

The Future and History of Social Innovation in Housing for Older South Australians

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The housing needs of older South Australians are changing in response to profound demographic, economic and social transformation. In common with other parts of the nation, South Australia has a history of innovation in aged housing that has been focussed on the non-government sector, while relying upon home ownership and – to a lesser extent - public housing as the primary forms of accommodation for older citizens.

The established system of aged housing provision has not kept pace with contemporary trends: with the retirement village industry accommodating less than five per cent of the aged population, while 12 per cent of older households are resident in the private rental market. Our research suggests that conventional retirement villages are unattractive to a substantial percentage of the older population while those on low incomes may be trapped in housing that has poor access to services, is unaffordable, has limited capacity to meet their physical needs as they age and is insecure.

This paper considers the needs and preferences of older persons for housing in the 21st Century and the development of new models to better accommodate this important, and rapidly growing, group. The paper outlines some of the ways governments can create a policy framework that will encourage innovation in the supply of housing for older people.