EUTOPIA 75+: Exploratory Futures Scenarios for Baby Boomers' Preferred Living Spaces

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Abstract

Australia is experiencing the global phenomenon of an ageing population with the baby boomer generation starting to reach retirement age in large numbers. As a result, there is a growing need for appropriate accommodation and this will continue to grow for the foreseeable future. However, the needs of the fit, mobile and techno savvy baby boomers are likely to be far different from those of previous generations of older people, but are as yet unknown and unanticipated.

This paper reports on the findings of a Futuring research project to explore the preferred housing futures for the baby boomer generation in the city of Brisbane, an aspiring creative city in South East Queensland (SEQ), Australia. Their future home design and service needs are predicted by firstly employing a global environmental scan of related and associated ageing futures issues. This was followed by a micro-Futuring workshop, based on Inayatullah's Futures Triangle Analysis, to identify a range of scenarios.

The key aspects of the workshop culminated in the development of a Transformational Scenario – EUTOPIA 75+. From this, a suite of six design recommendations for seniors' housing design

and smart services provision are synthesised to give a sense of direction of preferred living styles, especially in terms of physical housing spaces, with a view to identifying new house design opportunities for the allied industries and research organisations. The issues identified are also of concern for aged care service providers, retirement living developers, and for academics involved in the social and physical design of living spaces for older people.

Keywords: ageing Futures, Brisbane, design, housing, smart services, transformational scenario.

Introduction and Background: What the Numbers Say

There is a global phenomenon of a numerical and structural ageing of the population. It is estimated by the United Nations that the number of older people over 60 years around the world will grow by 2.8% annually in 2025-2030 and exceed the number of young people for the first time by 2050 (United Nations Population Division, 2003). Internationally, older populations are, in the main, healthier and living longer than previous generations. This is due to a rapid increase in life expectancy in the 20th century; associated reductions in infectious diseases and declining early age and maternal mortality; medical advances in recent decades that led to declining middle- and old-age mortality; and rapid demographic shifts in the age structure known as population ageing (Kinsella and He in Olshansky et al., 2011). The most significant of these demographic shifts involves the ageing of the baby boom generation (see Table 1 below for the percentage of people aged 65+ in EU27, USA and Japan for years 2010 and 2060 - reflecting the ageing of the baby boom generation). The demographic changes indicate that the ageing of the baby boom generation will have a profound effect on the world in the decades to come with the urgent need to better understand the situation of ageing in place to consider appropriate policy and practice solutions.

Table 1. *Percentage of people aged 65+ for EU27, USA and Japan*

Nations	Percentage aged 65+	
	2010	**2060**
1. EU27 (including UK)	17.4	29.5
2. USA	13	21.9
3. Japan	23	39.9

Sources: 1. European Commission and Economic Policy Committee (2012); 2. United States Census Bureau (2012); 3. Statistics Bureau of Japan (2010), National Institute of Population and Social Security Research (2012)

In Australia, the over 65 population increased from 8.3% to 14%, and the over 85 cohort more than tripled from 0.5% to 1.8% between 1971 and 2011 (Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2012) (Table 1). Similarly to the national trend, it is expected that the proportion of people aged 65 and over in Queensland will increase from 13% to 20% by 2030-31. Almost half of Queensland's population growth will be constituted by the 65+ age group by the late 2020s (Australian Government, 2010). Brisbane's population is also ageing, as people aged 65 or older will more than triple by 2026, bringing the total of this age group to almost 156,000 (Brisbane City

Council, 2008). This fundamental change to Australia's population is due, for the most part, to the ageing of the baby boomer generation, increased longevity and a declining birth-rate. This will present both challenges and real opportunities for the city of Brisbane in service planning and delivery and providing attractive lifestyle localities for people from around Australia and beyond.

Who are the Baby Boomers?

In Australia, baby boomers are those born between 1946 and 1965. In 2011, the baby boomers born in the peak year of 1946 turned 65, starting a rapid growth of the over 65 cohort, four to five times faster than the total population. In 2021, the baby boomers will start to turn 75 and substantially increase their use of public sector health services and ageing support (Access Economics Pty Ltd., 2001).

Every generation has its own characteristics that distinguish it from others and baby boomers are no exception. Most are better educated, have more diverse experiences and on the whole are Internet and media savvy (Quine and Carter, 2006). They often enjoy better health than their predecessors due to better diets, medicines, exercise regimes and high quality health care access (Kaplan, 2002, Clausen et al., 2000). With the flexibility of the labour market and government incentive measures, they also intend to work longer as they grow older and, as a result of Australia's anti-ageist employment legislation, are unlikely to retire at a traditional retirement age (Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2010).

Baby boomers may not accept their parents way of ageing and would like to have more freedom and control of their personalised choices of retirement lives (Carson and Kerr, 2003; Hugo, 2003). Independence, participation, self-fulfilment and dignity are also advocated by the United Nations as important initiatives for older people (James, 2012). This will have implications on the changing needs of the baby boomers as they move through the age structure adding to the numbers of older people in the population and their need for better care and service provision in retirement. The purpose of this paper, therefore, is to pull together ideas and opinions from a Futuring workshop with aged care and retirement service providers and a multi-disciplinary university team from the social sciences, architecture and built environment disciplines to explore the future scenarios of retirement living spaces for Brisbane's baby boomer generation. To inform workshop participants, a pre-workshop environmental scan would discover what is currently known about the transition of the baby boomer generation into retirement to stimulate futures discussion about the implications for retirement living.

Method for Environmental Scanning and Futuring Workshop

There are several competing interpretations and definitions of Environmental Scanning (ES). Slaughter (1999, p.442) frames ES as a "methodology that stands at the juncture of foresight and strategy. It establishes organizationally relevant criteria that allow prepared human minds to discern information, knowledge and insight from the multitude of 'signals' that occur daily. In most cases the starting point for ES is the design of a scanning frame that helps practitioners decide what to look at and how to judge the usefulness of information. But, at the same time, there also needs to be an openness to new data, 'lone signals' and unconventional sources". For our own purposes, the ES component of this research was conducted

as a preliminary data collecting and sense-making exercise which formed the introduction to the Futuring workshop. Global environmental scanning was conducted to explore current options and situations of retirement living in order to obtain a general understanding of the existing practices of the retirement-living industry and identify possible implications for future development. Three major areas are identified including: a) government policies, b) senior housing in Australia and c) ageing related benchmarks.

The environmental scanning was conducted from June to August 2013. Relevant articles, reports, web pages, photos, videos, etc. regarding retirement living were collected from various sources such as Google searches, TV and radio programs, databases, advertisements, newspapers and magazines. A detailed analysis of the collected documents and materials was performed to retrieve information about the industry and possible future development of retirement living. The information was categorised and thematically analysed. The findings from the environmental scanning were reported to the participants of the workshop to set the scene and trigger innovative ideas.

The purpose of the Futuring workshop was to stretch and give tangible shape to the thinking of aged care providers and academics involved in ageing research. Participants were encouraged to examine critically their current routines of behaviour, to search for currently unrecognised alternatives, to analyse their goals and values, to become more conscious of the future and the control they may have over it, while being mindful of the well-being of future generations. The four hours workshop was conducted in August 2013 in a discussion-collaborative style with 15 participants from diverse professional backgrounds, including aged care service providers, architects, construction professionals, social scientists, a futurist and state government employees.

The data collected from the global environmental scanning was used as a basis for the workshop. Findings from the workshop, (the views and opinions of expert participants informed by the environmental scan), were then analysed through Inayatullah's Futures Triangle Analysis (FTA) (Inayatullah, 2008). By identifying Society, Technology, Environment/Economy, Politics and Value (STEEPV) themes, the analysis focused on both the pushes of the present, trends and drivers, and pulls of the future, in order to identify the emergent trends in the future.

Environmental Scanning major themes

Government policies for ageing population

Strategic frameworks from federal and state governments have been proposed to address emerging issues (e.g. health care and accommodation) associated with an ageing population. For example, the Federal Government's Positive Ageing Agenda for Australia is intended to provide different groups with a framework of actions to respond to the challenges and opportunities the demographic changes may bring (see Table 2). It recognises the breadth and complexity of the problems associated with an ageing society, and the importance of effective and coordinated action in making necessary adjustments. It is designed to engage the Australian community by encouraging cooperation between different groups of society.

Table 2. *Policy frameworks for ageing populations in Australia*

Governments	Major updated policies	Areas of priority
Federal government (FED)	Positive Ageing Agenda for Australia (2011)	Housing Participation Lifelong learning Active ageing Volunteering and philanthrophy Age discrimination
Australian Capital Territory (ACT)	ACT Strategic Plan for Positive Ageing 2010-14	Information and communication Health and well-being Respect, valuing and safety Housing and accommodation Support services Transport and mobility Work and retirement
New South Wales (NSW)	NSW Ageing Strategy (2012)	Seniors (tackling abuse, tech savvy seniors, linking senors to information, living active lives, travel safely) Middle years (work skills and workplace value, my life my decisions, scuring your future) Population ageing (public-private partnership, aged-friendly local communites, housing chocies, population aging in the NSW Government)
Northern Territory (NT)	Building the territory for all generations : a framework for active ageing in the Northern Territory (2007)	Independence and self-provision Attitude, lifestyle and community support Healthy ageing World class care
Queensland (QLD)	Positively Ageless — Queensland Seniors Strategy 2010–20	Supporting the aspirations of seniors who wish to remain in the workforce Age-friendly public and community transport Promoting active and positive ageing, and supporting prevention and early intervention approaches to health Encouraging volunteering
South Australia (SA)	Improving with Age – Our Ageing Plan for South Australia (2006)	Enabling choice and independence Valuing and recognising contribution Providing safety, security and direction Delivering the right services and the right information Staying in front – innovation
Tasmania (TAS)	Inclusive Ageing: Tasmania 2012-2014 Strategy	1. Demographic profile; 2. Accessing right information at right time; 3. Living affordability; 4. Voluntary contributions; 5. Age-friendly communities; and 6. Workforce participation.
Victoria (VIC)	Ageing in Victoria: A plan for an age-friendly society 2010-2020	Good health and well-being Age-friendly communities Economic and social participation
Western Australia (WA)	Generations Together – A Guide to the Western Australian Active Ageing Strategy (2004)	Health and well-being Employment and learning Community awareness and participation Protection and security Planning and the built environment

The responsibility for meeting the challenges of population ageing lies with all levels of government. Frameworks need to be developed which share similar areas of priority at both the federal and state levels. As Table 2 shows, there are

some marked differences in the identified priority areas across state and federal governments. However, there is some similarity between the Queensland and Victoria state governments who launched 10-year strategic plans (2010-2020) for active ageing, with similar emphasis on good health and well-being, community involvement and an active and positive ageing lifestyle.

Senior housing in Australia

One important factor contributing to people's retirement living is the quality of housing development as it is generally accepted that appropriate housing choices will have positive impact on the health and longevity of older people (Cartwright, 2007). For baby boomers, a place in which to age is more than a residence. It not only concerns affordable and appropriate housing with supportive community services and adequate mobility options, but also personal independence, social engagement and places with home environment and continued community interaction (Kochera et al., 2005).

Most older people still live in their own home after retirement. Two in three people aged over 50 intend to remain in their current home as they age (Productivity Commission, 2011). The majority of older people live in private dwellings (in their own home or with family). A small percentage of around 5.25 per cent of Australians aged 65 years or over currently live in approximately 1850 retirement villages, which accommodate over 160,000 older Australians (Zuo et al., 2014, Productivity Commission, 2011). By 2025, this figure is expected to rise to 7.5% (Productivity Commission, 2011). Although offering specialised, purpose-built accommodation for people aged 55 years and over, the most common age of entry into retirement villages is between 70 and 74 years (Stimson and McCrea, 2004).

A retirement village in an Australian context, refers to a community or a complex containing residential premises which are occupied predominately or exclusively by retired people (Parliament of Australia, 2007). In some villages, serviced accommodations with different levels of care services and/or nursing homes are also provided to meet people's needs at different life stages. The up-take of retirement village living has been slow and questions have been raised as to the willingness of baby boomers to live in age segregated accommodation. Retirement villages are commonly perceived as places for 'old people' and are not viewed as particularly attractive or friendly places to visit by the wider community. The reasons for relocating to retirement villages mostly include social contacts and activities, personal care and services, an unwillingness or inability to maintain property, lifestyle change, and a combination of maintaining independence and security (Gardner, 1994, Buys, 2000, Buys, 2001, Buys and Miller, 2007, Stimson, 2002, Grant, 2007, Tanner et al., 2008).

Despite the advantages of retirement villages, the vast majority of older people especially the baby boomers express preferences to live in ordinary dwellings as they age (Oswald et al., 2005). Loss of ownership status, segregated aged community and loss of privacy and autonomy are usually the major concerns of older people for not moving to retirement villages (Moody, 2006). In addition, many retirement villages are built on the metropolitan fringes at some distance from other communities with familiar or well serviced facilities and family networks for older people (NSW Committee on Ageing, 2002). The knowledge of a particular place and emotional attachment to the community help to frame one's self-image and identity

(Taylor, 2001).

There are, however, major disparities between people's expectations and reality. Existing research indicates a significant difference between the desire of many Australians to age in place and their ability to do so. In a survey of senior Australians, 36% of respondents did not have any design features in their homes to assist older or frail people (National Seniors Australia and Group Homes Australia, 2012). There are a lack of built environments for age-friendly communities that are vibrant enough to attract and accommodate people at each stage of life (Kennedy, 2010). This leads to the question of whether there are options available to the ageing generation of baby boomers for their future lifestyle and accommodation needs.

Ageing related benchmarks

Issues dealing with community ageing and preferred living arrangements are often culturally specific thereby creating a problem in identifying best practices or benchmark case studies from which to draw and learn. Nonetheless, it is useful to have some understanding of how other nations have, and continue to grapple with, ageing-associated opportunity areas such as housing.

Aged care policy and support has become the priority of many governments around the world. In Sweden for example, life expectancy is among the highest in the world and older people represent a growing proportion of the population. Many are in good health, lead active lives and, importantly, most live in their own homes. The aim of the Swedish government is to help older people and those with disabilities live independently and to this end, there has been legislative attention around requirements for housing accessibility. Also, almost all municipalities in Sweden offer home-delivered, pre-cooked meals further supporting older people and those with disabilities to continue living in their own home environment.

Recently, there have been several new forms of effective preventive health care introduced in Sweden. One example is physical activity on prescription, both for prevention and treatment. Older people are prescribed exercises within the context of physical activity, sometimes in combination with medication, with doctors monitoring the results. Cultural activities such as music, films, reading and painting are organised regularly to ensure the physical and psychological well-being of older people.

Similar preventive care is also provided in Japan through the long-term care insurance system. It incorporates both institutional and in-home support services, social welfare services and acute health services.

In Denmark, the USA, UK and New Zealand, there are shifts from the construction of stand-alone institutional residential care facilities to integrated solutions in building design, retirement living, serviced accommodation and care offerings. There is also greater flexibility for residents in choosing locations for receiving care services within a retirement village.

Micro-Futuring Workshop Results

As mentioned above, the workshop data (views and opinions of informed participants) were analysed using Inayatullah's Futures Triangle Analysis (FTA) (Inayatullah, 2008). From the analysis of this data, six pushes of the present (current trends and drivers) were identified together with four pulls of the future (emergent

trends and drivers) and all are discussed below in this results section.

Pushes of the present

Demographics

In terms of demographic shifts, Australia's population has been experiencing demographic ageing with low population growth rates (Hugo, 2003). Baby boomers make up 28% of the Australian population and 42% of the labour force. In 2011, this generation began passing the 65-years-old threshold and leaving the workforce and moving into retirement in significant numbers (Australian Government, 2012). This is leading to a rapid increase in the Australian ageing population.

Barrier-free environments

A second push cluster identified by participants involved the ergonomics of creating barrier-free environments in Brisbane city. Older people need to be respected for their diversity. It is expected that there will be a wide range of choices of living arrangements to give access to a variety of affordable lifestyles to meet the various needs of older people. Adequate mobility assistance and age friendly design are expected to be available in the house, street, community and city. It is important for older people to have meaningful independent roles in the community to avoid social isolation and maintain physical and mental health.

New technologies

Futuring workshop participants posited a range of in-development technologies whose strategic application in living spaces are anticipated to enable seniors to live in their own homes longer and reduce the demand on informal and formal care services. For example:

- **Touch screen technologies** are undergoing rapid development and will continue to change the lifestyles of older people by making it much easier for them to use communication devices, operate home facilities, drive vehicles and lead increasingly independent lives within their communities.
- Similarly, **remote and smart phone compact personal sensors** will enable individuals to monitor their mind-body statistics and functioning in real-time. Coupled with advances in computer technology, this will allow storage and the processing of complex data, transforming health care. Older people can routinely collect information about their bodies, and allow doctors to check vital signs and diagnose diseases using this technology and interface.
- The use of **robotics** is expected to play an important role in aged care and daily-life assistance. Robotic technologies are applied in surgery, medication dispensing and rehabilitation of stroke sufferers. Compact, mobile pet-like robots, already in prototype form, can provide companionship for those suffering dementia. Robots can detect falls, monitor locations, health conditions and provide reminders. They can also assist with daily life tasks, such as lifting heavy objects, cleaning, turning on/off electronics and assisting with mobility. Other **home assistance technologies** such as emergency call systems, visual sensors and real-time alarm systems will also enhance the safety of older people in their homes, and potentially as they move about their communities.

- **Mobility assistance** is perceived to be very important to older people's independence. Specially adapted vehicles or 'driverless' vehicles will provide seniors with significant autonomy, convenience and safety in their daily transportation. Other assistance services that technology may provide, such as travel organisation, shopping assistance and daily living activities, may also enable people to extend their independence and ameliorate their perceptions of self-control over their lives.
- Designing home maintenance: **Self-maintaining materials** based on bio-mimicry design principles will cut down on maintenance costs for seniors in place. For example, self-cleaning external paints or finishes will mean less maintenance work is required and may contribute to fewer home-related incidents involving falling and other injuries associated with home maintenance tasks.
- Baby boomers are familiar with the notion of design adaptability and in future it is expected that **adaptive dwellings**, homes with the functional ability to adapt, change, be moved around and evolve with apparent seamlessness, will be perceived as a design given. A simple example of the concept of adaptive housing is 'dual keyed apartments' where studio apartments and adjoining one or two-bedroom apartments can be configured as two separate dwellings, or as one dwelling to allow households to grow or contract, and demographics to shift within the established community. Adaptive housing may also be 'adaptable'.

Homes and services as environment-embedded: Workshop participants emphasised that all of the above technology features of quality futures-oriented home design and smart services cannot be conceived of independently of the social and physical contexts in which they are embedded.

Sustainability – changing the ways we live

A fourth *push* cluster selected by participants was the search for greater sustainability of aged care services. The actual micro-trends that cumulatively indicate the unsustainable nature of Brisbane's aged care services, including housing, encompassed the issues of:

- **Affordability** –the potential costs of modifications needed to homes, and of increasing in-home services options, point to keeping seniors living in their current homes as an economically unsustainable paradigm.
- **Built environment** – inappropriate housing, for example high-set homes, poor access between home and local services, and insufficient public transport infrastructure were perceived as adversely impacting mobility and social inclusiveness.
- Vulnerability to the effects of **climate change** – the risks for seniors from more frequent heat waves may be compounded by low quality housing, and inability to afford upgrades, or energy-efficient air-conditioning in the face of rising energy costs(Australian Council of Social Services, 2013). Brisbane along with Perth are predicted to have significantly more heat related deaths than other Australian cities (Valentine, 2013).
- **Urban consolidation** policies point to higher density multi-storey housing – such buildings currently depend on a continuous supply of energy to function properly. Such buildings may be expensive to occupy as energy costs increase

and may be vulnerable to power outages due to a range of causes thereby affecting residents who are dependent on lifts for vertical mobility.

Emerging values

In terms of emerging values, workshop participants described the right and freedom of retirees to choose where and how they live after retirement as becoming a key issue and one that retirement property developers, government and non-Government Organisations (NGOs) can no longer ignore. Older consumers are demanding respect for their lifestyle and cultural expectations, particularly through their market power as a significant element of the consuming public in areas such as food, recreation, travel and housing.

Social inclusiveness is an important value according to the workshop participants. Everyone has the right to be included in the community and to participate in community activities. Design for diversity and inclusiveness is necessary to be considered in housing, building, community and city development in the first place without much effort for adaptation. Flexibility is a key consideration as people will need to easily change their living places or adapt their homes to the changing needs of different life stages. This will also enable people to have more influence and control over their future. Liveable housing design features and disability-friendly access[1] are necessary to be integrated to current design standards to meet the needs of different people.

Creative minorities (CM)

a) Ageing in place

An umbrella CM trend is a tendency to prefer ageing in place pointing to the latent scope for innovative residential solutions for providing seniors with improved age and disability friendly environments that support affordable and vibrant lifestyles. A comprehensive approach is expected to be developed for adaptable and affordable housing, transport, urban design and community infrastructure to maintain and enhance participation and to better support ageing in place.

b) Universal design[2]

Also sometimes known as **adaptable housing,** universal design refers to the incorporation of design elements to meet the competencies of all people regardless of age, condition or ability. It generally refers to housing design that makes provision for future building modifications at minimum cost and disruption to the inhabitants regardless of their age or ability. In the Netherlands, it has become a user-quality label for housing that indicates barrier-free architectural design, supportive interior design and technologically advanced assistive devices. However, it has not been widely applied in home designs in Australia, although the Australian Standard for Adaptable Housing AS4299-1995 sets out the principles of adaptable housing as basis for the development of the accommodation needs of users of all ages and abilities. Many local governments already reference the standards in their planning codes, and various State public housing providers produce their own design guidelines based on this Standard. The majority of housing in Australia has been designed with little consideration of the needs of an ageing population. It is difficult for older people to find exactly the products they want within the existing housing market.

c) Green House project

There are some new concepts and models emerging for senior living in the USA. Among them is the Green House project which creates alternative living environments to traditional nursing home care facilities for 6-10 older frail persons. The aim of this concept is to deinstitutionalise long term care facilities through creating small intentional communities that foster late-life development and growth and provide residents with more privacy and control over their lives thus preserving older people's dignity and autonomy. Green House homes adopt universal design principles to 'age proof' the homes and make them disability friendly. The homes are built to blend in with their neighbourhood and surrounding homes and typically have a living room, kitchen and open dining area with each resident having their own room and bath. Residents can move about the home freely and participate in meal preparation if so desired. For those living in Green House homes there have been increased reports of social interaction and mobility, and fewer reports of depression and weight loss (LaPorte, 2010).

d) Naturally occurring retirement communities (NORCs)

NORCS are another emerging attractive model that enables seniors to remain living in their own homes in a local community with support services and volunteer programs. NORCs are not originally designed as senior communities, but evolve gradually with people growing old and young people moving out. NORCs help seniors stay connected and maintain vibrant community lives.

e) Supported living

Another CM trend, supported living, is a relatively new concept also from the USA and making significant inroads into the Australian retirement living market. Residents live in their own homes and receive all kinds of care and daily living services at home allowing them to age in place. Related creative models include *Modular Home Communities* where there are both full-time residents and part-year residents, and *Shared Housing* where seniors can share their homes with other people.

f) Gay and lesbian retirement communities

These communities cater to gays, lesbians, bisexual and transgender (GLBT) people who are often rejected from traditional retirement community lifestyles. Some research on LGBT ageing is beginning to highlight some of the concerns lesbian and gay people have about growing older and accessing services (Hughes, 2009). As with younger people, older lesbian and gay people may delay seeking assistance from formal services because of a fear of discrimination. This may not only have a negative effect on healthy ageing, but also place additional demands on informal support networks. Their experiences and expectations of support vary in relation to a number of demographic factors, including sex, age and geographical location.

Pulls of the future

Pulls of the future are future scenarios that provide reasonable, relevant and challenging stories about how the future could unfold. Four archetypal pulls of the future were discussed: business as usual; nostalgic images of the future; a collapse, worst-case scenario; and a transformative image of the future. We summarise these

below.

Business-as-usual

This pull of the future is a continuation and extrapolation of current trends with limited investment (Hunt et al., 2012). A considerable amount of workshop time was spent on identifying and expanding this scenario as there had been recent changes of government at both the federal and state levels resulting in significant changes of political ideology. As a result, the business as usual scenario was divided into three sections: government, not for profit (NFP) and private sector (PS) which were deemed to be areas directly affected by these changes of political ideology.

Government:
- Implementing 'band-aid' solutions without resolving deeper issues.
- Government providers look to assistance from NFPs and the private sector, realising they require support and that diversity of options is required in the market.
- Current supply-demand dynamics become increasingly unbalanced resulting in worsening market distortions.
- Exacerbation of economic/social factors in terms of cost to the state and individuals.
- Government has the opportunity to re-invent its role as a facilitator and enabler between NFPs and the private sector.

Not for Profits:
- A shifting focus to provision of 'safety net' for aged care service consumers, indicating a looming crisis point.
- Business-as-usual also suggests the need for NFPs to become more creative vis-à-vis their core competencies and social enterprise-orientation towards target and niche markets.
- Must build capacity for meeting local problems with local solutions and therefore more service-focussed by working closely with housing providers, community organisations including churches and charities.
- A continuation of the present way of doing things will also necessitate current NFPs to scale down or liquidate accommodation business and focus on services provision.
- NFPs will be forced to identify common ground with government providers thereby generating new synergies and collaborative possibilities such as helping the homeless inspired by the 'New York' model[3].
- Concluding the business as usual scenario, the consensus indicated that NFPs need to transform internally into more entrepreneurial enterprises in order to survive and function effectively in relation to their social roles.

Private sector (PS):
- There is an increasing need to identify novel niche market segments such as the 55+ lifestyle market, independent and assisted living markets, and residential care, and hospice markets.
- Business as usual is also leading to consumer-directed market imperatives and an improved continuum of care capacity.
- On-going blurring of currently clearly demarcated boundaries between

government, NFPs and the PS creating simultaneously confusion and ambiguity but also opportunities for new synergies and collaborative potentials.

- Private sector providers are finding themselves increasingly 'crossing over' into the business territory of NFP providers.
- There are signals of an organic growth of the multi-generational household as a future living option.
- Medium density focus: Private Sector is focussed on managed, master-planned communities that are like 'gated communities' on suburban fringes.

Nostalgic images of the future

The relevance and usefulness of nostalgic scenarios are often overlooked. While the future can never replicate the past, at the same time, it is a grounding thought to keep in mind that the future as it unfolds in space and time necessarily retains remnants from history. In a world seemingly obsessed with change, attempting to decouple the future from the past is to turn one's back on a valuable repository of tried and tested social memes that should form the superstructural contexts of creating preferred social futures. Accordingly, to keep our workshop temporally and contextually balanced, some time was allotted to exploring the nostalgia of how our forebears lived in their twilight years. Nostalgic features cited were:

- Multi-generational families living under the one roof.
- A stronger sense of community with neighbours quick to help each other out, especially in times of need or crisis.
- Active service clubs, including specialty clubs such as Lions or Rotary, sporting clubs, lawn bowls, the local RSL, chess and bridge clubs, and other gentle pastimes.
- Care for older people provided locally by families, friends, communities rather than by private or governmental service providers.
- Recognition, retention and revival of traditional skills and wisdom.
- Older people embedded in their communities with a sense of social usefulness and worthiness.

Collapse – creative seniors chaos

Perceived threats to senior living arrangements are always easier to imagine and articulate than our other prototypical futures images. For the workshop team, the very viability of Western medicine was suggested as one macro-factor in a possible collapse scenario. Other constituent factors of a collapse scenario included:

- Global financial chaos producing negative ramifications which would ripple through to affect the least advantaged of Australian society creating ghettos of Haves and Have-Nots.
- Food security, or lack thereof.
- A multi-culturalist backlash where immigrant minorities find themselves increasingly marginalised.
- As Australian society increases in complexity, the nation's social services are stretched to the point where ageing groups are no longer able to keep pace with the technologies and paperwork involved in managing one's post-work life, effectively resulting in older people falling through society's safety nets.
- An ageing population less able to deal with the physical challenges of

more frequent, more extreme weather events and therefore becoming more dependent on emergency services.

To conclude this section, the usefulness of a collapse scenario lies in the opportunities presented in strategically and pro-actively avoiding the threats they pose.

Sketching a transformational future – EUTOPIA 75+

While recognising the importance of storying the full range of images of archetypal futures in this FTA framework, the transformational images of the future and the possibilities residing therein formed the driving motivation behind this workshop. This transformational scenario – **EUTOPIA 75+** - was construed as a realistic, achievable utopia, not a perfect future, but a *eutopia* or better future. The key elements of an achievable *eutopia* for baby boomer housing futures identified by the workshop participants are:

- *Choice*: As people age in place, the issue of personal choice, especially informed choice, should be an underlying feature for the ageing baby boomer generation.
- *Accommodation mobility*: Living environments designed to be readily adaptable to the evolving needs of older people whether they be to address physical, environmental, financial, and/or emotional concerns.
- *Intra-community value*: Housing arrangements embedded in city and community contexts that 'value' the 75+ cohort. According to Larkin (2007), more than 60 universities in the USA are co-located with retirement communities, known as university-based retirement communities (UBRCs) a trend she notes that is likely to continue in the future (Larkin, 2007).
- *Extra-dwelling spaces*: As the current baby boomer generation ages, they will demand to strategically co-design age-friendly networked community environments. These environments will consciously provide for age-friendly public spaces, appropriate housing types equipped with appropriate technologies, effective and efficient transport and infrastructure for mobility, social inclusiveness, and equitable access to information, communication and media technologies (ICMTs).
- *Well-being focus*: Perceptions of ageing should in future focus on the aspects of well-being and social inclusion.
- *In-home, in-community certainty*: The availability of affordable services within the community and maximisation of self-determination regarding daily activities and life options.
- *Responsive aged care services*: The continued development of community based aged care services to maximise independent living.
- *Appropriate technologies*: Development of a new generation of user-friendly technologies. Near-future technological responses could leverage, customise and maximise the inherent potential of new and emerging technologies, representing a shift in the way technologies are co-designed by older people.
- *Wearable devices environment*: Futures-oriented design in wearable devices could be repurposed to address hearing impairment and recognition, sight, strength and community access.
- *Social networking*: Design recommendations will need to be mindful of how to create harmonious and vital social networks such as 'friendship circles'.

Emerging social media could be designed for the future with greater focus on building social networks, which enhance community connection and social meaning.

Design Guidelines

Five design guidelines can be derived from the general body of workshop findings and the transformational scenario **EUTOPIA 75+** with a view to giving a tangible shape to a preferred future. Preferred futures-oriented home design and services possibilities for the baby boomer generation are presented below. Combining the environmental scanning and Futuring workshop results enables the identification of emerging shifts for today's baby boomer generation of where they would prefer to live in the near future. This would provide the opportunity to develop novel and futures-appropriate design initiatives. These guidelines have application not only for Brisbane's baby boomers (the population group under review in the workshop) but also for other baby boomer populations throughout the world.

A sustainable care and service paradigm

A key finding is that the current paradigm of care provision is unsustainable, politically, financially, and in terms of generational preferences. Diversity of services and better infrastructure for care provision needs be delivered for future consumers along with appropriate and affordable housing development and design that reflects physically-challenged-friendly built environments. Social inclusiveness, regardless of age, mindful of mobility and mental health requirements need to be recognised as a critical issue when developing community-based care services. Environmental issues such as population density and energy efficiency also need to be considered in government policy and infrastructure development.

Adaptable housing design

With more diverse experiences in comparison to previous generations, baby boomers are highly adaptable in terms of rapidly changing needs and situations. Accordingly, the notion of 'adaptable housing' shows promise as a future lifestyle attribute option. Adaptable design features such as sliding partitions - both indoor and outdoor - enable people to adjust their living spaces in accordance with real-time needs. Adaptable housing design in combination with design that is responsive to the climate as it changes will further improve the quality of life for ageing baby boomers. These features will also promote ease of housing transferability according to evolving physical, environmental, emotional and financial circumstances.

Socially-inclusive city/community design

It is expected that the needs regardless of background, age and gender are considered, respected and addressed. Facilities such as meeting places, community centres, games rooms, fitness centres, clinics, doctors' rooms, public gardens for parties and BBQs, and personal gardens need to be established to ease people's lives and provide a place for entertaining and socialising.

Barrier-free housing/community design

Barrier-free design is important in housing and community development, so

people can age in their own homes and stay in the communities with which they are familiar. It is desirable to live independently to maintain well-being and quality of life. Typical barrier-free community design elements need to be fitted to public spaces and transport. Technologies such as hearing aid communication, improved illumination and provision of audio alarm devices need to be developed and equipped in the community to ensure the safety and participation of older people.

Next-gen smart/sustainable homes

Current and future advanced home technologies have a great potential to make smart and sustainable homes. "Intelligent lighting", remote controlled home facilities and large projected screens make it much easier for older people to enjoy their lives at home. Emergency alerts, CCTV and security systems improve older people's sense of safety and independence. 3D Skype and various communication technologies have the ability to strengthen seniors' virtual connections with their family and friends.

Conclusions

This paper explores the futures of Brisbane's baby boomer generation in relation to their likely accommodation preferences through environmental scanning and a Futures workshop. The Futures Triangle, consisting of pushes of the present, pulls of the future, and weights of history, was used as the macro-framework. From this, a sketch was created for a Transformative Scenario (EUTOPIA 75+) of the future. Synthesis of this scenario together with the workshop findings resulted in the development of five accommodation design guidelines providing a tangible shape to a preferred accommodation future that has application, not only for Brisbane's baby boomer generation, but also for baby boomers across the globe.

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Notes

1   Since 1990, the Building Code of Australia has stipulated that all new commercial and public buildings must provide disability access. There is no such provision on private housing.
2   Since 1990, the Building Code of Australia has stipulated that all new commercial and public buildings must provide disability access. There is no such provision on private housing.
3   Also known as the Common Ground Model, exemplified by the Brisbane Common Ground development project at Hope Street South Brisbane opened August 2012. See their website at: http://www.commongroundaustralia.org.au/index.php/state-by-state/queensland.htm

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