

Healthy ageing university-based retirement communities and intergenerational living programs

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Introduction

Australia's ageing population presents an opportunity and a responsibility - an opportunity to grow the 'silver economy'¹ by providing products and services to retired Australians, and a responsibility to provide retirement services that facilitate healthy ageing, ultimately reducing pressure on health care and welfare systems.

Over 30 years of research by Harvard Medical School's Dr George Vaillant has revealed some key requirements for a happy and healthy retirement.² These include remaining active, both physically and mentally, and maintaining friendships with younger people. In the United States they have applied these theories in the development of university-based retirement communities, and are seeing significant success. A range of other programs, such as home-sharing arrangements, have also been developed to improve quality of life for retirees.



Maintaining friendships with younger people contributes to a healthy and happy retirement. (Photo: Getty Images, Kondoros Eva Katalin)

The number of Australians aged 65 and over is projected to more than double by 2054-55 compared with today. By 2054-55 there are projected to be 7.0 million Australians aged 65 to 84, compared with around 3.1 million in 2015. This would represent approximately 18 per cent of the total population, compared with 13 per cent in 2014-15. Australians are also living longer in retirement, creating additional pressures on health care and welfare systems.³

Increasing numbers of older Australians, and increasing life expectancy, provides an imperative to better provide for retirees, ideally in a way that encourages healthy ageing, reduces pressure on health care and welfare systems and facilitates an economic opportunity for Australia.

University-based Retirement Communities

University-based retirement communities (UBRCs) are retirement villages located on or near university campuses. A concept that has existed in the United States for over two decades, it is estimated that there are now up to 100 such facilities with varying associations with US universities. This figure includes a number of prestigious US universities including Pennsylvania State University (Penn State), Stanford University, and the University of Florida.

¹ European Commission, 2015. *Growing the Silver Economy Background Paper*. Prepared for the European Summit on Innovation for Active and Healthy Ageing. Available online: <https://ec.europa.eu/digital-agenda/en/news/growing-silver-economy-background-paper>

² Vaillant, G.E., 2003. *Aging Well*. Little, Brown and Company, United States of America.

³ Commonwealth of Australia, 2015. *2015 Intergenerational Report Australia in 2055*. Available online: <http://www.treasury.gov.au/PublicationsAndMedia/Publications/2015/2015-Intergenerational-Report>

There are a number of benefits to both the retirees and the university in these communities including:

Benefits for retirees

- Environments that are intellectually as well as physically active
- Intergenerational programs
- Access to continued learning opportunities
- Access to sporting and cultural events

Benefits for the university

- Attracting broader student base
- Expanding the audience for sporting and cultural events
- Internship and work experience opportunities for students studying gerontology, nursing, nutrition, public health management, physiotherapy, human movement, etc.
- Bequests through strong links with retirees

The Village at Penn State



Residents of The Village enjoy special access to Pennsylvania State University. (Photo: <http://retireatpennstate.org/>)

The Village at Pennsylvania State University (Penn State) is a retirement community adjacent to the Penn State University Park Campus. It is a non-profit community, with all earnings reinvested back into the community. The community ensures multi-generational activities through its connection to the university, with residents having special access to campus activities, including advance opportunity to attend events at

the sporting and performing arts centres; lessons in golf, swimming and other sports from college athletes; and contributing to campus life as a mentor.

Other innovative programs have emerged, such as skype lessons for residents from student volunteers⁴ and a multimedia journalism class that runs the website 'Our Gray Matters'.⁵ The website features stories that celebrate the community's older residents while providing a platform for students to develop their journalism skills for the digital age.

⁴ LaJeunesse, S, 2013, *Older adults learn to Skype with help from Penn State students*, Penn State News. Available online at: <http://news.psu.edu/story/288102/2013/09/17/academics/older-adults-learn-skype-help-penn-state-students>

⁵ Bohn, K.J, 2015, *Penn State students blend words, pictures and video to tell stories*, Penn State News. Available online at: <http://news.psu.edu/story/365188/2015/08/11/arts-and-entertainment/penn-state-students-blend-words-pictures-and-video>

Level of university involvement

The level of involvement or affiliation between the university and retirement community can range from low to high, encompassing numerous arrangements in between.

Low level university involvement is where the retirement community is essentially just a revenue stream for the university. This generally involves the sale or lease of land adjacent to the university campus to a developer or operator of commercial retirement communities. Often in this type of arrangement the retirement community is not affiliated with the university at all, and there is no direct or brokered interaction between the two campuses. The retirement community is simply building on the university brand. Examples include Classic Residence by Hyatt and Stanford University. <http://www.viliving.com/communities/paloalto>

High level university involvement is where the retirement community is linked to the academic and social program of the university, and there is established, managed interaction between the two campuses. This interaction could be external where courses and academic interactions are taken into the retirement community, or internal, where the community residents are integrated into the core activities of the institution, participating in courses with the rest of the student body. Examples include The Village at Penn State. <http://retireatpennstate.org/>

The ultimate level of university involvement in the retirement community is when the university owns and operates the retirement community. One such community is Lasell Village, located on the campus of Lasell College in Newton, Massachusetts. Lasell Village is marketed as an education institution, rather than a standard retirement community. Residents must have at least a high school diploma and agree to 450 hours of continuing education each year (the minimum hours of a full time student). As well as formal classes, the continuing education may include physical fitness, volunteering, mentoring and continuing employment on campus. <http://www.lasellvillage.org/>

Excerpt from 'Finding Communities That Connect and Nurture the Like-Minded,' The New York Times⁶

...Three years ago, Dorothy Adelman, 99, moved into Lasell Village, on the campus of Lasell College, in Newton, Mass. All 210 residents of the village, which opened in 2000, are required to participate in 450 hours of education a year — about nine hours a week. (Cultural and fitness activities count.)

"The courses were the thing that I was most interested in," said Ms. Adelman, who has taken classes in politics, Shakespeare and the Bible, and teaches art once a week...



Dorothy Adelman lives at Lasell Village. (Photo: The New York Times)

⁶ Ellin, A, 2014. *Finding Communities That Connect and Nurture the Like-Minded*, The New York Times. Available online at: http://www.nytimes.com/2014/12/27/your-money/finding-communities-that-connect-and-nurture-the-like-minded.html?_r=0

Levels of care

UBRCs can range from independent living only, where residents are in relatively good health and require no medical or social assistance on a daily basis, to assisted living arrangements, where a range of health and medical services are provided, up to and including Alzheimer's/dementia care and hospice care for the terminally ill. Many communities provide a range of care options, allowing residents to 'upgrade' along the spectrum as their healthcare needs change.

The level of care provided in the community also impacts the level of interaction between the UBRC and the university. For example, communities offering only independent living may only require academic and social services from the university. However, a community offering assisted living arrangements could develop more significant interaction opportunities for students and faculty, particularly in the areas of health sciences (eg internships and work experience for nursing and physiotherapy students, etc).

Arrangements and facilities required for successful operation

According to George Mason University's Program Director for Assisted Living/Senior Housing Administration within the college of Health and Human Services, there are five key criteria for developing a successful UBRC⁷:

1. Be near a university – a location within an accessible distance (preferably one mile or less) of core campus facilities, such as theatres, sports complexes and classrooms;
2. Having a formal agreement about programming – programming that ensures integration between community residents and university students, faculty and staff, and is formalised with written letters of agreement;
3. Offering everything from active living through to dementia services – a requirement that such communities include the full continuum of senior housing services, including independent living, assisted living, and skilled nursing and dementia care as needed;
4. Sharing the financial stake in the community – a documented financial relationship between the university and the senior housing provider; and
5. Having at least 10% of residents associated with the university – a documented 10% or more of residents connected to the university, either as alumni, retired faculty or staff, or family of the same. This ensures that the connection with the university is maintained.

⁷ Carle, A. 2006, "University-based retirement communities: Criteria for success", *Nursing homes*, vol. 55, no. 9, pp. 48-51.

Student boarding programs



Music student Marissa Plank boards for free at the Judson Manor retirement community in Cleveland, Ohio. In return, Marissa holds a music performance for the residents each month. (Photo: CBS News)⁸

Student boarding programs allow students to live alongside elderly residents in retirement communities. In exchange for subsidised or rent-free apartments or rooms, the students spend a proportion of their time contributing to the retirement community. This can include acting as 'good neighbours' by watching sports, celebrating birthdays and offering company to elderly residents.

These programs have been highly successful in building relationships between the students and retirees.

Humanitas Deventer retirement home, Netherlands⁹



Student Onno Selbach interacts with two nursing home residents at Humanitas in the Netherlands. (Photo: PBS Newshour)

The Humanitas Deventer retirement home, an hour east of Amsterdam, began a student boarding program two years ago.

Humanitas head Gea Sijpkens has reported that the students bring the outside world, helping to address social isolation and loneliness often associated with older populations.

Jurrien Mentick, a student boarder, says 'elderly people are full of life. As a student, you can learn a lot.'¹⁰

⁸ Hartman, S, 2014. *Making beautiful music in a Cleveland retirement community*, CBS News. Available online at: <http://www.cbsnews.com/news/one-cleveland-24-year-old-loves-living-in-a-retirement-community/>

⁹ Reed, C, 2015. *Dutch nursing home offers rent-free housing to students*, PBS Newshour. Available online at: <http://www.pbs.org/newshour/rundown/dutch-retirement-home-offers-rent-free-housing-students-one-condition/>

¹⁰ ABC Radio National, 2015. *Dutch nursing home lets students live free*, Radio National Drive. Available online at: <http://www.abc.net.au/radionational/programs/drive/dutch-retirement-home-lets-students-live-rent-free/6351450>

Home-sharing programs

Home-sharing programs match young people with older people, providing younger people with affordable living and allowing older people to live at home for longer.

In return for subsidised or rent-free accommodation, young people complete tasks such as cooking and cleaning to assist the older resident.

These programs facilitates care and companionship while addressing housing affordability for young people, and helping older people maintain independent living for longer.

Excerpt from 'Homeshare proposal matches young people with elderly in exchange for cooking and cleaning', ABC news¹¹

...Barbara signed up to the program in Melbourne nearly four years ago and hasn't looked back.

Yin, a 33-year-old social work student, has been living with Barbara since that time.

Barbara now has peace of mind when it comes to safety in her three-bedroom home...

During the week Yin cooks dinner for Barbara and goes shopping with her on Saturday mornings.

"It has worked very well," Barbara said.

The 10 hours a week work in Barbara's home also works well for Yin who has been using the Wesley Homeshare service since 2009.

"The rent's crazy and when I heard about it I thought 'living with someone and to have someone to talk to and save me rent, that sounds great'," Yin said.

"Sometimes we share tea and when Barbara practises piano, I listen."

Both Barbara and Yin like listening to classical music and watching Antiques Roadshow together on television.

"It's great to know that somebody's here to be sure that you're looked after," Barbara said...



Barbara and Yin have been home-sharing for nearly four years. (Photo: ABC News)

¹¹ King, B. 2015. *Homeshare proposal matches young people with elderly in exchange for cooking and cleaning*, ABC News. Available online at <http://www.abc.net.au/news/2015-06-10/homesharing-program-matches-young-people-with-elderly/6531430>

Opportunities for Queensland

Queensland is well placed to become the leading innovator for healthy ageing in Australia. There are many opportunities to develop university-based retirement communities and pilot intergenerational living programs throughout Queensland. If such opportunities are seized, Queensland will cater for Australia's ageing population whilst harnessing the economic benefits of the 'silver economy,' ultimately reducing pressure on health care and welfare systems.

Opportunities include:

- Developing a university-based retirement community at the University of Southern Queensland's Springfield Campus
- Developing a university-based retirement community at the University of the Sunshine Coast
- Developing a university-based retirement community at Petrie, where the Moreton Bay Regional Council has purchased 200 hectares of land for a university and community precinct
- Repurposing accommodation built for the 2018 Gold Coast Commonwealth Games for retirement communities, and linking with Griffith University
- Repurposing ex-mining accommodation in regional Queensland, and linking with Central Queensland University
- Integrating retirement living into the University of Queensland's 2015 master plan
- Incorporating retirement living in the Coorparoo redevelopment

University-based retirement communities and intergenerational living programs align with a number of healthy ageing initiatives supported by the Queensland Government.

Senior Support Programs in Queensland¹²

Program Name	About
Tech Savvy Seniors	Courses offered in partnership with the State Library of Queensland and Telstra to teach seniors basic technology skills, including how to use an iPad, navigate social media, shop online and access government services.
60 and Better Program	Supports older people to develop and manage healthy ageing programs in their own communities. The program offers a mix of physical, social and intellectual activities. Activities include exercise programs, health talks, craft activities, theatre groups, card games and opportunities to explore computers and information technology.
Older People's Action Program	Provides older people who may be at risk of social isolation with activities and opportunities to extend and strengthen their personal and community connectedness. There are 22 funded services across Queensland that run a variety of activities.

¹² Queensland Government, Department of Communities, Child Safety and Disability Services, 2015. 'Programs and initiatives to support older people.' Available online at: <https://www.communities.qld.gov.au/communityservices/seniors/programs-and-initiatives-to-support-older-people>