

Health: The Design, Planning and Politics of How and Where We Live

- **Paper / Proposal Title:**

"The great Australian dream or just a roof over my head". An ecological perspective on seniors housing for a marginalised ageing Australian population.

- **Format:**

Written Paper (3000 words) and Verbal Presentation in person

- **Author(s) Name:**

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- **University or Company Affiliation:**

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- **Abstract (300 words):**

Australia, like many other industrialised nations, is facing a serious shortage of appropriate housing for its ageing population. Those on the margins, in particular, struggle to secure, affordable and physically appropriate housing. In truth the margins are growing. Larger numbers of older people, often women, are finding themselves experiencing episodic 'homelessness' for the first time.

The corporate quality of our wellbeing, significantly buoyed by safe and secure housing, could potentially decline into a national health crisis when so many older Australians are unable to find and retain suitable accommodation. Unless relevant responses are found, this shortage may indirectly add to the public health and resource burden, in what's likely to be a different socio-economic landscape in the future.

Compounding factors causing this shortage are; an ageing demographic, dissolution of traditional family units, government policy changes around publicly funded aged care services, increasingly out-moded building paradigms for older Australians, growing

unaffordability of housing, disparate legislative paradigms, and complicated and ill-informed planning processes inhibiting innovation. The widely proclaimed preference to 'age in place' is threatened by current housing stock; largely inappropriate for failing bodies and faculties inclusive of dementia related issues, and historic patterns of suburban development diminishing socialization older people increasingly isolated due to declining mobility and slim public transport options.

Though the call for new housing typologies to address these emergent issues is well represented in the literature, a scarcity of exemplary research exists in response. Competing forces within societal structures which shape housing for older people is not uniquely Australian. By examining these forces within the present seniors housing and care ecology in Australia, this study aims to identify barriers to innovation and explore potential new typologies that respond to the issues at hand and thus add to the knowledge around potential solutions for this growing national health issue.

• **Author(s) Biography (200 words each):**

Matthew Hutchinson is a registered architect and PhD candidate at QUT in Brisbane, Australia. In early 2016 he moved to full time research after 25 years in architectural practice. His most recent position was as a Partner and National Sector Leader in Seniors Living design for ThomsonAdsett, ranked 2nd in the world for seniors design by Building Design World Architecture. In this role Matthew was responsible for the strategic design and business direction of the firm's Seniors Living sector and has spoken regularly at Industry conferences. His current research is investigating new housing typologies for Australia's ageing population within the existing ecology of housing and care. He has a particular interest in solutions for the marginalised in this sector. Through his professional practice, his involvement in multiple seniors housing projects and his exposure to other models globally, Matthew considers that the present traditional specifically designed seniors housing typologies in themselves will be insufficient and inappropriate to meet the needs of imminent residents and more certainly future users like the Baby Boomers and generations beyond. Matthew believes that relevant solutions can only emerge through a considered review of the socio-economic, policy and environmental forces bearing on this sector.