Femininities, ruralities and alcohol geographies: Women's life narratives of 'going out' and 'staying in' in an Australian country town

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Abstract
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Femininities, ruralities and alcohol geographies:
Women’s life narratives of ‘going out’ and ‘staying in’ in an Australian country town

Susannah Clement

A thesis submitted in part fulfillment of the requirements of the Honours degree of Bachelor of Science in the School of Earth & Environmental Sciences, University of Wollongong 2013.
The information in this thesis is entirely the result of investigations conducted by the author, unless otherwise acknowledged, and has not been submitted in part, or otherwise, for any other degree or qualification.

Signed:  S. Clement

Date: 16/10/2013
Abstract

This thesis aims to better understand the relationship between women, age, rurality and alcohol. Specifically this thesis is concerned with transformations in women’s drinking over life-courses. The entry point is women’s narratives of ‘going out’ or ‘staying in’. Using a mix-method approach informed by post-structural feminist concepts, interviews and photo diaries of women from a country town in Victoria, Australia, were unpacked using discourse and narrative analysis. Attention was given to explore the different ways these women use or avoid alcohol, to make sense of themselves, their relationships with others and the places they live in as rural. Results explore sets of ideas about gendered responsibilities, classed and aged respectabilities and appropriate rural femininities that are key in shaping and reshaping the reciprocal relationships that forge drinking subjectivities, practices and places.
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1. Introduction

How does the relationship between people, place and drinking change over a life-course? My introduction to alcohol came via my parents at the dinner table where I was allowed to sip wine. ... As a teenager, around 14-15 years, the place to drink growing up in a regional centre was at parties with my peers ... ... I was forbidden to drink by my parents and the thought of going and not drinking being too humiliating to bear! ... ... But this all changed when I turned 18 and moved to uni. Alcohol became central to my social life. ... ... who I am with, now has a strong influence over, how much, where and what I drink. - Authors Reflexive Statement

This thesis investigates the relationship between women, life-course, rurality and alcohol. Specifically the thesis is concerned with the narratives of ‘going out’ and ‘staying in’ and explores how these enable women to make sense of themselves in relationship to place.

The focus on women, rurality and life-course is timely for a number of reasons. First, previous research has predominantly focused on urban places, specifically night-time city spaces (Lancaster et al. 2012). Meaning the focus of public health literature, policies and public concern often ignores the medically harmful drinking in rural communities. Indeed, Miller et al (2010) and reports from the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare (AIHW 2011) determined that alcohol related health harm reported in rural areas often far exceeds alcohol related harm in metropolitan areas (see Figure 1.1). Despite these statistics, rural places are often thought of in terms of the ‘rural idyll’ (Little & Austin 1996); that is, as ‘safe’, ‘authentic’ and as a dualism to the city. Positioning the rural drinking places in opposition to the dangers of night-time city spaces therefore works to exclude the possibilities for problematic drunkenness to exist. The focus on public drinking also ignores the domestic experience. Whist limited studies are available in the Australian context, studies of drinking culture in the United Kingdom indicates that the majority of people prefer to drink at home (Holloway et al. 2008; Valentine et al. 2010; Foster & Ferguson 2012). Policy makers often ignore domestic drinking practices, because it is hidden behind the veil of domesticity.
Second, whilst past studies explored the gendered dimensions of drinking little attention is given to older women – and their changing understandings of alcohol over a life-course. According to the 2010 National Drug Strategy Household Survey (NDSHS) (AIHW 2011) gender is crucial to understanding relationships with alcohol. Males (9.6%) are almost twice as likely as females (4.9%) to drink daily (AIHW 2011) and males outside Major cities are significantly more likely to drink in quantities with the potential to cause both single occasion and lifetime harm (AIHW 2010 in Carrington et al. 2011). Hence, most rural alcohol studies focus on men’s drinking or youth drinking, as hazardous drinking is most prolific for young people; 61% of 18-29 year olds who consume alcohol do so with the intention of
getting drunk compared to 36% of those 30-44 or 15% of 45-64 year olds (Alcohol Education and Rehabilitation Foundation 2011). Whilst studies have identified a gendered and aged difference pointing to older women as a cohort of more responsible drinkers, they have failed to investigate why this statistically significant difference occurs. Research into women’s drinking, particular into young women’s drinking (see Armstrong et al. 2011), generally frames it as a social problem rather than part of a context in which women have pleasurable experiences and make sense of their lives (Day et al. 2004; Jayne et al. 2011). Despite a large volume of work, there is little explanation about women’s rural drinking practices in general, and why particularly women over 29 years of age become more responsible in their consumption of alcohol.

Third, geographers can make a specific contribution by thinking spatially about drinking. Rather than starting with medical assumptions about drinking as ‘risk’, geographers seek to explore how drinking practices are embedded in an uneven geometrix of power. Many human geographers (Campbell 2000; Leyshon 2005; 2008; Holloway et al. 2009; Jayne et al. 2011; De Jong 2011) explored the relationship between drinking, identity and place and this thesis will build on their findings. This thesis doesn’t aim to ‘fix’ Australia’s ‘drinking problem’. Rather, it explores the role of drinking in creating, sustaining and changing women’s ideas about themselves and the rural places they live.

1.2 Research aims

This thesis aims to unpack women’s drinking and rurality over a life-course to provide further understandings of how rural women conceive, participate in and reflect on role of alcohol in their leisure time through opportunities to ‘go out’ and ‘stay in’. To do so, the thesis explores three research questions:

- How do women’s drinking practices sustain, contest or reproduce common notions of rural femininity?
- How do women’s spatial drinking practices and ideas surrounding alcohol, drinking and drunkenness change over a life-course?
• Where, when and for whom is alcohol consumption understood as problematic?

These questions are explored by a using mixed-method qualitative approach to give voice to drinking narratives of seventeen women from the town of Bellevue, Victoria, Australia (see Chapter 3 (p.30) for detailed discussion of location).

1.3 Thesis structure

Chapter 2 discusses the literary progress in the fields of rural and alcohol geographies. The literature review positions the project at the intersection of these two fields. A gap is identified within alcohol geographies. No previous research explores the practices and values around alcohol, drinking and drunkenness for women of different ages in an Australian country town. The chapter outlines a post-structural feminist conceptual framework to engage with the discourses surrounding drinking in an Australian country town.

Chapter 3 charts how the qualitative methods used in this thesis are aligned with and informed by a post-structural feminist conceptual framework. The chapter begins by covering the context of the case study town. It then turns to a discussion about the ethical considerations involved when doing qualitative research; including the ethical issues that arise when doing research about alcohol and when attempting to maintain participant privacy when doing research in a country town. The chapter goes on to outline the methods of recruitment and the sample, the mixed-method approach to data collection and outlines the techniques used in employing discourse and narrative analysis.

Drawing from the work on previous alcohol geographies the results are presented in six chapters. Chapter 4 explores three key themes that emerged through a discourse analysis of interviews and photo diaries across all participants. The three themes include: the reconfiguration of the ‘rural idyll’ discourse into the psyche of Bellevue residents; the normalization of drunken violence between young single men and the ‘everydayness’ of drinking in rural Australia; and the framing of
women as more responsible drinkers according to sets of ideas about rural femininity.

Drinking is deeply personal as well as socially mediated according to sets of ideas about the rural, gender and life-course. To accommodate the personal and the social, Chapters 5-9 focus on five participant vignettes. This allows the nuances of individual lived experiences as well as the similarities and differences across life-courses to be explored. Chapter 5 follows the life-course of 22 year old Kayla from rebel to responsible young mum. Kayla provides insights into the gendered manner of rural home life and the negotiations young mothers face when finding times and spaces for alcohol consumption. Chapter 6 (good mothers stay sober) shares Nadia’s (28) story of growing up in Bellevue and her experience of becoming and being a responsible girlfriend, sister, wife and mother. In being a parent and friend (Chapter 7), Jessica (50) narrative exemplifies how ‘acceptable’ approaches to parenting and relationships between parent and child changes over generations. Jessica also provides insights into the gendered nature of the local pubs and the peer pressures even older women face to drink. Penny’s (68) narrative in Chapter 8 (wining, dining and strong country women) examines the experience of a farmer’s wife and the role alcohol has in providing spaces for escape, relaxation and friendship. And finally Chapter 9 focuses on Edna (78) - the abstainer and peripheral participator. Edna’s story provides insight into the experiences of a non-drinker in a town where alcohol is key to many of the ‘going out’ places. Each vignette aims to understand how drinking practice is linked to ideas about the intersection between rurality, gender and life-course. The vignettes illustrate how sets of ideas about gendered responsibility, classed and aged respectability and appropriate rural femininity are key in shaping drinking practices, experiences and places of Bellevue women.

Chapter 10 concludes this thesis by outlining how the three research questions were addressed in each chapter. Future research possibilities are discussed that lie at the intersection between rural gender studies and alcohol geographies.
2. Literature review

This thesis covers two broad fields of research: rural and gender studies and alcohol studies. This chapter aims to situate this thesis within the broader context of such research areas and outlines the extent to which geographical perspectives enrich both fields of study. To do this, the chapter is structured into three sections. Section one begins by discussing how gender in rural places is conceptualized by various schools of academic thought. Drawing from such concepts and critiques the section ends by outlining the key theories that inform post-structural feminist understandings about gender and rural places. Section two charts the different approaches within alcohol studies and notes the importance of a geographical perspective in understanding drinking and drinking places as gendered as well as classed, aged and sexed. The third and final section of the chapter brings together the literature that exists at the intersection of rural gender studies and alcohol geographies and outlines the gaps in research that are present in the Australian context.

2.1 The rural is gendered

The aim of this section is to locate gender in different accounts of the rural. The section outlines the major frameworks used by geographers to conceptualize how the rural is gendered. In doing so, this section also provides the conceptual framework for this thesis; that is, a post-structural feminist perspective.

Gender was not a topic of study for geographers and others until the 1970s (Sharp 2011). Furthermore, gender was not central to rural studies until the 1990s (Little & Panelli 2003). Prior to this time, rural studies focused on rural economics such as the geographies of agriculture rather than the lives of rural people (Woods 2005). An economic approach remained prominent throughout the mid-twentieth century, underpinned by agriculture’s importance in national economies. Through this neo-classical economic approach primary industry was positioned as the key explanatory variable for settlement size, migration patterns and labour markets (Little 2002a).
Marxist writings provided critiques of neo-classical economic understanding of the rural, arguing it placed no importance on the social divisions of labour that caused classed inequalities (Bonner 1998). From this perspective, the ideology of family, community and tradition associated with rurality bound the majority of people, particularly women and children, to a subordinate and impoverished life. Inspired by Marx’s political economy approach, sociologists Buttel & Newby (1980) began to further develop new ways of thinking within rural studies, identifying restructuring, capital accumulation and political regulation as areas of concern due to their classed dimensions that manifest into patterns of social exclusion.

Social feminists also provide structuralist inspired critiques but differ from Marxist accounts by drawing attention to how the discussion of gender was continually used as a passive backdrop to economic analysis (Little 1987). Importantly, social feminist geographers highlight the classed and gendered inequalities sustained by a hetero-patriarchal way of life in the country (Hubbard & Kitchin 2004). They argue that gender categories are socially constituted with the ‘common sense’ male/female gender binary that is derived from Western Enlightenment thought (Hubbard & Kitchin 2004). In turn, the ‘facts of nature’ made true through ‘objective’ observations were used to prescribe physical abilities and thus social roles to men and women. These naturalised ‘facts’ that aligned gender with sex help prescribe man’s roles as the producers and breadwinners, whilst women are the reproducers and the nurturers. The implementation of these binaries in the creation of social roles, mean that men and women are defined as fundamentally different and are not equal members of society (Sharp 2011). These dualisms shaped knowledge of the rural and continue to be reproduced and underpin people’s understanding of rural places today.

Social feminist accounts of the rural became more prolific in the 1990s with the ‘cultural turn’ bringing critiques of the structure of rural life and the gendered divisions of labor that reproduce farming patriarchies (Philo 1992; Alston 1995; 2005; Sharp 2011). Key texts include Philo’s 1992 essay *Neglected Rural Geographies:*
A Review. Philo (1992) understands ‘the rural’ as not an outcome of economic relationships and flows but as a social construction that may be represented in multiple ways and present many different notions of ‘rurality’. His work was one of first of many in rural studies that focused on the differing experiences of ‘rural others’ such as people living in rural poverty (Cloke & Little 1997), lone parents (Hughes 2004), people of gay, lesbian and queer identities (Bell & Valentine 1995) and more broadly, women (Little 1987; Alston 1995; Little & Austin 1996; Alston 2005; Little et al. 2005; Pini 2008). Most importantly, social feminist geographers added a spatial account to understanding gendered unevenness, stating that women work and occupy ‘women’s places’, such as the home, which tend to have low status and are associated with limited political and economic opportunity (Johnson et al. 2000). These women’s places are naturalized within a heteropatriarchal ideology about farming communities. This ideology naturalizes women as caretakers, positioned as passive objects dependent upon men in rural life (Valentine, 2001). Therefore, women enter and engage in rural life through specific kinship relationships with men; as wives, mothers and widows in the domestic realm (Whatmore & Marsden 1994). Little & Austin (1996) argue that the concept and the manifestation of the ‘rural idyll’ (i.e. ‘the rural’ as inherently more authentic and traditional than the urban) is also influential in maintaining these patriarchal roles.

Post-structural feminist perspectives critiqued socialist feminist ontology, arguing that the focus on oppressive social structures reduces women’s agency. Post-structural feminist geographers aimed to shed light on issues of inequality whilst ensuring that the power relations within gender differences are not ignored when reproduced or contested (Little 2002a). Also importantly, post-structural feminist perspectives increase the awareness of the dangers of understanding and talking about rural women as a single category. Post-structural feminist geographers understandings of gender and the rural are often informed by the

---

1 Whilst the ‘rural idyll’ has an inherent sense of Englishness about it, the history of colonisation, immigration and ties to the mother country it may still manifest within the imagined geographies of rural Australia.
works of writers such as Foucault (1970; 1972; 1977), Butler (1999), Skeggs (2002; 2005), Probyn (2003) and Young (1990; 2005). The works and theories of such post-structural feminists inform the conceptual framework of this thesis.

Foucault’s (1970; 1972; 1977) work, particularly that on ‘discourse’, is influential in many geographical post-structural theories and methodologies. By ‘discourse’ Foucault means a group of statements which provide a meaningful language for talking about particular ‘sets of ideas’ (Hall 2001). In turn this gives meaning to material objects and social practice (Barker 2008) that underpin our everyday lives through various regimes of truth, power and subjectivity (Philo in Hubbard et al. 2004). Discourse can be oppressive as well as productive, as it regulates actions by excluding other forms of reasoning as unintelligible through the operation of ‘regimes of truth’ (Mills in Crampton & Elden 2007). Foucault argues that no form of thought can claim absolute truth, nor can it be outside of discourse, establishing that there is a mutually constituting relationship between power and knowledge. It is through these ‘regimes of power’ that ‘truth claims’ have real and material effects on bodies, as bodies are subjects of and subjects creating the regulatory power of discourse (Hall 2001). To elaborate, Foucault’s ‘subject’ can exist in many ways. For instance discourse itself produces ‘subjects’ who are figures that personify particular forms of knowledge and are specific to particular discursive regimes. But discourse also produces meaning and allows us to make sense of the world therefore we find a place where knowledge makes the most sense for us, in turn subjecting ourselves to meanings, powers and regulation. For example, the notion of the ‘countrywoman’ has been employed to represent the identity of the ‘real’ rural woman (Little 2002a). In Foucauldian terms, the sets of ideas that constitute the ‘countrywoman’ as the ‘farmer’s wife’ operates as a regime of truth over the experiences of rural women. Women who do not fit this mould of femininity are ‘othered’ as they challenge what is considered an appropriate way to ‘do their gender’. Cloke and Little (1997) argue that not only is the recognition of ‘othering’ and it’s conceptual existence necessary to understand rural people and their communities, but most importantly outlining how marginalization is not just a lack of qualities but is tied to discourse through power and knowledge and the construction of a spatial and temporal identity.
These normative discourses act to regulate bodies through a disciplining gaze. Foucault (1977) argues that individuals exercise self-surveillance and self-discipline and the body through this control becomes invested with relations of power, either through obedience or resistance. Valentine (2001) use the concept of self-surveillance to explore how the body is constituted within discourse and how different discursive regimes produce different bodies in different times and spaces.

Foucault’s work is also referenced by Butler’s (1990) seminal work on ‘performativity’. Butler argues against the positivist ‘truth claim’ of not only fixed genders but also sex. Following Butler, sex and gender is rather a method of self-regulation of one’s identity acted out repeatedly through the performance of various roles (Hubbard & Kitchin 2002). It is through the repeated performances of gender identity that sexuality and pre-existing notions of it are created as normative (Bryant & Pini 2011; Sharp 2011). These normative regimes are organized according to hetero-normative standards or what Butler called the ‘heterosexual matrix’ (Varela et al. 2011). Various feminist geographers (Little 2002b; Little & Leyshon 2003) have cited Butler’s work in their understanding of how rural women negotiate regimes of truth, power and subjectivity through varying performances of identity and the creation of multiple positionalities. For example, Little (1987) found that it was ‘natural’ for rural women to devote themselves to the roles of ‘wife’ and ‘mother’, with the performance of these roles involving a constant negotiation to uphold ‘moral values’.

Through post-structural accounts, femininity therefore becomes the process through which women are gendered and sexed and become specific sorts of women. As Skeggs (2002) argues: “Being, becoming, practising and doing femininity are very different things for women of different classes, races, ages and nations.” (p. 89). Her argument underscores that there is no universal women. Furthermore, Skeggs (2002; 2005) argued that femininity is closely tied to classed ideas of respectability. By the end of the nineteenth century femininity had become established as middle-class sign of a particular form of womanhood, done best by middle-class women. These women could prove themselves respectable through their appearance and conduct. White middle-class women could use their
proximity to femininity to construct distinctions between themselves and other women. Therefore, those women not doing the expected femininity were often represented/persecuted/marginalized as deviant and lacking respectability. Here Skeggs outlines a historical discourse that can continue to be understood and implemented today in ways society and women make sense of their place in the world through hierarchies of class. This hierarchy of women’s respectability is a patriarchal structure in that it is aligned with hetero-normative notions of appropriate performances of sexual and gendered identity. Bryant & Pini (2011) state that “Gender and class are intricately connected to rural spaces. They are actively constructed and reconstructed through daily interactions, the nature of one’s work, volunteer activities, leisure choices, and memories.”(p.76) Bryant & Pini go onto explore how a rural women’s class can establish her sense of belonging in the community i.e. by being ‘local’ in her own right compared to being married to a local man. This in turn raises her potential to access and identify with various forms of economic, moral, symbolic and cultural narratives.

One strand of studies on gender, sexuality and rurality has focused on the experiences of people who claim a gay, lesbian or queer identity (GLQ) (Bell & Valentine 1995; Gorman-Murray et al. 2013). Studies highlight the contradictory framing of the rural. Bell & Valentine (1995) discuss how dominant constructions of rurality, such as the discourses that create hegemonic masculinity (i.e. the interplay of powerful masculine discourses that operate to regulate the body into expected notions of heterosexuality), have marginalized some GLQ people. On the other hand, the rural may be presented as a utopia in the minds of some GLQ’s (Waitt & Gorman-Murray 2012).

Following Bell & Valentine’s lead, others began to explore the differing experiences of all rural people through their negotiation of hegemonic masculinity which runs strong in rural communities (Little 2002a; Leyshon 2005). This work also draws on the idea of identity as constructed performance that is spatially and temporally specific (Sharp 2011). As Probyn (2003) argues there is a spatial imperative to subjectivity. Bodies are the site and production of knowledge, feelings, emotions and history. Bodies are not separate to our mind and behaviours,
as well as the actions of those around us, this includes how the spaces we inhibit
are conceptualized and also shape us. Probyn (2003) uses the example of when a
woman goes into a bar to explain her concept of the Spatial Imperative of
Subjectivity. Due to the historical exclusion of women from bars up until the 1960s
(Kirkby 2006) a woman will occupy the space quite differently from the men in the
bar. She might be made to feel that she doesn’t belong and her body will experience
an emotional/physical response to this i.e. she is feeling her gender subjectivity.
This example shows how we inhabit space and in turn, space inhabits us; in this
case through the feeling of not belonging. Phenomenological work by Young (1990;
2005) has also been drawn upon by geographers beginning to understanding and
conceptualize women’s embodied experiences. In her essay Throwing Like a Girl,
Young (1990) explores the ways in which women’s styles of bodily comportment
and movement are more constricted than men’s, making the argument that this
difference is expressive of women’s oppression. Theorizing space as having
reciprocal and delimiting characteristics enables geographers to rethink how bodies
exist in and interact with other bodies in space. Thus any attempt to understand
drinking in rural contexts must look at the ways in which gender, sexuality and
rurality itself are embodied in everyday practices (Little and Leyshon 2003; Carolan
2008; Cloke 2011).

2.2 Drinking is gendered

The aim of this section is to chart the different approaches within alcohol
studies; paying attention to key concepts and associated methods. Unlike gender
and rural studies, geographies of alcohol are still relatively new. Hence, much of the
understandings around gender, drinking and rurality are still from positivist
standpoints. Part of the aim of this thesis is to help address this gap. This section
will first outline the some of the most current Australian public health literature
statistics that outline how drinking is gendered. The discussion will then outline
the problems associated with relying on quantitative research and illustrate the
importance of spatiality and subjectivities in understanding drinking cultures and
experiences. Finally, the section outlines the current alcohol geographies literature and focuses on how gender, class and life-course influence drinking experience.

Alcohol studies literature is vast and stretches across both social and medical sciences. Consequently, researchers have tended to consider alcohol, drinking and drunkenness in diverse and often contradictory ways, with little dialogue existing between disciplines. For example there is an overwhelming focus on drinking as a medical issue positioning alcohol as a social problem and associated with criminal activities that are to be controlled through legislation (Jayne et al. 2008; Kneale & French 2008). In Australia, reports and strategies focus on the public health risks associated with higher levels of alcohol consumption as well as the risks drinkers pose to others (e.g. Ministerial Council on Drug Strategy 2010; Carrington et al. 2011). In Australia, the term ‘standard drink’ is used as a unit to define ‘safe’ and ‘unsafe’ levels of daily drinking. The National Health and Medical Research Council’s (2011) guidelines state that no more than two standard drinks on any day and four standard drinks on a single occasion is the safest option (after not drinking at all) for reducing lifetime risk and immediate risk. Despite these guidelines, studies have shown that people’s perceptions of drinking risk differs from guideline recommendations (Bowring et al. 2012; Livingston 2012). Economic approaches to alcohol studies have further quantified the social costs of the health and social alcohol related incidents. For example, Collins & Lapsley (2008) estimated that in the 2004/05 financial year alcohol abuse had a social cost of $15.3 billion to Australians, and Byrnes et al (2012) have found the expected cost per incident for of alcohol related crime in NSW including assault, sexual offence, property damage and disorderly conduct (in 2006 dollar values) is $3982, $5976, $1166 and $501, respectively. This literature often uses statistics to provide evidence of social drinking patterns and through this proposes recommendations for legislators to act on. For example, the 2010 National Drug Strategy Household Survey (2010 NDSHS) (AIHW 2011) points to a gendered dynamic in drinking behaviours with women over-all less likely than men to suffer from alcohol-related harm: males were almost twice as likely (9.6%) as females (4.9%) to drink daily; and twice as likely as females to drink alcohol in quantities that put them at risk of
incurring an alcohol-related chronic disease or injury over their lifetime (29.0% and 11.3%, respectively). These statistical ‘facts’ are taken into account when proposing gender specific strategies to reduce alcohol related harm e.g. National Drug Strategy 2010-2015 (Ministerial Council on Drug Strategy 2010). Yet, such statistics reveal little about why women are more responsible in their consumption of alcohol. To address this question is a key aim of this thesis.

Whilst quantification can be useful for finding out actual numbers and proportions of drinkers, it often washes over the reasons that sustain drinking practice. Policy papers too often problematize drinking labeling it as ‘risky’ and drunkenness as being ‘even more risky’. But alcohol and drinking is evidently an important part of maintaining a social life (Wilton & Moreno 2012), considering that most Australians over 16 years\(^2\) drink (80.5% of respondents in the 2010 NDSHS being current drinkers). Drawing from post-structural concepts such as Foucault’s (1970; 1972; 1977) can provide the understanding that everything we do is bound by social discourse that creates practices and knowledge. Therefore what is missing from the literature is an understanding of how drinking practices relate to the discursive nature of drinking relationships, places, self and emotions. Douglas (1987), a social anthropologist, initially called for the need to move beyond a health focus and address the everyday social relations and cultural practices bound up with drinking. This critique is relevant when looking at how women’s drinking is still bound up in health and social warnings urging women to not to drink to excess for their looks, their safety, their fertility or for the health of an unborn child (Day et al 2004). The media’s recent focus on the binge drinking of young women in night-time city landscapes is an example of this moral panic (Jackson & Tinkler 2007; Eldridge & Roberts 2008). What is missing from this literature is an understanding of the sense of pleasure women may get from drinking and how they may use alcohol in their everyday lives (Day et al. 2004; Jayne et al. 2011). Women’s alcohol consumption has only recently become a topic of social science inquiry since the 1960s (Armstrong et al. 2011), but despite the recent concern these studies

\(^2\) 18 years of age is the legal drinking age in Australia
may in fact be reproducing a gendered double standard producing discourses that limit the appropriate ways, places and times a women can drink.

In recent years, geographers such as Jayne, Valentine & Holloway (2008; 2011) argued for a more nuanced approach to alcohol studies by incorporating geographical understandings of place and space in an effort to understand the spatial imperative of alcohol consumption. Jayne et al. (2008) writes that alcohol is: “at once a social problem, a leisure activity, a pleasure, an accelerator of violence, a central to identity formation and so on…” (p.255). Therefore, Jayne, Valentine & Holloway concede that social science and human geography alcohol research agendas have been quite fragmented. For example, Australian social research into alcohol consumption has included understanding drinking’s cultural capital in country towns (Allen et al 2012), young women drinking in pubs (De Crespigny et al. 1999), young women’s drinking cultures in cities (Waitt et al. 2011), drinking as an enactment of class and gender (Lindsay 2006), problem drinking at sporting events (Snow & Munro 2000; Thompson et al. 2011) and drinking’s place in Australian national identity (Kirkby 2003). But much of the literature on drinking geographies has come from overseas, particularly the United Kingdom, from which cultural parallels can be draw. Studies have included Hubbard’s (2005) investigation into the emotional geographies of going out, Leyshon’s (2005; 2008) look at hegemonic masculinity on pubs, Guise & Gill’s (2007) discourse analysis of undergraduate binge drinking, Day et al.’s (2004) investigation into how the media perceive women who drink and Wilton & Moreno’s (2012) review of critical geographies of alcohol. Geographers Jayne, Valentine and Holloway have been key contributors providing a suite of studies, articles, progress reports (2006; 2008) and a book (2011) on the geographies of alcohol.

At the forefront of many of alcohol geographies is the importance of space and place. Space and place is essential in the construction of an identity and gendered experience. Many authors also draw upon the works of influential post-structural feminist theorists. For example Cullen (2011) draws from Skeggs (2002) and Tinker & Jackson’s (2007) work on ‘respectable femininities’ to explore how teenage girls perform, negotiate and scrutinize drinking femininities. Lindsay’s (2006) work is
along similar lines of thought; investigating drinking as a way that young people in Melbourne ‘do’ class and gender through their choice of going out venue. Leyshon’s (2005) article, No place for a girl, looks at young people’s performance of identity in pubs and illustrates how the construction of a disciplinary code of drinking is performed and given meaning through embodied practices - in particular the hegemonic masculinity legitimized by young men in rural pubs through phallic language. A more recent work by Leyshon (2008) also looks at embodied experiences providing an opportunity for understanding the performative aspects of rural women’s drinking. Leyshon (2008) depicts the pub as a highly territorialized place colonized mainly by different groups of men, resulting in women’s spaces being in the marginal areas of pubs, in the corners, along the sides, and in beer gardens. Leyshon also notes that these territories may be encountered differently with alcohol: “therefore encountered in and through embodiment (sensations), in and through practices (drinking, dancing, talking, etc.), in and through particularly everyday located lives.” (p. 283) Articles such as these outline how geographers and social researchers have begun to identify the ways in which drinking and drunkenness can be seen as part of a process of performative experience that is gendered and classed.

As well as gender and class, age is also a focus point for alcohol geographies. Valentine et al. (2007; 2010) looks at the intergenerational differences and continuities of the values of alcohol consumption in the United Kingdom to assess patterns of change in terms of what is consumed, when, where and by who. These studies explore how generational cohorts have developed different normativities in relation to drinking. Australian public health statistics indicate differences across age brackets also. Data from the 2010 NDSHS implies that older drinkers seem to be more responsible than their younger counterparts “…those aged between 18–29 years were more likely than any other age group to consume alcohol in quantities that placed them at risk of an alcohol related injury, and of alcohol-related harm over their lifetime” (AIHW 2011, p. 45). An explanation of this trend is articulated through ideas of the ‘rite of passage’ (Crawford & Novak 2006; Valentine et al. 2007; Haartsen & Strijker 2010). Bonomo et al (2004) confirms it’s presence in Australian
drinking discourse and argues that the recent rise in youth binge drinking in Australia may in fact be a coincidence of the legitimization and normalization of this stage of life-course behaviour. Understanding how ‘rites of passage’ and other age subjectivities play out over life-courses is a key aim of this thesis.

As this section has shown the gendered patterns of alcohol consumption are an emerging focus for the geographical literature on drinking. But there is concern that public drinking spaces, such as the pub, are taking centre stage in the literature (Holloway et al. 2009; Wilton & Moreno 2012). Holloway (2008) has argued that public debate about binge drinking in the United Kingdom has masked the importance of domestic consumption, leaving those drinking to harmful levels in the home invisible to public concern. In accordance Livingston (2013) argues that Australian researchers and policy makers need to look beyond pubs and nightclubs and think about other places alcohol related harms can occur. As well the public health impetus (Foster et al. 2009; Foster & Ferguson 2012), the lack of studies looking at domestic drinking spaces is significant as feminists have long argued that the public/private dichotomy is a gendered one, particularly considering the history of gender exclusion in public houses (Kirkby 2003; 2006). Some argue that this may result in women in their up-keep of respectable femininities and mothering responsibilities being relegated to drinking in the home, a space often outside of the research gaze (Jayne et al. 2011). Understanding how and why women make decisions about public/private drinking, and how drinking is constituted in other places often ignored by researchers, such as places beyond the metropolis, is a key aim of this thesis.

2.3 Rural drinking places are gendered

If rural places are gendered and drinking places are gendered, therefore rural drinking places must be gendered also. The aim of this section is to the current literature that lies at the intersection or rural gender studies and alcohol geographies, outline the gaps, and provide future research goals, many of which are research aims for this thesis.
Rural drinking places are inherently gendered (Leyshon 2005; 2008). This statement can be made clear via subscribing to a post-structural feminist standpoint that demands that the experience of rurality is rooted in the political and discursive economy of particular places and is complicated by an intersection with social axes such as gender, class, age, ethnicity and etc. Much of the work in intersection between the field of rural gender studies and alcohol geographies can be found in the geography literature from the United Kingdom. For example, Leyshon (2005; 2008) provides gendered accounts of rural pub experiences, Valentine et al. (2008) explores alcohol in the lives of young rural people, and Jayne et al. ’s (2011) book critically reflects on the intersections of gender, rurality, class and age in drinking culture, exploring the spatial subjectivities of other alcohol geographies. Looking closer to home, Campbell (2000) has looked at men’s performance of masculinity in rural New Zealand pubs through the use of ‘conversational cockfighting’, and De Jong’s (2011) thesis explores how ‘going out’ helps women establish their sense of place and constitutes ideas rurality in the Bega Valley, New South Wales, Australia. In De Jong’s case study, participants constructed their rurality through talking about the lack of choices to ‘go out’; ‘going out’ being ‘less’ than city experiences; or through the feeling of surveillance from friends-of-friends. These resulted in reflections of the hetero-normative and ‘respectable’ femininities that are constructed when going out in commercial spaces either in the Bega Valley (‘conservative country femininity’) or the more urbanized town of Merimbula (‘sexy metropolitan club femininity’). These studies show that rural drinking places are gendered, sexed and classed and come with a range of discursive regimes.

Through a synthesis of the Australian public health literature Miller et al (2010) determined that alcohol related health harm in rural areas far exceed those in metropolitan areas. Data from the 2010 NDSHS (AIHW 2011) also confirms that ‘risky’ drinking is more apparent as remoteness increases (see Table 2.1) Despite this, much of the problematization of drinking is imagined to be in night-time city spaces (Lancaster et al. 2012). A literature review by Wilton & Moreno (2012) also affirms that there has also been a considerable focus amongst human geographers
on the spaces of night-time economy (NTE). With harmful drinking more prevalent in rural areas, it is surprising to see a lack of geographical research in this area.

According to Leyshon (2005) there is a lack of studies done on masculinities and femininities in rural ‘public houses’. Research to date has focused on young men drunk and out of control, rather than understanding drinking as a way of maintaining social bonds and friendship circles. It could also be argued looking at the literature on rurality that there is a lack of understanding about the masculinities and femininities of rural life in general. Work from social scientists and geographers such as Bell & Valentine (1995), Cloke & Little (1997), Little (1987; 2002a), Little & Leyshon (2003), Carolan (2008), and Bryant & Pini (2011) are recent additions to further understand the ways in which rural people make sense of their lives. Still, not enough is known about many facets of rural life, particularly the lives of women and what goes on in home spaces. Therefore taking on board the work of rural geographers and filling in these gaps will be key to this investigation into rural alcohol geographies.

Much of the literature (including the public health literature), when it does focus on rural place, looks at young people (Wilton & Moreno 2012), particularly young men positioned as ‘trouble makers’ (e.g. Snow & Munro 2000; Kraack &

### Table 2.1 Lifetime and single occasion risk, people aged 14 years or older, by social characteristics, 2010, percentage of population. Source: AIHW 2011, p. 60

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Geography</th>
<th>Abstainer/ex-drinker (a)</th>
<th>Low risk (b)</th>
<th>Risky (c)</th>
<th>Low Risk (d)</th>
<th>At least yearly (e)</th>
<th>At least weekly (f)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Major cities</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>20.4</td>
<td>61.0</td>
<td>18.6</td>
<td>41.3</td>
<td>23.4</td>
<td>14.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inner regional</td>
<td>17.7</td>
<td>60.3</td>
<td>22.0</td>
<td>40.2</td>
<td>25.0</td>
<td>17.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Outer regional</td>
<td>17.5</td>
<td>57.9</td>
<td>24.6</td>
<td>39.9</td>
<td>24.1</td>
<td>18.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Remote/ Very remote</td>
<td>15.3</td>
<td>54.2</td>
<td>30.5</td>
<td>33.4</td>
<td>25.6</td>
<td>25.8</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(a) Not consumed alcohol in the previous 12 months. (b) On average, had no more than 2 standard drinks per day. (c) On average, had more than 2 standard drinks per day. (d) Never had more than 4 standard drinks on any occasion. (e) Had more than 4 standard drinks at least once a year but not as often as weekly. (f) Has more than 4 standard drinks at least once a week.
Kenway 2002; Carrington et al. 2011). Statistically this cohort in general takes more risks when drinking with 61% of 18-29 year olds consuming alcohol with the intention of getting drunk (Alcohol Education and Rehabilitation Foundation 2011). Despite this well-known fact, there is no targeted attempt to understand the flip side of these statistics and ask the unanswered questions i.e. why do women drink at less risky levels? Why does the prevalence of risky drinking change according to age? And how do gendered ideas about rural places influence the drinking of men and women? Drawing on feminist geographical perspective this thesis starts to explore these questions to by gaining a better understanding of the role of alcohol in the lives of country women.

2.4 Chapter summary

The aim of this chapter was to chart the key themes emerging between gender, geography, rurality and alcohol. To do so the chapter was divided into three sections.

The first section explored the ways gender in rural places is conceptualized by different schools of academic thought. Through the discussion the post-structural feminist conceptual framework for this thesis emerged. From a neo-economist account gender is an uncontested given; a passive and fundamental backdrop to the structure of rural life (Woods 2005). Marxist accounts of the rural similarly don’t position gender as a prominent issue. Rather, the rural is a place of classed oppression caused by capitalist exploitation, in which farm women are recognized as those most socially downtrodden (Buttel & Newby 1980). The works of socialist feminists uproot the ideas of a biological gendered order and in arguing for equality between men and women state that gender is merely a construction of identity with the structures of patriarchy creating a gendered world (Alston 1995; 2005). On the other hand, post-structural feminists understand gender and space as co-constituted by the way in which people ‘do’ identity (Butler 1990). In turn this reproduces/contests rural discourses or regimes of truth, power and subjectivities e.g. ‘the rural idyll’ (Little & Austin 1996). Furthermore, as Skeggs (2002) outlines femininity is the articulation of a dominant sexual discourse that when contested
results in a woman’s class and respectability being questioned. Drawing from the work of Probyn (2003) and Young (1990; 2005), this impacts on how women feel their gendered and sexed subjectivities depending on how they each do ‘rural womanhood’ through their engagement with spaces and other bodies. Therefore, in taking on board the principles of post-structural feminists, thinking about rural places and spaces must consider the role of gendered, sexed, aged and classed discourses.

The second section of this chapter aimed to chart the different approaches within alcohol studies and explore how drinking is gendered. Most commonly alcohol research is done within a public health framework that calculates ‘risk’ and positions alcohol consumption as ‘bad’. Such approaches try to quantify and codify the reasons for people drinking and ignore the pleasures and social discourses that inform decisions about consuming alcohol (Jayne et al. 2011). Public health statistics also point to drinking as a gendered practice and position young men as the most reckless drinkers and older women as the most responsible. As opposed to understanding such statistics as a given, alcohol geographers draw upon ideas and concepts of post-structural feminists finding that drinking is a performative experience that is classed, aged, spatially dependent as well as gendered.

The third and final section looks at the literature that exists in the intersection of rural, gender and alcohol geography. When focusing on Australian studies it can be seen that despite drinking harm being more prolific in rural areas there are gaps in the literature around rural drinking, particular rural women’s drinking. This due to a preoccupation with what is considered ‘most problematic’ drinking; this being the excessive drinking by male youth in night-time city spaces. This section calls for a better look into the drinking experiences of rural women and places this thesis at the centre of many unanswered questions. Such as gendered reasons behind why women choose to drink in private or public places; where drinking is constituted as problematic by rural people; why rural women are considered the most responsible drinkers; and how life-course informs drinking practice.
The next chapter turns to the methods that resonate with feminist geographical perspectives that provide insights to the different ways alcohol is narrated across a life-course for women living in a country town.
3. Methodology: ethics, positionality, context, recruitment, data collection and analysis

The aim of this chapter is to justify the methods used in this thesis. Consistent with a feminist geographical perspective, this chapter outlines how rigour was achieved in this project by discussing ethics, positionality, recruitment, sample, semi-structured interviews, photo-elicitation diaries and discourse and narrative analysis. Given the social norms surrounding drinking and drunkenness; rigour in alcohol research poses a number of challenges. How the project design addressed these challenges is outlined in the discussion around ethics, recruitment, sample and justification of the use of mixed-method qualitative approach. Equally, the project design sought to provide insights to the social norms surrounding alcohol garnered from personal geographies of how women negotiated alcohol over a life-course. Therefore, alongside identifying overarching themes emerging from a discourse analysis across participants’ narratives, a justification is provided for the use of narrative analysis and character vignettes to present results. A discussion on the context of the study begins this chapter.

3.1 Bellevue: the case study town

Participants of this project come from a country town in Victoria, Australia, which was given the pseudonym of Bellevue (Section 3.2 (p.37) for a discussion on participant confidentiality and privacy). According to the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS 2012a) the population of Bellevue is approximately 1,400 people. Bellevue is geographically classified by the ABS as ‘outer regional’ with its closest regional centre 120km (1.5 hour drive) away and is more than a 300km drive away from the nearest capital city. Today, Bellevue is an important economic and social centre for nearby properties and towns, such as Collegee3. Bellevue is embedded in European histories of colonization and pastoralism. The first European cattle station is dated to 1838. A township began to form when land was ‘opened-up’ for selection in the 1860s. In 1879 the town was surveyed. In 1882 the first land sale was

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3 Collegee is 15km outside of Bellevue and consists of a pub, a football and netball ground and a café converted from an old post office. Some participants also associated themselves as coming from this small locality and/or having ties to the football and netball club.
made and in the same year the existing Bushman’s Pub was opened. Alongside the inland location, the physical topography and lack of access is important to understand why population growth remained small. Bellevue remained relatively isolated due to its location in a valley, with the road connecting it to the east only opened in 1950 and it being completely sealed in the 1990s. Whilst not on either a formal or informal tourist circuit the town does hold an annual horseracing cup and a weeklong annual Bush Festival which draws crowds of 10,000 people each year. At other times throughout the year the town is en-route to people travelling to do ‘outdoor’ activities such as fishing, camping and four wheel driving.

Bellevue has a ‘quintessentially white pioneering Australian’ sense of place. The countryside is understood by white settler locals as “natural” and “unspoilt” (Pam 60, part-time nurse & Garden Club member) despite the recent history of land clearing for agriculture, pine plantations and electricity generation (see Figure 3.2). The history of Bellevue and its surrounds is mostly found on tourist websites promoting the region as ‘idyllic’. The motifs on websites as well as attractions around town aid the creation of an imagined geography filled with nostalgic tales about the high country graziers, stockman and bushrangers. This is integral to
configuring a white pioneering national history that also silences the role of women and others (Dominy 1997). For example, there are three main Indigenous language groups (not named to maintain the anonymity of the town) that also have a long connection to this country.

Figure 3.2 Photo of the ‘natural’ and ‘untouched’ countryside, despite the fencing, tree clearing and roads. Source: Clement 2013

3.1.1 Demographics

In terms of demography the census data reflects the process of colonization and the ongoing dominance of the pastoral economy. According to the ABS 2011 Census, 89.5% of the population was born in Australia and the most common ancestries being Australian (35.5%), English (31.1%), Scottish (10.1%), Irish (7.2%) and German (3.8%). Indigenous Australians make up 0.8% of the population. The age profile of Bellevue is also necessary in understanding the dynamics of the town (see Figure 3.3). There is a significant decline in persons between the ages of 20 to 35 years. Many young people leave to go to study and find work and then may return later in life to work in family businesses or farms or to start a family. The population is very much an aging one with the median age being 48 years.
(compared to the national median of 37 years). The majority of people working are employed in the agricultural, forestry and fishing sector, followed by health and social assistance services (see Figure 3.4).

![Bellevue Age Profile, 2011](image)

**Figure 3.3 Bellevue Age Profile. Source: ABS, 2011 Census of Population and Housing Basic Community Profile, State Suburbs**

![Industry of Employment, Total Persons over 15 years, 2011](image)

**Figure 3.4 Industry of Employment by Total Persons over 15 years. Source: ABS, 2011 Census of Population and Housing Basic Community Profile, State Suburbs**
3.1.2 Alcohol geographies

In terms of the alcohol geographies, alcohol is sold in a number of different venues including two pubs, a country club, football clubrooms, two cafes, a cinema, a restaurant and at the local supermarket.

The *Bushman’s Pub* is in the centre of town and is Bellevue’s oldest pub. According to many participants as well as Bellevue’s senior police constable this establishment has a reputation for being the ‘party pub’ on a Saturday night and claims the majority of drunken incidents before any other establishment. It is also the venue with the latest closing time in the town, staying open until 1am on Saturday nights. *The Bushman’s* recently changed management and was closed for six months to undergo renovations reopening just prior to this project’s fieldwork. Gentrification has resulted in a new layout, removing walls that divided the bar areas and the ladies lounge; an architectural reminder of women and children’s historical place in the margins and backrooms of Australian pubs (Kirkby 2003). Despite the open-planning the lattice divider between the bistro and front bar (see Figure 3.5) and the refurbishment of the ‘kids play room’ suggests there is still spatial divide to where women and children can go in the pub. The Bushman’s also has accommodation, a pool table, jukebox and a beer garden.

![Figure 3.5 Bushman’s Pub photographs. (Top) street view from side; street view from across the road. Source: Clement 2013 (Bottom) divider between bistro and bar area; beer garden; front bar with pool table. Source: Bushman’s Pub website](image-url)
The *Bellevue Hotel Motel* is out of the centre of town but still on the main road/highway and has accommodation, a TAB betting outlet, pool tables, jukebox, bistro and outdoor deck. According to participants this caters for a more family orientated crowd that the *Bushman’s Pub* – “it’s the place you go to eat” (Kayla, 22, admin assistant & stay-at-home mum). Many participants noted that this pub closed earlier (around 9pm) therefore not allowing people to become drunk and disorderly. The bar area is a masculine space with its décor containing ‘Australiana’ style motifs. The bar has a corrugated iron front and bullnose veranda and decorations in the bar area include Australian flags and advertisements for beers; such as Victoria Bitter and Carlton Draft (see Figure 3.6).
The *Bellevue Country Club* (see Figure 3.7) is off the main street, situated near the golf course and football ground. It has a Chinese restaurant (*Catfish*), a bar and an array of pokie machines. Patrons at the club are older than those who frequent the two pubs. But the Chinese restaurant is well patronage by families and people of all ages and also does takeaway orders. The club is also well used by the local sporting clubs for end of season award functions.

Bellevue’s two AFL (Australian Rules Football League) football and netballs clubs also have liquor licenses to serve alcohol after games in their club rooms. As well as this each ‘claims’ one of the pubs as their ‘local’. The *Bellevue Thunder* has a partnership with the *Bellevue Hotel Motel* and the *Bellevue Bulldogs* claim the *Bushman’s*. Collegee also has a football and netball club, the *Collegee Cats*, and has a liquor license for club rooms and a partnership with the *Collegee Pub*. Like in many country towns, the supply of alcohol is integral to leisure times and spaces, and a partnership with local establishments is a trend seen throughout Australia where country football leagues exist (Sawyer et al. 2012). As Snow & Munro (2000) have found there is a strong and sometimes harmful relationship between sport and alcohol, particularly amongst the players, officials and supporters of amateur country football clubs. Thompson et al (2011) also notes the importance of alcohol and sporting events, finding that (non)consumption of alcohol by spectators at AFL matches is integral to their identity as a fan.

Bellevue’s licensed restaurant, *Jack’s Restaurant* (see Figure 3.8), is attached to the *Country Motor Inn* and is open most weeknights and Saturday nights. *Jack’s*, along with *Filmbug Cinema and Pizzeria* (see Figure 3.8), a dine-in cinema that
plays box-office movies, offers a more ‘sophisticated’ ‘wining and dining’ experience. Bellevue also has two licensed cafés (The Local and Art on a Platter) that do occasional theme nights and functions. Art on a Platter has a ‘metropolitan’ vibe to it. The Local is seen as a more family friendly café and many of the participants choose to meet here for interviews as well, particularly if they had children in tow.

A local Liquor Accord is central to understanding the regulation of access to the sale of alcohol in Bellevue. Established in 2008, the Bellevue Liquor Accord is a locally run agreement between all the licensed venues in Bellevue and surrounding area. The Liquor Accord operates through the work of a committee which is made up of publicans, other relevant community stakeholders and the local police (Liquor Accord 2012). This committee has the authority to ban people from entering all licensed venues, as well purchasing alcohol from the supermarket for a period of time as a result of alcohol-fuelled violence. The lengths of bans vary depending on the severity of the offence, but the period may be reduced if the offender undergoes a Responsible Service of Alcohol course and writes an appeal. The Accord is legislated by the local council but the Victorian Commission for Gambling and Liquor Regulation (VCGLR) and local police also provide support for this program. Similar community driven Liquor Accords operate state and nationwide. Bellevue’s Liquor Accord acts as a deterrent to people who may otherwise drink to excess because they have to travel a long distance to find an outlet that’s not on the Accord. Bellevue’s senior police constable says this Liquor Accord has been an effective way of combating drunken behaviour in Bellevue. Past incidents included assaults in venues and on the streets, public urination and vandalism of nearby businesses and amenities, patrons having sex in a public place and noise complaints from neighbours as patrons made their way home.

3.2 Ethics and feminist research

Ethical considerations are inherent in feminist research. Post-structural feminist theories state that objectivity is impossible to achieve therefore subjectivity and an
understanding of ‘positionality’ should be embraced. Positionality is a person’s position within social categories that contribute to their experiences and view of the world, such as class, age, gender, sexuality, upbringing and nationality (Ekinsmyth 2003). Being alert to these subjectivities is essential as research is not conducted within a vacuum, meaning power relations, assumptions and misunderstandings always exist. Being critically reflexive provides transparency in the motivation of the research, reveals ‘taken-for-granted’ attitudes (Banks in Blunt et al. 2003; Ekinsmyth 2003) and is a reminder that findings can be interpreted by different people (Smith in Clifford & Valentine 2003). As advised by Dowling (2010), reflexive thinking occurred at all stages of this thesis, at the beginning to understand why the research is being done; during, to determine how the researchers involvement shaped the research process and at the end to understand how the research process has shaped the researcher. Hence, ‘reflexive statements’ are included throughout this chapter providing insight into how and why decisions were made and how the researcher was at all times situated within the project (see Research Diary Extracts, Figures 3.9, 3.10, 3.12, 3.13, 3.14 & 3.15).

3.2.1 The formal demands of ethical guidelines

Ethical considerations include the guidelines set by the Human Research Ethics Committee (UOW HREC). The HREC approval (Ethics number: HE13/155) (see Appendix C p. 111) required addressing key ethical considerations; four identified for this project included deceit; informed consent, minimizing harm to participants and maintaining privacy and confidentiality. Each is now addressed in more detail.

First, deceit was raised the decision over the entry point to the topic. Previous research consistently shows an underrepresentation in the reporting of drinking levels and associated behaviour, with people modifying their answers often thinking projects are about monitoring the amount of alcohol they consume (Stockwell et al. 2004; AIHW 2011). In order to overcome the position of the project as some sort of policing of alcohol, recruitment focused on how participants spend
their leisure time when ‘going out’ and ‘staying in’. In this case, deceit was justified (and approved by the UOW HREC) due to the statistics on underreporting in previous research and the importance of research that better understood the ways people use alcohol to make sense of their lives, rather than inherently problematic. Given the participants didn’t know they were being asked about alcohol, careful attention was given to the design of the research project to overcome this challenge. What was unplanned was the difficulties that the researcher encountered when asking direct questions about alcohol consumption (see Figure 3.9). Drawing from feminist methods and applying critical reflexivity to evaluate interview execution enabled the researcher to rework their interview techniques and facilitate more open and rich discussions about drinking in Bellevue. Section 3.4 (p.43) explains in more detail how such techniques and changes were made throughout the research process.

![Figure 3.9 The problems with asking about drinking. Research Diary Extract](image)

Second, informed consent is crucial as participant narratives are the basis of the argument put forward in this thesis. Informed consent relied upon the use of a Participant Information Sheet (PIS) and consent forms (See Appendix D p.114 & E p.116).

Third, research into alcohol also comes with ethical responsibilities such being aware that it may uncover stories of alcohol-related harm and abuse. The researcher carried a list of names and contact numbers for appropriate medical counsellors and facilities in case participants became distressed or revealed stories of frequent and excessive alcohol consumption.
Finally, given the size the country town used as a case study, maintaining confidentiality was a key ethical concern. The measures put in place to protect confidentiality and privacy were four-fold:

1. A pseudonym (Bellevue) was used for the town’s name.
2. Pseudonyms were used for participant names (unless they requested their own name to be used) and the places and people they mention.
3. Photographs were not published without further consent from participants and burling of the images to remove distinguishing features of people and places.
4. Participants could request the interview transcripts for verification and editing allowing them to be ‘in control’ of the information recorded, circulated and published about them.

Despite the above measures, complete confidentiality and privacy could not be guaranteed as the narratives told in this thesis may be recognizable to a reader from the town. This warning was stated on the PIS and care was taken to maintain participant privacy when writing up the results (see Figure 3.10).

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I’ve been having some musings on maintaining the confidentiality of my participants. Many have shared stories about themselves and about other people and as a result I’ve heard many versions of the same story from many different angles. Firstly, this is really interesting, and is a great example of the subjectivities of life, but it’s hard to know if I can tell these stories without accidentally giving away the identity of the people spoken about – when these people have no idea that they and their actions are being made the focus of research inquiry. It’s a bit of a question of research ethics and an issue that must be acknowledged as something that arises when doing research in a country town.

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Figure 3.10 Privacy in a country town. Research Diary Extract
Recruitment occurred through a mixture of strategies (see Figure 3.11 Recruitment relational map). First, the local weekly newspaper, the Bellevue Courier, was contacted to generate a public profile for the project. Over two weeks an editorial spot in the paper profiled the project (resulting in 2 participants) (see Appendix F p.120). Second, posters were also positioned in businesses, the Visitor Information Centre and public library notice boards (see Appendix H p.122). Asking permission to put up posters provided an opportunity to increase awareness about the project (resulting in 9 participants). Third, 60 invitations were mailed-out to random PO Boxes at the town’s post office. Eligible participants were asked to contact the researcher by email, telephone or post (see Appendix G p.121). The aim of the mail-out strategy was to increase the reach of the project’s promotion and potentially increase the diversity amongst participants. However, no participants were recruited through the mail-out. This strategy may not have been effective due to the lack familiarity, goodwill and relationship between residents of Bellevue and the University of Wollongong. With a more familiar institutional letterhead this strategy may be more successful. Consequently, the project employed a fourth recruitment strategy that combined targeted and snowball sampling strategies. Women of all ages over 18 years of age were targeted within the researchers’
friendship networks, as well as the Rotary club, Lions club, the Country Women’s Association and the three football and netball clubs (resulting in 6 participants).

In total, seventeen women participated in the project. The sample of women shared commonalities along the lines of ethnicity, sexuality and parenting responsibilities. All participants were of Anglo-Celtic descent, were, or had been in heterosexual relationships and are mothers. The sample of women was differentiated by age, employment histories, marital status and whether they considered themselves as locals. ‘Local’ was self-defined by each participant but many stated that a local in Bellevue is someone who has at least three to four generations of family from the town. A few women called themselves or others ‘blow-ins’ when talking about how they came to live here. Many moved to Bellevue because they met their husbands who were locals or moved because of their husband’s line of work (see Appendix A p.109 for participant list).

The largest age group represented in the sample was those middle-aged or older. Many of these women are retired and/or spend their time volunteering for community run organizations. There was a lack of elderly and younger women participating resulting in the project having a partiality in responses or ‘voices heard’. The lack of younger participants can be attributed to the small numbers of young women within the town. According to Census data (ABS 2012a) women from 18 to 30 years are roughly 10% of the town’s female population. The singular participation of more elderly women could be attributed for there not enough recruitment material effectively targeted at older age groups. The reflexive statement in Figure 3.12 provides a discussion on why people choose to participate in social research projects.
3.4 Data collection

As feminist geographer Narin (2002) points out every method has shortcomings, therefore a mixed-method approach is useful as it enables the researcher to assign the most appropriate method to the respective stages of the research project. The benefit of this is the establishment of rigour in the research project by enabling triangulation; using multiple sources, methods and theories to inform the research (Bradshaw & Stratford 2010) (see Appendix B p.110 for Table 12.2 on how rigour was achieved in the thesis). Hence, in this project a variety of methods were used including face-to-face and over the phone semi-structured interviews and photo diaries.

3.4.1 Stage 1: Semi-structured interview

This project gathered empirical information through interviewing. Feminists do not understand interviewing as process to reveal objective facts. Instead, feminists remain mindful that the knowledge created in interviews is always spatially and socially contingent. Hence, as Falconer Al-Hindi & Kawabata (2002) argue the researcher must remain critically reflexive during the interview process, particularly in terms of how the interview was structured, the role of each participant and where it occurred.

Semi-structured interviews were initially conducted with each participant. In this project the semi-structured interview was comprised of four sections: ‘introductions’, ‘going out’, ‘staying in’ and ‘opinions about alcohol’ (see Appendix I...
Open-ended questions allowed the participant to lead conversations whilst the interviewer listened and responded to participants’ narratives.

The interviews also included the use of maps of Bellevue and its surrounding area to help enrich the conversation. Maps were introduced to encourage people to talk spatially about where they would, and wouldn’t, ‘go out’ or ‘stay in’, and to provide an explanation for their choices. However, the maps not effective. Many of the participants were not ‘familiar’ with cadastral maps. For this reason, maps are not included in the analysis.

The interviews took 40 – 90 minutes and were recorded and then transcribed so that discourse/narrative analysis could later occur. The interviews were either face-to-face or over-the-phone, depending on what was more convenient for the participant and what was possible given the timeframe of the project. As Dyck (2002) suggests the place of the interview and the way in which it is conducted is something which requires consideration because of uneven power relations inherent in research. Dyck (2002) states that as places and people change appropriate methods and techniques of execution may need to change too (see Figure 3.13)

... I met many participants in public places such as cafes or the public library, places where conversations can be overheard and I think at times this may have resulted in the participants not saying everything that they wanted to say. At times I even felt ‘bad’ for having to ask people such personal questions public. I was very conscious of their comfort. It was interesting how the dynamics of the interview changed when conducted in public or conducted in homes. In the comfort of their own home people seemed less polite and less eager to please me by giving the ‘right’ answers and more open to having more flowing conversations. I also much preferred doing the face-to-face interviews than those over the phone. I felt like we were having more realistic conversations. I also feel like I listened better and I got a lot more clues about what the participants were thinking and reacting to my questions from their body language.

Figure 3.13 Considering place. Research Diary Extract

The Stage 1 interviews’ importance is beyond the questions and answers. The interview provided an opportunity to establish rapport and trust (see Figure 3.14). This was crucial in establishing rigour for this project. Only in the follow-up interviews did the research have sense of trust necessary to ask about drinking and
hence, the participants shared more detailed personal stories about the role of alcohol in ‘going out’ and ‘staying in’.

During interviews I made a point of trying to keep the participant happy by being flexible in my time with them. I also tried to build up good rapport and trust with them, and tried not to position myself as the ‘researcher’, interjecting with personal anecdotes .... I often felt my ‘out of town-ness’ so in order to seem more trusting I always mentioned my connections to the town i.e. growing up in the region or playing netball in a country football netball club.

Figure 3.14 Building trust and rapport. Research Diary Extract

3.4.2 Stage 2: Photo diary and follow up interview

After the first interview participants were invited to take photos of their ‘going out’ and ‘staying in’ experiences over an approximate two week period. Photo-elicitation as a method is used by numerous geographers (Rose 2001; Gill et al. 2009; Waitt et al. 2009) including those looking at ‘going out’ practices of women (De Jong 2011; Waitt et al. 2011). Photographs are useful research tools because they document social practices and are personal artefacts around which more in-depth conversations may be framed (Waitt et al 2009). Furthermore, the cultural framing of the photograph as a visual text also provides insights into individual expectations about what was valued (Crang 1997). Nine participants accepted the invitation to conduct a follow-up interview to discuss and reflect on the photos taken over the two weeks. During this stage all interviews were conducted face-to-face in public cafés or in the homes of participants.

This second semi-structured interview was structured into two parts; part one was a discussion about their photos and part two was a discussion specifically about alcohol and drinking. Part two questions were framed as a ‘follow-up’ focusing on the major themes spoken about in the first interviews. This provided a context in which direct questions about alcohol consumption could be asked. Questions were based around topics such as ‘learning to drink’, ‘peer pressure’, ‘changes in drinking over life-course’ and ‘views on the Bellevue Liquor Accord’ (see Appendix J p.125).

As addressed in Section 3.2.1 (p.34), doing alcohol research is a difficult negotiation of ethical considerations. The positioning and framing of each question
in the follow-up interview was a key change that occurred to overcome the dilemma the researcher faced around talking about alcohol and participant deceit. Rather than asking direct and seemingly out-of-the-blue questions about alcohol, the researcher shared personal stories about alcohol use as a way to provide examples and focus the conversation. This design and technique of delivery enabled more detailed and personal accounts about drinking to be shared (see Figure 3.15). The trust and rapport built from the first interview as well as the sharing of photographs allowed participants to talk more ‘freely’ about drinking, creating ‘richer’ conversations.

Figure 3.15 Overcoming the problems with doing research on alcohol. Research Diary Extract

3.5 Analysis: Discourses, narratives and vignettes

This section justifies the use of discourse and narrative analysis as well as the presentation of results by identifying dominant and shared themes across participants as well as exploring the insights offered by a less conventional approach of personal geographies and vignettes.

3.5.1 Discourse analysis

Discourse analysis is a well-established approach to interpreting textual (and many other forms of) data in geography. Underpinned by Foucault’s (1970; 1972; 1977) ideas about discursive power, discourse analysis critically identifies the sets of ideas (discourses) that people use to make sense of their world (Waitt 2010) (see Chapter 2). Following the strategies outlined by Waitt (2010) (see Table 3.1) this project focused analysis on the ways participants spoke about alcohol – that is, how
talk about drinking, or not drinking, was meaningful in establishing and maintaining the co-constitutive relationship between subjectivities and place.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strategies for doing discourse analysis</th>
<th>Examples</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Choice of texts</td>
<td>Transcripts read to determine quality and richness.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Suspend pre-existing categories: become reflexive</td>
<td>Become reflexive in understanding the types of drinking geographies championed by the researcher as well as locating their embodied knowledge within the project.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Familiarisation</td>
<td>Thinking critically about the social context of the texts- written representation of an audio recorded interview that occurred within a discourse of feminist ‘qualitative research’.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Coding</td>
<td>Transcripts were coded for organization, then analytically for interpretive/discursive themes.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Effects of ‘Truths’</td>
<td>Transcripts investigated for effects of ‘truths’ about their rurality, gender, etc. and how this impacted on their decision to drink.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inconsistencies within Texts</td>
<td>Transcripts investigated for contesting ‘truths’ about rurality, gender, age, sexuality, drinking, etc.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Silences</td>
<td>Asking ‘What is not being said?’ and alerts the research to how privileged and dominant discourses silence different understandings of the world.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 3.1 Strategies for doing discourse analysis. Source: Waitt 2010

3.5.2 Narrative analysis

“Life narratives are most apt because storytelling is a highly reflexive practice that articulates particular understandings of self as a spatial accomplishment, through the articulation of emotions, meanings, experiences and memories.” (Waitt & Gorman-Murray 2011, p.1390)

Narrative analysis is underpinned by the belief that we interpret and construct the world around us through interactive talk (Wiles et al. 2005). Narrative analysis is an ‘umbrella’ term for the interpretation of this talk that pays attention to the embedded meanings and evaluations of the narrator and their context. Narrative analysis is designed to take up the challenges of interpreting and understanding multiple layers of meaning in interview talk that can be lost using coding techniques and technologies. Narrative analysis is effective for finding themes across transcripts as well as searching for the intricacies and contradictions within
stories. Fraser (2004) outlined a framework for conducting narrative research. Table 3.2 provides a summary of this framework and outlines how the narrative analysis techniques were employed in this research.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Phases of doing Narrative Analysis</th>
<th>Examples</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Phase 1: Hearing the stories, experiencing each other's emotions</td>
<td>Conducted interviews and listened to audio recordings</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Phase 2: Transcribing the material</td>
<td>Interviewer becomes closer and more acclimated in the stories</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Phase 3: Interpreting individual transcripts</td>
<td>Noted common themes, ‘main points’, and emerging contradictions from across transcripts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Phase 4: Scanning across different domains of experience</td>
<td>Looked for intrapersonal (self-talk, confessions and emotional geographies) and interpersonal experiences (talking about others drinking), cultural conventions (e.g. football /pub ownership rivalries), and structural aspects (references to class, gender or other social axes).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Phase 5: Linking ‘the personal with the political’</td>
<td>Linking stories to discourses e.g. the rural idyll, responsible motherhood</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Phase 6: Looking for commonalities and differences among participants</td>
<td>Emergent themes and patterns across transcripts discussed in the final results section.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Phase 7: Writing academic narratives about personal stories</td>
<td>No ‘right’ knowledge, is analysis relevant to research questions, should these be altered to reflect new foci?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 3.2 Line by line phases of narrative analysis. Source: Fraser 2004

3.5.3 Vignettes

Vignettes work within individual life narratives. Following feminist thinking, personal geographies should not be understood as reductionist. Instead, personal geographies are always embedded within wider social, political, economic, cultural norms and practices (Valentine 2008). A vignette approach demands thinking about the specific individuals rather than patterns across qualitative data sets. Hence, a vignette style of analysis requires keeping transcripts ‘whole’ and providing an interpretation of transformations over a life-course to provide a more cohesive understanding of personal geographies (see Valentine 2000; Bailey 2009; Waitt & Gorman-Murray 2011). Valentine et al (2007), Holloway et al (2009) and Jayne et al (2011) employed a vignette approach to successfully illustrate how individuals negotiate the social and spatial norms of alcohol. These works draw attention to how an individual is positioned within a nexus of religious, ethnic gendered, classed and aged norms. Hence, following the discussion of the overarching themes present in all participants’ alcohol narratives, five vignette
chapters report individual drinking narratives to provide a greater understanding of the deeply personal yet socially and spatially mediated attributes of alcohol.

3.7 Chapter summary

This chapter outlined the methods employed in this thesis. The discussion began by justifying and familiarizing the reader with the case study town. Attention then turned to examine the ethical considerations inherent in feminist research that requires going beyond formal demands of ethical guidelines through the application of critical reflexivity. Alert to questions of rigour in alcohol studies research, the third section justified the choice and effectiveness of employing a mixed-method qualitative approach. The final section outlined a justification for the use of narrative and discourse analysis to present results not only in terms of the overarching discursive themes across all seventeen participants, but also through the use of vignettes to illustrate how individual participants negotiated discourses of drinking alcohol over a life-course. Before turning to the insights offered by personal geographies to the relationship between gender, rurality and alcohol in Chapters 5-9, Chapter 4 discusses the three overarching discursive framings that help understand the dominant ways alcohol and alcoholic consumption is understood amongst all seventeen participants.
4. (Un)problematic drinking, rurality and femininity

The aim of this chapter is to address the thesis research questions about alcohol and rural femininity, alcohol and changes over life-course, and locating problematic drinking. To do this, the chapter is structured into three sections and explores three themes that emerged across the participant interviews and photo diary discussions. The first section explores the manifestation of the ‘rural idyll’ into ideas about gendered rural safety. The second section outlines how alcohol-fuelled violence in Bellevue pubs is normalized and drinking is constituted as an ‘everyday’ activity. And the third discusses how through being ‘responsible drinkers’ women perform and negotiate their femininity and rurality. Key concepts drawn on in this chapter include Foucault’s (1970; 1972; 1977) understandings of discourse, Probyn’s (2003) Spatial Imperative of Subjectivity, Young’s (1990; 2005) understanding of feminine bodily control, Skegg’s (2002; 2005) discussions about class and gender and Butler’s (1990) work on performativity.

4.1 The rural idyll

Jayne et al. (2011) argue that problematic drinking is often constituted by people living in the United Kingdom as a problem of the inner city night-time economy, helping mask drinking at home or in rural places. This argument is confirmed in this thesis by how many participants fashion Bellevue by the discourse of the ‘rural idyll’. Participants draw on sets of ideas that constitute Bellevue as being safe, crimeless and small. They underscore the ‘rural way of life’ as simpler, less rushed and more socially connected and as place that upholds ‘traditional values’ such as the nuclear family. As Little & Austin (1996) explain: “The village community is seen as a place where few slip through the net of a caring paternalistic society. People take responsibility for the welfare of others unlike in the city where most turn a blind eye to the plight of the individual.” (p. 102) For example:

Robin (32, runs own social media business): ... I like that it’s good for kids, lifestyle, cost of living, and without sounding crude, it’s in a backwards way, the old fashioned way.
Susannah: What do you like about living here?

Jackie (53, unemployed & Community Liaison Council member): Well like I said, safe town, beautiful country, that rural lifestyle I suppose. *(S: Is that different to cities?)* Well even Aberdeen, I hate it, I hate going there I hate being there, *(S: cause its busy?)* Yeah...

Dualistic thinking of the rural/urban binary is also central to how participants made sense of their life in Bellevue. For example, how participants made sense of their experiences of going out in Bellevue often relied upon drawing on sets of ideas of more urban places, such as Aberdeen. At night, the streets of city places were portrayed as unsafe, over-run with crime, too big or having too much drunken violence for women walking alone at night.

Nadia (28, high school teacher & Bellevue Bulldogs Secretary): ... Yeah so I've never felt threatened that I've not wanted to go out, but in Aberdeen, and this was almost 5 years ago, I did fell threatened one night walking to our car. *(S: Ok)* You know from a group of boys. And I suppose the difference in Bellevue is that everyone kinda knows everyone so those couple of might be from outside causing the fight and I'm not going to have a big gang somewhere else, whilst in one night in Aberdeen I was very petrified ...

Nadia believes that Aberdeen in comparison to Bellevue is unsafe at night-time because of the lack of familiar faces. Nadia draws upon discourses of women's vulnerability to make sense of feeling scared walking alone at night in the city (Lyons & Willot 2008). As Day et al. (2004) argue that assumptions about the night-time economy as a masculine space “clearly work to consolidate drinking as a male endeavour, as women who attempt to enter this domain are cast as likely victims either of their own alcohol abuse or of drunken men intent on damage” (p. 166). Pain (2001) notes that the gendered ideas about night-time city spaces and fears aligned with ideas about vulnerable femininities work to exclude women from such many ‘going out’ spaces. Other participants, such as Lesley (60, retired, Visitor Information Centre volunteer & artist), also spoke about how she felt her gendered subjectivity when walking home alone in the city:

Lesley: ... Though I’ve sort of got it [walking alone at night in Aberdeen] a little bit down to a fine art now because I tend to walk with a group, I’m sort of with them but I’m not.

Susannah: oh ok
Lesley: haha But they don’t really know I’m there

Susannah: They're going the same direction to the car park

Lesley: Yes a lot of people will be parked down that street ...

Despite subscribing to the discourse of ‘rural safety’ Jillian (37, festival event manager & bartender at the Country Club) feels unsafe when walking home at time in Bellevue or to her car after work when closing up the Country Club on her own.

Jillian: Yeah normally I try to share a ride, there are girls who live near me and we’d walk to a point not far from our houses and separate. So just to make sure other’s safe. When I walked alone I was actually on my phone to the girl whose house the drinks were at... ... And I think it’s because I’m a woman, I feel that more. And I hate closing the club on my own, when we close it, there isn’t enough patrons to have two people there working all the time so umm I will start closing and doing some closes soon. And I hate walking out there, its pitch black, our car park isn’t very well lit and you just don’t know who’s around. And especially if you’re working from a job, you’re a target because you have obviously made money of some description and you’re also a woman. It’s a business, you’ve made money, you know.

Jillian states “you just don’t know who’s around” implying the notion of there being a stranger in the midst. As Little et al. (2005) has explored, ‘strangers’ personify fear of the unknown, anti-community and threaten the rural idyll of a stable secure community. In Jillian’s case she feels the space around her much more threatening because she may be perceived to be carrying cash, but also because she is a woman, again drawing in principles of gendered vulnerabilities (Lyons & Willot 2008).

Both Jillian and Lesley use strategies to make them feel safer whilst walking alone at night. Jillian phones a friend and Lesley shadows a group of people, making the spaces they move though seem less isolated and thus less threatening. Women often do a lot of planning prior to going out, such as meeting at people’s houses, choosing a designated driver, going out in groups or walking home together. Collective decision-making when out is also common (Waitt et al. 2011). These are strategies women use to make them feel safer at night. These actions demonstrate how women are constantly aware of the perceived dangers of night-time city spaces, as well as night-time rural spaces.
On a whole Bellevue is described as relatively crimeless and safe: “Yes, I have never had any instance of feeling uncomfortable, never.” (Sophie, 66, retired, owns and runs B&B). Sophie taps into the notion of the rural idyll to make sense of her lived experience of Bellevue. But such statements also act to mask the presence of alcohol-fuelled violence in Bellevue. Sophie’s feelings of safety come from a choice to distance herself from places where alcohol consumption is seen as a problem – such as the Bushman’s Pub prior to its change in management.

Sophie: They [the clientele at the Bushman's] were drinkers, obviously you go to a pub to drink, but they drank to excess, they had social issues like they smoked marijuana, that sort of thing and it was almost as if it was encouraged by the then owners... ... I’ve got to be very careful where you recommend guests go. (S: Because you want them to have a good time?) I want them to go away with a positive attitude about Bellevue.

Sophie is much more willing to go to and refer her B&B guests to places where she feels most comfortable in; such as the Bellevue Hotel Motel or Jack’s Restaurant. These are places that she believes problematic drinking does not occur in and therefore help recirculate the construction of Bellevue as an idyllic rural place.

4.2 Normalizing alcohol-fuelled violence and everyday drinking in Bellevue

Despite Bellevue being imagined as a ‘safe rural place’, the occurrence and awareness of alcohol-fuelled violence and public drunkenness is inescapable due to the existence of the Bellevue Liquor Accord. This community driven agreement was enacted in 2008 following a spate of alcohol induced crimes and disturbances (see Chapter 3 p.34) When asked about drunkenness in Bellevue Sophie (66, retired, owns and runs B&B) confirms the presence of alcohol fuelled violence:

Sophie: ... No, those sporting groups are really... normally they are quite normal humans and citizens but they get together in a group, a bit of alcohol they’re just like Jekkyl & Hyde ... ... you hear about it the next Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday sort of thing that you know they had a big night at the pub and they got out of hand and the police had to be called ...

Snow & Munro (2000) found that drinking to excess and at harmful levels is prevalent in amateur AFL clubs in Victoria. It’s an activity undertaken by players, officials and spectators. Michelle (55, Nurse, travels to Aberdeen for work 3 days a
week) is unsympathetic of the weekend drunkenness after football games, as she has had to deal with the consequences of drunken stunts and scuffles, alcohol poisoning and drink driving incidents through her work as a nurse. She particularly targets young men, often football players, as those in the community who drink excessive amounts. She draws from medical discourse to justify her stance as many of the men are dehydrated, physically exhausted and have an empty stomach, making them more susceptible to the effects of alcohol. But Michelle doesn’t think that this behaviour is going to change any time soon, stating that “I know they have to learn...” implying that this behaviour is normal for young men, is a part of growing-up and is part of the highly masculine football sub-culture (Sawyer et al. 2012).

Many other women also talk about young men’s drunken behaviour as a rite of passage into manhood. This ‘rite of passage’ discourse outlines that it is through the experiences of drunkenness that children become adults (Crawford & Novak 2006) learning from their mistakes and ‘getting it out of their system’ (Valentine et al. 2007; 2008). For example, Jackie (53, unemployed & Community Liaison Council member) describes her knowledge of young single men’s behaviour as “just silly”. This discourse is used by participants to normalize drunken behaviour, particularly by young single men, but also at times by young single women (see Section 4.3 p.58).

Drinking, drunkenness and fighting is also legitimized as a way to maintain mateship bonds and assert masculinity.

Kayla (22, admin assistant & stay-at-home mum): ....But there is a lot of fights in the pub haha, every weekend there is a fight, it might just be scuffle, others, it’s a full on brawl, you know it’s all ins and stuff so yeah it sort of depends sometimes it’s a personal stuff sometimes its friends just having a bit of a... (S: Rumble tumble type of thing?) Yeah...

Kayla speaks about drunken violence in a normalized way inferring that fighting between men is a regular occurrence at the Bushman’s Pub, as well as it being a spectacle and part of a good night. Campbell (2000) calls these types of fights between men ‘conversational cockfighting’ where men enjoy ‘one-upping’ each
other and enjoying ‘wrong-footing’ outsiders. This behaviour also asserts the social hierarchies in place at the pub. In the case of Jessica’s (50, retired library manager & volunteer) son Andrew, the fighting is rationalized as community service:

Jessica: ... they drink too much on a Saturday night, they don’t drink every night, they drink too much on a Saturday night and they might wrestle with their mates but they’re not, well Andrew [her son] I know punched a guy out in town at the pub who was a very nasty piece of work. And most of the town wanted to put a medal on him for it …

This incident was used to settle a long running dispute as well as put the other guy ‘back in his place’ and allow Andrew to assert his place at the top of the local clientele hierarchy. But whilst there is a normalization of fighting between men who are known in the town, for visitors to the town this is a different matter:

Nadia (28, high school teacher & Bellevue Bulldogs Secretary): ... there used to be a lot of rivalry but then there was rivalry when we played then this weekend but then half the Thunders were coming across to us [the Bulldogs] at the end of the night, and they’re all mates. Now what tends to happen it’s the outside clubs who have players that don’t, they have player who come from Aberdeen or whatever who come to the pub and create a kafuffle.

Despite fighting being “naughty” (Nadia’s words) the fact that many pub brawls come from footballing rivalries mean that they are celebrated as part of the town’s identity. Nadia also makes the point here that ‘locals’ are not the problem makers, their fights are not as problematic as fights that occur between visitors and a local. In the context of the United Kingdom, Valentine et al. (2008) found that alcohol-related violence did not appear to be interpreted as a threat to rural residents, at least not as much as the encroachment of ‘urban problems’ such as crime, poverty or homelessness. Furthermore Little et al. (2005) states that crime in rural areas is often understood as a result of ‘outsiders’ or ‘strangers’ who do not understand the community’s way of life and values. Therefore, these fights are also ways in which men defend the town’s values and its honour.

Despite being normalized, the drinking of young men from football clubs is still considered the most problematic and is one of the most visible types of drinking that occurs in Bellevue. The drinking places and practices of men are seen as fundamental in maintaining social bonds which influence men’s mental health and
wellbeing. Many participants stated that their husbands, sons, fathers or brothers drank to relieve stress. Most men in Bellevue are employed in primary industries such as agriculture and forestry (23.8% of men) or the construction industry (13.6% of men) (ABS 2012a). Farming is a practice clouded in uncertainties; weather and climate patterns, economies of various scales affecting the prosperity of farms. The pressure of running a profitable business and being the family breadwinner can bring on feelings of anxiety and depression (Carrington et al. 2011). Some participants shared stories of people they knew, including family members, who have suffered depression and/or have tried to take their own life. Statistics of depression amongst farming communities is high, with male suicide rates particularly prevalent in rural areas (ABS 2010). Traditionally there is a stigma against male depression with emotions seen understood as unmanly and a weakness to achieving the performance of hegemonic masculinity. The onus from social groups (i.e. Beyond Blue) and governments has recently been to get men to talk about their problems. Associations such as the Men’s Shed provide spaces for social connection and discussion about depression and stress to occur. Women are being urged to allow their men to make time for emotional talk and allow their men to go to spaces that provide this social interaction. In many rural communities participation by working men in the local drinking culture through pubs and football clubs is seen as a reward for a ‘hard days work’ (Campbell 2000). These places are important places of male bonding, with drinking, sometimes to excess, being integral to this process of letting go and unwinding. The men who go to these places are not all young, single and out of control football players. They are husbands, sons, brothers and fathers. They are not constituted as drunks or trouble makers by their family and community but rather as men letting go, men being social and men doing what men need to do. Drinking in this sense is seen understood as medicinal (Valentine et al. 2007) and a necessary part of day to day life. In this patriarchal society it is therefore the women’s’ duty to support such practices through supporting her man to open up and seek help. For example, Kayla (22, admin assistant & stay-at-home mum) allows her fiancé to go out on ‘boys’ nights’ and she stays home with the children (see Chapter 5 p.64). Edna (78, retired preschool director & volunteer) whilst thinking that places such as the Country
Club, a den of hedonistic of drinking and gamboling, believes it at the same time is an important space for community belonging (see Chapter 9 p.86). These particular acts of drunkenness are not understood as problematic as they occur under the guise of getting men to talk about their problems. In these different ways the excessive drinking practices of men in Bellevue is accepted and indeed seemed essential to everyday life.

Alcohol consumption was talked about by many participants as an ‘everyday thing’. It was an integral part to unwinding after the working week and was present at BBQ’s, family dinners and children’s birthday parties. The presence of alcohol in Marty’s (65, part-time Visitor Information Centre & Garden Club member) photo diary (see Figure 4.1) shows drinking and alcohol as part of the background; it’s just part of life in rural Australia. But the ‘everydayness’ of consuming alcohol also acts to skew people’s perception of level of risk involved (Bowring et al. 2012; Livingston 2012). As national health guidelines recommend, the safest level of drinking is to drink no alcohol (National Health and Medical Research Council 2011). But many quote “no more than two standard drinks on any day…” (p.2) or “...four standard
drinks on a single occasion..." (p.3) as being the safest option. Through a misapplication these guidelines are often used as an endorsement of people’s behaviour – allowing them to recirculate a ‘drinking in moderation is safe’ discourse than may mask the dangers of frequent alcohol consumption. Similar arguments have been made in the United Kingdom context, with the normalization of everyday home drinking masking the amount and associated long term health risks (Foster et al. 2009).

4.3 Femininity, control, responsibilities and rurality

Public health data suggests that women not only drink less than men (AIHW 2011) but also take fewer risks when it comes to drinking and their mobility. For example, in 2011 97% of fatal crashes in New South Wales involving Blood Alcohol Concentrations (BAC) over the legal limit had a male driver (Centre for Road Safety 2011). Drink driving is a factor in about 18% of all fatal crashes in New South Wales and this figure is even higher (27%) in country areas (Centre for Road Safety 2013). In Victoria, Harrison (1996) reported that rural drivers also tend to drive with higher a BAC than metropolitan drivers. Senserrick et al (2003) found that 21-26 year old males from rural Victoria were the most likely group to drink and drive. These statistics begs the question, how do ideas about femininity and rurality intersect to help fashion rural women as more responsible drinkers?

Participant narratives provide insights into the decisions about drinking and driving for Bellevue women. For example, Cherie (37, part-time council admin worker & Collegee netball player) explains her responsibilities as designated driver when she and her husband go out:

Cherie: My husband plans that. He gets to drive to the venue and I get to drive home, haha.

Susannah: Oh sharing. Is that the usual?

Cherie: Hmmm, otherwise, occasionally, I get to [drink].

Susannah: Ok do you mind that?
Cherie: I do sometimes. But it’s a guy thing, socially. I’m not a big drinker so I’ll go through the night with a few glasses of wine whilst the guys go through the night in a shout and whilst he’s far from over the limit they tend to get to that point quicker and you have to make the decision ‘Oh who’s going to drive home?’ And I’m not there but give me a couple of hours and I would have had a glass too much.

Susannah: It falls back on you a bit

Cherie: It does.

On many occasions Cherie is required to forego drinking alcohol to ensure first, that her husband enjoys himself, and second, that her family can get home safely at the end of a night out. Her role and responsibilities as mother, wife and designated driver trump the pleasures of drinking. Many other participants such as Nadia (28, high school teacher & Bellevue Bulldogs Secretary) (see Chapter 6 p.70) and Jessica (50, retired library manager & volunteer) (see Chapter 7 p.74) also chose to be the designated driver, remaining sober when socialising with their male partners in order to retain control of their bodies and their personal mobility. Edna (78, retired preschool director & volunteer), despite being a non-drinker also chimes in on this issue, stating that drinking and driving “is not on!” Young (1990) argues that understandings about feminine existence, such as women’s deficiency in bodily capabilities in relation to man’s, are recirculated from a young age. Hence, the choice women make to refrain from drinking may come from the knowledge that their existence as a female requires them to be ‘careful’ and always vigilant in upholding personal safety and the safety of those around them. For the women of Bellevue, drink driving is not acceptable and gendered ideas about resilience as well as responsibility enforce it as a reckless and unfeminine choice.

Being responsible daughters, mothers, wives and grandmothers is learnt through ‘doing’. Similar to Young (1990; 2005), Butler (1990) argues that the performance of feminine responsibility, respectability and control requires a constant negotiation of changing aged, classed and gendered subjectivities that operate in the rural. Acceptable levels of drinking and drunkenness are therefore never constant and change over a participant’s life-course.
Many participants reminisced with both amusement and embarrassment when telling their ‘learning to drink stories’. For example, Jillian (37, festival event manager & bartender at the Country Club) recounted a night out on the town as a young single woman at university with both delight and a sense of indignity at her past actions. Because she wasn’t allowed to drink as a teenager, moving out of home and going to university provided Jillian with freedom and a new found chance to experiment with alcohol. She tells a story of going out one night and having a taste of everything in an effort to make up for lost time; “One pub I had cocktails, the next I had shots, the next I had beer... ... That was the biggest night that I can remember, I still remember the hangover...” She states after this that she never consumed that quantity of alcohol again and goes on to note that she doesn’t have the freedom to be so irresponsible and carefree anymore. Today Jillian’s responsibility as a mother to a young child reinforces her decision to drink less. Dea (46, part time council officer & bison farmer) states that since starting a family, opportunities for leisure time and big nights out have diminished “I wouldn’t do it [go out and drink] during the week because I’ve got to go to work, and maybe when I was your age I might have, but not anymore...” Carolyn (36, part time nurse & Colleege netball player) also says that she “just got over it [drinking to get drunk]” with a change in her consumption of alcohol occurring when she had a child. Holloway et al. (2009) and Paradis (2011) note that women often reduce the amount of alcohol they consume after having children. Drawing from the work of Foucault (1977), it is through the surveillance of peers, family and society that bodies of people are disciplined. For women, such surveillance enforces them to drink slower, drink less, appear more sober and to uphold an air of feminine respectability (Skeggs 2005). For new mothers reducing alcohol consumption and forgoing the pleasures of drunkenness is part of the negotiation of new discursive regimes that stipulate how ‘good’ mothers should act (see Chapter 5 p.64). Out of control drunkenness is understood as a youthful endeavour and not something that women in older life stages should partake in. Hence, mothers and older women talk about drinking in ‘moderation’. As Jackie (53, unemployed & Community Liaison Council member) articulates: “No, well I’m not going to go to the pub and get drunk and do something silly.”
As well as learning to drink responsibly so she could fulfill her role as mother, Jillian goes one step further by keeping her drinking separate from parenting responsibilities:

Jillian: But she [Jillian’s 3 year old daughter Lily] doesn’t see us drink a lot. If we’re social Ethan [Jillian’s husband] might go out with a friend and I’ll stay home with Lily. It’s even the fact that we have to wake up to her the next day. It’s nice to have one of us that’s not hungover.

Jillian configures alcohol as an adult endeavour, one that separates parent from child. Kayla (22, admin assistant & stay-at-home mum) also subscribes to this understanding and keeps her drinking separate from her parenting duties. In Kayla’s case, her gendered responsibility as the primary carer results in her staying in and looking after her sons whilst her fiancé goes out to drink at the pub. But given that drinking places are key to the social networks within a country town, drinking less or not drinking at all has real effect on a country women’s ability to socialise. Kayla recognizes that her choice to separate drinking from parenting limits her options to catch up with friends, so she creates new times and spaces where excessive alcohol consumption is the norm (see Chapter 5 p.64).

Other participants such as Jessica (see Chapter 7 p.74) and Cherie (37, part-time council admin worker & Collegee netball player) blur the lines between what has traditionally been considered parent and child behaviour (Valentine et al. 2008). Cherie activity encourages her older teenage children to join her and her husband at the pub for after-football drinks. The choices to include children and introduce them to alcohol in public drinking places as well as in home spaces naturalize and recirculate ideas about alcohol consumption as an inherent part of rural life.

Given alcohol’s presence in the everyday in rural communities such as Bellevue, upholding and performing the appropriate rural femininity does not always constitute sobriety. Many women spoke of the pressures they faced to drink, particularly as teenagers but also as older women. Chapter 7 (p.74) discusses how Jessica disguises her non-participation through the consumption of tea-stained water in a wine glass. And Chapter 9 (p.86) follows the life narrative of Edna, a non-
drinker whose position in the community as an elderly volunteer requires to her to support establishments that contest her moral values.

This section explored the ways in which country women recirculate the idea that women are more responsible drinkers than men. Women’s foregoing the pleasures of alcohol consumption to upkeep feminine responsibilities and respectabilities is apparent across the transcripts. Fitting the mould and getting the performance of the expected rural femininity right (i.e. as a sober/in control responsible country woman) is learnt from a lifetime of constant negotiations that entail when, where and how much respectable country women will drink.

4.4 Chapter summary

This chapter explored three of the key themes that emerged from the interviews and participant photo diaries. First, the ‘rural idyll’ is central to participant’s narratives that frame Bellevue as a ‘safe rural town’. Despite the introduction of a Liquor Accord in the wake of alcohol-related violence, drunkenness if not constituted as a city problem then at least is an out-of-town problem. Second, alcohol-fuelled violence, most notably done by young single men, is naturalized as temporary displays of youthfulness, mateship and acts to defend the town from strangers that encroach on the Bellevue way of life. Male drunkenness is conceived as unproblematic and disconnected from the kind of behaviour that results in drunken violence, assaults, hospitalisations or road deaths. Regular ‘everyday’ drinking done by the men and women from Bellevue (in ‘moderation’) is also not considered a problem as much falls within ideas about the ‘rural way of life’. Third, women are missing from these stories of drunken violence. These narratives confirm that drinking and the rural are inherently gendered (see Chapter 2 p.13). Drunkenness is less acceptable for women, whose roles and responsibilities are tied up with ideas of motherhood and respectable femininities. In Bellevue, women’s choice to uphold these norms strengthen and recirculate understandings of what respectable country women should look like and act like.
These results highlight that social norms or Foucault’s (1970; 1972; 1977) ‘regimes of truth’ lie at the intersections between drinking, rurality and femininity. Thus upholding and performing the appropriate rural femininity requires a delicate negotiation of the gendered and aged subjectivities that play out in country towns. As well as being socially mediated, drinking geographies are deeply personal. Feminist geography has long acknowledged the importance of how such social agents impact on the personal and play out in individual’s lived experiences (see Valentine 2000; Waitt & Gorman-Murray 2011). Hence, the next chapters explore how individual lives, across life-courses, mediate the social norms of drinking addressed in this chapter, as well as provide examples of how participants contest and reconfigure such discourses. Chapters 5-9 highlight the differences and similarities of alcohol across five participant life narratives. Whilst each participant is similar in terms of gender, sexuality, motherhood and rurality they are differentiated in terms of age, marital status, childhoods, household composition and ‘local’ status, providing a diverse range of positionalities and drinking subjectivities. The next chapters are therefore structured as vignettes that illustrate how alcohol and drinking exists differently and similarly in the lives of five country women.
Kayla is 22 years old and at the time of the interviews she was engaged to be married to the father of her two children. Kayla works part-time at an employment agency but had recently resigned to be the primary carer for her sons. Kayla was a teenage mum. Motherhood is very much part of her identity. Both Kayla and her fiancé were born and raised in the nearby regional centre of Aberdeen. The family moved to Bellevue just under three years ago after her fiancé received a job offer. Before that, Kayla was connected to the social networks of Bellevue through her partner playing for the Bellevue Bulldogs AFL club.

Learning to drink

When talking about her recent birthday, Kayla expressed disappointment that she didn’t get drunk – only having three glasses of wine was “lame”. When asked to further explain why she felt it was lame she reminisced about drinking excessively at her birthdays prior to having children. When asked about learning to drink Kayla said that the first time “seriously drinking” was her 13th birthday.

Kayla: … Me and some friends got some alcohol and had a sleepover and got drunk and then from then on it was whenever I could have a party. Though like you said your mum would have a wine with dinner and blah blah blah like we were never modelled responsible drinking, like if people drunk it was to get drunk, it was never really 1 or 2 it was to binge drink. So when I started at 13 it was too get drunk, that was the point of it, not to taste it, like everybody bring money, we’ll by the slabs let’s just get wasted.

Susannah: Where did you get the alcohol from?

Kayla: Mum

Here she reflects about the absence of what is socially considered a ‘responsible drinking role model’ and how this has shaped her relationship with alcohol. Drinking for her is binge drinking. This does not mean she is not aware of the medical guidelines or discourses about it being unacceptable and unsafe (National Health and Medical Research Council 2011), but through her experiences binge drinking is widely accepted as a form of pleasure, a way to relax and as something that is normalized as a part of her leisure time experience (Cullen 2011).
Susannah: ... When you were a teenager did you feel pressure to drink from anyone?

Kayla: Not really I was kind of the person who was pressuring (S: hahaha) like I was the instigator, I threw fake birthday parties so my friend's parents would let them come and get drunk. (S: hahaha) Yeah looking back now, I wish I would have been a bit more responsible, but it was going to happen no matter who it was. Unfortunately it was me. I got the majority of my high school friends drunk for the first time.

Kayla looks back on her partying days fondly but also with a sense that she did push the limits of what type of drinking was socially acceptable. Drinking and drunkenness created the possibilities to party, spend time with friends as well as undermine the authority of her friend’s parents. Being the ‘instigator’ or ‘veteran drinker’ allowed Kayla to position herself as an authoritative figure in the hierarchy of her peer group, pressuring her friends to drink (Cullen 2011).

**Becoming mother**

A change in Kayla’s drinking occurred when she became pregnant at 17. She was now required to negotiate a new discursive regime in order to be considered a ‘good mother’. As Day et al. (2004) and Jayne et al. (2011) have noted there is a large amount of social and medical concern about women drinking whilst pregnant, creating the discourse of what a good mother should look like and how she should act. Kayla’s going out practices in-between pregnancies consisted of weekend clubbing with a younger friend. These nights out enabled her to negotiated her new responsibilities as mother, as well as her responsibilities as a legally allowed to drink young adult (Cullen 2011).

The move to Bellevue and her second pregnancy further reinforced her role and identity as a mother. Through attending a mothers group in town Kayla met many of her now girlfriends. Her two closest friends are also young mums having their first children at 17. Drinking to become drunk is integral to the social bonds amongst her friendship circle, particularly when they ‘go out’ rather than when ‘staying in’. Kayla’s organization of ‘girls’ nights’ is a resourceful creation of time and space in which drinking can occur. But most importantly it’s a time and space in which social bonds can be forged to create a collective identity and shared experience of motherhood. Kayla identifies that being a parent and organizing a
responsible time and space for drinking requires careful planning, as opportunities for her and her friends to become drunk together are limited.

Kayla speaks from conventional gendered divisions of productive and reproductive work. Her fiancé Jason is the breadwinner whereas Kayla’s feminine identity is embedded in gendered expectations of motherly responsibility. As part of being a mother and ‘doing home’ she is responsible for her children’s care and the organization of the household. Here Kayla reflects on how she reconstructs and negotiates a discourse of hetero-normativity that reifies ‘traditional gender roles’ and the spaces of her parenting (Aitken 2009):

Kayla: ...They [fathers] have less requirements on them than us mothers do.

Susannah: So why do you think they have such less requirements than a mother does?

Kayla: haha that’s such a non-parent question

Susannah: It is I’m not a parent hahaha. Well I know the answer looking at my Mum but what’s your opinion?

Kayla: Well I don’t know. Well it’s just, well we’re expected to do so much of it like if we stay out I get a lot of mother guilt, like oh now I’m going to be too sick tomorrow to you know do my best and get up and cook dinner early. And whilst dads aren’t like that, it doesn’t matter if they are hung over or if they yeah.

Susannah: They get up and go to work anyway.

Kayla: Yeah or if it’s a Saturday, they just sleep in. Dads are just allowed to go out and do it and have no expectations no one is disappointed in them, they aren’t guilty or anything like mums put a lot of pressure on themselves, even when they have fun, to you know be the parent first, whilst dads are parents second.

This extract also provides an example of the ‘requirements of motherhood’. This includes the requirements of her body (i.e. birthing, breastfeeding) and the requirements of her time now being spent caring for someone else. Kayla expressed guilt when she does take time out for herself. ‘Mother guilt’ is an experience explored by Longhurst (2008). Longhurst discusses how women hetero-normatively reproduce gendered expectations of ‘good’ or ‘bad’ mothers. ‘Good’ mothers are usually constructed as white, affluent and in their mid-20s to mid-30s, whose place is within the home. The work of Day et al. (2004) would add to this list mothers
who stay at home and abstain from drinking alcohol to excess. Those women who live their lives as mothers outside these parameters run the risk of being perceived as being too poor, too young, too old and lacking. In Kayla’s case, she may still feel the tension between gendered expectations of becoming a responsible mother, drinking and going out rather than staying in at home (Schofield 1994). This awareness of the gaze of judging others is expressed as guilt and anxiety; the embodied experience of not conforming to the hetero-normative ways of acceptable motherhood. Kayla’s case suggests that young women who are mothers experience emotional strain when seen going out drinking with friends.

Today her reasons for drinking have somewhat changed. She doesn’t drink to undermine a personified authority such as a friend’s parent, but rather the authority of middle class discourse that enforces social norms of adulthood, motherhood and responsibility (Valentine et al 2007; Waitt et al 2011). These norms discipline the body into how it should behave and as Foucault suggests placing the body at centre of struggles between competing discourses (Hall 2001). The reconfiguration of bodily capacities through drinking and drunkenness and the pleasure people get out of pushing these boundaries has been explored by Peralta (2008) Jayne et al. (2010) Guise & Gill (2007) and Waitt et al. (2011). Drinking and drunkenness loosens inhibitions, offers the opportunity for creative thinking and the opportunity to do things which one would not normally do. For Kayla, drinking to the point of drunkenness is an important way for her to relax and mark the start of her weekend or time off parenting.

‘Out’ in Bellevue

When Kayla does go out with her girlfriends, or fiancé, she goes to the Bushman’s Pub. This is a space territorialized by the Bellevue Bulldogs, the football team that Kayla’s fiancé plays for and hence is an important place of belonging where she relaxes, socialises with friends and confirms her sense of self as a ‘local’.

Kayla: … In footy season it’s the place where you can catch up with everyone, the footy boys and netball girls and everyone’s out letting their hair down. And it’s got a really good atmosphere and I know a lot of the people that go there so you can almost always guarantee it’s a good night...
To make the transition from ‘mother’ at home to ‘childless-for-one-night’ at the pub, and centre of attention, Kayla enjoys getting dressed up to go out. Doing a highly sexualized ‘emphasized femininity’ (Connell 1987) is important to enjoying a ‘girl’s night out’. The practice of ‘dressing up’ as part of ‘going out’ to drink is explored by Leyshon (2008) as an important way in which women express their hetero-femininity.

Kayla: … I always just figure I don’t go out much so I like to dress up. I always go out in heels to the pub, I would never wear flats out, and I get a lot of compliments on my shoes, cause they are glittery, so everyone notices them. So I umm like to put in a little bit of effort, but most of the girls don’t bother sort of wear what they wore to footy, but if us girls go out and we plan to go out we’ll dress up. Even if we go out to dinner, we’ll dress up. We just say yeah we don’t get to go out much so we might as well just enjoy it while we can.

Kayla’s style of dress may also be residual of her learning to negotiate the ‘going out’ scenes in the more urban centre of Aberdeen. According to Kayla (and many other participants) Aberdeen has a ‘more happening’ night life that Bellevue, and as a result normative dress as well as institutionally enforced dress codes are more ‘sexy’ and ‘metropolitan’ than those which are considered appropriate in Bellevue. This distinction between rural and urban nightscape and dress codes has been described by De Jong (2011) and Agg & Phillips (1998). Kayla also reflects on the fact that her style of dress is age and place specific. “And I don’t always wear a dress, like the last few times I’ve just been wearing jeans and heals and stuff.... I think it’ll be something that’ll grow out of when I’m older” Kayla notes she may one day learn to or succumb to fitting in with the rural crowd adopting their less glitzy dress codes. ‘Dressing down’ or adopting a casual look has been described by Hubbard (2005) as a way people send out signals that they wish to maintain their privacy. Kayla’s choice of dresses and glittery heels attracts the male gaze but she isn’t concerned with this: “I’m used to guys”. The ‘guys’ behaviour towards her is used to confirm her hetero-femininity and is normalized as part of the rituals of the pub (Campbell 2000; Leyshon 2005; 2008). Kayla is more concerned with the sanctioning looks she gets from women:

Kayla: …. sometimes I notice one girls like [rolls eyes] looking at you funny and sort of they get the wrong impression they just think you’re you know a bit of a tart or
whatever. But most of the time I’m out with Jason or on a girl’s night and so it probably
doesn’t look too weird to the majority of people and anyone who knows me know
knows the fact that I do dress up.

This judgmental attention from other women questions her sexual proximity
and is a way of being disciplined for pushing the boundaries on what is an
acceptable form of rural femininity (Leyshon 2008).

Kayla’s relationship with alcohol changes over her life-course. As a young
woman drinking is used by Kayla to reconfigure bodily capacities and push the
boundaries of parental control and social acceptability. As a mother, her
relationship with alcohol changed. However, Kayla still creates spaces and times for
drinking and drunkenness through the organization of child-free ‘girls’ nights’ at
home, at friend’s houses or out at the pub. These times are differentiated with times
of parenting and responsibility through drinking and the choice of clothes that
accentuate an emphasized femininity. Despite wanting to push the boundaries
Kayla is always alert to what is expected of her as a young woman and mother. She
is aware that her going out clothes may be too ‘sexy’ and ‘metropolitan’ for
Bellevue. Her devotion to traditional gendered roles within the family unit means
she is resourceful in planning her leisure time.
6. Nadia: good mothers stay sober

Nadia is 28 years old and a mother of two young children. At the time of the interviews she was pregnant with her third child. She is the principal homemaker and also supplements the household income by teaching part-time as a high school teacher. Her husband works on the family dairy farm. Both Nadia and her husband, who she met at 17, spoke about themselves as ‘locals’ with generations of family farming history. Nadia has two younger brothers and one younger sister who also live in the town. Like many young people (see Chapter 3 p.32) Nadia left Bellevue aged 19 years to attend university and then returned to raise her family.

Feminine vulnerabilities and responsibilities

Growing-up, Nadia’s recalls how alcohol consumption in the home was coupled with the marking of special events. As a teenager Nadia said she was allowed to have “a little bit [of red wine] if it was a special occasion”. Outside the home, Nadia paints a picture of specific intervention by her parents to prohibit consumption. Her parents did not give consent for their teenage daughter to drink at parties with friends. Discussions between Nadia and her parents installed a heightened sense of responsibilities for young women and social norms of alcohol consumption. When asked why she thought her parents wouldn’t let her drink outside of the home she stated her parents associated drunkenness with women succumbing to the unwanted sexual advances of men (Day et al. 2004; Lyons & Willot 2008).

Nadia: It is funny because I think Mum has always been a bit hung up on the girls verses boys type of thing. Cause girls can get drunk and get into trouble and get pregnant type of thing...

Nadia’s parent’s parents underscore the social norm that responsible young women do not drink to become drunk (Kirkby 2003). How gender intersects with rurality and mobility is exemplified in Nadia’s story about her younger brother being allowed to go to a football function and she had to stay at home. Nadia understood that her mother’s parenting choices recirculate the hegemony of gendered ideas about adolescent women as the ‘weaker sex’, who are more vulnerable and in need of protection (Sharp 2011). Despite parental bans on drinking with friends she would still go out and become drunk. The social norms
outside the home point to how drinking among social networks of teenagers in Bellevue is naturalized in similar ways that drinking is naturalized for the young people of rural Cumbria, United Kingdom as discussed by Valentine et al. (2008). Nadia spoke about sourcing her alcohol from other friends and older siblings. At the time, situated amongst peers, the pleasures derived from drinking with friends were understood as the sensible thing to do. Today, she thinks that disobeying her parents’ wishes as “so naughty now”, highlighting her role as a responsible adult, parent and teacher.

Despite feeling anger at times over the different ways she and her brothers were treated, Nadia’s drinking choices did not always conflict with her parent’s value system. Situated in the context of the pub with her then boyfriend, the teenage peer pressure to drink was easier to resist. In the social context of the pub, as well known local, she was aware of how her consumption choices affected others. For example when out at the pub Nadia chose not to drink underage and forego the pleasures of consumption.

Nadia: …I started going out with Mitch when we were 17 and we would go to parties to drink and go to the pub but I would never drink there. And the publican, well I think he and she, they thought I was older. But I would never have a drink because I knew that they would get into trouble. (S: Ok) Like for serving me alcohol if the cops came in...

Faking it

Again, Nadia’s interest in responsibilities for her and others carried on when she moved to the city to go university. Nadia would go out most weekends after her waitressing job. Despite enjoying drinking on these nights out, Nadia prioritized the responsibilities of the journey home. She expressed a strong hate/fear waiting for a taxi or ride home at the end of the night. Therefore taking on the role of designated driver gave her a legitimate excuse to be sober while clubbing with her friends. Nadia’s behaviour points to the peer pressure to become drunk within friendship networks and the need to behave disorderly as part of pleasures of a night out:

Nadia: Well as I’m quite happy to not drink and always have been like that.

Susannah: It doesn’t affect your experience of the night?
Nadia: No. I just pretend I’m crazy, you know

To compensate for not drinking Nadia acts ‘crazy’ instead to fit in with the drunkenness present at the venues. As Jayne et al. (2010) explores, alcohol reconfigures bodily capacities, loosening inhibitions and facilitating a ‘togetherness’ with other drunken revellers. Nadia prioritizes her concerns about safety above the benefits of relaxation and heightened emotional bonds that appear to be important aspects of why individuals choose to drink alcohol.

Nadia: I’m not fazed by not drinking though, some people have to have a drink, my husband for instance, he’s social but he feels more comfortable if he has a drink and he can’t not go somewhere and not say no, do you know what I mean.

Staying sober

The responsibilities of becoming a young mother confirmed Nadia’s decision not to drink to become drunk while pregnant or breast feeding. Holloway et al (2009) discuss this reduction in women’s drinking when they have young children. Medical discourses about the dangers of drinking whilst pregnant (e.g. risk of foetal alcohol spectrum disorder (FASD)) are prevalent. These medial discourses appear in public health ad campaigns, warnings from doctors and are articulated by society as ‘common sense’ behaviour that ‘responsible women’ do as ‘good mothers’ (Day et al. 2004; Valentine et al. 2007). Nadia prioritizes her parental responsibilities above the pleasure of drinking alcohol. Nadia points to the impossibility of negotiating two children with a hangover to affirming her sense of self and stance on not drinking to excess.

Nadia: ... I’ve had one really big night since having two children. In Aberdeen at a 30th and I said never ever ever again when you have got kids. I just, the next day was the longest day in history.

Nadia’s experiences confirm the impracticality of combining a hangover with child care. Nadia illustrates alcohol's ability to instill prominent embodied memories of sleep deprivation, sickness and temporal variations in our realities.

In summary, Nadia’s drinking geographies illustrate how through her life-course she negotiated the responsibilities of being a daughter, local, girlfriend, friend,
pregnant woman and mother with those of the pleasures of drinking. From a young age she was aware of the gendered responsibilities of drinking and how these imposed greater controls of the lives of country women. Equally she illustrates the social norms of underage drinking in country towns and the importance of peer pressures. Further, Nadia illustrates how she prioritized personal safety ‘going out’, forgoing the pleasures of intoxication as the designated driver. The choice not to drink is made easier in a country town because of how abstinences are strongly aligned to the responsibilities motherhood.
7. Jessica: being a parent and friend

Jessica is 50, widowed and lives on a small property just outside of town. She came to live in Bellevue after meeting her husband at 18, married and had her three sons. In her own words “I pretty much change my career every 5 years or so”, with former jobs including being the library manager and event management of the annual Bushman Festival. After her husband’s death four years ago, she retired and now spends most of her time volunteering and travelling. Jessica is aware that she does not qualify to dominant understanding of being a local, despite living in the town for 32 years and marrying into a family with over three generations of farming history. As a ‘blown-in’, she regards herself as someone who is able to push the boundaries of the status quo. She is concerned with social justice, positioning herself as a non-conservative, environmentalist. In her words: “a little bit greenie, a little bit pro-Aboriginal...”

Jessica was born in a country town but her family moved to the outer suburbs of Melbourne when she was young. Growing up during the 1960s and 70s, alcohol was banned from her parental home. Explaining the ban Jessica recalled how alcoholism was integral to how her mother spoke about family relations, particular with uncles, fathers and grandfathers.

Like many Australians, Jessica was introduced to alcohol as integral part of the practice of making leisure time and places (Allan et al. 2012). She recalled her first encounter with alcohol as a child when she visited a winery as part of a family holiday. Her parents drank Port and she and brothers were given grape juice, which she thought was fantastic, drinking like Mum and Dad. However, overall, alcohol, drinking and drunkenness were not integral to how Jessica framed her growing-up narrative as young woman. She recalled only one time drinking to become drunk at the age of 14 when she and two friends stole an older sisters ID, bought two bottles of cheap spirits and drank them in a public park. “Mum had no idea.” Instead, she recalled that her brothers drank to become drunk and disregarded their parent’s authority. From an early age she gendered drunkenness as an expression of youthful rebellion and irresponsibility.
Susannah: Ok, did they try and regulate your brothers drinking in any way?

Jessica: I don’t think they had a hope, they’d just go out and come back when they’re sober. They’re responsible they’re not… yeah. But well my boys, I think my boys drink too much, and they’re stupid when they do, and they do stupid things.

Masculine spaces

Jessica’s experience of going out when she first moved to Bellevue gives clues to wider understanding of how respectable femininity of single, white women is aligned with rural drinking cultures.

Jessica: And I know when I was 18 ummm you, it, just I couldn’t got to the pub by myself as an 18 year old, I didn’t know anybody. You can’t just walk in their as a girl to a pub at 18 by yourself.

Susannah: No yeah I think I feel that

Jessica: So you sort of had to have a boyfriend in tow or a group of girls.

As an 18 year old woman, pub entry required Jessica to be configured by those in the pub as a girlfriend of a local man rather than single. Drawing from Probyn’s (2003) *Spatial Imperative of Subjectivity* theory the relationship her body has with a male partner legitimizes her presence in the pub space that has traditionally been a site of exclusion for single young women (Kirkby 2003). Without a partner, she realizes that she feels the space inside the pub quite differently to other patrons who feel the pub as a site of belonging. As Leyshon (2005) argued the rural pub is a highly masculinized place that facilitates belonging for certain groups of people in different spaces, but in turn is also a site of exclusion for others. Jessica’s feelings of uncomfortableness and lack of acceptable entry options into the local pubs illustrates the gendered forces that work to exclude single, young women from country pubs.

Throughout Jessica’s narrative problematic drinking and drinkers is always gendered and aged. Young, single, country men are consistently positioned as problematic drinkers.

Jessica: I think there’s definitely a, I think they [men] drink too much, a lot of them. But I don’t think it’s anything new. You know I don’t think it’s anything less than my 93 year old grandfather who now hasn’t had a drink for 50 years but I’m sure it’s nothing
he didn’t do when he was young and then they grow out of it. But ummm you know mainly they get girlfriends and settle down.

Jessica illustrates wider social norms that provide insights to gender, rurality and alcohol. For Jessica, first, drunkenness is a normative behaviour for young, single country men. In Jessica’s words: “… I think it’s [drinking to become drunk] one of those things they [young, single country men] do, they drink a lot up here.” Second, she taps into a ‘rite of passage’ (Crawford & Novak 2006) discourse that again normalizes youthful experimentation as a phase that young people pass through (Valentine et al 2008). And third, Jessica positions the ‘girlfriend’ as the agent of transformation. Women are positioned Jessica’s narrative as the ‘responsible’ figure and agent for self-restraint (Lyons & Willot 2008). These ideas about country drinking are underpinned by man/woman binaries that prescribe characteristics and behavioural traits as gendered (Sharp 2011).

Being a new kind of parent

Unlike her parental home, Jessica explained that drinking was an integral part of making and remaking her familial home, particularly during meal times and house-parties. For example, when her children were young, alcohol, specifically beer, was an integral part of everyday life. Jessica explained that her husband would have a ‘stubby’ of beer each night. Furthermore, Jessica and her husband would fill empty beer (stubby) cans up with water for her sons to drink out of at dinner. “Cause it was a way of getting water into them [her sons], cause they were being cool like Dad you see. But Mum was horrified, haha.” This practice of filling beer cans with water gives important clues to changing parental techniques, but also naturalized understanding of how to become a man. In terms of parenting techniques, the horror expressed by Jessica’s mother is illustrative of the changes in what have been considered acceptable and unacceptable parenting techniques over generations. As Connidis (2004) further explains: “Our relationships with family members are not the outcome of simply learning and then applying rules that are associated with particular roles (e.g., father, daughter, or grandmother). Instead, we are engaged in ongoing negotiations and renegotiations of family relationships over time.” (p.99) Parent/child relationships have traditionally been that of authority over children,
sustained through laws and everyday norms of behaviour, but others (Valentine et al. 2008) have suggested that at the end of the 20th Century parents have sought closer and less hierarchical relationships. Relationships now oscillate between the parent as the friend and the parent as the authoritative figure. In terms of learning to become man, this quotation is illustrative of how parenting can help naturalize understanding the drinking beer is an integral part of rural hetero-masculinity.

House-parties are particularly important leisure spaces for young people growing-up in country towns. As outlined by Valentine et al. (2008) and Kraack & Kenway (2002) this is because there are often few commercial venues in country areas for young people; particularly for those under 18 years of age. Jessica recognized the importance of house-parties in the social life of her teenage sons. She understood that alcohol and drunkenness was an integral part of the pleasures of the party for teenagers. Rather than banning alcohol from house-parties, she opened-up the family home for her underage sons and their friends to drink. Drawing again from the changing understandings of parent/child relationships, Valentine et al. (2008) notes “... it is [now] rural parents’ responsibility to encourage sensible drinking rather than total avoidance of alcohol...” (p.35) Jessica justifies her decision along the lines of; “I'd rather have them out here and know where they were and safe than at someone else's house ...” Jessica also taps into discourses that positioned the home as a safe(r) place to drink than public night spots or informal drinking places such as playgrounds & parks (Valentine et al. 2008). This is underpinned by more general ideas around the home as a safe space for adolescents (Holloway & Valentine 1999) and also ideas that understand drinking as an important activity that young men do (Leyshon 2005). But through being understood as 'safe', drinking in the home may actually be just as dangerous as drinking in public, as feelings of safety allow for drinking to occur in unregulated ways. Many have argued that home spaces mask problematic drinking (Foster & Ferguson 2012). Holloway et al. 2008 argues that the focus of media upon the problems created by public binge drinking has led to people rationalizing drinking at home as being unproblematic; i.e. whilst bingeing in terms of units of alcohol consumed, people do not understand their behaviour as breaking social or legal
rules by being raucous, ill or violent in a public space. Rather their actions are entirely consistent with wider understandings of ‘home’ as a place to relax and let go.

Maintaining control

Control is an integral theme to how Jessica regulated her own drinking behaviour. For Jessica there is no pleasure in either losing control or feeling sick the next day. As argued by Young (1990; 2005) and exemplified by Waitt et al. (2011), bodily control is key to the reproduction of conventional ideas of femininity. The behaviour that excessive alcohol consumption can ensure such as large and clumsy movements and raising ones voice does not conform to such norms. Thus, Jessica draws upon conventional middle-class discourses and uses the language of moderation to describe her style of drinking. A “heavy night” of drinking for her is four glasses of red wine. This figure on par with the national guidelines of what is considered a ‘safe’ level of drinking on a single irregular occasion, with over this amount being considered unsafe or ‘binge drinking’ (National Health and Medical Research Council 2011).

Today, Jessica also prefers to not drink for health reasons, stating drinking a bottle wine each night is not a habit she wishes to get into. Jessica also discussed a number of strategies she deploys to maintain control in particular social contexts in which the serving of alcohol is regarded as essential.

Jessica: I do have to have something in a glass though, but I’m happy to have water. I’ll get a wine glass and put water in it, people don’t know the difference. … … I have been known to put a bit of yellow food dye in my drinking, actually a green tea bag, so it looks like what they’re drinking.

Susannah: Why do you feel like you have to mask that you’re not drinking?

Jessica: Because once people start drinking they get a bit belligerent. (S: They say something?) Yeah or I guess well I only did that when it was someone I didn’t want to offend, that wanted to have a drink with me, and said that, but would feel offended if I didn’t. So you know I had the drink with then, they were happy, I was happy, I didn’t have to drink the white wine that gave me mouth ulcers.

Drinking water in a wine glass, sometimes coloured by a tea bag, enables her to fulfill her role and responsibilities as a friend, colleague or acquaintance. In doing
so, Jessica points to the wider social norms around drinking alcohol together as facilitating social bonds (Allan et al. 2012). Alternatively, Jessica exerts her agency to become the designated driver to belong in social contexts where alcohol is being served.

Jessica: I’d probably normally drive when I’m happy to pick other people up and drop them home. Because I’m not really fond of walking into a place by myself so (S: Yeah, neither am I) so that’s another thing. But if I pick people up I’ve got someone with me.

Jessica’s vignette provides an insight into the very gendered and aged dynamics of rural drinking practices. As a child drinking was disallowed for her own safety. Adolescence brought on new possibilities to relinquish parental control and experiment with alcohol. As a young woman her experiences of rural pub life were often exclusionary, particularly because of her gender, age and non-local status. As a mother, allowing her sons to drink, and at times drink to excess, within the perceived safety of family home became a negotiation of emerging parent/child relationship trends. And as a middle-aged woman, her drinking again becomes a site of contention where she must negotiate social norms of expected drinking despite not wanting to relinquish control.
8. Penny: wining, dining and strong country women

Penny, 68, thinks of herself as a Bellevue local, growing up on a beef and dairy farm just outside of Bellevue. She spoke with pride of her family heritage stretching back to some of the first European settlers in the area in the 1860s. Aged in her late 60s, Penny narrates the strict guidelines growing in Bellevue during the 1950s as cossetting rather than limiting. Her narrative is one of a rural idyll where and her sister would go to the movie pictures once a week, as well as football dances held in country halls on Saturday nights. Penny’s narrative of these events rarely involved drunkenness. Despite her parents being strict, she was allowed to drink alcohol at these events. For young women in Bellevue in the 1950s, she suggests there was not the same peer pressure to drink to excess. Perhaps suggesting her friendship network was organized tightly within the norms of respectable country femininity. According to Penny, alcohol abuse amongst teenagers was not as prevalent at these dances in comparison to the equivalent events of today.

Playing housewife

Like many young women who grew-up in Bellevue at this time, Penny moved away to attend boarding school at age 14 and later attended a business college in the city for three years. Holidays were spent at home in Bellevue or in Melbourne with her aunt. Here the adults would hold dinner parties, providing Penny and her sister the opportunity to “play kitchen hands or waitresses… I thought it was great, just like going to finishing school...” This is an example of how Penny was socialised into the world of upper-middle-classed dinner parties and the role as a housewife and hostess from an early age. As Skeggs (2002) would argue, these times provided Penny with the rules of social etiquette and appropriate femininities necessary for negotiating the upper-middle class world of adult dinner parties. These times also introduced her to alcohol and drinking respectabilities through serving drinks to adult guests and learning how to drink through observation.

On a home visit Penny (age 17) met her now husband, a beef farmer. Following this she moved back to Bellevue and worked in a solicitor’s office for five years before getting married. Like many women of her generation living on farms, she
stopped work when she was married and became the principal homemaker. Penny has three children, and many grandchildren, who all live in close proximity. Her eldest son continues to run her late father’s farm. Following conventional social norms she fulfilled the parenting roles of mothering, staying at home until her children completed school. This gendered division of labour is common in farming communities as women’s roles as mothers and women’s spaces in the home are naturalized within hetero-patriarchal ideologies of rural life (Valentine 2001). However, like many mothers, Penny experienced domestic labour as unfulfilling.

Penny: ... My husband... in those days, he would have been a bit put out with me working...being able to provide for me... this was the 60s... the late 60s and 70s... so umm... and my eldest son was born in ‘69 and I was very happy to stay at home while the children were small and then when they became teenagers, my eldest some was gone, my daughter was just finishing school, the other son was four years behind. It wasn’t enough for me to be hanging washing on the line, you know, handling cattle in the stockyard was too big a challenge, so I went back to the solicitors where I used to work...

Not just a farmer’s wife

Once the children were older, homemaking “wasn’t enough”. Her words echo the argument of geographers, such as Valentine (2001) and Pini (2008). They argue that the conventional gender roles within farming communities often provide limited political and economic opportunities for women. Penny’s return to the workforce is an example of her agency in contesting this dominant social structure (Little 2002a). Another way Penny contested the stereotype of a ‘passive’ farmer’s wife was to learn about running the farm. After working at the solicitors for another ten years she ‘threw herself into farming’. Penny completed courses so she could “speak the same language” as her husband. Her objective was to become an equal by providing valuable opinions about farm operations.

Penny became involved in this project through a chance meeting at a lunch with her Garden Club friends. The Garden Club is comprised of primarily women, who meet approximately once a month to share gardening tips or visit gardens. However, for Penny, pleasure was derived from possibilities to socialise and relax
with friends, catching-up and sharing personal issues and stories over a glass of wine.

Penny: We have a glass of wine and a chat... we provide a time & space for sharing problems, we air our little problems. Do a bit of group problem solving and things, and it’s not all doom and gloom... most of the time. We just update and keep each other buoyed up if we need to.

These lunches where older women meet are important because they provide times and spaces for sharing problems. As another participant and Garden Club member said, “We look like old ladies gossiping, but it’s really more than that” (Marty 65, widowed & remarried, part-time Visitor Information Centre, Garden Club). For these women the emphasis is on the quality of the alcohol and food, not the quantity. The taste, texture and of alcohol content of wine allows them to relax; marking time out to support each other. Food, drinks and friendship is often associated by women with pleasurable leisure time experiences (Rolfe et al. 2009). These times allow for discussion of hardships, such as loss of family members and illnesses, marital annoyances or sharing stories and common interests. For example, on occasions Penny’s sister also attends the group lunches when she has time away from caring for her husband who has a debilitating brain injury. Penny states that going out for lunch with the girls is particularly important for her sister as allows her to maintain a social life. The women’s regular get-togethers facilitate feelings of belonging and collective identities of famer’s wives as ‘strong country women’ who are integral to the operation of the family farm and the community during hard times. Evidence of such ideas about Bellevue women as ‘strong’ were also articulated at a Women on Farms meeting that the researcher attended with another participant (Lesley, 60, retired, Visitor Information Centre volunteer & artist)(see Pini et al. 2007). The women in this group, as well as Penny and her friends from the Garden Club show that contrary to initial structural views of the rural (e.g Bonner 1998), women are in fact actively engaged in shaping farming communities.
Drinking as part of ‘the everyday’

Drinking was present in many of the photos Penny provided in her photo diary (see Figures 8.1 & 8.2) showing it is an important aspect of ‘going out’ and ‘staying in’. For Penny, alcohol consumption is important in marking time and space to relax with her husband at the weekend or the end of the day. Often having one to two glasses of red wine (or sometimes beer during summer) each night when her husband comes in from work. Serving alcohol is a naturalized practice of staying in – including at birthday parties, dinner parties or barbeques held at her home.

Penny: ... I try to have some friends for a dinner party, oh... every few months. We can do a BBQ in the summer that’s ok, but summers tend to wear me out with daylight savings, you know we end up eating til about nine o’clock or something and I keep telling him [her husband] I’m too old for this...

For Penny, ‘going out’ with her husband for a “counter tea” at the Bellevue Hotel Motel held particular significance in her weekly routine.

Penny: ... he and I go there to get some nice meals and we go there sometimes on our own, sometimes with friends. We usually try to get out on weekends, most weekends otherwise we would stay home all the time. When we stay home we usually deal with business matters...

Penny underscored the importance of leaving the house and farm at the weekend, to eat and drink with friends. Eating restaurant food and drinking wine are important practices to help sustain Penny’s friendship network, designate leisure time, the weekend, maintain her relationship with her husband and fashion special occasions. As Penny explained, she and her husband also go to Jack’s Restaurant or to the Flimbug Cinema and Pizzeria for a “nicer meal”, suggesting that there are social hierarchies at work in the drinking and dining spaces of Bellevue.
Penny illustrates how choices of alcohol are also embedded in the intersection of gendered, classed and aged social norms and hierarchies. Penny’s preferred drink is red wine, specifically a Shiraz. Penny’s choice of drink has changed over the years, stating that she and many of her and her husband’s friends used to drink beer.

Penny: … No we don’t really drink a lot. We might usually have only one or two glasses. No we can always drive home. We’re not big drinkers. I don’t like feeling out of control... feeling like no, I’ve had enough. No we’re social drinkers really.

Similar to Jessica (see Chapter 7 p.74), bodily control is an important theme. Regardless of where she goes out to socialise, Penny states she doesn’t like “feeling out of control”. Therefore, Penny usually only has one or two glasses of wine. As argued by Young (1990; 2005), bodily control is important in the social reproduction of conventional ideas of femininity. Waitt et al. (2011) extends this theory to alcohol geography and discusses how respectability and responsibility are aligned to gendered ideas that women’s bodies should be always be controlled and contained. Lyons & Willot (2008) have also explored this gendered alignment between the ‘responsible’ drinkers and conventional ideas of femininity. Penny’s choice to drink in moderation in her home space or private groups drinking with friends allows her to exercise her femininity through being someone who is responsible and employs restraint.
Similar to many women her age who were interviewed, including those in her friendship circle, Penny talks about drinking in moderation. Penny doesn’t like to relinquish personal control for fear of her safety, but mostly to uphold the middle-class norms of femininity (Young 1990; Waitt et al. 2011). However, alcohol is often drunk daily, marking times to relax at social outings with friends or at the end of a day. Mediated by alcohol, these social outings are key times and spaces where discourses about ‘strong country women’ are created and recirculated.
9. Edna: the abstainer and peripheral participator

Edna is 78 and a retired preschool teacher, she lives with her two dogs in Bellevue. Originally from Auckland, Aoteoroa/New Zealand Edna moved to Australia to study and work in primary education in her early twenties. She married in her mid-twenties and became mother to a son. After her divorce she moved to Aberdeen with her young son and worked in a factory. Edna relocated to Bellevue when she got a job as Director of the preschool in 1974. Edna began volunteering after she retired in 2002. In addition to being a member of the Country Club (and former Secretary), Edna volunteers at the museum, Visitor Information Centre, Op shop, Community Reference Group and the Men’s Shed. As discussed by Windenbank (2008), Hardill & Baines (2009), and Alonso & Liu (2013) volunteering in rural towns creates a sense of community and civic pride. According to Toepoel (2012), volunteering for the elderly population may be a particularly important past time because of strengthened sense of connectedness and is often done as an expression of care and support to others. Edna’s volunteering responsibilities are important to her for all these reasons.

Drinking as wasteful

Edna describes herself as a “teetotaler” - someone who abstains from drinking alcohol. The origin of the term itself is thought to come from the Preston (Lancaster, England) temperance movement of 1833 (Oxford Dictionaries Online 2013). Edna has never drunk alcohol; growing up in her family home in Auckland during the post-World War II depression, the prevailing norm in her household framed alcohol as wasteful.

Edna: Well some do but it’s a waste of good time and money. I don’t, again if it’s done in moderation, and I’m not saying that you shouldn’t drink anything. It’s just something that I wasn’t brought up with.

The acquisition of short-term pleasures from drinking was not a top priority for her family that struggled financially through the depression. During this era similar social prohibitions of drinking occurred in Australia (Fitzgerald & Jordan 2009) and the United Kingdom (Valentine et al. 2010). Reflecting on growing up in Auckland she expressed a desire to have been allowed go to night time dances as a young girl.
However, she recalls her father being ‘old fashioned’; in order to appear respectable her father prevented her from not only drinking but also attending dances.

As a result Edna considers ‘excessive’ consumption of alcohol undesirable. Unlike the temperance movement, Edna emphasised she is not a “Wowser”; she doesn’t tell people not to drink as “…people, adults in general are responsible for their actions.” This type of reasoning is underpinned by enlightenment era philosophy that understands humans (men in particular) as capable of making rational decisions. Thought this liberalist standpoint that allows people universal freedoms and decision making entitlements only goes so far (Gregory et al. 2009). Edna made clear her willingness to support legislation directing the alcohol consumption of others with a view to safeguarding lives including drink driving laws, Responsible Service of Alcohol legislation or Bellevue’s Liquor Accord.

Susannah: ... Do you have an opinion on it [the Liquor Accord]?

Edna: Well, being part of the Country Club ahhh not as a drinking or not as an observer, it is a good way of bringing in line someone who might be underage, but more specifically of cause to the people who would use it to excess. And the people who cannot contain their consumption and consequently their behaviour can become less acceptable in that particular venue and in any other venue. And for the other patrons, and who have to listen to maybe perhaps be a focus of unwanted attention, it’s an uncomfortable situation it could become a dangerous situation.

Susannah: Have you ever been put in that situation before?

Edna: Never. But I know what to do, you immediately alert the staff and they have a procedure that they follow… ...Yes so it’s important to limit, to reduce excessive, and to hopefully prevent the excessive consumption of alcohol because a person is not themselves when they are consuming quantities that are beyond their body’s capabilities.

From this standpoint, laws exist to limit excessive drinking in places where alcohol is served in public. She also notes that drunken behaviour is not welcome in the Country Club. She outlines the procedures to sanction people’s consumption choice and encourage what is considered acceptable behaviour. The knowledge of the Responsible Service of Alcohol and Liquor Accord procedures makes her feel safe at the Country Club. However, given the peer pressure amongst young people to drink to become drunk, encouraging responsible drinking in the Country Club is never a certainty.
As a non-drinker Edna removes herself from situations which have alcohol present; as drinking, smoking and gamboling as wasteful activities. For example, she tends not to go to functions that may have alcohol present nor will she involve herself in groups and volunteering activities that happen at night and in spaces where drinking is more acceptable i.e. at a pub bistro:

Edna: ... But I'm not a bistro-ie sort of person, I don’t go in for fast foods. I don’t drink, I don’t smoke, I don’t, I did belong for a while to... umm ... it’s an offshoot of the Rotary Club. But I did want to do other things ... ... I like being home at night. I spent my life going out working and then during the day time I go out and do volunteer work for leisure interests but during the night I come home.

Civil responsibilities

However, as a volunteer, she cannot distance herself from alcohol altogether, given how much drinking is a part of the social fabric of Bellevue. The Country Club is an important place for her to ‘go out’. Here, she presents herself amongst her peers as having a stronger determination to forgo the pleasure of hedonistic consumption.

Edna: ... I’m still on the committee, because I thought, not that I’m a pokie addict, I don’t I’m not, I can’t stand the things, they ruin a good tune. And I don’t drink and I don’t umm gamble or anything like that. But they do need a bit of support and they are a location of which many people in town suit a specific element that needs something like that. It has its place and you can exercise your own restraint over whether you participate or don’t participate...

For Edna, her citizenship responsibilities as a volunteer are prioritized above preventing the pleasures of her peers who drink and gamble at the Country Club. As Edna explains:

Edna: ... I take a lady, (S: Oh ok) Dana, she’s a Dutch lady who’s 82 this year and she loves the ambiance of the Country Club, she likes to play the pokies she likes to be in the raffles and she used to be on the committee years and years ago. She considers it important to support them. And to get her there I pick her up every Friday night. (S: ok) And we have a little joke. In the summer time she’ll pull her trousers or skirt up above her knee and I say: “Oh that’s the Dutch red light district of Bellevue.” (S: I see). Haha. And she thought that was a bit humorous. And so I say I’ll come and pick you up in Friday night, I’ll enter the Dutch red light district...
Whilst Edna understands she is encouraging drinking and gambling by volunteering to take an 82 year old woman to the *Country Club*, she feels a sense of responsibility in enabling this woman to enjoy the pleasure of hedonistic consumption. Edna spoke about enjoying taking her friend into the club each Friday evening. Friday nights at the *Country Club* have become an important part of her leisure time. The rituals of getting there and inside jokes create a comforting pattern of regularity and being there allows her to feel useful and feel a part of the community. But to ensure that her stance on alcohol and gambling is not misunderstood, Edna sits by the front door of the club, to underscore her determination to forgo the pleasures of hedonistic consumption.

*Edna:* Yes so she can go in if she wants to and I’ll sit out by the door.

*Susannah:* And what do you do whilst your there?

*Edna:* Well I’ll sell the raffle tickets. And I know quite a few of the people, I’ve known their kids and seen then grow up. And to be quite honest I’ve been surprised by the people who choose to come in and use the raffle machines. And I respect their decisions I don’t go there saying I don’t think you should do this, they are adults and can make up their own mind. It’s just a social outing and it does help and it’s one that a committee member has to do as you’re handling quite a bit of money.

Furthermore, Edna doesn’t participate in the activities available at the club and she doesn’t consume any food or drinks: “*I come fed and watered*”. Yet, Edna does conveys a sense of pleasure from engagement with a wide range of people that she may not otherwise encounter: “*You see things through seniority that other people might not see, I enjoy sitting on a raffle table down the street, because you see many many things.*”

Edna’s narrative illustrates the contradictory perspectives that surround alcohol. On the one hand whilst she acknowledges drinking may be framed as forging emotional bonds and sense of togetherness, she has a sense of not quite fitting-in in certain social situation where alcohol is present. On the other hand, she underscores how ‘excessive’ alcohol consumption is a key concern for individuals, the community and policy makers alike.
Vignette summary

These vignettes illustrate the personal alcohol geographies of women and how they negotiated alcohol across a life-course. The vignettes illustrate the similarities and differences between participants in terms of the ways they use, or don’t use alcohol in forging the reciprocal relationship between people and place, and their roles and responsibilities of themselves as teenagers, mothers and retirees. Chapters 5-9 have also further exemplified how men, children, families, strangers, football players, rural communities and cities are constituted by rural alcohol geographies. The next chapter concludes the thesis.
10. Conclusion

This chapter revisits the thesis aim, summarizes key findings and outlines future research possibilities for geography that lie at the intersection between rurality, gender and alcohol.

10.1 Key findings

The thesis aim is to unpack women’s drinking and rurality over a life-course to provide further understandings of how women living country towns conceive, participate in and reflect on role of alcohol in their leisure time through opportunities to ‘go out’ and ‘stay in’. Specifically, the thesis focused on three research questions:

- How do women’s drinking practices sustain, contest or reproduce common notions of rural femininity?
- How do women’s spatial drinking practices and ideas surrounding alcohol, drinking and drunkenness change over a life-course?
- Where, when and for whom is alcohol consumption understood as problematic?

The thesis addressed these three research questions through conducting a literature review (Chapter 2), adopting a mixed-method approach that collected life narratives of seventeen women from Bellevue, Victoria, Australia (Chapter 3) and exploring the findings (Chapters 4-9).

Chapter 2 identified an important gap in alcohol geographies and the drinking lives of women living in country towns. Alcohol geographies have tended to focus on cities, particularly the inner city (Lancaster et al. 2012; Wilton & Moreno 2012). When attention has turned to rural places, the focus tends to be on younger men (Wilton & Moreno 2012). Little is known about the drinking choices of women in Australian country towns, particularly older women, and how these choices change over a life-course. The literature review discussed how feminist geographers can provide unique insights to the relationship between people, place and alcohol consumption. The entry point of public health academics into alcohol consumption
is often through highly moralistic medical discourses (Kneale & French 2008) that prescribe what is understood as ‘good’ drinking behaviour (Jayne et al. 2010). In contrast, the entry point of feminist geographers is to better understand the way people use and make sense of alcohol in their everyday life (see Jayne et al 2010; 2011). Alcohol consumption is understood as deeply personal, as well as embedded in wider social norms of particular socio-cultural contexts. Drawing on the ideas of Foucault (1970; 1972; 1977), Butler (1999), Skeggs (2002; 2005), Probyn (2003) and Young (1990; 2005), feminist geographers understand alcohol consumption as spatial, performative and cultural and thereby intimately tied to the intersection of ideas about femininity, parenting, age, class, sexuality and rurality are constantly negotiated in particular contexts. Previous research on rurality, gender and alcohol in Australia highlighted how drinking cultures are normalized as essential to not only demarcating leisure time and places but embedded in highly masculinized cultures, particularly those of pubs (Allan et al. 2012) and football clubs (Snow & Munro 2000).

Research into drinking is notoriously difficult. People often underestimate how much they drink or may deliberately lie about their drinking choices because of how drinking is embedded in particular moral norms (Stockwell et al. 2004; AIHW 2011). Chapter 3 outlined how a mixed-method qualitative project was designed alert to these difficulties. By framing the project in terms of leisure time experiences, participants were unaware of the onus of the project on alcohol. The use of qualitative feminist methodologies such as semi-structured interviews and photo-elicitation provided less direct and confronting ways to get an insight into the presence of alcohol, drinking and drunkenness in the ‘going out’ and staying in’ experiences of participants. What was unplanned for were the personal difficulties that the researcher had to overcome to ask direct questions about alcohol consumption. Drawing again from feminist methods, reflexivity and critical thinking about the project enabled interview techniques to be reworked and improved to eventually facilitate more open and rich discussions about drinking in Bellevue.
Chapter 4 presents the results from a discourse analysis of the photo diaries and narratives told by the seventeen participants. Three key themes emerged that shed light on the research questions and thesis aim.

First, it is the discourse of the ‘rural idyll’ (Little & Austin 1996) that masks men and women’s drinking in Bellevue. The rural idyll, which supposes the community as ‘safe’ and ‘trouble free’, is pervasive in silencing alcohol-fuelled violence and harm that may be present in public and private drinking spaces. These results confirm the findings of Little (2005) that position problem drinking and drinkers as always men form elsewhere.

Second, this chapter explored the everydayness of alcohol-fuelled violence by men who are known to participants. This is accepted as simply part of the social fabric of living in a country town. Hence, this section provided important insights to help answer the research question: Where, when and for whom is alcohol consumption understood as problematic? Drunkenness of young men from football clubs is often normalized through discourses of ‘boys being boys’, youthful hiccups and displays of mateship (Campbell 2000). Alternatively, the alcohol-fuelled violence of young men who play football is framed as acts to defend the town from strangers that encroach on country town life (Little et al. 2005; Valentine 2008). Equally important is a discourse that frames and legitimizes drinking as medicinal (Valentine 2007). Men drinking to excess together in the pub are often overlooked by wives and partners as their drinking and drunkenness is understood as necessary for their wellbeing to counter the stress of being breadwinners within an agrarian economy that is prone to fluctuations of the weather, international markets and dollar. This in turn informs an understanding that rural women's drinking is rather ‘moderate’ in relation to the drinking of men. Therefore, masking a level of risk in their drinking behaviours.

And third, rural women are positioned and position themselves as more responsible drinkers than men. Health statistics and road tolls suggest that country men take the most drinking risks of any other group. To understand why such differences play out this section looks back to the discussion in Chapter 2 about
how drinking and the rural are inherently gendered and draws on the concepts of post-structural feminists such as Skeggs (2002), Butler (1990) and Young (1990; 2005) to make its argument. In Bellevue, men on nights out are permitted to experiment with alcohol and drink to excess, whist for women, particularly mothers or those beyond their youth, doing such activities are positioned as irresponsible. For these women, reducing alcohol consumption and forgoing the pleasures of drunkenness is part of the negotiation of discursive regimes that stipulate how 'good' mothers should act (Day et al. 2004; Jayne et al. 2011). Understandings of rural femininity are also created through a dualism with rural masculinity. Rural men are more often allowed to drink and drink to excess whilst women’s responsibilities are tied up with ideas of motherhood and appropriate rural femininities that assert aged identities. Women’s roles are also positioned caretakers for men, through driving them home, allowing them to drink to excess and undertake the risky activities that reassert the gendered divide between drinking behaviours.

Drawing from feminist understandings that sees the personal shaping the social, and vice versa, drinking is understood as deeply personal as well as socially mediated. Hence, Chapters 5-9 were structured as vignettes focusing on the drinking narratives of five participants. This allowed the nuances of individual lived experiences as well as the similarities and differences across life-courses to be explored.

Chapters 5 -9 provide important clues to answering the research question: How do women’s drinking practices sustain, contest or reproduce common notions of rural femininity? A common theme running across the five vignettes is the idea that gendered responsibilities prescribe women roles as daughter, girlfriend, wife and mother. As found in Chapter 2 & 4 these roles are explicitly linked to the gendered way of rural life and social expectations of women as child bearers and carers (Whatmore & Marsden 1994; Valentine 2001). Such responsibilities often come before leisure time activities, particularly drinking. When drinking does occur, women often do so in moderation (Chapter 8) and in times and spaces that are child-less (Chapter 5). Women often forgo drunken comportment because of ideas
about feminine health, feminine respectability and feminine responsibility (Day et al. 2004). Women’s drinking practices do however act to contest dominant ideas of appropriate rural femininities. When going out on ‘girls’ nights’ younger women such as Kayla (Chapter 5) contradict ideas of well-behaved country women by drinking to get drunk. They go out to socialise, dance at the pub and dress provocatively to affirm their sense of feminine self (Leyshon 2008). These actions help redefine rural women; they are not just passive and confined to structures of patriarchy but rather their actions and performance of drunkenness is something done for pleasure. Making times and spaces for drinking is an emotionally driven decision (Hubbard 2005), it is pleasurable, it facilitates community belonging (Chapter 8) it is done to relax and lose control and the times and spaces women mark out for drinking and drunkenness provide a release from the pressures of negotiating motherhood.

Chapters 5-9 also provide important insights to the question: How do women’s spatial drinking practices and ideas surrounding alcohol, drinking and drunkenness change over a life-course? Drinking was understood to be essential to the leisure times and spaces of Bellevue. Alcohol was positioned as normal. Yet, drunken comportment was understood as a youthful endeavour (Valentine et al. 2008). Over a life-course, women spoke about how the social norms of drinking changed not only in accordance to how much they drank, but also where, when and what they drank (Chapter 7 & Chapter 8).

The vignette’s also confirmed that the pubs and clubs in are central to the social scenes in Bellevue. Even non-drinkers attend these places. The participants in this project demonstrated a number of strategies used so they could participate in the social life of the town, without drinking. For example, some spoke of the role of the designated driver (Chapter 6 & Chapter 7) and others illustrated that a strong sense of self and belief in ones values was enough to resist urges of wasteful consumption (Chapter 9). Each of the vignettes confirmed that foregoing the social pressures to drink became easier with age as women described themselves becoming more self assured of their decisions to forego drinking as they grew older.
As discussed in Chapter 4, for some participants in this project the transformation of drinking places and practices was deeply implicated in motherhood and parenting (Chapter 5 & Chapter 6). Drinking alcohol to excess was widely accepted as not acceptable for women during pregnancy, when breastfeeding or parenting young children (Day et al. 2004; Valentine 2007). Participants with young children spoke about how the pleasures of drinking were diminished by reduced capacity to do the work of child care the next day.

Nevertheless, for women living in a country town, alcohol still plays an important role in their social lives, particularly in terms of creating leisure spaces to forge friendship bonds and enhance the capacity to relax. For example, while child-free ‘girls’ nights’ were important for younger women, older women with children who have left the nest spoke of the importance of alcohol, particularly wine, in dining out with friends (Chapter 8). Aligned with discourse about women as responsible drinkers, these women framed their drinking as done ‘in moderation’, with one or two drinks as the maximum in a session. Drinking over ‘girls’ lunches’ bred feelings of solidarity and recirculated discourses of ‘strong country women’. These times and spaces were ways women contested the dominant ideas that understand farmer’s wives as passive members of the community.

This thesis has illustrate that the use or non-use of alcohol when ‘going out’ or ‘staying in’ is a significant way women living in country towns make sense of their lives and mark out leisure time.

10.2 Future research agendas

This project is only a starting point for research exploring the intersections between rurality, gender and alcohol and opens up a whole field of potential projects. In outlining these future projects consideration is first given to approach, then focus, and finally geographical context.

Geographers have recently sought to move beyond narrative and discourse analysis, paying more attention to embodied or lived experiences. Drawing from and building upon the work of Hubbard (2005) and Jayne et al. (2010) one future
research project could investigate the embodied alcohol geographies of women in a country town. This would require designing a project that traced the experiences of ‘going out’, such as participant observation, more in-depth field notes and participant diaries as well as photo diaries. Such a project is complicated by the need for building trust and rapport with participants in a country town and the associated burden of time required by participants.

This project focused on the intersection of women, femininity and life-course. Notably all the participants in this project were of the dominant ethnic group; that is of Anglo-Celtic ethnicity and aged over 18 years. Future projects exploring rural drinking geographies could shift focus to look at marginal groups or what Philo (1992) termed the ‘neglected rural others’, such as the drinking practices of Indigenous Australians or people from linguistically and culturally diverse backgrounds. Alternatively, future research could focus on the intersection between gender, ethnicity and those people aged 18 years or those aged over 80 years (the fastest growing age group of the Australian population (ABS 2012b)). However, such projects pose their own ethnical and recruitment challenges. For example, considering the implications of research as an enactment of neo-colonialism is essential if focusing on Indigenous drinking practices. The researcher must be constantly negotiating the power relations present during research and aware of inadvertently recirculating racial discourses (Howitt & Stevens 2010). Second, the implications for speaking to people about alcohol and drinking and gaining consent from people who are under the age of 18 must be addressed and managed in accordance to ethical guidelines as well as institutionalized law (Dowling 2010). And finally, developing strategies to involve and empower marginalized groups, such as the elderly, requires a rethinking of traditional recruitment and research methods that aim to give people a voice, rather than continue to silence them.

Another focus is that of the home and alcohol-fuelled domestic violence. In Bellevue, the police noted the occurrence of domestic violence. Similarly, national statistics show that women, whilst less likely to be involved in alcohol-fuelled violence than men, are more likely to be involved as victim of domestic alcohol-fuelled violence (AIHW 2011). Future geographical research could explore this
important and urgent topic in the context of rural communities. Geographers can provide important insights to better understand how women negotiate the potential ramifications from speaking out about domestic abuse given the small social networks operating in country towns.

Alternatively, future research agenda could explore ideas about rural femininity, drinking and the intersection of health and sport. Previous research has examined the hazardous drinking behaviours of men country AFL clubs (Snow & Munro 2000). Equally, the presence of alcohol in Australian football culture is well documented (Thompson et al. 2011; Sawyer 2012). However, so far no studies have looked at the drinking behaviours of women in country netball clubs.

Another gap in the literature was found when doing research into drinking mobilities. Rural men are the most likely group to drink and drive. But according to Senserrick et al (2003) whilst women drive less, drink less and have a high general knowledge about road safety issues, moderate proportions will still choose to drink and drive. In Bellevue women drink driving was not reported to be the norm, nor accepted, with participants denying drinking and driving and describing it as immoral or unsafe. Hence, more work can be done to understand how rurality, drinking, mobility, risk and ideas about masculinity and femininity may affect ones choice to drive.

Finally, the geographical context of rural drinking geographies could shift from country towns to locations more distant from regional centres. For example, what different ways do men and women use alcohol in remote properties? How is alcohol embedded in myths of the ‘outback’ (Dominy 1997; Gill 2005)? How do ideas that sustain drinking practices intersect with ideas about gender/sexuality of settler women and men as well as Indigenous Australians living on remote farming stations? The field of rural, regional and remote alcohol geographies is just in its infancy. This thesis is a starting point, rather than end point.
11. References


Alcohol Education and Rehabilitation Foundation, 2011. Annual Alcohol Poll: Community Attitudes and Behaviours, Deaken West: Alcohol Education and Rehabilitation Foundation


quantity frequency, graduated-frequency and recent recall. *Addiction*, 99(8), pp.1024–33.


## Appendixes

### A. Participant list

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Age*</th>
<th>Work status</th>
<th>Local</th>
<th>Marital status</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Edna</td>
<td>78</td>
<td>Retired preschool teacher, volunteer</td>
<td>Moved for work in 70s</td>
<td>Divorced</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Penny</td>
<td>68</td>
<td>Retired office assistant, Garden Club member</td>
<td>Local. Great grandfather settled in 1860s</td>
<td>Married</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sophie</td>
<td>66</td>
<td>Retired hairdresser, owns and runs B&amp;B</td>
<td>Moved for lifestyle change</td>
<td>Married</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marty</td>
<td>65</td>
<td>Part time Visitor Information Centre, Garden Club member</td>
<td>Moved here to get married</td>
<td>Widowed and remarried</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Janelle</td>
<td>65</td>
<td>Beef farmer, Garden Club member</td>
<td>Moved for husbands work, running pharmacy</td>
<td>Married</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pam</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>Part time nurse, Garden Club member</td>
<td>Moved for husbands work on family dairy farm</td>
<td>Married</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lesley</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>Retired, Visitor Information Centre volunteer, artist</td>
<td>Moved 12 months ago</td>
<td>Married</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Michelle</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>Nurse, travels to Aberdeen for work 3 days a week</td>
<td>Local, born here</td>
<td>Married</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jackie</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>Unemployed, Community Liaison Council member</td>
<td>Moved with family when she was young. Defines herself as a local</td>
<td>Married (recently separated)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jessica</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>Retired library manager, volunteer</td>
<td>Moved to marry husband, 32 years ago</td>
<td>Widowed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dea</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>Part time council officer, bison farmer</td>
<td>Moved for work.</td>
<td>Married</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jillian</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>Festival event manager, bartender at Country Club</td>
<td>Moved to marry husband</td>
<td>Married</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cherie</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>Part time council admin, Collegee netball player</td>
<td>Local, grew up, moved away for study, then came back</td>
<td>Married</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Carolyn</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>Part time nurse, Collegee netball player</td>
<td>Moved</td>
<td>Married</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Robin</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>Runs own social media business</td>
<td>Moved to marry local farmer</td>
<td>Married</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nadia</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>Part time high school teacher, Bellevue Bulldogs Secretary</td>
<td>Local, moved away to study then came back</td>
<td>Married</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kayla</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>Part time office admin, stay at home mum</td>
<td>Moved 2 years ago with partner for work opportunity</td>
<td>Engaged (now married)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 12.1 Participant List

*age estimated where not provided.
B. Rigour

Taking the advice of Bradshaw & Stratford (2010) the methods used in this thesis was checked a trustworthiness to the research. Hence, Table outlines how the design and implementation of this thesis has enabled rigour to occur.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Research Method</th>
<th>Credibility (Accuracy of data. Is this a culturally meaningful account?)</th>
<th>Transferability (How do findings fit with other contexts?)</th>
<th>Dependability (Impact of researcher on collection/interpretation)</th>
<th>Conformability (Role of researcher in relation to research)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Literature Review</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ethics: Regulatory guidelines (PIS, Consent forms and transcript checking)</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ethics: Critical Reflexivity (Positionality statements, addressing research difficulties)</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Purposeful Sampling (rural women)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mixed methods</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Recording and Transcribing Interview</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Triangulation (in data sources and processes)</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Analysis (Narrative, Discourse and Vignette style personal geographies)</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td></td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 12.2 How rigour was achieved in this thesis.
In reply please quote: HE13/155

12 April 2013

Ms Susannah Clement
4/31 Kembla Street
WOLLONGONG NSW 2500
sc527@uowmail.edu.au

Dear Ms Clement

Thank you for submitting your proposal to the Human Research Ethics Committee.

Ethics Number: HE13/155

Project Title: ‘Going out and staying in’: Women’s generational experiences, practices and values towards alcohol, drinking and drunkenness

Researchers: Ms Susannah Clement, Prof Gordon Waitt

Reviewed Date: 11 April 2013

The Committee has reviewed the application in accordance with the NHMRC National Statement on Ethical Conduct in Human Research and has asked for the following additional information/modifications:

1. You have addressed the issue of individual privacy through the use of pseudonyms in Q.31 and advised the participants that their confidentiality cannot be guaranteed in the Participant Information Sheet. Could you please comment on whether the use of a pseudonym for the town would be feasible in this study as a way of strengthening confidentiality and privacy.

2. Could you please indicate on the Participant Information Sheet and Consent Form that this research is an Honours project that will result in a thesis paper.

Please send a written response clearly addressing each point above to the Ethics Officer, Research Services Office, University of Wollongong or email it to rso-ethics@uow.edu.au, along with the revised document/s showing changes by either highlighting or using Track Changes. It is not necessary to revise the application form itself, unless specifically asked to do so.

This response will be reviewed by the Executive Committee and can be submitted at any time. You do not need to consider the agenda deadline for the next meeting of the full Committee. Please note that in some cases the nature of the additional information provided may result in additional questions and/or the application being forwarded to the next meeting of the full HREC to consider the response. You will be notified if this occurs.

Please note that if you have not responded to this review letter within 2 months, this file will be closed and archived and you will be required to re-apply if you wish to proceed with your research.

Yours sincerely

A/Professor Garry Hoban
Chair, Social Sciences
Human Research Ethics Committee

Ethics Unit, Research Services Office
University of Wollongong NSW 2522 Australia
Telephone (02) 4221 3386 Facsimile (02) 4221 4338
Email: rso-ethics@uow.edu.au Web: www.uow.edu.au
18 April 2013

Ms Susannah Clement
4/31 Kembla Street
Wollongong NSW 2500

Dear Ms Clement

Thank you for your letter responding to the HREC review letter. I am pleased to advise that the Human Research Ethics application referred to below has been approved.

Please include the Research Services Office, Ethics Unit email address on both the Participant Information Sheet and Consent form prior to commencement and provide a copy to us for our records.

Ethics Number: HE13/155
Project Title: ‘Going out and staying in’: Women’s generational experiences, practices and values towards alcohol, drinking and drunkenness
Researchers: Ms Susannah Clement, Prof Gordon Waitt
Approval Date: 18 April 2013
Expiry Date: 17 April 2014

The University of Wollongong/Illawarra Shoalhaven Local Health District Social Sciences HREC is constituted and functions in accordance with the NHMRC National Statement on Ethical Conduct in Human Research. The HREC has reviewed the research proposal for compliance with the National Statement and approval of this project is conditional upon your continuing compliance with this document.

A condition of approval by the HREC is the submission of a progress report annually and a final report on completion of your project. The progress report template is available at [http://www.uow.edu.au/research/rso/ethics/UOW009385.html](http://www.uow.edu.au/research/rso/ethics/UOW009385.html). This report must be completed, signed by the appropriate Head of School, and returned to the Research Services Office prior to the expiry date.

As evidence of continuing compliance, the Human Research Ethics Committee also requires that researchers immediately report:

- proposed changes to the protocol including changes to investigators involved
- serious or unexpected adverse effects on participants
- unforeseen events that might affect continued ethical acceptability of the project.
Please note that approvals are granted for a twelve month period. Further extension will be considered on receipt of a progress report prior to expiry date. If you have any queries regarding the HREC review process, please contact the Ethics Unit on phone 4221 3386 or email rso-ethics@uow.edu.au.

Yours sincerely,

A/Professor Garry Hoban
Chair, Social Sciences
Human Research Ethics Committee

cc: Prof Gordon Waitt
D. Participant Information Sheet

Participant Information Sheet

‘Going out and staying in’:
Women’s experiences of leisure time in __________

The Project: This project is interested in documenting the where, what, when, why and how women spend their leisure time in __________. This project hopes to identify both the benefits and constraints of leisure time in __________. This is an Honours research project being conducted by Susannah Clement and data collected from participants will be used in her Honours thesis, scholarly publications, conference presentations and reports.

The Focus: The focus of this project is to explore how women of different ages living in __________ spend their leisure time. Hence, the key questions driving this project are:
Where do women in __________ normally spend their leisure time? What do women normally do in their leisure time? What are the pleasures of ‘going out’ and ‘staying in’? Are there any risks of ‘going out’ and ‘staying in’? How often do women living in a country town have time to ‘go out’? How far do women living in a country town have to travel to ‘go out’?

The Purpose: The purpose of this project is to better understand how women in __________ spend their leisure time.

What you will be asked to do: Participation involves up to 2 stages:

1. Face-to-face interview- In a discussion (approx. 30min to 1 hour) with the researcher you will be asked various questions about the when, what, where and why of ‘going out and staying in’. A map and sketching activity will be used as tools to facilitate discussion.

2. Photo Diary- After the initial interview you will be invited to take photos to illustrate your ‘going out and staying in’ experiences over a 2 week period. With your permission these photographs will inform a second-interview (approx. 30mins to 1 hour).

You are invited to request a copy of the transcript, and to submit edits/revisions. You will also be asked if you wish to be given a pseudonym as direct quotations from the interview may be used in scholarly publications, such as the Honours thesis.

Confidentiality will be maintained in all publications and presentations on the research through the use of pseudonyms for the town, venues and individual participants, unless you indicate in the consent form that you are willing to be identified. However, given the size of social networks in __________ confidentiality cannot be guaranteed. Participants are reminded that your responses may still be identifiable by someone living within __________, even with the use of these pseudonyms. In this instance, checking of transcripts will allow you to manage your personal privacy. Further, if during the project
participants disclose facts about illegal activities then the researcher’s duty of confidentiality is overridden by the public duty to disclose to the police the facts about felonies.

Your involvement in the study is voluntary. You may withdraw your participation and any data that you have provided within a reasonable time frame for the project. In this instance this will be around a month after the follow-up interview. Withdrawal from the project will not affect your relationship with the University of Wollongong.

**The Project Organiser:** If you have any enquiries about the research please contact: Professor Gordon Waitt (02 4221 3684; gwaitt@uow.edu.au) or Susannah Clement (sc527@uowmail.edu.au). This study has been reviewed by the Human Research Ethics Committee (Social Science, Humanities and Behavioural Science) of the University of Wollongong. If you have any concerns regarding the way this research has been conducted, you can contact the UOW Ethics Officer on (02) 4221 3386 or rso-ethics@uow.edu.au

*Thank you for your interest in this study!*
E. Consent forms

Consent Form Stage 1
Interview
‘Going out and staying in’:
Women’s experiences of leisure time in Corryong

I have been given information about the ‘Going out and staying in’ project. I have had an opportunity to discuss the research project with Susannah Clement who is conducting this as an Honours research project through the School of Earth & Environmental Science, Faculty of Science, University of Wollongong. At this time I have asked any questions I may have about the research and my participation.

I have been advised of the potential risks and burdens associated with this research. I understand that participating involves an interview that will last around 30 minutes to one hour. I understand that I may later choose to continue to participate through creating a photo diary about my experiences of ‘going out and staying in’ in Corryong.

I understand that my participation in this research is voluntary; I am free to withdraw my participation from this research at any time and any data that I have provided within a reasonable time frame for the project. In this instance this will be around a month after Stage 2. My withdrawal from the project will not affect my relationship with the University of Wollongong.

If I have any enquiries about this research, I can contact Professor Gordon Waitt (02 4221 3684; gwaitt@uow.edu.au) or Susannah Clement (0488 545 380; sc527@uowmail.edu.au). If I have any concerns or complaints regarding the way the research is or has been conducted, I can contact the Ethics Officer, Human Research Ethics Committee, Office of Research, University of Wollongong on (02) 4221 3386 or rso-ethics@uow.edu.au

By ticking the following list of activities and signing below I am indicating my consent to participate:

☐ An interview of 30 minutes to 1 hour held in a convenient place to be audio-taped by the researcher for later transcription and analysis

☐ To be provided with a copy of the transcript of my conversation for checking

By ticking one of the following boxes I am indicated by consent to:

☐ Be directly quoted in publications with the use of my given name.

☐ Be directly quoted in publications with the use of a pseudonym.

P.T.O
I understand that the data collected from my participation will be used for an Honours thesis, scholarly publications, conference presentations and reports, and I consent for it to be used in that manner.

Signed

................................................................. Date

................................................................. ....../....../......

Name (please print)

.................................................................

Terms and conditions:

I understand that my personal particulars will be stored by the University of Wollongong for a minimum of five years for record keeping and administrative purposes only and will not be supplied to any other person or organisation for any other purpose.
**Consent Form Stage 2**  
**Photo Diary**  
‘Going out and staying in’:  
Women’s experiences of leisure time in Corryong

I have been given information about the ‘Going out and staying in’ project. I have had an opportunity to discuss the research project with Susannah Clement who is conducting this as an Honours research project through the School of Earth & Environmental Science, Faculty of Science, University of Wollongong. At this time I have asked any questions I may have about the research and my participation.

I have been advised of the potential risks and burdens associated with this research. I understand that participating in Stage 2 involves creating a photo diary about my experiences of ‘going out and staying in’ in Corryong over a 2 week period and having a follow up interview to discuss these photos.

I understand that my participation in this research is voluntary; I am free to withdraw my participation from this research at any time and any data that I have provided may also be withdrawn within a reasonable time frame for the project. In this instance this will be around a month after Stage 2. My withdrawal from the project will not affect my relationship with the University of Wollongong.

If I have any enquiries about this research, I can contact Professor Gordon Waitt (02 4221 3684; gwaitt@uow.edu.au) or Susannah Clement (sc527@uowmail.edu.au). If I have any concerns or complaints regarding the way the research is or has been conducted, I can contact the Ethics Officer, Human Research Ethics Committee, Office of Research, University of Wollongong on (02) 4221 3386 or rso-ethics@uow.edu.au

By ticking the following list of activities and signing below I am indicating my consent to participate:

☐ Creating a photo diary about my experiences of ‘going out and staying in’ in Corryong over a 2 week period.

☐ To have a follow up interview of 30 minutes to discuss the photos, held in a convenient place to be audio recorded by the researcher for later transcription and analysis.

☐ To be provided with a copy of the transcript of my interview for checking

P.T.O
By ticking one of the following boxes I am indicating my consent to:

☐ Be directly quoted in publications with the use of my given name.

☐ Be directly quoted in publications with the use of a pseudonym.

☐ Photographs being used in publications with the blurring of peoples distinguishing features.

I understand that the data collected from my participation will be used for an Honours thesis, scholarly publications, conference presentations and reports, and I consent for it to be used in that manner.

Signed

.................................................................................................................

Date

....../....../......

Name (please print)

.................................................................................................................

Terms and conditions:

I understand that my personal particulars will be stored by the University of Wollongong for a minimum of five years for record keeping and administrative purposes only and will not be supplied to any other person or organisation for any other purpose.
Local women asked about spare time

How often do women living in a country town have time to ‘go out’?
How far do women living in a country town have to travel to ‘go out’?

The research involves a 30 to 60 minute interview where participants are invited to talk about their experiences using a map to help guide the conversation.

Finally, if they wish, participants will be invited to create a photo diary telling the story of their time spent ‘going out or staying in’ over a two week period. This will then be followed up with another 30 to 60 minute interview discussing the photos.

You can find more about the project by contacting Susannah by phone on 0488 545 380, by email at sc527@uowmail.edu.au or by writing to Susannah Clement, School of Earth & Environmental Science, University of Wollongong, Wollongong, New South Wales.
Dear Household,

Susannah Clement, an Honours student from the University of Wollongong, is inviting all women, over the age of 18 years, from Corryong, 3707, to participate in research focusing on women’s experience of leisure time.

‘Going out and staying in’:
Women’s experiences of leisure time in Corryong

The Focus: The focus of this project is to explore how women of different ages living in Corryong spend their leisure time. Hence, the key questions driving this project are:
Where do women in Corryong normally spend their leisure time? What do women normally do in their leisure time? What are the pleasures of ‘going out’ and ‘staying in’? Are there any risks of ‘going out’ and ‘staying in’? How often do women living in a country town have time to ‘go out’? How far do women living in a country town have to travel to ‘go out’?

The Purpose: The purpose of this project is to better understand how women in Corryong spend their leisure time

What you will be asked to do: Participation involves up to 2 stages:

1. Face-to-face interview- In a discussion (approx. 30min to 1 hour) with the researcher you will be asked various questions about the when, what, where, and why of ‘going out’ and ‘staying in’. A map and sketching activity will be used as tools to facilitate discussion.
2. Photo Diary- After the initial interview you will be invited to take photos to illustrate your ‘going out and staying in’ experiences over a 2 week period. With your permission these photographs will inform a second-interview (approx. 30mins to 1 hour).

You can find more about the project by contacting Susannah by phone; 0488 545 380, by email; sc527@uowmail.edu.au or by Susannah can also be contacted about the project by writing to; Susannah Clement, School of Earth & Environmental Science, University of Wollongong, Wollongong, New South Wales, 2522

Kind regards,

Susannah Clement
Honours Student
School of Earth & Environmental Science
University of Wollongong
‘Going out and staying in’: Women’s experiences of leisure time in

All women over the age of 18 years from [redacted] are invited to participate in university research focusing on women’s experiences of leisure time.

What’s this research about?
The focus of this project is to explore how women of different ages, living in [redacted] spend their leisure time...

Where do women in [redacted] normally spend their leisure time? What do women normally do in their leisure time? Are there any risks in ‘going out’ and ‘staying in’?

How far do women living in a country town have to travel to ‘go out’? and more...

Sound Interesting?
Want to share your thoughts?
You can find out more and how to participate by contacting Susannah:
phone: 0488 545 380
or email: sc527@uowmail.edu.au
or by writing to:
Susannah Clement
School of Earth & Environmental Science,
University of Wollongong
Wollongong, NSW 2522
I. Interview schedule

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activity/Question</th>
<th>Theme it addresses</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Introductions</strong></td>
<td>Background information</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tell me about yourself?</td>
<td>- Positionality of the participant</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- How long have you lived here?</td>
<td>- Sense of belonging in the community</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Why did you/your family move to Corryong?</td>
<td>- Generation association</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- What do you like/dislike about living in Corryong?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Do you consider yourself local?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- What’s your age?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Going Out</strong></th>
<th>‘Going out’</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>On the map can you circle where you like to go out in Corryong? (Blue pen)</td>
<td>- Motivations, practices, experiences</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Can you tell me about the important ‘going out’ places?</td>
<td>- Presence of drinking in ‘going out’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- When and why would you go out to these places?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Who do you go with?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- What do you do there?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Tell me about a time when you’ve gone to this place...</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Have the place you go out changed over the years you have lived here?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Why do you think this has happened?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Getting ready to go out</strong></th>
<th>Rituals</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Tell me about getting ready to go out. Is there a lot of planning?</td>
<td>Putting on costumes for going out performance</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>When you go out, how do you get there?</strong></th>
<th>Mobility in the country</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>You may show me the route on the map if you like. (Green pen)</td>
<td>- Negotiating drinking and driving</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Do you drive? Tell me about learning to drive – Do you own your own car?</td>
<td>- Responsibility</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Tell me about what you like and dislike about country driving</td>
<td>- Key issues raised: unsealed roads, darkness, animals, staying over, cost, police presence.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- How does driving impact on going out?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Who drives?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- How is who gets this responsibility determined?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- What are important considerations about when to leave and when to return</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Do you ever stay over? When?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Looking at the map again, can you circle any places you would never go? (Red pen)</strong></th>
<th>Ideas of respectability- age, gender and class appropriate places.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>- Can you tell me about these places, and why would you never go there?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Looking at the map, are there any places that you would like to go out but can’t?</strong></th>
<th>Exploring limitations of access, time, shame, etc?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>- What stops you from going out in these places?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Are there any places beyond the maps where you like to go out?</strong></td>
<td><strong>Addressing limitations of research design (map extent vs map scale trade off)</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---</td>
<td>---</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Staying In</strong></td>
<td><strong>Uncovering hidden drinking geographies of ‘women’s places’</strong>&lt;br&gt;<strong>Key issues? Negotiating household duties, exclusion from the pub, feelings of comfort and safety</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Now thinking about leisure time at home...</strong></td>
<td><strong>Negotiating hangovers</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- What do you like to do when at home and have leisure time?</td>
<td><strong>Opinions about Drinking</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- When do you do this? E.g. Weekends, in the evenings?</td>
<td><strong>Where do you think ‘problem drinking’ occurs?</strong>&lt;br&gt;<strong>Locating problem drinking</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Who do you do this with?</td>
<td><strong>We’ve reached the end of the interview.</strong>&lt;br&gt;<strong>Is there you have anything else you would like to add?</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- How often do you do this?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### J. Follow-up interview schedule

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Reasons for asking</th>
<th>Possible Questions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Photo discussion</td>
<td>To further illustrate the experiences of going out and staying in. Who is there,</td>
<td>Okay – let’s lay out the photographs/look at them on your computer screen…</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>what happens, when certain things occur, what role does alcohol have?</td>
<td>Which ones are about staying in?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Which ones are about going out?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Tell me about your staying in photographs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>- Why did you take this photograph? When was it taken?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>- What were you doing here?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>- Who else was with you?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>- Tell me about this time...</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>- Did staying in involve drinking alcohol – explore why – why not</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>- How much – what type</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>- What impact did drinking have on staying in</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>- Is this normal drinking practice</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Tell me about your going out photographs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>- Why did you take this photograph? When was it taken?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>- What were you doing here?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>- Who else was with you?</td>
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<td></td>
<td>- Tell me about this time...</td>
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<td></td>
<td>- What impact did drinking have on going out</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>- Is this normal drinking practice</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Follow up and clarification</td>
<td>To further clarify statements and themes from previous interviews.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Themes:</td>
<td>Staying in – breaking up the day, alcohol as a relaxant</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>When people talk about staying in I think about what my parents do of an evening.</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Mum comes home from work at about 5:30, changes into her non-work clothes, helps</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>prepare or cook dinner depending on what Dad has already done or not done and will</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>have a glass of wine with dinner. She’ll then have another glass of wine after</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>dinner when she’s watching a tv show. So I was wondering if at your house if this</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>type of routine is similar? What do you do to unwind in the evening?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- What do you drink?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Who much would you drink?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Personal narratives with alcohol</td>
<td>Many people spoke to me about the Liquor Accord that is in place in Corryong. This</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>got me thinking about the regulation our drinking and drinking behaviour by</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
different people and institutions

So in terms of people – I started thinking about how my parents introduced me to drinking alcohol. My first drink would have been a sip of wine at the kitchen table at about 7.

- What’s your memory of how your parents regulated your access to alcohol? Did your parents encourage/discourage drinking?
- What did they encourage/discourage? What did you like/dislike about it?

After my parents – I started to think about the regulations of my friends – and the peer pressure to drink with them when either going out or staying in – it was often hard to say no...

Thinking about when you were a teenager what are your memories of your friends – Was there a peer pressure to drink alcohol – Where? When? How much? How did you source alcohol?

When I met my boyfriend my drinking pattern changed, I was more open to drinking but maybe because I was getting older. His drinking pattern changed too, he stopped going as much.

Tell me about when you became married – partnered – did it change where you drank – how much you drank?

For older people – what about after retirement did you notice drinking more social drinking with friends?

Finally, like the Liquor Accord – I am aware of other state programs to restrict the amount of alcohol I consume –
- Has the Liquor Accord impacted on your drinking preferences/patterns? What about your friends?
- What about other people in the town?
- Do you think that the Liquor Accord was needed?