

Rethinking Solutions for Ageing & Housing Challenges

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Ageing and Housing Challenges

- Challenges
 - for social and economic policies, community services
 - fiscal sustainability
 - for individuals and families
- 'Ageing in Place' a key strategy
 - more easily said than done
 - disparities and inequities of choices between home owners and non home owners
 - can today's preferences, housing and neighbourhoods, technologies, funding and services meet the challenges?
- Rethinking required for new solutions

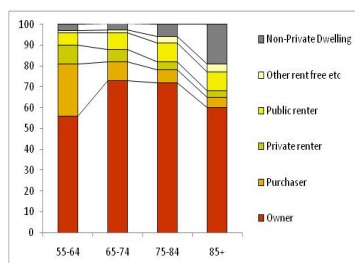
Research Questions

1. How do older home owners regard and utilise their housing and land?
 2. What are their views about current and future housing livability?
 3. How suitable is housing and neighbourhood for remaining in own home?
- Full report on AHURI website www.ahuri.edu.au

Scope, scale and methods

- Multidisciplinary, multi method approach
 - sociology/social gerontology, architecture/urban design, industrial design & economics
 - qualitative and quantitative methodologies
 - all available evidence - ABS Census, Aust Housing Survey etc.
- National survey of 1,604 home owners 55+
 - 70 in-depth interviews and dwelling assessments
- Design and Cost Benefit Analysis
 - 3 design approaches - Visitable, Adaptable, Universal
 - on 3 dwelling types
 - compared to modifying conventionally designed home


Home Ownership & Housing tenure (National data over 55s)



A new age for old age?


- Increasing longevity and healthy productive ageing
- High levels of home ownership and housing wealth
- Increasing diversity and mobility
 - in life passages, life experiences, cultural backgrounds
 - in family relationships and notions of obligations
 - in housing
- Baby Boomers
 - transforming values and attitudes for selves AND their parents
 - high value placed on independence and autonomy
 - enhanced expectations of what 'life' will offer,
 - the adventures of later life

The meanings of 'home'



- Housing for lifestyle crucial for life chances, health and wellbeing
- Need to understand housing utilisation, complexities of attitudes and behaviour regarding livability
- More than "machine for living"
 - symbol of autonomy and independence in the face of ageing
 - retains iconic status as the 'Australian Dream'
 - a symbol laden with memories and meaning
- A major asset – financial security & independence

How respondents regard their housing



- Strong desire to 'Age in Place' and remain living independently in community
- Express satisfaction with current home, particularly location
- 9 /10 rate home as "very suitable" for family, work and leisure to age healthily, actively and well
- Priorities
 - familiarity and delight in home and local environment
 - access to familiar local medical, health services, transport and community facilities
 - proximity to friends and family

Present housing Livability and Wellbeing



- Older people value the space they have very highly
 - use in very appropriate and creative ways
 - rarely talk of excess rooms or space
- Older people spend more time in their home than younger working counterparts
- Use home for part-time work, hobbies, pastimes.
- Regular temporary residents
 - children, grandchildren, relatives,
 - students, visitors – particularly for people with family overseas

Bedroom as office/study




- 35.6% of respondents were working full-time or part-time

Bedroom as sewing or utility room





What of the future?

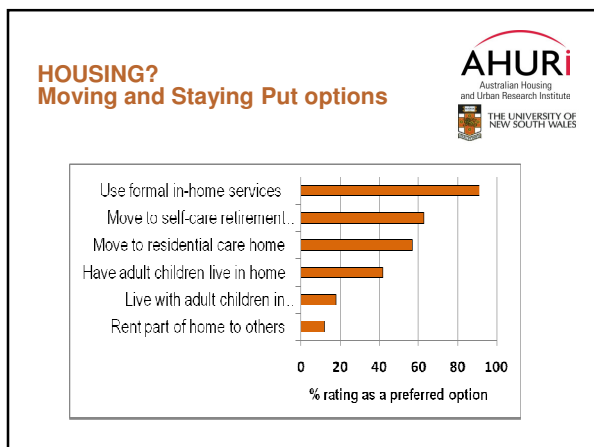
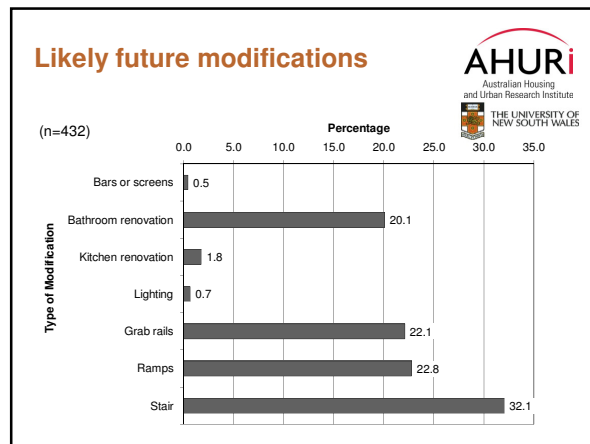


- Lack of planning for future ageing and possible morbidity
- Home modifications
 - mostly older people and/or result of care responsibilities within household or visitors with special care needs
 - Mostly to bathrooms and stairs, grab rails, etc
 - Less often kitchen, improved lighting, ramps, security bars
- Result in
 - Improved livability of dwelling
 - Positive effects on health and wellbeing


Future livability and wellbeing



- Livability and safety become **more** important as age
- Modifications
 - Cost and affordability vital considerations
 - Men more able to pay than women
- High levels of concern and uncertainty
 - what is necessary and how to pay?
- Faced with ageing and possible future morbidity, what options are preferred?



Sharing accommodation




- Generally not favoured
 - Sharing with children contentious
 - Renting part of home acceptable to a minority (10%)
- General reluctance to live with children
 - CALD respondents talk of changing values
 - Some acceptance in self-contained 'granny flat'

The need for rethinking



- Shifting attitudes and priorities
- Housing becomes even more important to people as they age
 - Remains source of independence and autonomy,
 - Enables lifestyle choices for healthy ageing and wellbeing
 - **BUT** planning for ageing and possible morbidity very low among young old, particularly Baby Boomers
- Attitudes change with advancing years and life situation
 - Levels of unpreparedness lead to crisis situations

Foundations for the future



- Healthy & productive ageing population
- Wide range of public, community & not-for-profit home care & assisted living services available (HACC, CACP, EACH, Home Modifications etc)
- High standard publicly funded health & welfare services
- Increasing availability of aids & technology to support independent living, social participation, physical activity
- Homes can be prepared for ageing through individual investment, possible subsidies & incentives

Rethinking by individuals



- Think ahead
 - assess livability of house and neighbourhood when considering a move earlier in retirement
- Access consumer information and advisory services
 - Existing services – e.g Home Modification & Maintenance Services (HMMS) www.homemods.info ; Housing for Life www.ma.org.au
 - Design Ideas for Accessible Homes www.buildforlife.com.au
 - Various State & Local Government advisory services
- Prepare homes for ageing
 - through own investment
 - access modifications through subsidised services
- Buy everyday home modifications and aids

Rethinking by planning, building and development industries



- Plan communities for all ages
 - Develop and promulgate national guidelines for best practice, e.g. separate pedestrian ways from traffic
 - mixed use neighbourhoods in metropolitan strategy plans
- Build to universal and accessible design standards
 - basic UD from the start is not costly
 - minimises cost of tailor-made adaptations
 - Innovative design for space efficient design for downsizing
- Balance development of general UD housing and specialised retirement communities

Rethinking policy solutions



- Expand focus on ageing in existing policy discussions
 - National Housing Supply Council
 - Dialogue on Universal Design/Access to Premises Standards Inquiry
- Give more attention to housing policies as means of
 - enabling individuals and families to realise choices and desires
 - reducing demand for in-home services and residential care
- Mix regulation and persuasion
 - harmonise minimum required standards in Building Code
 - accessibility criteria in Social Housing Stimulus Initiative projects
 - work with other bodies - Australian Local Government Association, State Municipal Associations, Council on the Ageing, National Seniors etc

Rethinking research issues



- Methods and measurement
 - combine objective and subjective measures of under-use and efficient use of space
 - Assessment of cost-effectiveness
- Develop anthropometric and movement research
 - *specific* design features that are preferred and beneficial
- Design and promote new products
 - gaps in available products
 - fixtures and fittings, slip resistant surfaces
- Further WHO Healthy Cities framework
 - Support multidisciplinary evidence-based research
 - City Futures at University of New South Wales
 - Australian Housing & Research Institute (AHURI)