

Like much of the inner south West End's early white settlers were mostly working class. The timber industry cleared the heavily wooded areas and the neighbourhood went on to support businesses like leather tanning and boot factories, and even a brewery. It's today become one of our city's most expensive addresses but its battler and slightly eclectic reputation persist. As much as Queenslanders like to think we're a little different to our southern cousins, many West Enders are keen to march a step out of time to the rest of Brisbane.



West End is just 2 to 3km from the CBD, but bounded by the river on 2 sides it feels open, green and much more suburban. A post-war influx of immigrants helped create a vibrant café and retail precinct around Boundary Street and this draws visitors from around Brisbane, keen to escape the anonymous, multi-level shopping centres. Much of the area's light industry is well past its use-by date and the transition to new apartment buildings is importing big numbers of professionals and empty-nesters, further adding to this suburb's intriguing cultural melting-pot.

the suburb's dwellings:

West End is something of an inner city rarity, with houses still making up more than half of its dwellings. Much of the suburb is occupied by pre-1946 cottages and with a relatively prescriptive Local Area Plan in place from City Council, many of these houses will be around for some years to come. Vast areas of light industry are rapidly making way for new residential apartments so the total number of dwellings in this riverside suburb will grow faster than most over the coming 5 years.

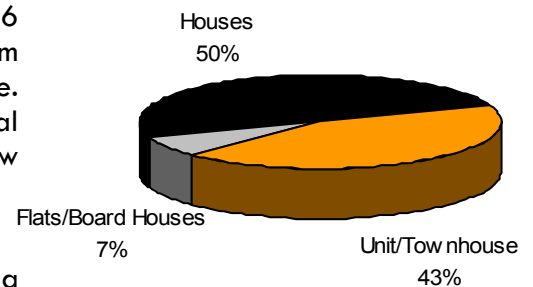
meet the 'West Enders':

There were 6206 people counted in the suburb at the 2006 census, growing 9% since 2001, and West End's greatest changes are yet to come as new apartments become available. Childless couples are still the largest family type (41%) but a third are couples with kids, unusual for the inner city and reflecting the higher number of houses and backyards. There's a further 20% of families that are single parent. While still a large 35% of households, lone persons have declined strongly in recent years, possibly reflecting older residents moving on.

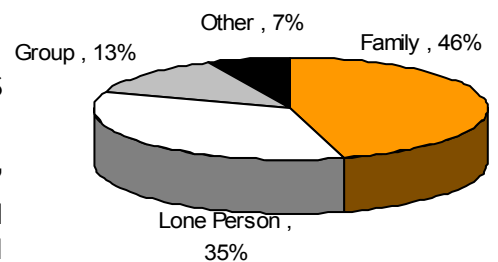
More people are renting than in any other inner southern suburb: the ABS reported 55% of residents are tenants, compared to 27% for the nation.

While 39% of its residents were born overseas West End's 'traditional' ethnic groups are not as dominant as in years gone by. Greek and Vietnamese born residents are still large groups but have each reduced their resident share by more than 20% since the last census. Households speaking Greek have also dropped from 10% to 8% in the past 5 years.

Dwelling Type



Household Type



Resident Profile....

Maylin Chuah recently moved into a timber cottage just off the suburb's multicultural hotspot of Boundary Street.

What do you like about the suburb you live in ? West End is a great place to live as it's close to the city, Southbank and the river. There is always something happening day and night down the main streets but at the same time it's a very quiet place to live. You can walk a lot of places and public transport is also good.

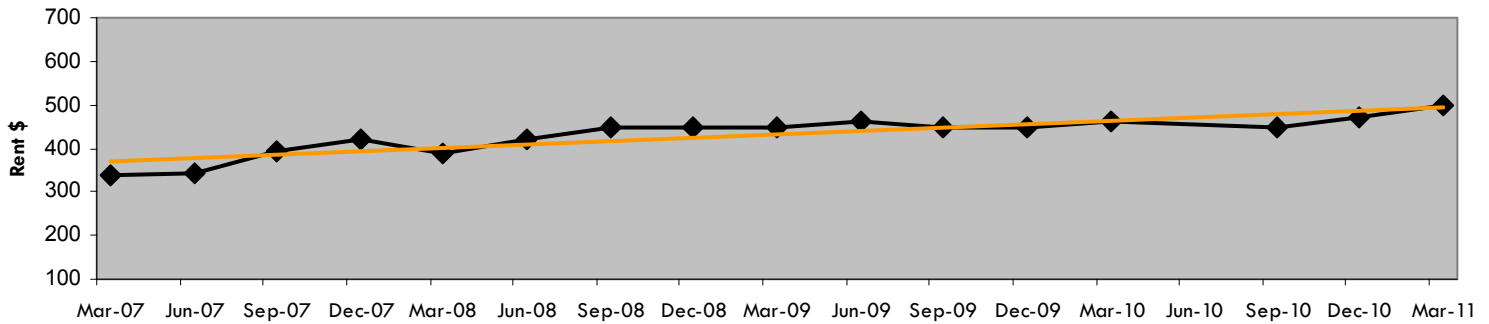
What would be your favourite weekend? It would have to start with a visit to the West End markets down at Davies Park then have a leisurely breakfast at home. I'd go for a throw of the frisbee down at Orleigh Park in the afternoon. Sunday would be a bike ride around the river coming back to Southbank or West End for breakfast. I'd take a walk down Boundary St on Sunday afternoon to see what's happening and stop for a drink and listen to live music somewhere.

What is your favourite local eatery ? Does favourite equal most frequented? Then it has to be Icecream Mania on Boundary St!

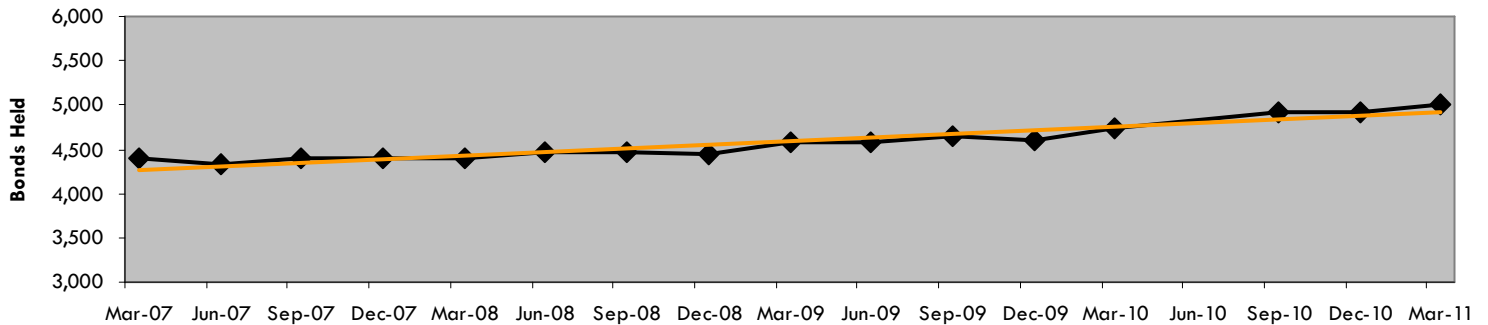


West End's Rental Market

Median Rent - 2 Bedroom Apartment



Total Bonds Held



The March quarter stats are out from the Residential Tenancies Authority and after a couple of years of fairly stable rents we've now had 2 quarters of growth in postcode 4101. The median rent for a two bedroom apartment has hit \$500 per week, a significant milestone as the first area outside the CBD to reach that mark. It's good news for patient landlords.

And interestingly the gap between postcode 4000 and 4101 is shrinking noticeably. It's now just \$40/week dearer to live in the CBD than the West End/South Brisbane/Highgate Hill area, where it was \$100 more a couple of years back. Why? One reason is the new developments through West End's riverside precinct that have added a number of quality apartments with typically high rents. The inner-south's early history may have been working class, but these suburbs' tenants now pay some of the highest rents in Queensland.

Note: RTA stats quoted here cover all of postcode 4101 including Highgate Hill and South Brisbane.

what's happening in West End:

This is clearly a suburb in transition and across inner Brisbane there'd be few areas with as much residential development planned and underway. The riverside Montague Road precinct is a hotbed of changing land uses, with new luxury apartment residents sharing the neighbourhood with warehouses, panel beaters and offices. Meridien's "Regatta Apartments" was the first brave project to claim the riverfront for residential uses in 2002 and while these new buildings might still sit a little uncomfortably amongst their rusty tin-shed neighbours, it doesn't take much foresight to imagine this area in 10 years time.

Stage one of Stockwell's "Riverpoint" on Forbes Street was completed in 2010, and the two towers in "Waters Edge" are nearing completion. Both offer luxurious waterfront apartments. The 300+ apartment "Montague" had been pre-selling next to "Koko", but we understand this project may not be proceeding in the short term.

The suburb's momentum is building at an amazing pace but many streets in West End are oblivious to the changes. Backyards are still filled with vege patches, chicken coops and rainwater tanks (from long before the last drought!) This is a suburb where many residents are staying put. A couple of major land parcels will no doubt cause plenty of debate when finally developed – amongst them the 2.6 hectare (almost 6½ acres) Absoe Furniture site on Boundary Street.

Last updated: April 2011 **Sources:** ABS, RP Data, ourbrisbane.com, Residential Tenancies Authority

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