



# Not the retiring type

Limousines, swimming pools and fitness clubs. It's the new face of community living for boomers who want more than a retirement village. **SHERADYN HOLDERHEAD** and **TRISTAN WILLES** report

FITNESS centres, swimming pools, bars and restaurants – these are among the resort lifestyle features luring a new generation of retirees to age-specific housing complexes.

Not only are the facilities being updated, some housing estates are changing their stigmatic branding by dropping the word retirement.

Retirement Village Association SA/NT region chairman Mark Prosser said “lifestyle” villages were attracting residents from a variety of age groups as young as 53.

He said facilities directed toward younger, active people such as swimming pools, tennis courts and walking trails were becoming more common.

“Generally the younger retiree is also looking for a walking trail, those kinds of things,” Mr Prosser said.

Young retirees who planned to travel were also attracted to the idea of having their home kept safe and secure while away, he said.

“That’s an advantage a retirement village has over the traditional home,” Mr Prosser said.

“If they do go on holiday, they go knowing that their house is still being looked after.”

Brenton Jarrett, 53, and his wife Sue, 58, have lived at the Townsend Park lifestyle village, Hove, since moving back to Adelaide from Victoria and could not imagine living anywhere else.

“It’s friendly, the fact that

you can just go away, lock up and you don’t have to worry about your house,” Mrs Jarrett said.

“We love it, couldn’t think of anything better – I can’t work out why there aren’t more people our age here.”

Jill Clough, who celebrates her 60th birthday today, has lived at Townsend Park for five years and said she would gladly stay for another 30.

“I think that people my age would be very surprised, it’s not just for over-70s,” she said.

“Preconceived ideas are probably the only thing holding people back, it’s good fun here.”

Mrs Clough, who resides in the village with husband Deane, 67, said she liked the open space and proximity to the beach.

Eastern suburbs lifestyle village On Statenborough, developed by Smallacombe Real Estate and Simon Chappel Constructions, was architecturally designed with features including cafe and function restaurant, heated swimming pool, spa and sauna, gym, wood workshop and limousine service.

Smallacombe director David Smallacombe said the idea for the village was spawned from the realisation retirees did not want to be locked up in a big house, but wanted a base for an active lifestyle.

“It used to be that you worked all your life, then you retire and just stop, but it’s not like that any more,” he

said. “A lot of people want a lock-up-and-leave lifestyle because they might go away for the winter.

“Some people have beach houses they stay in for extended periods.

“(Lifestyle villages) enable people to have a change in lifestyle, but it is a very full and active lifestyle.”

Council on the Ageing chief executive Ian Yates said age did not restrict people from enjoying the features of a village.

“There’s nothing peculiar about a retirement village – they might be called a senior lifestyle village or not called anything,” he said.

“There are a set of lifestyle choices that people could make at any older age.

“There are really diverse preferences of homes in villages, and people will make choices based on their own circumstances.

“It may well be that they have friends who are older and have moved into a retirement village, and that they want to have their neighbours and friends in the same community.”

Mr Yates said villages were particularly attractive for younger retirees with health problems or disabilities, who could enjoy life more fully without maintenance or gardening concerns. However, he said only a minority of retirees chose to live in a village and an even smaller minority were younger.

Professor Andrew Beer, who works at the Flinders

Institute for Housing, Urban and Regional Research, said the number of older Australians living in villages was expected to rise from 3 per cent to 6 per cent by 2015.

“These sorts of villages are focused on the wealthy minority, but as baby boomers age it is creating a greater demand,” he said.

Last year, Prof Beer’s team prepared a report titled *Our Homes, Our Communities: The Aspirations and Expectations of Older People in South Australia* for ECH Inc, one of the largest providers of residential housing services for older people in South Australia.

It found the desire to shed the burden of house maintenance was one of the main reasons for a move to purpose-built aged accommodation, especially for women.

Many older South Australians also reported that they were looking for retirement housing that was large enough to support their lifestyle when at home, but sufficiently contained that the housing could be locked up while travelling.

The report noted that while most people living in retirement villages reported very high levels of satisfaction with their accommodation and community setting, the majority of older South Australians were not attracted to village living.



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### CHANGING FACE OF RETIREMENT

- Limousine service
- Swimming pools
- Hairdressing salon
- Tennis courts
- Fitness club and indoor heated pool
- Cafe/bar/restaurant
- Reading room
- Extra bedroom
- Community centre - featuring a gym, billiards room, flat-screen TVs and Wii games
- Changing name - senior "lifestyle village", brand name or no specific retirement-related name at all



**HAPPY:** Jill Clough and Sue Jarrett at Townsend House, Hove, yesterday