When a heritage site or building becomes redundant it is generally recognised that finding an appropriate and sympathetic re-use for the place is an effective way to ensure its conservation and likely long term retention.

What happens when the principal reason for a township’s establishment and economic existence is removed or becomes redundant? Whose responsibility is it to ensure the survival of that community? Is tourism the only answer?

This paper briefly focuses on four townships: Terowie and Wasleys, small rural settlements which reflect the issues of much of regional Australia; Edithburgh, a former coastal shipping port; and Peterborough, a former national railway hub.

The paper considers the implications of their ‘redundancy’ and the attitude of their communities to the survival of their towns.