



**Global Centre for
Modern Ageing**

Ageing in the Right Place

AN AUSTRALIAN PERSPECTIVE

“

A place where I am comfortable, safe and stress-free. A place where I will continue to age independently and to grow culturally and in experience ... a place where I want to be.

”

FOREWORD:

Ageing in the Right Place



At the Global Centre for Modern Ageing (GCMA), we are dedicated to unleashing the value of people's lived experience.

Modern ageing is filled with opportunity and the GCMA realises the importance of amplifying the valuable voices of older people to inform business and policy to support people to age well. As such, the GCMA has invested to bring you this important Ageing in the Right Place research to better understand what the 'right place' means for people as they age.

The global population of people aged over 60 is expected to increase from 962 million in 2019 to 2.1 billion in 2050. In Australia alone, the proportion of people aged 65-plus is projected to grow from one in seven in 2017 to more than one in five by 2057.

The place we live – whether it be our house, home or haven – is often integral to who we are. As this report discusses, older Australians are not one homogeneous group and they have varying needs. There are, however, some common threads.

Three in four Australians aged 85 or older live independently at home, and not in care accommodation. Yet, as people's needs change, remaining at home might not be possible, highlighting a need to understand what constitutes the 'right' place for people to age well.



The findings presented in this Ageing in the Right Place report offer innovative businesses the chance to leverage opportunities by refocusing their vision of quality housing, aged care and retirement living, through a people-centric lens.

What could be more important?

The results have been summarised into the House-Home-Haven framework, which provides a perspective for transforming physical houses and spaces into meaningful havens.

On behalf of the Global Centre for Modern Ageing's team, I am delighted to present the inaugural Ageing in the Right Place report. We trust this report prompts a curiosity to further understand the opportunities the international ageing phenomenon brings.

By empowering industry, the GCMA is committed to ensuring that everyone will have the opportunity to live in the right place as they age.

Julianne Parkinson
Chief Executive Officer
Global Centre for Modern Ageing

Ageing in the Right Place An Australian perspective

The world is ageing with the proportion of people aged 60 and over continuing to grow. The UN predicts the global ageing population will more than double to over 2 billion people aged 60+ by 2050, up from 900 million in 2015. In Australia, the 65+ population is forecast to grow from 3.7 million in 2016 to nearly 6 million in 2031¹.

This ageing phenomenon presents both opportunities and challenges, creating a social and economic imperative for government and industry to help improve the health, wellbeing, lifestyle, engagement and participation of people as they age.

On an individual level, the Global Centre for Modern Ageing (GCMA) recognises that ageing brings opportunities for meaningful experiences and contributions through work, learning, social connections and leisure.

The GCMA seeks to uncover these opportunities by connecting older Australians to industry to ensure their voices are represented at the centre of discussions, design and strategy that will inform the future of ageing.

¹ Australian Institute of Health and Welfare, [Older Australia at a glance](#), 2017



One of the GCMA's key areas of focus is to understand the places where people live. Alive with memory and meaning, these 'places' become a part of ourselves, with affinity and attachment accumulating throughout our lives.

This attachment leads to a desire to 'age in place', with three in four Australians aged 85 or older living independently at home, and not in care accommodation.² Yet, as our needs change, remaining at home might not be possible, highlighting a need to understand what constitutes the 'right' place for people as their needs change.

In Australia, aged care facilities have come under immense scrutiny following the Royal Commission into Aged Care Quality and Safety, highlighting the need for substantial sectoral reform. There is urgent focus on identifying solutions that provide appropriate care to people who want to stay in their homes and those who need to move into care.

To understand what the 'right place' means for people as they age, the Global Centre for Modern Ageing surveyed over 1000 Australians aged 55+.

The research sought to discover:

- What 'ageing in the right place' means;
- The importance and meaning of home;
- Attitudes towards staying at home, moving home and making home modifications; and
- Perceptions of, and experiences with, community services and facilities.

The insights presented in this report offer innovative businesses the chance to leverage the opportunities arising from the modern ageing phenomenon and the increased demand for better housing, retirement living and aged care options. Ultimately, by empowering industry, the GCMA hopes everyone will have the opportunity to live in the *right* place as they age.

² Australian Institute of Health and Welfare, [Australia's welfare 2011](#) (2011), p 168.

House-Home-Haven™

As part of the 'Ageing in the Right Place' research, the Global Centre for Modern Ageing surveyed over 1000 Australians aged 55+ to uncover what makes a place feel like home and what factors are important when creating places where people want to live.

The results have been summarised into the **House-Home-Haven™** framework, which provides a perspective for transforming physical houses and spaces into meaningful havens.



HOUSE

The practical and physical residence for shelter, belongings, meals and sleep. The house provides safety and comfort and for some, is also a financial asset.



HOME

Bringing freedom, choice, independence, emotional safety, familiarity and individuality. A place for friends, family and kinship across life-stages.



HAVEN

The highest order of meaning. A sanctuary entwined with self and complete belonging. Familiarity transcends material value. People develop a seemingly irreplaceable 'sense of place'.



Utilising the House-Home-Haven™ framework.

Understanding haven-making is integral to shifting away from outdated models towards a more human-centric approach to housing, retirement living and aged care. This becomes especially important when circumstances change and alternative housing feels more like a shelter than a home or haven.

By adopting the House-Home-Haven™ framework, accommodation providers can minimise the emotional displacement for an individual and create an intimate and personalised offering.





HOUSE

A dwelling to live/reside in that provides...:

Somewhere to keep belongings

A place to eat, sleep etc.

Somewhere safe

Shelter

A roof over my head



HOME

A place that is my own where I...:

Have freedom, independence, choice

Feel comfortable, safe and secure

Can relax

Have love, happiness, memories

Live with, raise, gather and entertain family and friends



HAVEN

My refuge, castle, safe-haven, sanctuary where I...:

Have warmth, peace and tranquility

Can be myself

Belong

“It’s my everything!”

The Seven Needs of the 'Right' Place

Under the House-Home-Haven™ framework, the GCMA has identified seven distinct needs that determine the haven or 'right' place for people as their circumstances change.



This can serve as a guide to assist industry to take a more client-centric approach when developing commercially viable homes, retirement villages and aged care facilities that enable quality living and improve world standards.



Choice:



Individuals want to make their own decisions, determining what they do, and when and where they do it.

"To age where I want to, not where someone else thinks I should be."

Safety:



People need to feel safe on a physical and emotional level. Safety means different things to different people.

"A safe home in a safe area."

Comfort:



Linked to safety, people need a comfortable environment and to feel familiar with their house, surroundings and people.

"Where we are familiar with our environment, residence and community."

Access:



There is a need for close and reliable access to facilities including transport, health, shopping, medical, community, social, housing and hospital services.

"Growing older in an area that means I can still go shopping, travel easily to places I want to visit - the beach, gym, pool, and the city, parks and gardens."

Independence:



Linked to choice, there is a need for autonomy in daily life in a supportive environment, where help is accessible.

"Living in a place where you are happy and confident that you can either be independent or receive the help you need."

Connection:



Being close to friends, family and the community without feeling like a burden is an important need and source of social interaction.

"A place where I can have social interaction."

Happiness: 

People want to feel happy and be happy with where they are. Also important are feelings of contentment, satisfaction and enjoyment.

"Enjoying life to the best of your abilities."

Key Findings

Finding: **The desire to stay at home, even as circumstances change, *increases* with age.**

8ⁱⁿ10

8 in 10 respondents want to stay in their current home for as long as possible.

3ⁱⁿ4

3 in 4 respondents want to stay in their current home even if circumstances change and help is required.





Almost two-thirds of those aged 75+ think they will stay in their home, which is double that of the youngest cohort (55-64 years).



Possible Reasons:

Connection to community.

As we age, our connection to community can become tied to the bricks and mortar of home as independence is limited.

Personal experience.

As we grow older, we are more likely to have witnessed firsthand the transition to aged care facilities, through our parents or connected family members. This exposure forces a realisation that ageing can lead to compromised independence requiring support and an acceptance that staying at home might not be possible.

Our attachment to home grows stronger over time.

Familiarity provides comfort as circumstances change (e.g. declining health, mobility issues, loss of a loved one).

Opportunity for industry: **Appreciate individuality.**

Older Australians are not one homogeneous group. Personalisation is key. Building and delivery of solutions should consider life-stage differences and the diversity that comes with it. For instance, one person may be closer to a more immediate need to move than another. Those with no immediate need may passively absorb information about planning, options and providers, and not actively seek it out.



Finding: Older Australians are not planning their enablement to remain at home.

17%

Despite wanting to stay at home, only 17% of respondents thought their home would require repairs or modifications to enable them to do so.

40%

Even amongst those who are experiencing difficulties at home, only 40% acknowledge the need for home modifications.

\$

Barriers to home modifications include affordability and being able to find trusted builders and tradespeople.

Possible Reasons:

We compensate for our declining health.

Over many years, people may make incremental adjustments and compromises to their physical movements and habits, modifying their behaviour to suit their home, rather than reaching a point where they commit to home modifications that suit their needs.

Lack of awareness of options.

Home modifications may have been considered but disregarded due to a lack of awareness about options and processes required, and/or concerns around cost or trustworthiness of providers. Lack of knowledge about building options may make people feel less empowered to scrutinise plans, work and contractors.

Cost prohibitive nature of home modifications.

Home modifications can be expensive and high-commitment decisions, forcing them out of reach for many Australians.



Opportunity for industry: **Offer genuine and honest support.**



Home modification decisions are often difficult as they are sometimes unwelcome or made under duress, for instance, after a fall. Businesses who can help their clients navigate this tricky landscape can position themselves as a genuine solution provider in those crucial moments. The right partners could also encourage earlier and more prudent conversations before an emergency.

There is an opportunity for industry to address the need for public education around home modifications so people understand their needs, options available to them and the processes involved before decisions are rushed or forced.



Finding: **Balancing affordability and needs** is a key challenge when making housing transition decisions.



The most important considerations when moving were location, independence and cost.



Key barriers to moving included cost, difficulty of moving and wanting to remain somewhere familiar.



A quarter of people surveyed felt there was a lack of viable alternatives to living at home.

1 in 5

Only one in five people said there were no barriers to moving home.

5%

Only 5% would consider moving into a facility where care is provided if they needed help.

Opportunity for industry: **Communicate value.**



The research suggests that people want to age at home for as long as possible. To overcome the barriers associated with moving, businesses need to communicate their value. Providing affordable and desired options for supported living could empower people to stay in their home.



Finding: **Houses, community properties, facilities and services need to improve.**

Less than half of respondents believed there was adequate affordable and accessible housing available.



Only a quarter of respondents thought properties and facilities in the community suited the needs of older residents.



Healthcare, community services and transport services were not perceived by people living in regional areas to be done well.



Opportunities for arts, entertainment, culture, business and jobs were perceived as essential in communities.



Costs of cars and public transport were identified as key barriers to leaving the house, preventing people from engaging in their community.



Opportunity for industry: **Unified response.**

Improving properties, facilities and services is not the sole responsibility of planners and aged care providers. To be effective, there must be a unified response involving the entire modern ageing ecosystem, including local and state government working in concert with business leaders, developers and planners.



About the Research

Aim

The aim of the 'Ageing in the Right Place' research was to understand:

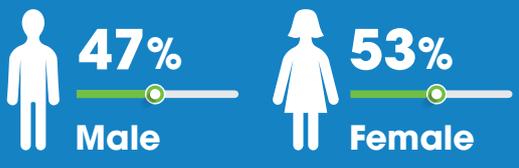
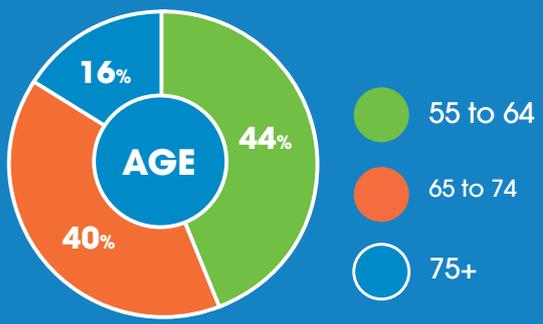
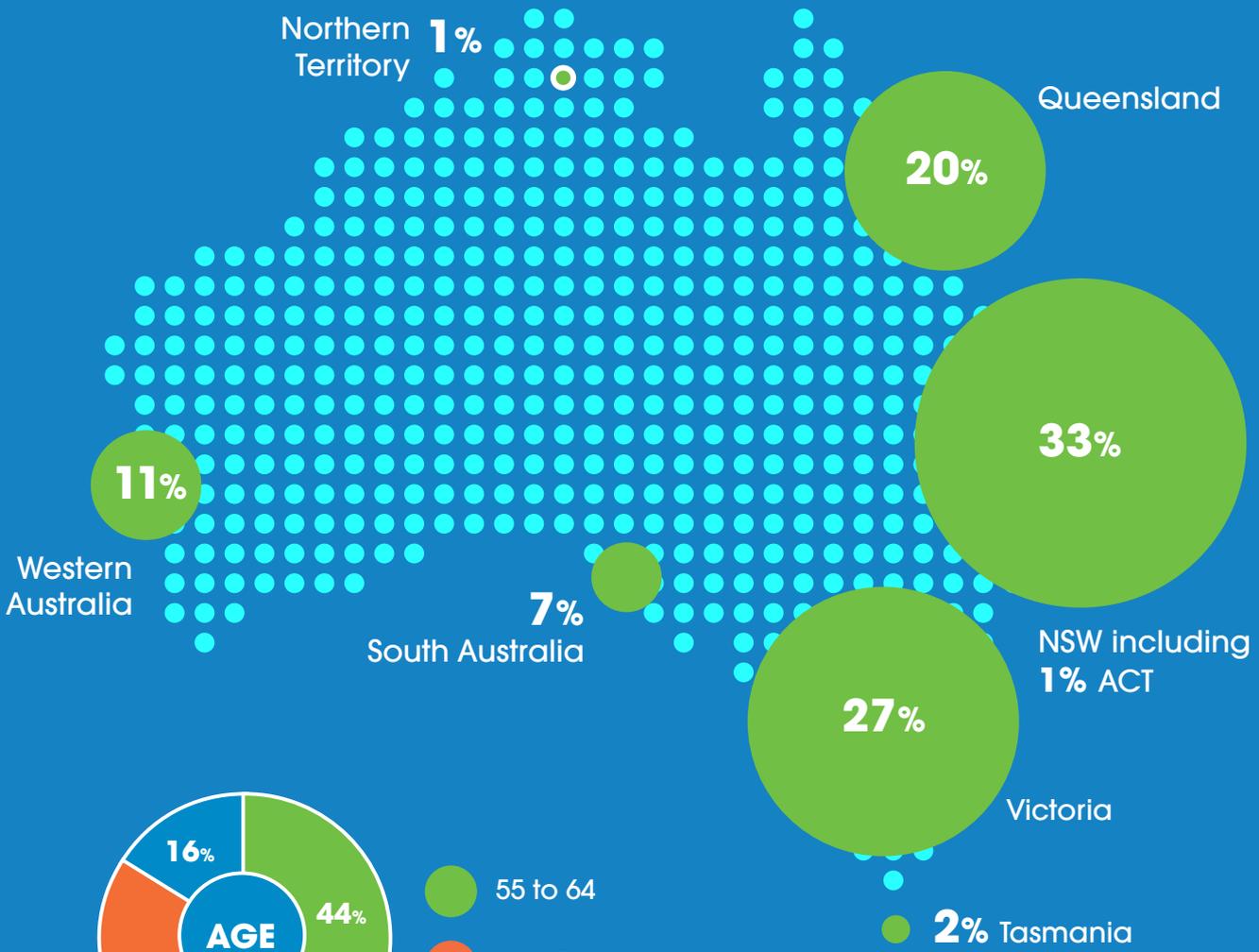
- What 'ageing in the right place' means;
- The importance and meaning of home;
- Attitudes towards staying at home, moving home and making home modifications; and
- Perceptions of, and experiences with, community services and facilities.

Methodology

Through an online survey of 28 questions managed by an online panel provider, the Global Centre for Modern Ageing sought insights from 1056 Australians aged 55+.



The sample



This sample was self-selected. Respondents were recruited via an online panel provider.

Questions about the research?

Questions about the 'Ageing in the Right Place' research can be directed to the Global Centre for Modern Ageing by emailing info@gcma.net.au or calling **+61 8 6117 5510**.

What's next?

The 'Ageing in the Right Place' research is the start of a new way of thinking. **The House-Home-Haven™** framework sets a direction to develop a deeper understanding of what housing options, independent living and a new spectrum of solutions could look like.

In 2020, the Global Centre for Modern Ageing will generate further insights that help specific industry sectors understand their opportunity in a transforming market.

To stay informed, please sign up to the GCMA newsletter at www.gcma.net.au/latest-news



About the GCMA

The Global Centre for Modern Ageing serves as a leading response to the international ageing phenomenon.

Modern ageing sparks an inclusive future that engages people throughout the whole of life's course to participate and belong in the ways they value.

The Global Centre for Modern Ageing provides world class research, advisory, advocacy and living lab services for governments, businesses and organisations. We help to improve the development of products, services and solutions, and to understand the challenges and opportunities presented by the changing demographic landscape.

The GCMA is a not-for-profit organisation that provides national and global clients with an independent, specialist and internationally acclaimed service offering.

Led by CEO Julianne Parkinson, the GCMA and its LifeLab network includes a product and technology testing environment facilitating user co-design, located in South Australia's Tonsley Innovation District.

www.gcma.net.au

“

... a place where I want to be.

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gcma.net.au

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