-homes’ because they lacked one or more ingredients considered essential in forming a home.

13.1.2. Differences

Differences were also revealed, however, many of these were not ‘black versus white’ differences but rather, differences of degree. For example, their descriptions of the role of possessions in contributing to a sense of home varied slightly in emphasis between the two groups of informants. For informants without an intellectual disability, possessions contributed to a sense of home by reason of their familiarity to the informant or because of the memories they carried of other times, places, people or events. Often possessions were both memory-media and familiar objects. On the other hand, for informants who had an intellectual disability, possessions were mentioned in a ‘less enhanced’, more matter-of-fact manner, most of the time. Possessions were frequently listed readily and extensively, apparently more on the basis of their everyday familiarity and in a fashion devoid of any reference to memories which might be embedded in them. Typically, in situations where they lived with their family, their identification of possessions was restricted to their own personal possessions and they largely ignored other possessions held in common with the rest of the family.

Significant differences of degree, which will be discussed in detail below, were identified in relation to the informant groups’ understandings and practices surrounding the following aspects of home as related to:
the self via;
- control (particularly territoriality, ownership and possessions, privacy, and autonomy),
- contentment (especially refuge),
- personal expression,
- approval of others;

the environment via;
- the use of rooms,
- physical features, appointments and attributes,
- family homes and their surrogates,
- socialising, both in the home and externally,
- social atmosphere (especially felicity, place of love, and contributing),
- social context (particularly neighbourliness and knowing, and being known by, others); and,

the metaphysical dimension, in particular the spiritual aspects.

It needs to be re-emphasised here that the same attributes of home were identified across both groups of informants and therefore they can be regarded as sharing the same core concepts which contribute to a notion of home. What was different, and what is reported here, was the extent to which these components were typically expressed or experienced by the two groups.

Control.

In contrast to the non-disabled informants, informants with an intellectual disability described a very limited sense of control over their home. This sense of control was predominantly centred on their bedroom and only superficially extended into the rest of the interior of the dwelling. In only a very few cases did it encompass the exterior surrounds of the building.

The centrality of the bedroom is further revealed by analysis of the comments of informants who have an intellectual disability concerning their possessions. These comments mainly consisted of a listing of possessions largely confined to those in their bedroom. This may be the result of a real sense of ‘mine’ and ‘not-mine’ which draws heavily upon a distinction between what is owned by the individual and kept in the individual’s room as against what is owned by others, or in common, and is in the rest of the dwelling. Where informants with an intellectual disability mentioned items of importance to them, they were, more often than not, kept in their bedroom (e.g., television sets, tape recorder/players, radios, CDs and tapes, computers, trophies). This contrasted markedly with the range and locations of the possessions of non-disabled informants (e.g., photo albums, gifts from others such as pipe stands, pieces of
furniture, tools, pictures). In addition, the possessions of the non-disabled group were used more by them to link themselves to events, places and people encountered or experienced earlier in their lives than was apparently the case with the possessions of informants with an intellectual disability.

The importance, and centrality, of the bedroom to informants who have an intellectual disability, is further evidenced by their remarks concerning privacy. Many reported that privacy was difficult to obtain. For those informants, privacy was really only obtainable in their bedroom and even then, in a number of cases, the amount of privacy obtained was less than that desired. This contrasts with the situation regarding privacy reported by non-disabled informants. As an extension of this aspect of control over one’s environment, autonomy seemed to be largely taken as a given by non-disabled informants; whereas, for those with an intellectual disability, they reported experiencing a significant lack of autonomy in matters affecting their home.

The importance of their bedrooms to a number of informants with an intellectual disability reflects a difference in way this group experiences home. However, it does not indicate a difference in the underlying values informing or comprising the concept of home. Home, to people who have an intellectual disability, comprises the same fundamental aspects as does home for people without an intellectual disability, albeit in a less elaborated, more minimal, way.

**Contentment.**

The home as a place of refuge has been identified in this study as a significant contributor to one’s feelings of contentment. Non-disabled informants typically regarded the total home (i.e., the dwelling and its grounds, if not its immediate neighbourhood as well) as their place of refuge. For informants with an intellectual disability however, their notion of a place of refuge seemed more often than not, to be restricted to their bedroom rather than the whole of the dwelling. This lack of a sense of refuge provided by the total home rather than just the bedroom, was most pronounced in a number of informants with an intellectual disability who resented the unwanted intrusion of visiting others (usually relatives) but were powerless to do anything about it.

**Personal expression.**

Allied to the confinement of possessions largely to their bedrooms, informants who have an intellectual disability tended to restrict the expression of themselves via their surroundings, to their bedrooms. Few reported having any involvement in maintaining and establishing the garden surrounding the residence or decorating it and only slightly more mentioned having involvement in decorating their bedroom. Informants who did not have a disability were much more comprehensive in their expression of themselves via the home, extending in many cases to include, not only the maintenance and enhancement of the interior
and exterior of the dwelling, but also the actual design and construction or renovation of the actual building as well.

Approval of others.

Perhaps the focus of informants with an intellectual disability on their bedroom as the centre of their home (or as its main component) explains their apparent lack of need for the approval of others regarding the physical aspects (both internal and particularly external) of the home. Likewise, it also may explain their lack of awareness of, or perhaps somewhat limited sensitivity to, privacy protocols with visitors in regard to access to the home (i.e., the more extensive the access to parts of the home accorded a social visitor, the more intimate the social relationship between the visitor and the host).

Use of rooms.

The regular taking of meals, other than breakfast, in the bedroom was only reported by informants who have an intellectual disability. This is a use of the bedroom that was unreported by non-disabled informants and probably only occurs for them under exceptional circumstances, and for very limited periods, such as illness when one is confined to bed. Taking one’s main meal alone in one’s bedroom suggests, by that action, a conceptualisation of the bedroom as other than merely a bedroom. It suggests the bedroom is viewed by the informant in a much broader sense as the home, or at least holding a major element of the home not typically associated with the bedroom per se.

Similarly, many of the in-home relaxation and leisure activities reported by informants with an intellectual disability took place in their bedrooms and mostly, alone. Activities such as listening to music, watching television, or playing on a computer, commonly took place only in the informant’s bedroom, and were mainly solitary pursuits. This again contrasts quite sharply with the situation reported by non-disabled informants where most of their relaxation and leisure activities involved others and took place in a variety of locations in and around the residence.

Physical features, appointments and attributes.

The reported importance of each of the various rooms in the home and particularly the home’s external surroundings, to the non-disabled informants was not matched to the same extent, or with the same degree of detail, by the informants with an intellectual disability. The external physical features of the home and its other physical appointments and attributes (e.g., appliances, architectural features, etc.) were noted by many non-disabled informants, but by only a few of the informants with an intellectual disability.

Family home and surrogates.
The family home, from the perspective of a child or a parent, or both, was mentioned by all of the non-disabled informants. The notion of some settings being surrogate family homes was also mentioned by some of this group. However, this stood in marked contrast to the informants with an intellectual disability who made little mention of these attributes of, or contributors to, a sense of home. The notion of a surrogate family home in particular, was noticeable by its near-total lack of mention by this informant group, even by people living in residential service settings with un-related others.

Socialising.

The informants with an intellectual disability on the whole, reported doing far less socialising in the home or away from it, than the non-disabled informants as a group. Not only did the amount and frequency of in-home socialising appear less on average in the intellectually disabled cohort, but the variety also appeared to be more restricted, in that there were less informal visits and visitors and the spontaneous activities these generate. The in-home socialising of the informants with an intellectual disability more often focused on, or was confined to, major events such as birthdays or Christmas, or family gatherings. Both their in-home and external socialising were frequently limited to contacts with other (extended) family members. These findings contrasted with those reported by the non-disabled informants who had a rich, regular and varied range of social activities both in their homes and away from home, in almost all cases.

Social atmosphere.

Felicity was a very important attribute of home for most non-disabled informants, though it was hardly mentioned by those with an intellectual disability. Likewise, the home as a place of love was a key ingredient in making a place a home for many non-disabled informants. This was in marked contrast to the informants who have an intellectual disability who gave little mention to it although a number emphasised the importance of being able to get along with others in the dwelling. They also mentioned the importance of contributing to the operation of the home and the welfare of others in it, to a greater extent than the non-disabled group. Perhaps this was because those living in residential services were placed with others not of their own choosing who they had to tolerate and learn to live with, in the absence of any reinforcing emotional or familial ties.

This notion of contributing to the operation of the home seemed to be of greater importance to informants with an intellectual disability as a group, irrespective of whether they were living in a residential service setting or in the family home. One reason for this may be the importance, to those concerned, of the domestic social roles embedded in such activities (e.g., dishwasher, table-setter) and the relative paucity of significant social roles available to people who have an intellectual disability in other facets of their lives (Wolfensberger &
Social context.

Informants with an intellectual disability also made little reference to the importance of neighbourliness, and of knowing, and being known to, others in their neighbourhood. Informants living in residential service settings barely mentioned the social context of their homes at all. This may be explained as a function of the inward-looking nature of group homes fostered by the larger than typical numbers living in them when compared with their neighbours. However, it does not explain the absence of a mention of relationships with neighbours by those living with their family.

Metaphysical aspects - Time-related and spiritual.

Several informants with an intellectual disability mentioned time-related aspects of the home such as continuity, and meaningful events and possessions. However, these mentions were few and, for the most part, very concrete. No informant with an intellectual disability made mention of the spiritual sense of home at all. Perhaps, given the difficulties in abstract thinking which are commonly encountered in people who have an intellectual disability and the abstract nature of spiritual considerations, this lack of mention could be expected.

13.2. Conclusions

Home, as described by the non-disabled informants is essentially a created phenomenon. That is, the abstract place where people live or have lived has no meaning in and of itself. It is the meanings attached to that place by individuals which make it a home for those individuals. These meanings may be consciously or unconsciously ascribed. People may set out to create a home by: keeping some areas, or their contents, or the behaviours in which they indulge in those areas, hidden from casual public notice; furnishing it in a certain way; creating and raising a family around them; surrounding themselves with familiar or meaningful (or both) possessions; ensuring welcome and hospitality is extended to all who visit; or a myriad of other actions. Whether these actions are intended or simply happen, does not matter so much as the effect they have on transforming the place into a home. It is the awareness of the transforming effects of these actions that changes the person’s perception to regard the place as their home. In this sense (and in the sense noted by Berger and Luckmann [1966] concerning the construction of reality by individuals), the individual’s place of abode becomes realised as their home - realised in two ways; as in becoming aware of its changed status from place to home, and realised as in acting to create (i.e., make real) the home, thus transforming the place.

People with an intellectual disability appeared to have more difficulty creating (and describing) a home for themselves. They experienced less control,
less autonomy, and had less physical and cognitive resources to draw upon in forming their own sense of home. Not withstanding these limitations however, they did create a sense of home for themselves. This home appeared to fall into two types: the family or parental home; and the place where they were currently permanently domiciled. Where they live, and where they have previously lived happily, (particularly with their parents) seemed to be considered homes by people with an intellectual disability. The realisation of home then, for people with an intellectual disability, seemed to be founded more on concrete experience and the awareness which derived from that experience rather than a deeper or more complex sense of ‘realising’ by creating a home. In other words, home for people with an intellectual disability appeared to be “discovered” rather than made by them. Because of its “discovered” nature, home for informants with an intellectual disability therefore appeared to be a smaller (i.e., minimal, less elaborated) version than the sense of home created by non-disabled informants.

The concepts used by informants who have an intellectual disability to describe their homes were basically the same as those used by non-disabled informants. The essence of home was the same for both groups of informants. However, not only was the language used to describe home more restricted in the case of informants with an intellectual disability (a factor which can be accounted for by reference to the essential nature of the cognitive, expressive and language limitations integral to intellectual disability), but their expression of home through their own actions in creating and modifying that home was also restricted. This last element may be partly explained by the difficulties in abstract reasoning (and therefore the ability to plan and create a personal ideal of home) commonly observed to be a consequence of intellectual disabilities.

In the analysis of data, two further perspectives appeared which demonstrated this reduced conceptualisation of home on the part of informants who have an intellectual disability.

For people with an intellectual disability there was the idea of ‘the bedroom as home’. For many their bedroom appeared to be the centre of their experience of home in the fullest sense of the concept. It had many of the elements of home for them. It was where they were able to experience home as related to the private components of the self and, to a lesser extent, the public components of the self. It was where they enjoyed a sense of: personal territory; ownership and display of their possessions; privacy; security; autonomy and the ability or freedom to express private behaviours; a place of refuge to which they could escape; a place to pursue recreation and leisure activities; a place where they were surrounded by familiar objects and had some familiar routines. Thus, their bedroom may have provided many informants who have an intellectual disability with a sense of stability and a place to which they could return. To a limited extent, it also provided them with a medium through which they could express themselves to others.
This restricted version of home stood in stark contrast to the elaborated concept of home manifested in the lives of the non-disabled informants. Although the non-disabled informants seemed to use the same concepts to form their sense of home, for them it included not only the whole of the dwelling but also its surrounds, which often included the neighbourhood, district or city. For some, it extended to a metaphysical sense of a spiritual extension of the self. For the non-disabled informants, home was not simply their bedroom, their bedroom was a minor part of their concept of home.

The second perspective which emerged, was the experience of informants who have an intellectual disability of never being in charge of the home or their lives within it. This lead to a lack of awareness of the home as related to the self, especially in the area of self-expression and seeking others’ approval of one’s personality as expressed through the medium of the home. The absence of any experience of being in charge of the home also gave rise to a lack of awareness of the role of host with its aspects of felicity and control over access to the home as well as the use of the home for socialising. The non-disabled group regarded felicity as a major indicator of home. The intellectually disabled informants, on the other hand, did not mention it. Perhaps the concept was too subtle or abstract to be recognised, or too difficult to articulate, but whatever the reason, they did not mention it except very obliquely. These informants were more concerned about having a reasonable degree of autonomy and independence, - that was one of the major indicators of being truly at home for them and yet one which was largely absent or heavily constricted (in comparison with the situation of the non-disabled informants) for many.

These conclusions suggest that people wishing to create a home for people with an intellectual disability must take into account what the people with an intellectual disability regard as the essential components of home and also what visitors, such as parents and family members or non-disabled friends, may regard as equally essential. In other words, seeking to maximise independence and autonomy within the home is important but so also is teaching people the importance of offering hospitality and welcome, and maintaining a felicitous atmosphere.

It may be however, that the restricted conceptualisation of home is not just a sequela of having an intellectual disability but may also be the result of other factors common to people who are societally devalued (Wolfensberger, 1972, 1998) including, but not confined to, people who have an intellectual disability.

A possible explanation for the restricted conceptualisation of home by informants with an intellectual disability can be developed by consideration of the consequences of being placed in one of the major socio-historical roles of devalued people (Wolfensberger, 1975), namely, the role of an eternal child. One of the major features of this role is that others around the person treat him or her as a
child rather than according to the person's chronological age. This results in adults with a disability often being treated as if they were children rather than adults. As Wolfensberger (1998) argues, much of this process occurs at an unconscious level without either the perpetrator or the person affected being totally aware of what is happening. A significant consequence of this age-degradation is that the person is treated, and responds, as a child. This phenomenon may therefore go some way towards explaining why informants with an intellectual disability (regardless of whether they were living with their family or in a residential service setting) had a limited perception of the meaning of home, a perception perhaps more typically encountered in the non-disabled population when they are (chronologically) children. As a child one lives at home, but in the parentally owned and controlled dwelling. The main (typically the only) area of self expression allowed the child is his or her bedroom. Access to the home and the provision of hospitality is largely controlled by the parent(s).

Tentative evidence supporting this proposition was discovered by accident in an interview (Halliday, 1999) published after the interviews for this study were completed. The interview was with two men aged 45 and 40, who have physical disabilities and have been living in a small, community-based, residential service for people with disabilities for the past four years. (This report is reprinted as Appendix D). While both men were apparently of normal intelligence, their lives in the residential service setting appeared similar in significant aspects to the lives of informants to this study who have an intellectual disability, irrespective of whether those informants lived with their parent(s) or in residential service settings. The two disabled men:

- appeared to regard their bedrooms as the main component of home;

  We each have TV's in our own rooms. There's no TV in the lounge room.

  There's nice big windows in the lounge so you can see out. I like that. The windows aren't as big in my bedroom but I still like it. I've got pictures up and I've got a TV, a stereo and a video (in the bedroom).

  When we're at home, we go to our rooms quite a bit.

  We do have our meals out here (? In the dining room) together sometimes (Emphasis added).

- don't entertain much in the home.

  If we want company we go in the hostel (adjacent).

  People don't come around and visit us often here.
The lounge room doesn't get used much.

- appear to have limited control over their home.

I'd be happy staying here. They (the Yooralla Society) are thinking about pulling this place down I think. But there has been no real decisions yet. I don't think they'll move anyone else into the third bedroom here.

Some of the furniture here is my own but some they (the Yooralla Society) provided. Quite a bit came from Yooralla.

Neither of these men appears to evidence any acquired brain injury similar in influence on cognition and adaptive behaviour to an intellectual disability. However, what they do share in common with the intellectually disabled informants to this study is: (a) having a devalued status, and (b) living in a human service setting. Perhaps, as a consequence of these two commonalities, they too may be (unconsciously) imaged and treated as eternal children and, as a result, emitting the behaviours reinforced by the imposition of this role, especially (for the purposes of this study) in regard to their conceptualisation and experience of home. Clearly this is a prime area for further research.

Having discussed the similarities and differences between the data from informants with an intellectual disability and those without such a disability, and having drawn some tentative conclusions regarding the results of this study, let us turn to a comparison between this study's findings and the body of literature on the topic of home.

13.3. Comparisons with the Literature

13.3.1. Comparison Between this Study's Findings and Previously Identified Perspectives Concerning Home per se

The examination in this study is of home as a unified concept. Therefore, discussion in this section will be confined to a consideration of the studies of Despres (1991), Sixsmith (1986), and Smith (1994) described earlier. In common with Sixsmith's (1986) finding, a number of meanings of home were found to co-exist. With the exception of six of the 20 types of home identified by Sixsmith (viz: room; county; area; miscellaneous; hall of residence; campus; and, "digs") informants to this study directly identified the same types of home. In addition, they identified four or five additional types of home namely: home groups (groupings of students at school); second home (one's workplace); coming home (returning to the family fold though not necessarily physically returning to the family dwelling); home environment; and, home state (although this last type can
be interpreted as analogous to Sixsmith's "home county").

Sixsmith's categories of interdependent meaning attached to the concept of home were all evident in the data with the possible exception of "Architectural style" which was not noted, although several informants did note architectural aspects of their home(s) such as high ceilings or wide verandas. Distinct architectural styles (e.g., Colonial, Gothic, or Arte-deco) were not mentioned.

Sixsmith's three experiential modes of home: the personal, social, and physical, were also identified through the analysis of the data into a meaningful framework, however, the time perspective was considered as separate and placed into the metaphysical category.

Despres' (1991) categories of ascribed meaning could be found in the data obtained in this study. However, the notion of the home as having a metaphysical aspect was not noted by Despres. Despres' suggested theoretical approaches to the study of home appear relevant and valid based on the analysis of data from this study. Each perspective is able to provide illumination and seems able to incorporate all the data although the spiritual dimension identified by informants does not sit comfortably within all of Despres' theoretical approaches.

Smith's (1994) identification of the salient features of non-homes was borne out in this study with the addition of two extra aspects of importance: the lack of personal possessions, and, being unable to follow usual 'at home' patterns of behaviour.

13.3.2. Comparison Between this Study's Findings and Previous Work Concerning the Meaning of Home for People who have an Intellectual Disability

The only other literature dealing with the concept of home in relation to people with an intellectual disability is a policy article by O'Brien (1994) described earlier. O'Brien's views do not appear to be grounded upon any research concerning the meaning of home, either to people with, or without an intellectual disability. Rather, O'Brien's views seem more to be derived from an examination and consideration of literature evaluating residential service settings and policy covering that area. O'Brien's article appears to be based upon an identification of what is missing from residential services when compared with his intuitive understanding of the concept of home. In other words, O'Brien has identified a number of non-home characteristics of residential services and consequently advocates their amelioration or removal in order to render residential settings homes. (This appears to be the same type of approach as the 'institution-antithesis' model which lead to the first formulations of the principle of normalisation [Nirje, 1969, Wolfensberger, 1972]). Using this technique, O'Brien identified three dimensions of home: a sense of place; control; and, security of place. The sub-concepts identified under each of these may be overlaid to give the following framework:
A sense of place, i.e., provides for, or allows:

- comfort
- personalisation of the home
- choice of: tasks and routines
- home improvements
- contributing to the household
- safe structure
- decent furniture
- adequate nutrition
- tenancy rights
- membership of a circle of family and friends
- physical and emotional base
- privacy
- opportunities for hospitality

Control

- choice of: setting
  - co-residents, who and how many
- control over: personal assistants
  - decisions affecting the home

Security of place

- ownership of the dwelling
- stability

A number of these attributes appear to arise largely as a result of the approach adopted by O’Brien. For example, tenancy rights, decent furniture, adequate nutrition, and a safe structure were not mentioned as indicators of home by either group of informants.

The informants with an intellectual disability certainly noted the importance of the contribution to a sense of home arising from control and choice concerning the aspects identified by O’Brien. Likewise, they mentioned the importance of privacy and stability as well as comfort.

However, they seemed less concerned with having: opportunities for hospitality; membership of the neighbourhood; a circle of family and friends supported by the home; and, with the issue of home ownership and legal tenancy rights. Such things are probably to their advantage but they did not mention them as components of home.

13.4. The Emergent Theoretical Perspective

From further analysis of the results of this study, it appears that the concept of home can be summarised as “the three C’s”: - Control, Comfort, and Conviviality. Control, as found in establishing and maintaining a sense of one’s
own territory; Comfort, as engendered by the experience of the familiar (people, objects, settings, language, routines, rhythms, tasks, actions and activities) and the reduction or elimination of stress this facilitates; and, Conviviality, in the sense of people's ability to socialise and 'get along with others' in the home.

Analysed in this fashion, the common link between these aspects appears to be the role of the home as the place best facilitating the reduction or elimination of stress; a return to some form of homeostasis which enables one to rekindle one's energy, to renew one's thinking, and rest and repair the physical body.

People feel safer and more at ease in their own territory. This may explain why the experience of being burgled is so unsettling for many people, or why travellers are often pleased to get back home. One's own territory has an air of predictability about it, you know where things are kept, how things operate, - there are no surprises.

Familiar experiences require little effort to respond to, to plan for, or to anticipate. Again, everything is reasonably predictable and leads to a sense of satisfaction either when being undertaken (e.g., carrying out some form of leisure activity) or when completed (e.g., cleaning the kitchen). Where chores are perceived as onerous their familiarity reduces their stressful impact as does the awareness that they are of short duration thereby enabling other, more desirable activities to be contemplated or undertaken once the chore is completed.

Socialising and generally getting along with others again reduces or eliminates the risk of stress that encounters with strangers or with socially difficult or obnoxious individuals can provoke.

This essence of the concept of home as being a place where stress is avoided, eliminated, minimised or reduced, is further borne out by the responses of both sets of informants concerning non-homes. In all cases, the descriptions of non-homes involved situations which the individual concerned found stressful. The level of stress experienced may have varied from person to person, and from situation to situation, but the one response in common was that all wished to get out of that situation as soon as they could and to avoid any future repetition of it.

13.4.1. Validating the Theory

One way to test the veracity of the theory that the essential element defining 'home' is its contribution to the reduction or elimination of stress in the life of the individual, is to check its internal validity by considering whether all the components of home identified in the analysis of informant interviews are consistent with the theory. When one examines all the components of home identified in this study by either group of informants, it can be seen that they all contribute in some fashion to the reduction or elimination of stress in the life of the individual. It is to this proof that attention is now directed.
The private components of the self as related to home were identified as: control; contentment; stability; and, ‘rootedness’. Both control and contentment encompassed a number of subsidiary concepts. In the case of control these were: territoriality; ownership; privacy; security; and, autonomy, which incorporated private behaviour. In the case of contentment, the subsidiary concepts were: refuge; place of happiness; and, familiarity. All of these factors would contribute to the reduction or elimination of stress. Being able to exert control over an area as one’s own territory and to have the desired degree of privacy and freedom to do whatever one wished within that area, means that the stress of having to obey the dictates of others with which one may not agree, or the stress of having to continually negotiate what one desires to do, is avoided. Likewise, to have what one regards as a place of refuge, to be surrounded by familiar people, objects, activities, etc., and to feel happy is surely the antithesis of a stressful situation. A preferred place in which unanticipated changes are rare, together with a reference point in life to which one feels one belongs and can return to, assist greatly by providing an assured escape (albeit only temporary) from the stresses of daily life in the outside world. The concept of stress also explains the resultant tension people experience when their sense of privacy has been violated by burglary or unwanted intrusions or their sense of control is violated by others taking control over the home environment or their freedom of action within it.

The public components of the self as related to home were considered to be: the home as a medium of personal expression; and, as a way of obtaining the approval of others. Giving form to one’s creative urges and need for self expression through the medium of one’s home, and receiving the acknowledgement and approval of others for the expression of oneself embodied in the home, both aid in reducing or eliminating stress in the individual. They do this by re-affirming the individual’s inherent worth and membership of a group of like-minded others who share similar values, tastes, etc.

The physical environment of the home incorporates: the names and uses of rooms; the physical features of the setting; and, its physical appointments and attributes. These contribute to the reduction or elimination of stress in the individual through their contribution to a sense of the familiar; and to a sense of individuality and individual expression.

The home’s social environment was conceptualised as comprising five major components with a number of subsidiary components in each. The family home, together with its subsidiary concepts of a place of nurturance, raising one’s own children, and the creation of a surrogate family home, contributes to a sense of one’s social worth (i.e., as a loving and lovable person) as well as a sense of order and one’s place in society as a member of one’s natural or ‘created’ family. This sense of identity, of ‘who one is’, is reassuring and therefore aids in reducing stress.
The home’s social environment includes its function as a gathering place for friends and family and, through these social occasions, can reaffirm the individual’s sense of self as person who enjoys the company of others, and whose company is also enjoyed by others. Likewise, the use of the home as a base from which a person goes socialising and as a contact point for others seeking that person, reaffirms the person’s social worth and identity. This confirmation of one’s social worth is important in maintaining a person’s self-esteem and in reducing stress which comes from the challenges to their self-esteem which people face in their daily life.

Social atmosphere is an important part of the home’s social environment. It encapsulates the concepts of: felicity, the home as a place of love; contributing to the welfare of others in the home; and, the compatibility of the people in the home. A place where one is welcomed, loved, respected and accorded hospitality is significantly less stressful for an individual than one where the opposite circumstances apply. Similarly, sharing common tasks and contributing to the overall conduct of the home, and being able to get along with others in the home, are all important attributes in the creation of an harmonious household, one in which stressful arguments or other sources of interpersonal friction are avoided.

The social context of the home is also a significant part of its social environment. Establishing and maintaining harmonious relationships with neighbours and knowing and being known by others in the neighbourhood are both desirable traits if one is to feel accepted in the local community. This acceptance by the local community adds to one’s sense of belonging and extends both one’s sense of the familiar and one’s sense of territory. All of these actions and their consequences actively assist in reducing the amount of stress which might otherwise be generated by the social context in which one lives.

The metaphysical dimension of home incorporates two main considerations: time aspects, and spiritual aspects. The time aspects include consideration of: past or former homes; ‘synthesised’ homes; future homes; and, time-related qualities associated with home comprised of the notions of continuity, meaningful events and experiences, and meaningful possessions. The time aspects of home all contribute to a lessening of stress in the life of the person by virtue of their retention of positive elements of home. For a place to be considered a home, it must be held in positive regard. Places and possessions with (predominantly) positive memories attached to them are more likely to be regarded as symbolic of home than those holding negative remembrances. These places or possessions associated fondly with former or current homes and the people and events which have taken place there, reduce stress by invoking positive feelings in the person concerned. They are powerful links with people, places and events which are meaningful in the life of the person concerned. Imagined future, or synthesised homes gain their stress-reducing or stress-eliminating properties through their composition which is often made up of a montage of assorted fragments derived from current and previous home
experiences. Therefore, they capture a number of positive aspects around the notion of home.

One last test of the validity of the theory that the essential meaning of home is indelibly linked to the effective reduction or elimination of stress is to determine whether the non-home attributes identified by informants are all situations which either could or did induce stress in the person concerned. A great variety of non-home attributes were identified by informants. Those reported were:

- Dissatisfaction with not owning the dwelling or the furniture or both;
- Not having one’s own possessions;
- Having to use other people’s possessions;
- Lacking any personal space and any privacy or solitude when required;
- Constantly having to behave in a public manner because of the continual presence of others;
- Being under the direction or rules of others;
- Feeling pressured to conform to the ways of others;
- Feeling insecure or unsafe and unable to relax;
- Being in unfamiliar surroundings or away from the individual’s real home;
- Being in transition and unable to settle-in;
- The feeling of being out place because the individual felt like an intruder in the lives of others;
- Finding oneself in an overly-fastidiously maintained environment;
- Disruption of personal routines;
- The absence of common home-making tasks - the loss of the familiar;
- A dwelling which was not personalised in any way, even by the inclusion of one’s personal possessions or by modifying the environment in some way;
- A sense of isolation;
- Physical isolation;
- An unpleasant or unfamiliar environment;
- A sense of impermanence;
- Places which bore unpleasant memories or experiences;
- Places which lacked any significant memories;
- The absence of any enduring link with the place or people,
- Living in a place with an uncertain future hanging over one as regards security of tenancy, or employment, or both;
- A place to escape from;
- The presence of unsatisfactory facilities or the absence of desired facilities;
- Memories of a dwelling as a place of hardship enabling only a minimal (basic) existence;
- The lack of a sense of family;
- The absence of love (or loved ones);
- Living with strangers;
- Lack of any social relationships, or even courtesy and respect from strangers;
- The presence of ongoing social tension within the dwelling;
- Unwelcoming places where no hospitality was proffered and the person consequently felt uncomfortable and ill at ease;
- An inability to communicate with others in the locale because of a lack of a common language; and,
- A significant and unacceptable restriction or lack of autonomy.

All of these would probably have constituted stressful situations for the individuals concerned and therefore were not regarded as homes.
Chapter 14. Limitations, Recommendations and Conclusions

_Dorothy now took Toto up solemnly in her arms, and having said one last good-bye she clapped the heels of her shoes together three times, saying, “Take me home to Aunt Em!”_ (Blum, 1900-1965, p. 159).

Despite the thought and rigour which has gone into its design, conduct and analysis, this can never be the definitive study on home. It is, at best, a significant piece of the jigsaw, but it is not the whole picture because it does not cover every possible perspective on the concept in exhaustive detail. Therefore this chapter identifies and discusses the limitations of this study by considering the composition of the informant samples, the procedures adopted, the settings used for the interviews, and the constraints of the research interviews. Recommendations for future research on home and related concepts are then made before the concluding summary.

14.1.

14.1.1. **Limitations**

14.1.1. **General Considerations**

This study has been conducted in Melbourne, Victoria, Australia during 1996-1998. It is therefore grounded in the Victorian variation of the Australian culture prevailing at that time. At its core it contains abiding truths about the meaning of home which transcend nationality, ethnicity and country. However, in some of its more peripheral elements it reflects the period and environment (geographic, social, cultural, economic and political) in which it is located. For example, the names used to define rooms reflect the period, culture and class of informants because, before the 1960's people did not have TV rooms, sitting rooms are a relatively middle class phenomenon, and ensuite bathrooms and walk-in pantries are generally found only in more expensive houses. As Rybczynski (1986) has pointed out, the concept of home is continually evolving to take on new aspects and meanings and shed obsolete ones (e.g., how many homes have a parlour these days?).

14.1.2. **The Composition of the Samples**

While the size of both samples used in this study were small (viz. 21 non-intellectually disabled and 18 people with an intellectual disability respectively), they were each close to the individual samples used by Sixsmith (1986) (22 informants), and Smith (1994) (23 informants). The total of 39 informants used in this study is greater than either that of Sixsmith or Smith. In addition, as detailed previously, the composition of the samples used in this study was more diverse than the relatively homogenous samples used by both Sixsmith and Smith. This
study is qualitative and, through the use of Trost's (1986) technique, satisfactory samples were constructed.

As mentioned elsewhere, Trost's approach generated a number of theoretically, but not logically or practically, possible non-disabled informants which could be removed from consideration. However, even where it might be logically possible for a particular informant to exist, it may be that the probability of the informant's existence is quite low and therefore it may not be possible to locate that particular informant, willing and able to be involved in a study.

Of the number of possible "profiles" of informants without an intellectual disability remaining (28), only 20 different profiles were matched. It was not possible to identify and recruit informants with 8 (28%) of the profiles. Again, one must consider the nature of this study and that was (in part) to determine the 'essence' of the experience of home. Given that 72% of possible informant profiles were represented, then whatever those informants held in common concerning the meaning of home could still legitimately be considered to be the essence of 'home'.

Using Trost's technique, the number of informants who had an intellectual disability which one could logically or reasonably expect to encounter was much larger than that finally recruited for this study. However, given the number of informants involved (18) and the use of a comparison group of 21 non-disabled informants, together with the fact that no previous studies of the perception of home by people who have an intellectual disability existed, this was not considered a problem for this study.

Based on a review of the literature, a number of factors considered to play an important part in influencing people's experience of home were chosen as criteria for informant selection. For each of these factors, extremes of status were chosen (e.g., old/young; renting/purchasing or owner, etc.) and informants selected accordingly. However, in choosing a limited number of factors to construct a framework of criteria for informant selection, perhaps some relevant criteria was omitted. For example, the criteria used excluded the contribution made to a sense of home of the length of time the informant had resided at their current location. It also needs to be remembered that, using Trost's model, every criterion added effectively doubles the number of informants sought. So, two becomes four, becomes eight, then 16, 32, 64, 128, and finally 256, with the selection of eight bipolar (e.g., old/young, or rich/poor) criteria. Such a large sample may be neither necessary nor desirable for a study such as this.

14.1.3. Process Issues

This study used a single method to ascertain the meaning of home for informants. Smith's (1994) study on the meaning of home used a combination of small qualitative and quantitative studies to arrive at its conclusions. While such a
combination of approaches may be useful, it may not necessarily be required in order to reach equally, or more, sound conclusions.

The use of a structured, open-ended interview format naturally asked some questions and omitted others. Additionally, the interviewer chose certain aspects of each informant's answers to probe and ignored others. This format did not constrain the informant's answers to the extent that a forced-choice, structured questioning approach would have, but it must, by its nature, have imposed some constraint on the informant's freedom to answer in any way deemed appropriate. On the other hand, simply having a single, open-ended question such as, "What, to you, is the meaning of home?" may or may not have produced the type of rich description desired for this study.

The time limits placed on the interview and the fact that only one interview was conducted for each informant meant that the capacity to explore the topic of home, fully and at length, was restricted. Most interviews took around 45 minutes with the shortest taking about 25 minutes and the longest about an hour and five minutes. In all of these the first few minutes were devoted to introductory and explanatory remarks prior to settling down to the actual interview proper. In addition, a brief period at the conclusion of the interview was spent packing up the interviewer's tape recorder, thanking the person for their time, and reiterating the feedback procedure. Other constraints on the time available for the interview were the informant's willingness to submit to an extended interview and their ability to maintain the necessary concentration and focus on the issue under examination for an extended period. All of these factors limited the amount of time available for interviewing informants about their ideas on aspects of home.

The interviews with informants with an intellectual disability were conducted at their day placement agency in all except two cases. While every attempt was made to help the informant feel relaxed, and the interviewer was extremely careful to conduct the interviews in a cordial fashion as between equals, the use of areas predominantly used by agency staff may have unsettled some informants or led them to perceive a closer link between the interviewer and their day agency than actually existed. Such impressions, while incorrect, would have had a negative impact on the informant's freedom of exchange during the interview.

14.2. Recommendations

14.2.1. Concerning Future Research Procedures

The procedures followed for this study were found to be satisfactory in most respects, however, it is recommended that future researchers consider the use of market survey recruitment agencies to recruit informants to surveys such as this. While this use of these organisations is not cheap (the fee charged was $25
for each potential informant name actually used for an interview and this was
discounted from the full commercial rate of $50 per informant) a considerable
amount of time, effort, and unnecessary expense can be saved.

It is also recommended that researchers consider making a payment of
some kind to compensate informants for their time. With the growing use of
telephonic and door-to-door surveys undertaken by various commercial
organisations for their own marketing endeavours, the general public may become
reluctant to spend a significant amount of time volunteering personal information
to researchers without at least some token of compensation or appreciate for their
generosity and assistance. Regardless of whether payment of some form
motivates people to respond or not, it would be a rare situation where it actually
acted as a major disincentive to participation however, it should also not be so
large as to constitute a form of coercion.

Future researchers seeking a cross-section of views from people who have
an intellectual disability would be well advised to draw upon several different
types of sources of potential informants if at all possible. For instance, people
could be recruited via a variety of different avenues such as through: advocacy
agencies; day programs; vocational support and training agencies; residential
support services; self-advocacy groups; or, through groups of parents who have
an adult son or daughter with a disability. Drawing on all these sources of
potential informants should make the composition of the final group as diverse as
possible.

As regards the obtaining of informed consent, the method used in this
study seemed appropriate and valid. There are risks in introducing further
measures, such as having people who know the informants well assess and
confirm that they have given their informed consent. Such additional measures
may be seen to cast doubt on the autonomy of the informants and question their
ability to give consent. However, notwithstanding these risks, it would probably
be more advisable to adopt such a course in proportion to the severity of
intellectual disability (i.e., the greater the level of disability, the greater the benefit
of having independent third parties involved in confirming the informed nature of
the consent).

With respect to the type of interview or other data gathering techniques
employed, it is advisable to use the least obtrusive approaches possible. The ideal
here is the adoption of data collecting approaches which are the most authentic
(i.e., involving the people with an intellectual disability directly and giving them
as much control and autonomy in forming responses to questions as possible) but
least intrusive (e.g., using free-flowing conversations around a central topic or
theme which can be subjected to narrative analysis in preference to a structured
interview format where ever possible).

The research approach should also be considered in toto. People who have
an intellectual disability have, for too long, been subjects of research, but not
designers. They have had little input into the dominant research agenda, if any.
They have an important, valid, and central perspective on matters affecting them
and their lives and therefore decision-making power, including the shaping of
research agendas, should be shared with them (Heller, Pederson, & Miller, 1996).
In doing this they will need the assistance of experienced researchers to help them
form and shape 'researchable' questions and it is here that one of the greatest
methodological challenges lies for the intellectual disability field, - that of finding
better, more effective and meaningful ways of bringing people with an intellectual
disability in to research affecting them, not as subjects, but as co-researchers and
partners.

14.2.2. Recommendations for Future Research

A. Recommendations for future research on the meaning of home per se.

The study of the meaning of home may be approached in a variety of
ways. This study has adopted a phenomenological perspective on the topic.
Phenomenology was chosen as the best perspective through which to investigate
meaning. However, meaning, like language, is not static. For example, terms such
as disk, byte, and laptop are relatively recent additions to the English lexicon as is
the use of 'access' as a verb, - to access. Similarly, as Toffler (1970) and more
recently, Heller (1994) have noted, Western society is becoming increasingly more
mobile to the point where Heller describes an encounter with one continuously
travelling executive who could only identify her home as, "... where my cat is" (p.
3). A number of studies have investigated the meaning(s) of aspects of home in
various cultural or ethnic groups while other studies have examined the meaning of
home in specific places or times. Therefore, this study is grounded in time, place
and culture, and bounded by the language used in its conduct.

The interviews used in this study were conducted in 1997, around the
metropolitan area of Melbourne, using English, with informants from a Western
cultural background. The experience of home revealed through those interviews
may well have been different if even one of these reference points was changed.
The results may have been different if people of Asian origin were interviewed
exclusively or the informants restricted to people who were devout Muslims or
from cultures where the extended family is the norm. The experience of home to
Australian Aborigines is unknown. It may be that their languages do not have an
equivalent word to 'home' and therefore, for them, there is no 'meaning of home'.
Even where language, culture and ethnicity is shared, the meaning of home may be
different as might be the case of Victorians living on isolated farms in wheat
growing areas such as the Wimmera region. None of these speculative cases can be
either proved or disproved and therefore there is scope for future research on the
meaning of home to determine if there is some other, more fundamental, shared
meaning of home which transcends the idiosyncracies of place, religion, culture,
ethnicity, time and language.
The conclusions of this study also give rise to two other possible avenues of productive research: the notion of home as a place of stress reduction or minimisation; and, the possibly childlike perception of home by informants with an intellectual disability.

The notion of home as a place, or even the place of stress reduction or minimisation for the individual, is worthy of further research to either prove or disprove its validity. There are a number of ways in which such research could be designed including the use of reliable and valid measures of stress which could be applied to individuals in a variety of locales including the place they regard as their home. Research in this area could also shed further light on what it is that causes people to regard some places which could be homes as non-homes.

It is currently not documented how children experience home and how their experience and resultant conceptualisation of home evolves over the developmental period. This would therefore seem to be a worthwhile avenue of research. Perhaps, for young children, home is defined by where the parents are although this begs the question regarding the situation of children whose parents have separated. Perhaps the child’s sense of home is less shaped by where the parents live and progressively more shaped by where the child lives as the child grows older. Such research might also be able to reveal how the conceptualisation of home evolves to the more complex and abstract level observed in adults and, in so doing, give some indication of how this development may be assisted in ‘normal’ children.

B. Recommendations for future research on the meaning of home to people with an intellectual disability.

This study has identified that the notion of home for a number of people who have an intellectual disability is predominantly focused on their bedroom. It has not been possible in this study to determine whether this perception of the bedroom as home is a childlike one (see recommendation above in this regard), and possibly an extension of the conscious or unconscious perception of them by significant others in their lives as ‘eternal children’ (Wolfensberger, 1972, 1975, 1998) and their (conscious or unconscious) adoption of this (imposed) role. Research to determine the home-related expectations of people who have an intellectual disability by others in key roles in their home environment (e.g., parents, siblings, staff or peers) would assist in identifying the dynamics at work here.

Alternately, the treatment of their bedroom as home by a number of people with an intellectual disability might be their adaptive response to a situation in which they perceive (rightly or wrongly) that they lack either the authority or ability (or both) to control their environment beyond the confines of their bedroom. Again, further research to determine the nature and motivation of
their home behaviours and resultant lived experiences, would be illuminating.

Confining activities and the centre of meaning within the home to the bedroom may be considered learnt behaviour in that the individual is subjected to the directions or restrictions of others when in the rest of the dwelling to a far greater extent than when engaged in activities within his or her own bedroom. Thus, there are less negative consequences attendant on occupying oneself in one's bedroom, than there are for doing the same things in other areas of the dwelling. There are several parallels which support this analysis which can be identified from the interviews with the non-disabled sample. In that sample, one informant spoke of the need to have a shed or a den to which he could retreat to enjoy privacy, solitude and the ability to 'do his own thing' uninterrupted and undisturbed by other members of the family. For another non-disabled informant it was his vegetable garden and the strip of lawn at the very rear of his home which fulfilled this need for him by allowing him to practice his golf swing and be free to contemplate whatever he wished while tending his garden. Further research is needed to determine why the bedrooms of informants with an intellectual disability played such a major role in their conceptualisation and experiences of home, what motivates or rewards this behaviour, and whether or not this phenomenon is simply a variation of the need for a retreat or den expressed by several other, non-disabled informants.

Further research could also explore specific sub-themes of home in greater depth and detail. For example, how much control do people with an intellectual disability exercise in their homes, what is the nature of that control, and what are the limiting factors to it? What is the perception of people with an intellectual disability regarding the locus of control in their lives; does it reside with themselves or with others? If it resides largely with others for most aspects of their lives, does this pertain also in the individual's home? Do people with an intellectual disability perceive the control of their lives to be largely in the hands of others and, if so, what elements of control do they perceive that they retain (if any), and in what situations does this occur? How do people with an intellectual disability perceive the nature and level of control available to them in their own home. Are they people who have been denied opportunities to exercise control and therefore have learnt to tolerate that situation, or are they people who do not want to exercise, or regard themselves as incapable of exercising, control and are therefore willing to accept their lack of control over important aspects of their home? Is the level of control which people with an intellectual disability have exercised over their home by others' desired, tolerated, accepted, or resented by them? Additionally, do the particular aspects of this control differ in the manner in which they are perceived and experienced? For example, having someone else exercise control over the menu relieves one of the need to plan menus and shop accordingly and to decide, what's for dinner tonight. On the other hand, it also denies one the choice of desired dishes and the avoidance of foods one does not like. Further research on this important aspect of home would shed better light on how people with an intellectual disability conceptualise control vis-a-vis home.
This study involved a small number of people who have an intellectual disability as informants. All were capable of expressing themselves verbally, and all were adults, one living alone, others living with their family, and the remainder living in residential service settings, predominantly hostels, with more than six, non-related other people. This study has not included people with an intellectual disability who are unable to verbalise their thoughts. Further research using other methods such as participant observation may not only validate the findings of this study but also shed light on the meaning of home for people with an intellectual disability who are unable to speak.

This study has not interviewed people with an intellectual disability residing in 'wards' or 'units' in large congregate care facilities, nor has it included people living in smaller community residential units of six or less, non-related individuals. Similarly, people with an intellectual disability residing in Supported Residential Services or Special Accommodation Houses (i.e., large boarding houses exclusively for people with disabilities operated by the for-profit sector) have not been included. All of these are situations ripe for further research on the meaning of home for those who live in them.

There is much more investigation which could be undertaken to determine how the people concerned conceptualise the impact the presence of staff has on their perception of a place as home. How do staff enhance or reduce the degree of 'home' experienced by individuals; what effect on the experience of home do staff rosters and turn-over have? Any or all of the factors mentioned above may introduce or exacerbate stress felt by an individual residing in a dwelling, to the point where it becomes a non-home for that person. If reality is socially constructed (Berger & Luckmann, 1966), then staff are often the main constructors of the reality of the home experience for people with an intellectual disability living in staffed residential service settings. What sort of reality do those staff create; how do they create it; and how can they create a more desirable experience of home?

The meaning of home for people with an intellectual disability residing in any one of the residential service settings identified previously is unknown at this time. Significant amounts of government, private and charitable funds around the world are expended annually on residential services and supports for people with an intellectual disability and yet the end result of that expenditure may be the maintenance of something less than a home for the people concerned. It is therefore important for future research to determine the nature of what is being provided and to identify and address any shortcomings noted, in order to create genuine homes for the people concerned, and to improve the quality of their lives whilst also assuring the most effective application of the limited funds available for this form of service provision.

The movement of people out of large congregate care facilities into smaller,
community based options has been the subject of a great deal of research, particularly around changes to the quality of life of the individuals concerned (Cummins & Dunt, 1990; Cummins, Polzin, & Theobald, 1990a, 1990b). However, changes in the meaning of home (if, indeed, either situation is regarded as a home by the people concerned) invoked by deinstitutionalisation have not, to date, been reported and this is, therefore, an area calling out for further research. It makes little sense from the perspective of the individual concerned, to shift from one non-home to another non-home, if that is the case. There is little or no benefit to the individual in such a move. On the contrary, there may be significant disadvantage in such a move because of its near-total disruption of the familiar for the person moved.

Another question which is worthy of further research is whether the meaning of home is learnt. Obviously, one’s perception of home evolves as one develops from child to adult. It also appears to continue evolving in concert with the various stages in the person’s adult life. The experience of finding a partner and co-habiting, having and raising children, the leaving home of the children to establish their own homes, and finally, the death of a partner, all have a major impact on the experience of home for an individual. Each of these changes of circumstance is accompanied by a need to adapt and to learn new ways of experiencing place as home. If the meaning of home is learnt, then the question for those seeking to assist and support people with an intellectual disability is: how can this ‘meaning of home’ be taught and reinforced by one’s own experience and the example of others?

C. Recommendations for future research on the meaning of home as applied to residential services for people with other forms of disability.

The interview with the two men with cerebral palsy living in a hostel operated by the Yooralla Society reported elsewhere in this study suggests that they share a number of experiences in common with the people with an intellectual living in residential service settings who were interviewed for this study. This suggests that there may be common issues and experiences around residential service provision encountered by people who have a disability of whatever type. This shared experience appears, from the interview reported, to involve a number of non-home characteristics of such settings. Therefore, research to identify and describe these characteristics would be useful in aiding their amelioration to the benefit of the individuals currently affected by them.
14.3. **Conclusion**

14.3.1. **Implications of this Research**

Most western nations spend significant amounts each year in providing residential services to people with disabilities, particularly people with intellectual disabilities. For all this expenditure, in most countries the results are remarkably similar; the provision of places which are not genuine homes for the people living in them but rather “residential service settings” with the operational emphasis falling on one or more of these three words. By discovering more about what makes a place a home, service provider agencies and their support staff can focus more clearly on creating and maintaining real homes for the people who live in them. This study has confirmed a range of key elements critical to the experience of home. It has also identified the over-arching criterion of the greatest absence or reduction of stress in a person’s life as the essential hallmark of a home. Furthermore, it has revealed how people who have an intellectual disability may be limited in, or miss out on, some of the key aspects of the experience of home. This study provides pointers for further research on the meaning of home for people with an intellectual disability and also actions service providers (of whatever form, including families) may take to improve the experience of home by a person with an intellectual disability.

This study also goes some way towards meeting Despres’ (1991) challenge for research on the meaning of home from the perspectives of ‘non-traditional populations’ through its examination of the lived experiences of people who have an intellectual disability. It may also provide some illumination on the experiences of other ‘non-traditional populations’ who experience other forms of home (e.g., members of the forces living in barracks, people living in communes, or students in student hostels). This study shows that the concept of home can be understood and experienced outside the family home. The dwelling does not have to be permanent, owned, or even furnished by an individual, for that person to perceive it as their home. The experience of home is not contingent on the presence of others. Where there are others present, they do not necessarily have to be related to the individual or even regarded with some degree of affection in order for the person to feel “at home” or, at least, that the place is not a “non-home”. The existence within the dwelling of tolerance or mutual respect among the inhabitants may be sufficient to avoid the creation of a non-home.

14.3.2. **Summary**

This phenomenological study of the meaning of home from the perspectives of people with and without an intellectual disability sought to identify, (a) any common ‘essence’ of meaning held by and, (b) the nature of any differences of perception between, the groups. Purposive samples of 18 people with an intellectual disability and 21 non-disabled people were surveyed using a semi-structured interview to ascertain their experiences of home and ‘non-homes’.
Inductive analysis of the data revealed a shared, basic level of understanding of the meaning of home. This core understanding of home was found to comprise: the ability to exert control over an area; having a personalised space; feeling content with the living situation; a sense of familiarity with the setting; a set of behaviours and routines usually only enacted when at home; common names and uses for rooms; socialising at home with others; the importance of a positive social atmosphere in the home; and, recognition of places as non-homes because they lacked one or more of these attributes. Further analysis suggested the essence of home is its experience as the place where stress is most reduced or minimised for the individual. Major differences between the two samples were largely differences of degree with people with an intellectual disability experiencing the same core attributes of home as people who do not have an intellectual disability but in a less elaborated form. Principal among these differences of degree was the notion of control over the home and its derivative elements which was very restricted for people with an intellectual disability being largely confined to the person’s bedroom. Socialising in or from the home was also very limited for people with an intellectual disability in comparison with that experienced by non-disabled informants with the former group conveying an impression of leading significantly socially isolated lives at home. This study has implications for residential service provider agencies seeking to establish and maintain genuine homes for people with an intellectual disability. Further research on aspects of the home experience of people with an intellectual disability is recommended.

*Aunt Em had just come out of the house to water the cabbages when she looked up and saw Dorothy running toward her.*

"My darling child!" she cried, folding the little girl in her arms and covering her face with kisses; "where in the world did you come from?"

"From the Land of Oz," said Dorothy, gravely. "And here is Toto, too. And oh, Aunt Em! I’m so glad to be at home again!" (Blum, 1900/1965, p. 160).
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NUD·IST - see Richards and Richards (1991)


Department of Social Security.


APPENDIX A

Initial Recruitment Package for Non-disabled Informants Distributed to Specific Census Collector’s Districts

1. **Demographic Details Questionnaire**

   **CONFIDENTIAL**

   Respondent Number: ........................................(To be supplied by researcher)

   **Personal details**
   Please tick the appropriate answers to the following questions regarding yourself. If you do not match any of the criteria given for a particular aspect (e.g. you are older than 25, but younger than 65) please disregard this request for assistance or pass it on to some other member of your household who matches the criteria for their consideration. You should omit any questions you do not wish to answer.

   1. **Age range**
      - 18 to 25 years of age **OR**
      - 65 years of age or older

   2. **Gender**
      - Male **OR**
      - Female

   3. **Current dwelling**
      - Renting current dwelling **OR**
      - Purchaser/owner of current dwelling

   4. **Living arrangement**
      - Live alone **OR**
      - Live with one or more others

   5. **Employment status**
      - Not currently employed **OR**
      - Employed outside dwelling less than 21 hours per week **OR**
      - Employed outside dwelling more than 21 hours per week

   6. **Income**
      - Income of less than $12,000 per year **OR**
      - Income of more than $45,000 per year

   7. **Children**
      - Live with one or more children under 16 years **OR**
      - Not living with any children under 16 years

   8. **Place of birth**
      - Born within Australia **OR**
      - Born overseas

   Thank you! Please forward this questionnaire to John Annison by the end of this week in the reply-paid envelope provided.
2. **Covering Letter and Plain Language Statement**

(Deakin University Letterhead)

Dear Reader,

Can you help me? I am seeking your assistance with a research project which may benefit a number of our fellow Victorians who live in some form of residential service such as an elderly persons' hostel, a home for children without families, or a residence for people with a disability.

My name is John Annison and I've been involved with the provision of residential services to people with disabilities for the past thirty or so years. I'm currently a lecturer in the School of Studies in Disability at Deakin University's Burwood Campus and am undertaking this research as part of my doctoral studies.

If you meet the guidelines for involvement in this research I would greatly appreciate your assistance. Naturally, I understand that your time is valuable. Therefore, if you are interviewed as part of this study, I would be willing to compensate you for the time involved. First, however, let me explain a little about the study.

Most of us have some idea of what we mean when we talk about 'home'. It may be a place, a feeling we get, or just somewhere special to us. I'm interested in finding out what you think 'home' is to you, in order to develop a meaning for home to which everyone can relate. That's why I would like your help, - you know what 'home' means to you, and everyone else knows what 'home' means to them, but what are the meanings of home we share, - what really makes somewhere 'home'? Once identified, this shared meaning of home can then be used to create places for people requiring some form of specialised care. Places which are a real 'home' and not just somewhere to live.

One way to find out what 'home' means to people would be to ask everyone for their views. However, there are as many views as there are people, so I've had to limit my study while still making sure it reflects a wide variety of viewpoints. Therefore the study is designed in two stages.

In this first stage, some information is requested from you in order to determine whether you match the criteria for inclusion in the research. The attached questionnaire lists the information I'm seeking. In responding to this questionnaire you can be assured that this study has been closely scrutinised by Deakin University's Ethics Committee and any information you provide will be treated with the strictest confidentiality. All responses will be securely stored and people's names and contact details will be kept separate from their other responses. The University's Ethics Committee is also concerned that anyone participating in this study, does so voluntarily and on an informed basis.
Therefore the enclosed consent form should also be read and completed.

If you wish to contribute your opinions to this study, could you please forward the completed questionnaire and consent form in the enclosed reply-paid envelope by the end of the week?

In the second stage of the study a variety of people, each with a unique profile identified from the returned questionnaire, will be selected to interview. Anyone not interviewed will be contacted to thank them for their offer of assistance and their questionnaire will be shredded in order to safeguard their privacy. People being interviewed will be contacted to arrange a suitable place and time/date for the interview by me.

The interview will probably take about 30 to 40 minutes and will be tape-recorded. The interview will explore the person’s views on various aspects of ‘home’. Any person interviewed is free to answer or not answer any questions asked as he or she sees fit. As a token of appreciation for the inconvenience of having to set aside 30 to 40 minutes of their time, people interviewed will be given $30 at the commencement of the interview. After the interview the tape will be transcribed and this transcript sent to the person concerned to modify in any way he or she wishes so that it accurately reflects that individual’s unique views.

All people interviewed will receive a copy of the major findings of the study upon request.

Please read the other documents included in this letter. If you have any questions or comments I’d like to hear them. I can be contacted at Deakin on (03) 9244 6149 during normal business hours or at home on (03) 9419 8363.

Thank you for taking the time to read this. I hope you’ll join with me in this interesting study and look forward to receiving your completed questionnaire in the near future.

Yours sincerely,

John Annison
3. Consent Form

DEAKIN UNIVERSITY ETHICS COMMITTEE
CONSENT FORM: SURVEYS, QUESTIONNAIRES

I, ...................................................................................................................................................
of ..................................................................................................................................................

Hereby consent to be a subject of a human research study to be undertaken by
John Annison, a doctoral student of Deakin University, and I understand that the
purpose of the research is to identify those thoughts, feelings and activities which
make a place a home.

I also understand that:

- the research involves the selection of a small number of people to interview
  about their thoughts on the notion of home;

- in order to select this group of people for interview it is first necessary to
  obtain some personal information from a larger number of people;

- information obtained in the first stage of this research from people not
  selected for an interview will be destroyed;

- if I am asked for an interview I will be paid the sum of $30.00 at the
  commencement of the interview for my inconvenience;

- the interview will be tape recorded and that I will be given a transcript of the
  tape recording to amend, delete, or revise in any way I wish; and that,

- this revised transcript will be the only information from me used in the
  research.

I acknowledge that

1. Upon receipt, my questionnaire, tape recording and transcript of interview,
   will be coded and my name and address kept separately from all of them.

2. Any information that I provide will not be made public in any form that
   could reveal my identity to an outside party (ie. that I will remain fully
   anonymous).

3. Aggregated results and un-attributed quotations will be used for research
   purposes and may be reported in scientific and academic journals.

4. My individual results will not be released to any person except at my request
   and on my specific authorisation.

5. I am free to withdraw my consent at any time during the study in which
   event my participation in the research study will immediately cease and any
   information obtained from me will not be used and will either be destroyed or
   returned to me.

Signature: .................................................. Date: ..........................................................

Contact phone number: (....) ..........................................................
(Most convenient time to call) ..........................................................
APPENDIX B

Initial Recruitment Package for People Who Have an Intellectual Disability

1. **Demographic Details Questionnaire**

**CONFIDENTIAL**

Respondent letter: .............................. (To be supplied by researcher)

**Personal details**
Please tick the answers to the following questions which are right for you. Do not answer any question if you do not wish to answer it.

1. **Agerange:**
   - 18 to 25 years of age
   - 26 to 64 years of age
   - 65 years of age or older

2. **Gender**
   - Male
   - Female

3. **Renting current dwelling**
   - Purchaser/owner of current dwelling

4. **Livealone**
   - Live with one or more others

5. **Currently employed**
   - Employed outside dwelling less than 21 hours per week
   - Employed outside dwelling more than 21 hours per week

6. **Income**
   - Income of less than $12,000 per year
   - Income between $12,000 and $45,000 per year
   - Income of more than $45,000 per year

7. **Live with children**
   - Live with one or more children under 16 years
   - Not living with any children under 16 years

8. **Born within Australia**
   - Born overseas

9. **Residential status**
   - Has previously lived in a residential service setting in the community.
   - Is currently living in a residential service setting in the community
   - Neither of the above
10. Has previously lived in a segregated congregate care residential service.
   Is currently living in a segregated congregate care residential service
   Neither of the above

Thank you!
Dear Reader,

John Annison is a lecturer at Deakin University. He is doing a study to find out what makes a place a home. He is asking for your help with this study.

If you agree then you will first be asked to answer some questions about yourself. These questions are on a page attached to this letter. There are no right or wrong answers to these questions and your answers will not be told to anyone else.

John would also like to interview you. These interviews will involve another set of questions. These questions will be about your ideas on what makes where you live a home to you. It will be entirely up to you to decide whether you wish to answer any of these questions, or even to be interviewed at all. This interview will take up to an hour of your time. You will be given $30.00 for your time if you are interviewed. The interview would be arranged on days, and at times and places to suit you.

The interview will be tape-recorded. After the interview, the tape recording will be typed-up and you will be given a copy. You will also be given a copy of the tape-recording if you want one. You will be able to alter the typed-up version of the interview in any way you want so that it says what you want it to say.

To make sure that any information you provide for this study is kept confidential you will be given a code letter. Only this letter, not your name, will be written on the sheet with your answers to the first questions. If you are not interviewed for any reason, any information from the first questions will be destroyed. If you are interviewed then the letter given to you, not your name, will also be written on the tape-recording and the written version of the interview.

There will be several people interviewed for this study. The study will look at the answers from these people as a group. Some individual answers may also be used but no one person will be identified as giving any particular answer. You will be given a copy of the final report from this study if you want one.

The study is being conducted by John as a teacher at Deakin University. By finding out more about what makes a place a home for people, John hopes to help organisations providing residential services to people with an intellectual disability to make their services more like real homes for the people who live in them.

If you don't want to be part of this study, or if you don't want to answer any questions at any time, you are free to say so. You do not have to answer any
questions unless you want to answer them. You do not have to be a part of this study unless you want to be. If you decide to help with this study now, but latter on change your mind and don't want to be a part of it anymore, you can stop and your answers will be destroyed.

If you would like to go ahead with the first questions, could you please complete them. Could you also please read and sign the other form attached to this letter to show that you understand what the study involves. When you have completed both forms please put them in the envelope supplied with this letter. The envelope does not need a stamp so you can post it at any post box.

If you have any questions or wish to talk to John Annison on anything about this study, he can be contacted at Deakin University on (03) 9244 6148.

Thank you for considering this request for your assistance. I hope you'll join with me in this interesting study. I look forward to receiving your completed questionnaire in the near future.

Yours sincerely,

John Annison
3. Consent Form

DEAKIN UNIVERSITY ETHICS COMMITTEE
CONSENT FORM: SURVEYS, QUESTIONNAIRES

I,

of

would like to be part of a study by John Annison, who is a student of Deakin University.
I understand that the study is about what makes people feel or think that a particular place is their home. It is also about finding out what things people do to make their place a home.

I also understand that:

• the study involves choosing some people to talk to about their ideas of home;

• in order to choose the people to be talked to, first some questions will be asked about a person’s age, where they live now, and whether they live within anyone else;

• any answers given by people to these first questions will be destroyed if they are not selected for an interview;

• if I am interviewed, I will be paid $30.00 at the start of the interview for my time;

• the interview will be tape recorded;

• I will be given a written copy (and a copy of the tape if I want one) of the interview that I can alter in any way I want; and that,

• the final record of the interview will be the only information from me used in the study.

I know that

1. All the information I give as part of this study will be given a special code and my name and address will be kept separately from that information.

2. My name or other information which could tell people who I am will not be given to anybody at any time. I will remain totally anonymous.

3. The study may be written down and published. If this happens, nothing in those reports will identify me. The reports will talk of the group of people interviewed, but won’t name them. They may repeat something I said, but the reports won’t say who said it.

4. None of my specific information will be given to anybody except if I ask for it to be given. Only I can give permission for any one else to read my particular information.
5. I can tell John I don’t want to answer any questions, or that I don’t want to be a part of the study anymore, any time I want to. I know that I don’t have to explain why I want to stop. I also know that, if I decide to stop being part of this study, any information I have given will be destroyed or given to me and not used by John.

Signature:                                                                 Date:

Contact phone number:   (......) ........................................

(Most convenient time to call)........................................
APPENDIX C

Set of Common Questions Followed in Interviewing Informants

What, to you, is a home?

How do you come to perceive it that way?

Do you regard where you currently live as a home?
    Why/why not?

Can you describe each of the rooms and the outside of your current/most recent home?

What is it about a home that makes it feel a home for you?

Are any of the areas in or around your current/most recent home ‘special’ for you?
    In what way(s)?

What do you do at home that you don’t, or rarely do, anywhere else?

How do you use the various areas in your current/most recent home?

Can you identify some places which you regard as ‘homes’?
    What qualities make/made them homes?

What is it about other places that makes/made them feel like homes?
    What do/did you like about them?

What do you do to make other places seem more like home to you?

Can you identify places which you did/do not regard as homes?
    Why were/are they not homes?

What is it about a place that gives you the feeling that it’s not a home?
    What do you dislike about them?

What do you tend to do if you find a place is not a home to you?

What do you do away from your home that you don’t do at home?

When you use the term ‘home’ what does it mean to you?
    Can you think of some other ways in which the word ‘home’ is used?
What areas would you use to socialise with: visitors/ friends/close friends?

Of all the places you have regarded as homes, which gave you the strongest sense of home and why?
   What sort of feel did that home have, can you describe it?
   What sorts of things did you do there which contributed to its sense of home?

Have you ever been burgled?
   How did you feel about that?
   What did you do about it?
   What did you think about it?

If you lost your current/most recent home (say, because of fire) what memories would you have of it?
   What would you miss most about it?

If you lost your current/most recent home (say, because of fire) how would you feel?
   Why would you feel that way?

If you were shifted to another city, how would you set about creating a home for yourself, what would you do?
APPENDIX D


Our place

Gary Clarke, 45, has been confined to a wheelchair since a car accident in 1974; his housemate, Colin Mackenzie, 40, has used a walking frame since childhood. They live at Silete Court, one of Yooralla’s homes for independent people with disabilities.

Gary: It all started for me when I became disabled in 1974 after a car accident. In 1981, I went around the world to see what it was like. Then I was sleeping in the hostel in Armadale but I got bloody sick of things there because I knew I could look after myself having been around the world already. I had to live in a big place with quite a few other people and I like it here much better. I’ve been here since 1994 and Colin has been here since when?

Colin: This will be my fourth year in November this year. Where we are is one of Yooralla’s sheltered accommodation places. I lost my father about four years ago and, prior to that, I was living with him. Before I came here I was living in Hampton for a while with some other people but it was a big hostel with 11 other people and I just didn’t like it at all. The house was huge and I just wasn’t happy there. I heard of a room here and I applied for it through the social worker and came here on a six-week trial to see how we all got on. After the six weeks I was accepted and I’ve lived here ever since. In the other place, you used to have to tell people where you were going and what time you’d be back. Being an adult that was a bit hard to put up with. Some of the furniture here is my own but some they provided.

Gary: Quite a bit came from Yooralla. We do have a bit of space outside and, yes, we do spend quite a bit of time out there when the weather’s nice. There’s a ramp going out the back so it’s easy for me in my chair.

Colin: The bathroom has been changed too, to make it easier to get in and out. There’s a big shower that you can just walk straight into.

Gary: Yes, it’s got a handrail that makes it easier. I don’t know if the doorways are any wider but it is quite easy to get around. In the main section at the front of the property, there’s always someone there. It’s like a hostel. There’s a button on the wall just near the kitchen that we can press to get them.
Colin: Yes, if either of us have something go wrong or if we fall we can get people to come here straight away.

Gary: That's the only place the button is and it goes straight through to the main hostel.

Colin: It has never happened though.

Gary: Not once while I've been here.

Colin: We get along OK. We each have TVs in our own rooms. There's no TV in the lounge room. In some respects, I think it's better to have your own. I mean, we both like The Bill but it's better to be by yourself sometimes.

Gary: We do have our meals out here together sometimes.

Colin: For breakfast and lunch, we do our own meals.

Gary: We don't do it for each other.

Colin: Just ourselves. We're each individual. We actually knew each other before I moved in because we worked together in a sheltered workshop.

Gary: Yes, we'd known each other for a while.

Colin: We don't spend a lot of time together, really. We both go to the gym but we go to separate ones.

Gary: We do part-time work now.

Colin: Yes, we do part-time public speaking about things like the benefits of going to the gym. We don't do the speaking together. I just did one Tuesday but that was by myself.

Gary: When we're at home, we go to our rooms quite a bit.

Colin: Yes, we do.

Gary: Just for privacy. There's three bedrooms here and there was someone before when Colin moved in but now it's empty.

Colin: We use it as a store room. There's an ironing board set up in there, too. I don't iron but Gary does.

Gary: Yes, I like to iron my things. Some people don't like it but it's different courses for different horses.
Colin: That's right. We have an attendant carer that comes in for two hours a day.

Gary: In other words, we don't have to cook or clean at all.

Colin: She comes in around dinner-time and cooks the meal and does a bit of tidying. I do the shopping for the both of us and we're lucky because we have somebody six days a week and she likes cooking. She's very efficient and we have a cleaning task done every shift as well. One shift she might do the floor or something like that. There's a supermarket near here and when the attendant carer is here we sit down and work out a list of things that she will do and work out the food list by the things she will cook. It's made life easier and now we get things done bit by bit.

Gary: She normally comes around 5.30 pm. On the seventh day a different woman comes.

Colin: I do the shopping once a week and she suggests what she would like to cook so if we both like it we say yes, and I buy the ingredients.

Gary: I put things away in the cupboards.

Colin: We do like the area in Armadale.

Gary: Yes, we do. It's nice here. I think we can stay here as long as we like. From grave to cradle (sic). I'd be happy staying here. They are thinking about pulling this place down I think.

Colin: But there has been no real decisions yet.

Gary: I don't think they'll move anyone else into the third bedroom here. It's just the two of us.

Colin: When I was here I had a trial period, which I think is fair enough because you've got to get on with people, but when the other person moved out just over a year ago they never got anyone else.

Gary: I think we'll stay here for a while.

Colin: Yes, for a while. I'd imagine that I would always share with someone, wherever I was.

Gary: Yes, same here. I wouldn't like to be just by myself. You'd go bloody bonkers after a while I reckon. Nobody to talk to.
Colin: There's less chance of friction here with two than there was where I was before with 11. It was horrible. If we want company we go in the hostel. There's solariums there but we don't go very often.

Gary: We would know everyone in there. People don't come around and visit us often here.

Colin: I've got a couple of brothers but one's interstate. They both work long hours so there's not much time for a visit. The lounge room doesn't get used much. Even when the carer comes in I tend to just go and have a chat to her when she prepares the food.

Gary: She doesn't have a meal with us.

Colin: There's the nice big windows in the lounge so you can see out. I like that. The windows aren't as big in my bedroom but I still like it. I've got pictures up and I've got a TV, a stereo and a video.

Gary: I've got a TV. Not a video. I suppose we'd watch a video together. We'll have to wait and see.

Colin: I haven't had many video tapes, really so we've never done it. There's nothing I'd change. I'm glad I'm here.

Gary: Me too.