AHURI Research & Policy Bulletin

Issue 130 August 2010 · ISSN 1445-3428

Housing, support and care for older Australians: the role of service integrated housing

FORMS OF SERVICE INTEGRATED HOUSING—SUCH AS RETIREMENT VILLAGES—HAVE BEEN DEVELOPED BY THE COMMUNITY AND PRIVATE SECTORS TO PROVIDE HOUSING, SUPPORT AND CARE FOR OLDER PEOPLE IN AUSTRALIA. IS THERE A NEED FOR A MORE *HANDS-ON* ROLE FOR GOVERNMENT IN DIRECTING, SHAPING AND EXPANDING SERVICE INTEGRATED HOUSING?

KEY POINTS

- Service integrated housing (SIH) is a new term developed in this research to cover all forms of housing for people in later life where the housing provider deliberately makes available or arranges for one or more types of support and care services to be delivered in conjunction with the housing provision.
- SIH is identified as a third component of aged care in Australia, intermediate between community care and residential care, and overlapping with both these components.
- Retirement villages are the main form of SIH in Australia. At the 2006 Census, some 130 000 older Australians lived in retirement villages, and when other forms of SIH are added, the scale of SIH is comparable to residential aged care (with 167 000 residents as of 2006).
- SIH is becoming more diverse with the development of assisted living apartments and innovative approaches to integrating services with housing for older people at risk of homelessness or insecurely housed.

*This bulletin is based on research by **Professor Andrew Jones**, **Dr Anna Howe**, **Associate Professor Cheryl Tilse**, **Professor Helen Bartlett** and **Professor Robert Stimson** of the AHURI Queensland Research Centre.* *The research examined the provision of retirement villages and other forms of service integrated housing in Australia, and compared Australian services with those provided internationally. Recommendations are made for future policy directions and research.*

AHURI
Australian Housing and Urban Research Institute

- Development of SIH over the last 25 years has been shaped largely by providers' decisions in response to consumer demand, with only limited direct influence from government policy.
- Current initiatives to expand the supply of affordable housing in Australia, such as the National Affordable Rental Scheme, present opportunities for increasing access to SIH for lower income, low wealth older renters and others whose needs are not well met through general programs.

CONTEXT

Interest in service integrated housing (SIH) derives from the ageing of the Australian population, and the impacts of disability and frailty on the capacity of people to manage the tasks of daily life in the home. While the majority of those in need of assistance live in the general community with care from formal services and/or family or other informal carers, an increasing proportion are choosing to move into a range of purpose built housing for older people that also provides varying levels of support and care services. However, the diversity of SIH, its changing nature over time, and its development largely outside government policy mean that it has been not been easily recognised as a component of service provision for older Australians.

RESEARCH METHODS

This study is a review of service integrated housing in Australia, aiming to understand its current role in meeting the housing, support and care needs of older Australians. It involved compiling a history of service integrated housing in Australia to understand the factors (such as funding arrangements) that have shaped development to date. An international literature review was then carried out focussing on the UK, the US and Western European countries, to identify comparable service types. A typology was developed to classify different types of SIH in Australia into 18 categories, and many of these are illustrated in 14 case studies of service integrated housing developments in Australia based on secondary sources and interviews with service managers. The research findings were drawn together in an analysis of the drivers of the future of service integrated housing, and possible directions for policy and research.

KEY FINDINGS

The history of service integrated housing in Australia

One reason for the limited policy attention to SIH is its complex history that involves four tiers of development:

- Independent living units were developed by community organisations under the Aged Persons Homes Act from the 1950s, until the cessation of government capital funding in the mid 1980s.
- Hostels were developed through funding and legislative changes in the late 1960s and early 1970s. Over this period, hostels were progressively transformed to give a greater emphasis on care, culminating in hostels and nursing homes being brought together under the Aged Care Act in 1997.
- Retirement villages were developed by community and private sector providers from the 1970s. Although shaped indirectly by aged care policies, and in part filling gaps left by shifts in these policies, this development came about without any explicit policy direction.
- Innovative projects addressing needs of particular groups have been developed in an ad hoc way. Groups targeted included insecurely housed and homeless older people who require special support.

All these developments in SIH came about over a period of major expansion of home and community care services, and all have been underpinned to some extent by the growth of community care. Community care can be thus seen as providing the infrastructure for delivering support and care services to residents living in various forms of purpose-built housing for older people (as well as serving those living in the wider community).

As a consequence of these developments, service integrated housing has emerged as a third component of aged care in Australia, intermediate between community care and residential care, and

overlapping with both these components as shown in the Figure. When retirement villages and other forms of service integrated housing are combined, the scale of this component is comparable to residential aged care which had approximately 165 000 residents as of 2006.

The international context and forms of service integrated housing

To understand the future of SIH in Australia, and the roles that public policy might play, it is instructive to look at comparable overseas countries. Considerable common experience was found and it is evident that SIH is now a significant sector of service provision for older people in many countries. The development of SIH in these countries has been shaped by government programs, provider roles and consumer acceptance.

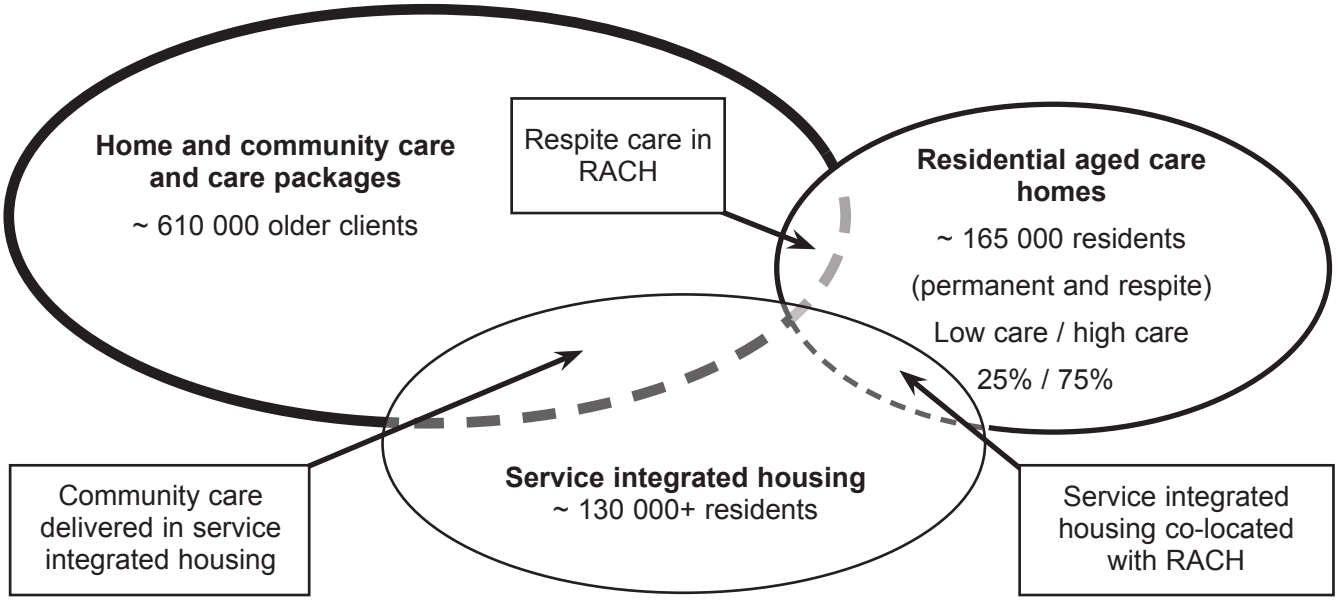
From a cross-national comparative perspective, a number of generic types of service integrated housing can be identified:

1. **SIH offering lifestyle and recreation.** This form of housing is typically targeted at early retirees still in an active phase of life, and is integrated with sporting and recreational facilities. Social activities often focus on a club house or community centre. Some Australian retirement villages are modelled on resort style Leisure Oriented Retirement Communities (LORCs) in the United States.
2. **SIH offering support.** This form of housing includes services such as providing barrier free environments, on-site management and care, general property maintenance, social and recreational activities, group transport, and limited supervision including personal alert/emergency call system.There are two main forms:
    - Shared housing involves small numbers of unrelated persons living together with a mix of shared and private facilities with the aim of providing a supportive environment. For example, Abbeyfield Housing (in the UK and Australia) provides private rooms in a communal setting while providing some support services.
    - Independent living complexes involve living in separate dwellings with support available communally. Examples include independent living facilities (US), sheltered housing (UK), and retirement villages (Australia). An increasing number of retirement villages are catering for older people requiring care. While some have developed serviced apartments and assisted living facilities, many providers assist residents in 'self care' units to access community care services. Although mostly catering for those who buy in by selling their former home, new forms of retirement villages, including affordable rental villages, are catering for low-income, low-asset aged pensioners.
3. **SIH offering support and care.** This form of housing provides some or all of the support services listed above as well as care services that may include property maintenance in response to individual needs, assistance with domestic work (cooking, cleaning, laundry, shopping and household management), individualised transport service, assistance with self-care (bathing, toileting, dressing, grooming, eating, medication), nursing care, allied health services and case management and counselling. It is distinguished from residential aged care insofar as it does not offer access to 24-hour on-site nursing care. Examples include assisted living in the United States and very sheltered housing or extra care housing in the United Kingdom. Examples in Australia are serviced apartments and assisted living units in retirement villages, and hostels (pre-1970s). Housing with continuing care is housing that emphasises the provision of care that is adaptive to changing needs over the whole period of later life. It includes continuing care retirement communities and life care homes in the US, some retirement communities in the UK, and 'apartments for life' in the Netherlands and (more recently) in Australia. (see Box)

Innovation and diversity in service integrated housing

There is currently a high level of innovation in SIH in Australia and increasing diversity. There has been innovation across sectors (community, private

FIGURE: SERVICE INTEGRATED HOUSING AS A THIRD COMPONENT OF AGED CARE INTERMEDIATE BETWEEN COMMUNITY CARE AND RESIDENTIAL CARE



BOX: INNOVATION AND DIVERSITY IN SERVICE INTEGRATED HOUSING

- Ocean Street Project (Bondi, NSW) is a high rise 'apartment for life' project being developed by the Benevolent Society of NSW, based on the Dutch Humanitas model. The concept is that residents can stay in the same high-rise apartment irrespective of changes in their care needs. Buildings and apartments are designed for barrier-free living and include assistive technologies. Care services are provided by the Benevolent Society and other community care providers. The project targets local people from a wide range of income and asset groups and with a wide range of independence/ dependency.
- Tall Trees Supported Living (Brisbane) is a 'supportive living community' operated by a private company in the southern suburbs of Brisbane. It targets middle-income retirees and aims to fill a perceived gap between conventional retirement villages and residential aged care homes. It provides 80, 1.5 to 2 bedroom clustered villa units, with barrier-free design features. It aims to provide continuing care (except for dementia care) and has a range of on-site support and care services including meals, home nursing, domestic assistance and leisure facilities. Residents can also access the Home and Community Care Program and aged care packages.
- Wintringham (Melbourne) is a not-for-profit organisation providing independent living units together with support and care services in both campus and high-rise settings for older people who are homeless or at risk of homelessness. Support services include supervision, health support, cleaning, meal support and recreational activities. Wintringham is an accredited community care provider and uses its own staff to provide Community Aged Care and Extended Aged Care at Home packages to this group of older people, many with complex needs.
- Matavai Group Living Project (Waterloo, Sydney) is a group living model for frail older public housing tenants with complex needs operated collaboratively by the NSW Department of Housing and Mercy Arms Community Care in high-rise public housing. It involves co-location of long term residents on one floor to facilitate high level support through pooling of CACPs. The building was renovated to make it suitable for the project and to include barrier-free design features. Support includes meals, an emergency call button, medication and self-care assistance, transport, cleaning, laundering and shopping.

or public), in dwelling form (low density, villa units or medium/high density apartments) and in service arrangements (internal or external), and these three dimensions are used to classify the various forms of SIH in Australia. Many of these types are illustrated in 14 case studies in the Final Report.

Selected examples of innovation in service integrated housing are highlighted in the Box.

POLICY IMPLICATIONS

Continuing population ageing and growing demand for SIH are likely to drive continuing market growth, innovation and diversification. The expansion of SIH will also be driven by the maturation and growth of the retirement village industry. Expansion of SIH may also be driven by Australian Government initiatives including the National Partnership Agreements (NPA) on Homelessness and Social Housing as well as the National Rental Affordability Scheme (NRAS).

As well as adding to the stock of housing available to lower income older renters, all of these programs emphasise barrier free design, an important component of supportive housing for older people. However, questions remain as to how, in a supportive policy climate, the provision of diverse forms of SIH for older people can be advanced.

Five ways in which government could play a more *hands-on* role in shaping and expanding SIH are canvassed:

- Firstly, policy interventions could facilitate current trends and enhance the roles being played by retirement village providers in SIH, while still relying principally on the entrepreneurship of private and community sector operators.
- Secondly, governments could selectively intervene on behalf of low-income, low-asset older people whose needs are not well met in existing arrangements. Attention might be given to upgrading accommodation developed under earlier public programs and promoting service integration by SIH providers who are also community service providers. Possible models are illustrated by recent projects in public housing catering mainly for older people and service supplementation to residents in independent living units.
- Thirdly, governments could address the geographic spread of SIH so that older people can adjust their housing while remaining in their familiar local neighbourhood. Provision of a standard set of information on the distribution of the aged population in relation to the distribution of various forms of older persons' housing would assist providers and could promote SIH in under-supplied localities.
- Fourthly, governments could play a role in setting principles and developing guidelines for good practice for SIH, in conjunction with provider bodies, through practice standards and guides, codes of practice, and rating scales.
- Finally, a stronger evidence base should be developed to inform public policy. There is a need for a comprehensive survey of retirement villages and other forms of SIH in Australia to establish the current level and types of provision.

AHURI Research & Policy Bulletin

FURTHER INFORMATION

This bulletin is based on AHURI project 20287, *Service integrated housing for Australians in later life.*

Reports from this project can be found on the AHURI website: www.ahuri.edu.au or contact the AHURI National Office on +61 3 9660 2300.

You may also be interested in the following related AHURI Research and Policy Bulletins (RAPs) which can be found on the AHURI website.

RAP 009: *Improving housing and care for adults with disabilities*

RAP 118: *The role of home maintenance and modification services in achieving health, community care and housing outcomes in later life*

RAP 067: *Ageing in place: intergenerational and intrafamilial housing transfers and shifts in later life*

RAP 012: *Housing, housing assistance and well being for older people*

www.ahuri.edu.au

AHURI
Australian Housing and Urban Research Institute

HEAD OFFICE Level 1, 114 Flinders Street Melbourne Victoria 3000 TELEPHONE +61 3 9660 2300
FACSIMILE +61 3 9663 5488 EMAIL information@ahuri.edu.au WEB www.ahuri.edu.au

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS This material was produced with funding from Australian Government and the Australian States and Territories. AHURI Ltd acknowledges the financial and other support it has received from the Australian, State and Territory Governments, without which this work would not have been possible.