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versus Aging in Place**

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CHAPTER SEVEN

Boomer housing preferences: Active Adult Lifestyle Communities versus aging in place

Caryl Bosman

Introduction

Population aging is a feature of many developed countries due to higher life expectancy and a collapse in birth rates following the post-war baby boom (Fishman 2010). The vanguard generation of this demographic shift are the ‘baby boomers’ – people born between 1946 and 1965 in the so-called post–World War II baby boom. In Australia baby boomers make up a significant proportion of the population and the effects of the aging of this cohort are increasingly the focus of housing scholarship. Between 1993-2013 the proportion of Australia’s population over 65-years increased from 2.8 percent to 14.4 percent (Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) 2013). Furthermore, the over 65-years cohort is projected to increase to 25 percent of the population by 2056 (ABS 2013). The aging population presents a number challenges in Australia: a reduction in the workforce; an increase in welfare/pension dependence; a change in consumer and lifestyle patterns; and most significantly for this book, the provision of housing.

One important facet of the intersection between the ageing of the baby boomer generation in Australia and the housing industry is the type of housing that this cohort will seek to live in as they age. This chapter will investigate two such build form options: 1) the master planned, age segregated, Active Adult Lifestyle Community (AALC) and 2) aging in place. Specifically, the chapter will examine the reasons why some baby boomers opt to buy into age-restricted communities, specifically AALCs, while others decide to age in place. Key indicators of baby boomer housing choice used in this study are affordability, sense of community, safety and security and staying physically active. Drawing on these key indicators, the aim of this study was to understand some of the benefits and disadvantages of aging in place and living in an AALC. This analysis provides an insight into some of the key housing attributes that can be drawn upon to inform housing choices and innovation in the housing industry, and to address the diverse housing needs and requirements of an aging population (Boldy et al. 2009).

Active Adult Lifestyle Communities (AALCs) and aging in place: a review

While previous research suggest that the majority of baby boomers show a preference to age in place, others has indicate their intention to move to a location that more directly facilitates their lifestyle aspirations (Beer et al. 2009; KPMG 2009; Smith 2009; Judd et al. 2014; Myers and Ryu 2008; Harding and Kelly 2007). This section will outline some of the differences between AALCs and aging in place.

AALCs: What are they?

AALCs began to emerge in Australia, New Zealand and United States in the early 2000s (Bosman 2012; Grant 2006; Fishman 2010). AALCs are age segregated master planned developments that are designed specifically for active adults between the ages of 55-74 (Bosman 2012; Suchman 2001). They are usually niche market developments, targeted toward the financially secure, healthy and active baby boomer cohorts or WOOAPies (well off older active persons). According to Grant (2006: 103) AALCs ‘provide an alternative perspective on the notion of aging in place ... [and] are intended to be dynamic environments, advocating independent living and a good quality of life’. Moving into an AALC for some baby boomers is about ‘making a transition to a new life ... bypassing and resisting the negative expectations and stereotypes of what growing older is supposedly about’ (Grant 2006: 102).

While AALCs offer their residents a suitable model for their lifestyle life-stage it is only an option available to those who have the financial security to buy into this type of housing. Those within this cohort are not financially homogeneous and these baby boomers have diverse financial positions. For many Australian baby boomers affordable and appropriate housing has become a real concern (Kendig et al. 2013). This concern is not unique to Australian baby boomers, many of which will not have more than the equity in their house and the government funded age pension. Baby boomers who have a sufficient self-funded income have the opportunity to choose their place and type of house to suit their preferred lifestyle and for some an AALC fulfils these criteria.

One reason that AALCs are becoming popular in both America and Australia is that they offer their residents the opportunity to reside within a ‘collaborative of individuals who are connected via their pursuit of a common lifestyle’ (Buys et al. 2007: 288). Most literature

confirms that social bonds are more commonly created between people of similar age, income, values, background and experiences (Rosenblatt et al. 2009; Panelli and Welch 2005). In AALCs resident age restrictions are enforced by property Title Deed and covenants and children are prohibited from residing in the community for any length of time. There are no investors or renters in AALCs resulting in a narrow socio-economic and demographic composition that McHugh and Larson-Keagy (2005) describe as ‘birds of a feather’.

Concerns about safety and security often increase as people age. Walters and Bartlett (2009) found that many people in their study who were about to retire, or had already retired, wanted to move from their current suburban environments to a master planned community (MPC). The primary motivation for the move was based on the understanding that the majority of MPC residents owned their own home, i.e. no rental properties. Home ownership has a strong correlation with the lack of housing risks associated with aging in place; principally fear of isolation, crime and risks attached to property (as opposed to home) ownership.

Walters and Bartlett (2009) found that strong social relationships were of great importance for physical and mental wellbeing as people changed their lifestyle in retirement. It is often the appeal of remaining independent and active that attracts many baby boomers to move into an AALC. It is also this appeal that makes these developments attractive to government agencies and developers. Active and independent (and therefore healthy) residents can lead to economic savings and other indirect benefits. Suchman (2001: 21) argues that ‘active adults impose less of a burden on most public services than do residents of other types of developments’. This is because residents of AALCs are (required to be) healthy and most formally public services are offered privately within the confines of the gates. Friendships also become more important as many residents do not expect support, nor want to be a liability on family members. In fact, in Walters and Bartlett’ (2009) study, many of the aging baby boomers have no expectations that their children would or should provide support for them as they age. This trend contradicts convention because, “for many years the traditional support network in old age has been the family, particularly the spouse and children” (Winter 2000).

Aging in place: A preferred option?

Drawing on Olsberg and Winter (2005) aging in place relates to the neighbourhood and familiarity with place rather than the actual dwelling. Successful aging in place requires

sustaining participation in the home and community throughout the course of older adulthood. The perceived benefits and disadvantages of aging in place are numerous. Benefits include opportunities to retain connections to long-term neighbours and friends within communities. In addition there are no covenants to be observed, governing visitors among other things, as there are in AALCs. However the demographic profile of many suburban areas in Queensland shows a high degree of ‘churn’, and this is particularly the case for the study region of the Gold Coast (Dredge and Jamal 2013). The concept of neighbourhood ‘churn’ refers to changes in the demographics of a longstanding and relatively stable neighbourhood as some older residents die and others move into alternative types of accommodation. This change can contribute to the social isolation of residents who remain to age in place, as new residents move into the area with different interests, life stages and attitudes. Significantly, community facilities are often targeted to the dominant demographic of the neighbourhood resulting in potentially reduced physical and social opportunities for those that age in a changing place.

Personal mobility can become a barrier to social engagement, active aging and independence. Likewise, neighbourhoods that are perceived as not being conducive to walking and where there is a lack of public transport may also lead to social isolation, ill health and dependence (Pearson et al. 2012; Siebert 2007). Research conducted by Bowling (2009) determined that the physical characteristics of a neighbourhood could contribute to the sense of safety and security of older Australians. The physical characteristics of the house may also be a cause of risk and expense. As a house ages it often requires costly maintenance and as residents of the house age retrofitting is frequently required to ensure safety and useability of the spaces (Judd et al. 2014).

Methods and case study background

This chapter draws on data gathered through two comparative case studies. In each case study area there was one AALC and one suburban zone (four in total). The case study locations were selected from the Gold Coast City region, in the South East of the State of Queensland, Australia (see Figure 7.1). The Gold Coast has a long established reputation as a retirement hotspot (Ogilvie 2010) and has seen a variation in retirement housing tenure and type since 2000. The Gold Coast is a regional, largely suburban, city of approximately half a million people. It is one of the fastest growing areas in Australia. By 2021 almost one third of the city’s population will be over 55. This will have a significant impact on the provision of facilities and amenities for aging residents in many suburbs. The aging profile of the Gold

Coast means that services for the aged will increasingly be needed: lifestyle life-stage housing, medical facilities, home care support and an increase in reliable and accessible public transport.

[INSERT FIGURE 7.1 HERE]

The two case studies selected from the Gold Coast City region were:

1. Case Study Site 1: Halcyon Waters, an AALC and a suburban area in Helensvale and
2. Case Study Site 2: Golden Crest Manors, an AALC and a suburban area in Nerang.

Both AALC zones were developed after 2005 and both suburban zones date back to the early 1980s. Using data drawn from the Australian Bureau of Statistics 2011 Census of Population and Housing, the two AALC sites were chosen for their difference in locational and socio-economic characteristics and the suburban sites were chosen because they are representative of the type of development in that specific suburban area (see Table 7.1).

[INSERT TABLE 7.1 HERE]

Case Study Site 1 – Helensvale and Hope Island-Halcyon Waters

Planning for the suburb of Helensvale began in the mid-1970s in response to strong population and economic growth in what is now the Gold Coast City. The area was predominantly sugar cane plantation prior to its suburban transformation. The suburb was designed to incorporate substantial open space in the form of a centrally located golf course and a series of interconnected linear parks that provided most houses with access to open space. By 1991 the suburb had both a primary and high school and a shopping centre (University of Queensland, 2013). Hope Island was also a sugar cane plantation with the majority of the land being floodplain for the adjacent Coomera River. After significant dredging and engineering works, the first residential development emerged in the mid-1980s. Development on Hope Island is explicitly exclusive, being at the high end of the property market and consisting in the main of gated residential estates. Halcyon Waters (2005-2013) is one such master planned lifestyle residential resort, planned and designed specifically for the over 50 active cohorts (i.e. baby boomers). Halcyon Waters, built on about 14 hectares, is situated within 100 acres of protected wetland.

Case Study Site 2 – Nerang and Golden Crest Manors

Residential development in Nerang is not typically exclusive. The township was surveyed in 1865 and by 1876 it was a small rural settlement and a railhead for local produce and timber. During the population and economic booms of the region in the 1970s and 80s the town grew and piecemeal residential subdivisions replaced pastoral landscapes. The Nerang case study zone, like Helensvale, was strategically planned. Planning and development of Golden Crest Manors in Nerang began around the same time as Halcyon Waters. Golden Crest Manors is located in Nerang, which is one of the earliest townships in the Gold Coast region (see Figure 7.1). Golden Crest Manors, sited on 27 hectares, is on a rise overlooking light industry and bulk retail outlets.

Both AALC developments offer detached 2-3 bedrooms, mostly single storied houses on 250-350 square metre blocks. The Helensvale suburban zone primarily consists of project houses with facebrick veneer and on-ground slab construction, and a few architecturally design houses, on 800–1000 square metre allotments. While the Nerang zone is characterised by lightweight prefabricated houses, mostly pole construction about two metres off the ground, on approximately 800 square metre allotments.

Interview participants from the four areas were selected based on age cohort (born between 1946-1965) and housing tenure and type (i.e. those residing within the case study zones, in detached houses, and home owners). A total of 13 individuals, five who are aging in suburban place and eight living in AALCs, were interviewed. Participants' gender was balanced and interviews took place in their homes. The familiar environment enabled participants to feel comfortable, which increased rapport, in turn increasing more informed and relevant discussion. Interviews were semi-structured and questions were open ended. Questions were designed to solicit information about some of the key drivers for housing choice for these baby boomers: this included affordability, sense of community, safety and security and staying physically active. Questions directed to AALC residents were focused on whether this housing typology met their physical, social and financial expectations. Questions directed at baby boomers aging in place sought to establish if the suburban setting was appropriate for their life-stage and lifestyle.

Limitations to data collection emerged during the course of procuring participants for interviews. It was difficult to gain access to the residents of AALCs because all initial contact

was made via onsite management, who were reluctant to approach residents. To overcome this a snowballing method was employed. Initial access to residents was achieved via a friend that had personal connections within one of the AALCs; this provided someone who could vouch for the research and assist in the recruitment of initial participants. Data limitations include a potential bias as many of the interviewees were from the same social network. Nonetheless, the benefits of procuring contacts in an otherwise inaccessible environment are balanced by this limitation (Streeton et al. 2004).

There is also an important caveat to make here. It would be incorrect to think that all baby boomers are alike and have the same capacity to be active consumers (see Hulse and Burke this volume). Baby boomers are as diverse as any other cohort and many will not fit the characteristics outlined in this chapter. The findings from this study should not be taken as representative of the heterogeneous generation known as baby boomers. Notwithstanding this caveat, a set of key baby boomer characteristics is commonly cited in academic, marketing and real estate literature and the term baby boomers, therefore, holds some contextual weight for an analysis of AALCs. The term 'retirement' also needs to be clarified. The official retirement age for many Australian baby boomers is 65 and this is mooted to increase to 70 as of 2035. The current accepted definition of retirement is generally related to a life-stage characterised by leaving the work-force and being eligible for government pensions and a range of fiscal incentives. Many baby boomers are in the process of remodelling this life-stage (KPMG 2009) and are predicted to go through several stages of stepping back before finally leaving the work force. These years are often referred to as the 'lifestyle phase' characterised by part time work and focused on lifestyle amenity. In this chapter I use the term 'lifestyle life-stage' to emphasis this life-stage (denoting baby boomers aged 65-68 in 2014).

The case study analysis is structured around the four key indicators of baby boomer housing choice outlined above: 1) affordability, 2) sense of community, 3) safety and security and 4) staying physically active. Where significant differences occur across the two case studies the specific zone is named, otherwise the following summary reflects both case study sites (all four zones). As already highlighted, there is an identified need for greater housing choice and innovation in the housing industry to address the aging population phenomena (Judd et al. 2014). This analysis provides an insight into one set of the key housing attributes that can be drawn upon to inform new housing choices and innovation in the housing industry.

Understanding the lived experience: AALCs and aging in place

Affordability

Affordability is a key component of housing choice for many Australian home owning baby boomers given many will only have the equity in their house and the government funded age pension (non-home-owning baby boomers face a set of different challenges). The term housing affordability is typically used to relate housing costs to household incomes. The term affordable or social housing typically refers to a form of housing tenure. A lack of funds (or housing equity) to access desired housing could result in baby boomers having little choice about the location where they live. As a consequence of this, some people may find themselves living in areas with poor access to public transport, community services and support networks.

The study did not determine the affordability or social housing status of households within the two case studies. All houses were generally of good quality and the urban form was well maintained. The major differences between the AALCs and the suburban zones were the age of the development and the extent of, and budget allocated to maintenance. Both AALCs were recent developments and were immaculately maintained by the Body Corporate. In addition, residents were obliged to comply with a suite of stringent covenants. These covenants contribute to the degree of homogeneity in the urban form. The suburban zones reflect a much more diverse and less regulated landscape partly because the development is older and alterations, additions and landscaping reflect personal, rather than Body Corporate, endeavours.

Another significant point of difference between the AALCs and the suburban zones is the cost of purchasing a house. An AALC home (which does not include the land) costs significantly more than a home in the neighbouring suburban area. For example, homes in the Halcyon Waters AALC development were advertised as selling for between AU\$445-850K plus expenses, while a Helensvale property (which included both house and land) were generally advertised for around AU\$350,000. The ABS data in Table 7.1 also shows the median household weekly income for residents living in Golden Crest Manors estate to be AU\$601 and in Halcyon Waters AU\$830. While both of these are lower than in the adjoining suburban zones (AU\$1154 in Helensvale and AU\$1249 in Nerang) the dominant tenure of the AALCs was “fully owned” and the suburban zones are “being purchased”. Affordability in respect to

living in an AALC is therefore in relation to paying Body Corporate fees and other related expenses rather than in purchasing a home. Moving into an AALC however does require sufficient equity to purchase a home, which limits who can and who cannot move into these communities.

Sense of community

In both the suburban zones the only communal areas and social infrastructure are green open spaces and a Returned and Services League (RSL) club with an associated bowling green in the Nerang area. By contrast, residents in AALC developments were provided with a range of informal and formal communal areas including: a clubhouse, barbeque areas, herb gardens and sporting facilities. Most of this social infrastructure is located to create an active mixed-use hub that provides a focal point for residents. This hub is conveniently located and accessible by foot for all residents. In addition, public art and design features encourage a sense of place within these developments. Because the communal green areas in the Helensvale and Nerang zones are informal and low maintenance there is no provision for specific place making design features. These green spaces are however interconnected with adjoining green spaces within the wider area thereby promoting physical and social integration of the zone. The communal areas and social infrastructure within both the AALCs are only available to residents, as these developments are gated and privatised. In this respect the urban form of the AALCs reinscribe socio-economic divisions. Also because they are AALCs, the degree of social mix within the development is limited: all residents are of similar age and abilities and housing tenure is all owner occupied.

However, while the AALCs were designed specifically to facilitate some forms of 'community' these developments were also seen as restricting other forms of 'community'. For instance, Sue said she decided to age in place because she regularly had family members over to visit and stay overnight; this would prove difficult in an AALC. John also chose to age in place because:

... people of the same age usually talk about similar subjects, I think it would be boring not to have a mix of people living around you.

Yet, for those who had moved into an AALC it was this social homogeneity that all interviewees valued. As Peter explains:

... you drive around, not with hoons running up and down the street, all the people are like-minded. A place like this you develop a lot of good friendships and then you get a very close nucleus of friends that you really love to go out with.

Likewise, Pam liked the fact that people were of a similar age and she resented the fact that in recent years the age profile was diversifying. She reflected:

Nobody was old here that we saw ... but now they're starting to let in a lot of older people. It wasn't supposed to be [like that]. ... they can't look after themselves. And none of us moved in here to be looking after old people.

A sense of community is strongly correlated to social health and wellbeing of individuals, and this is particularly the case as people get older. As people age, changes in their circumstances—such as reduction in income, reduced mobility, illness, widowhood, moving house or taking on informal caring responsibilities—can increase the risk of social isolation (Australian Institute of Health and Welfare, 2013), which relates closely to depression, low morale, and poor health. Conversely, social participation and connections are important sources of support for older people and contribute to good health and well-being throughout life (World Health Organization, 2007). Results of a study by Cornwell and Waite (2009) indicated that social disconnectedness and perceived isolation are independently associated with lower levels of self-rated physical health. It is these concerns and anticipated outcomes that are frequently associated with ageing in place. This is largely due to the lack of infrastructure and accessible amenities and facilities appropriate to the needs and requirements of individuals as they age (Smith, 2009; Walters, 2005). In addition, as capital and voting power shift to newer and/or more conducive development areas that are 'age friendly' (such as AALCs) some suburban areas may become even more physically and socially isolated for many baby boomers as they age.

Safety and security

Safety can be used to refer to two different concepts: one refers to the actual crime rate and another refers to individual's perception of safety (Wilson-Doenges 2000). Feeling unsafe and fear of crime have negative impacts on individuals' quality of life. People restrict their activities because of feeling unsafe (Taylor 1988; McIntyre 1967). Wood et al. (2008) found

that the level of upkeep of a neighbourhood environment positively impacts on feelings of safety and social interaction between neighbours.

Perceptions of and the provision for safety and security was key to many interviewees choosing to move into an AALC from a suburban environment. Perceptions of safety in the AALC case study zones emerge from living in a community where everyone was known, where only residents had access to facilities and where there was monitored and restricted access and egress to the development. The planning and design of the urban form also contributed to perceptions of safety. Public spaces were designed to exclude places of possible concealment and to maximise opportunities for surveillance. The street layout in both AALCs was simple and logical and way finding was easy. Spaces were specifically designed for intended uses including night_time use. Perceptions of and the provision for safety and security in the suburban case study zones were very different. Landscaping of the public areas was designed to minimise places of possible concealment however surveillance from adjoining houses was limited. In both suburban zones the street pattern in combination with the topography did not make for easy way finding and there was little consideration of appropriate night_time usage of the public green spaces.

All AALC interviewees rated safety and security as their primary reason for moving into the development. For example, Peter and his wife wanted to travel and they wanted to be sure their belongings were secure while they were away. Peter also identified safety and security as a feature of their enjoyment of the development when they were there:

We love the idea of going through gates that lock behind us. So you feel very safe here, the ladies feel very safe in here and don't mind walking around at night or anything like that. Its biggest attraction for older people is going to be the security. For sure, it's got to be the attraction. As soon as you turn on TV, 'I don't want to live out there'. Whereas here, you don't think of that, you think you're quite safe.

The threat of crime was also identified as a disadvantage by those who were aging in place. As Arnie, a suburban-zone resident, identified,

... like you see on the telly now, where every day multiple stabbings and robberies and that sort of stuff.

A personal sense of safety and security is heightened as people age and become less agile. The perception of crime or public nuisance problems within a persons neighbourhood are an important indicator of how they feel about their own safety and wellbeing. Tenure also plays a big role in the perception of security in Australian cities, where ‘renters are regarded as potential perpetrators of anti social behavior, and are seen as likely to ‘lower the tone’ of the community’ (Walter and Bartlett 2009: 232).

Staying physically active

The physical planning of all four zones encourages some level of physical activity. All four zones included public open space that potentially meets the needs of residents. These open spaces were, however, limited to a narrow range of activities specific to the demographic characteristics of the area: the mean age of AALC residents were 68, while it was 35 for residents in the suburban zones. Also, almost 60 percent of suburban zone households had children and there were no children residing in the AALCs. Notably, land use in Helensvale and Nerang is not specifically designed to encourage walking as the topography is steep and the zones are suburban and car dependant. Land use within both AALCs however is specifically designed to encourage physical activity with the location of recreational facilities and letterboxes planned to encourage walking. John explains:

There are two hazards of Halcyon that I recognised early in the piece. One is you develop RSI of the right elbow from waving to people and if you want to get your mail from the mail box down the front in a hurry you’ve got to drive your car because if you try to walk it will take you an hour.

The planning of the AALCs is designed specifically to meet the needs of active baby boomers. Partly because the development is gated and partly because the lifestyle and planning emphasis is on the active years of the baby boomer cohorts, the urban form may not be suitable for those AALC baby boomers who wish to age in place, particularly if they require specialised care. In the suburban areas some house designs can be adapted to meet the needs of people who wish to age in place however the topography and density of the suburb and the reliance on private vehicular transport suggest the opportunities for physical and social activities will be limited.

Most houses in the suburban zones are within 400-500m of a bus stop and have pedestrian access to open green space. Neither of the AALC case study areas was on a public transport route. However all foot and cycle paths within the estates were interconnected and destinational. Importantly, AALC streetscapes are designed to be attractive, interesting and welcoming to pedestrians and they are universally accessible. This is not the case in the suburban zones where the 'carscape' is predominant, not all roads have footpaths and pedestrian areas are not all universally accessible. In these two zones the street pattern comprises cul-de-sacs and loop roads and the majority of everyday facilities (shopping centre, community centre, etc.) are within a 1.5 km radius of the zone. These facilities are accessible for cyclists and fit and healthy pedestrians. The development to the north and east of Golden Crest Manors comprises light industry and fast food outlets and a hardware retailer. These amenities are not easily accessible by foot because the topography is steep and the roads are not conducive to either cycle or pedestrian travel. At Halcyon a medical precinct and age care facility are planned for adjoining greenfield sites and there is a small shopping complex within 1.5 km, accessible by motor vehicle.

Conclusion

Baby boomers, both in Australia and internationally, are often characterised as a generation with higher expectations than interwar generations and a desire to stay involved with working life (KPMG, 2009). It has been argued that baby-boomers have radically redefined each life stage as they have entered and moved through them (Hamilton and Hamilton, 2006). Therefore, it is perhaps not surprising that home owning baby boomers involved in this study are in the process of remodelling what retirement means, a stage of life characterised by part time work and focused on lifestyle amenity. Housing is key to this stage. As such there is an identified need for increased choice in housing to accommodate the needs and desires of many baby boomers. The key indicators of housing choice (affordability, sense of community, safety and security and staying physically active) discussed in this chapter have both national and international relevance and in particular with regard to aging populations.

This study focused on the build form and AALCs emerged as the preferred housing option for some baby boomers according to ~~these~~ the stated indicators. AALC developments were specifically designed to encourage a sense of community, safety and security and physical activity albeit within the gated perimeter of the development. Both AALCs include manicured open space and recreational facilities that encourage a broad range of activity choices. These

facilities were arranged to be accessible to all residents without the need to drive to any of them. To encourage this physical exertion street networks throughout the development are connected, pedestrian friendly and green and leafy. A major drawcard for some AALC residents is the provision of a clubhouse, which also acts as a venue for events, activities and to socialise with other residents. However, because these developments were *active* adult communities all infrastructure and resources for encouraging healthy aging were geared towards the 50-75 cohorts. This, of course, excludes those sorts of activities appropriate for children and the non-active adults. The downside to this ‘advantageous’ housing option is the cost related to the purchase of the house and Body Corporate fees, an exclusive and largely homogenous social structure, a reliance on residents being able to drive a motor vehicle and a lack of public transport. Nonetheless, AALCs were providing access to resources which appealed to their baby boomer residents, the oldest of whom were, as of 2014, in their 60s.

While the suburban areas offered some recreational opportunities, these were not as appropriate for all sections of the population; suburban street networks were not all connected and were not designed to encourage pedestrian travel. Impediments to the continuing engagement of older adults in these zones include discontinuous or broken footpaths, poor or no public transport and a lack of adequate lighting. Importantly, the suburban zones were designed primarily for vehicle travel and family living and intervention in these sites was difficult.

These case study findings are not unique; rather they reinforce the trends and evidence from international studies. Based on this analysis, some of the key housing attributes that can be drawn upon to inform new housing choices and innovation in the housing industry, and to address the housing needs and requirements of the aging population include:

- The design and delivery of an affordable product (relative to income from any source) that allows easy, universally accessible, pleasant and safe pedestrian access to core amenities and facilities such as communal outdoor and in-door spaces, as well as commercial and retail outlets.
- A product that gives security of tenure and appeals to baby boomers from a range of backgrounds and socio-economic brackets.

- A product that is well maintained and depicts a high level of appropriate design features (including crime prevention through environmental design, way finding and night time uses).
- A product that allows different levels of physical activity and caters for different circumstances and abilities.

To meet the challenge of housing a rapidly increasing lifestyle life-stage baby boomer population the housing industry will need to deliver affordable housing that also responds to and encourages a sense of community, safety and security and staying physically active. This housing should not just be suitable for the younger baby boomer cohorts, the housing products need to remain appropriate and relevant as they age. To quote the Australian demographer Bernard Salt (2010) ‘there’s nothing that should concern a government (at any level) more than a bored baby boomer in the burbs’.

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Figure 7.1: Location map of the case study sites Halcyon Waters, Helensvale, Golden Crest Manors and Nerang, Gold Coast City region, Queensland.

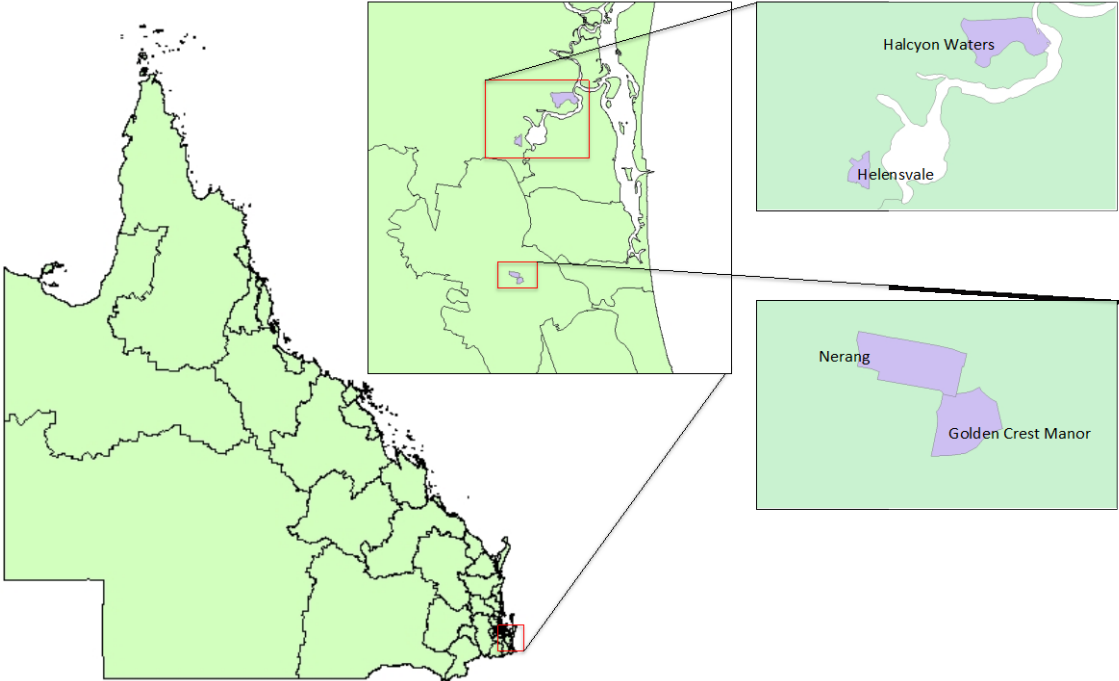


Table 7.1: Statistical comparison of the two case study sites (four zones) highlighting key socio-economic characteristics of the different areas.

	Case Study Site 1		Case Study Site 2	
	Halcyon Waters SA1 3125322	Helensvale SA1 3125232	Golden Crest Manors SA1 3124718	Nerang SA1 3124818
Median age	65	38	72	32
Households with Children	NA	58%	NA	59.3%
Lone persons	20.2%	22.9%	39.9%	12.8%
Median household weekly income	\$830	\$1154	\$601	\$1249
Low income households	27.6%	18.2%	45.2%	18.6%
Unemployment	NA	6.7%	NA	11.4%
2+cars/household	43.9%	56.1%	17%	65.1%
Dominant dwelling	separate house	separate house	separate house	separate house
Dominant tenure	fully owned	being purchased	fully owned	being purchased
Renting	NA	23.7%	NA	23.3%

Data taken from 2011 ABS (.id the population experts 2013)