



Aged Care and Retirement Housing Study

North Tuncurry Urban Renewal Area

Client: Landcom

Date: 10 November 2020

Contact:

Will Roden
will.rodan@elton.com.au
9387 2600

**SYDNEY
02 9387 2600**

Level 6, 332 - 342 Oxford Street
Bondi Junction NSW 2022

www.elton.com.au
consulting@elton.com.au
Sydney | Brisbane | Canberra | Darwin | Melbourne | Perth
ABN 56 003 853 101

Prepared by	George Porter and Will Roden
--------------------	------------------------------

Reviewed by	Will Roden
--------------------	------------

Date	10 November 2020
-------------	------------------

Version	Final
----------------	-------

Contents

1	SUMMARY	4
1.1	Objectives of the study	4
1.2	Methodology	4
1.3	Key findings	4
1.4	Recommendations	5
2	INTRODUCTION	6
3	OLDER PEOPLE IN THE AREA	7
3.1	Older people’s housing options	7
3.2	The size of the older population	7
3.3	Indigenous and overseas-born seniors	10
3.4	Migration	10
3.5	Household types	10
3.6	Income and tenure	11
4	OVERVIEW OF THE SENIORS HOUSING AND CARE SECTOR	13
4.1	Context	13
4.2	The retirement village sector	14
4.3	Mainstream housing options	16
4.4	Residential aged care	17
4.5	Health and support services	18
5	SENIORS HOUSING AND CARE IN THE LOCAL AREA	19
5.1	Retirement villages	19
5.2	Independent housing options	23
5.3	Residential aged care	24
5.4	Health and support services	26
6	OPERATOR PROFILES AND PRIORITIES	28
6.1	Classification of operators	28
6.2	Local operators	29
6.3	Operator priorities	30
6.4	Local priorities	32
6.5	Site requirements	32
7	CONCLUSION	35
7.1	Key risks and opportunities	35
7.2	Recommendations	35
FIGURES		
Figure 1	Age pyramid Forster Tuncurry, 2016	8
Figure 2	Projected change in age structure to 2036, MidCoast LGA	9

Figure 3	Household type for older age cohorts in MidCoast LGA (2016)	11
Figure 4	Weekly individual income, Foster Tuncurry (2016)	11
Figure 5	Tenure by age group for people 65 years and older, MidCoast LGA (2016)	12
Figure 6	Retirement villages and residential aged care facilities in Forster Tuncurry	21

TABLES

Table 1	Projected older population, MidCoast LGA	8
Table 2	Retirement villages in Forster Tuncurry	20
Table 3	Retirement villages in the wider region	22
Table 4	Residential aged care in Forster Tuncurry	24
Table 5	Aged care facilities in the wider region	25

APPENDICES

A	Appendix A – principal sources	38
---	--------------------------------	----

1 Summary

1.1 Objectives of the study

Elton Consulting has been commissioned by Landcom to undertake this study for the North Tuncurry Urban Renewal Area (NTURA). Specifically, we have examined:

- » Demand for seniors' housing and care facilities and in particular for a retirement village, residential aged care facility and associated health care facilities in the locality and its catchment
- » Potential developers and operators and their possible interest in developing and operating these facilities
- » The requirements of potential operators, including factors that could generate market interest
- » Master Plan requirements that would accommodate retirement housing, an aged care facility and associated health facilities, including site specifications
- » Recommendations including timing and staging.

This report has been prepared to ensure the NTURA provides affordable housing that satisfies the needs of the incoming population throughout their lives.

1.2 Methodology

This report is based on analysis of available data, published reports, and consultation with stakeholders (see **Appendix A**) as described in the body of the report.

The original report was written in 2014. We have updated it based on analysis of recent data, reports and additional consultation with stakeholders. We note recent feedback from MidCoast Council indicated all existing and proposed facilities had not been recognised, including Evermore Retirement Living and proposed aged care accommodation in the Civic Precinct. This report also incorporates updated information on existing and proposed retirement village and aged care facilities within the study area and its surrounds (section 5).

1.3 Key findings

The most significant findings are:

- » The Forster Tuncurry urban area is an attractive location for older people relocating for a sea change, and the area has one of the highest proportions of seniors in its population in Australia. Population growth in the area has for some time depended on inward migration, and most incomers are seniors.
- » Given this, the North Tuncurry site can be expected to be attractive to older people.
- » Locally generated needs for retirement housing and aged care facilities are currently fairly well met, and existing developments including Pacific Cape (GLAICA), the Civic Precinct (Evermore Supported Living) and Palm Lake Resort Forster (Palm Lakes) can be expected to meet the need for retirement village dwellings and residential aged care over the next few years.
- » The key need in the area is for seniors-friendly housing in the community. The NTURA can certainly assist in meeting this need, and the Master Plan can further contribute by ensuring that the urban design and facilities of the new community meet the needs of incoming residents including older people.
- » The Master Plan is sufficiently flexible to allow retirement village accommodation and care facilities to be provided at some stage in the future, and the site is likely to be an attractive one for developers of such facilities. One local provider has expressed interest in developing facilities in the area in the future.

- » Previous research has noted that there may be an opportunity to develop a seniors' precinct at North Tuncurry, bringing together housing, care, support and health facilities, if appropriate partners can be attracted.

MidCoast Council has indicated there is insufficient information to demonstrate a need or demand for aged care and retirement housing within the NTURA site. This report demonstrates there is sufficient supply within the market currently to address demand and that there is additional capacity to respond to increases in demand in the medium term. While aged care or retirement village development is not required within the NTURA to meet demand, there are opportunities to provide this accommodation. However, the greatest need in the NTURA is for diverse and affordable housing that caters to all household types, including older people. This can be provided using the recommended zoning provisions detailed in the Planning Study prepared by Ethos Urban.

1.4 Recommendations

- » Planning for the whole North Tuncurry site should seek to maximise its utility for older people, including providing a safe and attractive environment, and "mainstream" housing options that suit older people.
- » Master Planning and zoning should be sufficiently flexible to permit purpose-built retirement housing, an aged care facility, and/or a seniors' health precinct to be provided at some future date, if the need and demand is found to be strong enough. There does not appear to be a need to allocate specific sites at this stage of planning.
- » Should a location be sought for purpose-built facilities (retirement village with residential aged care), an appropriate site would preferably have the following features:
 - > The site should be at least 10 hectares and preferably 15-18 hectares. A smaller site could accommodate a more modest retirement village or a residential aged care facility, but scale is sought by most contemporary operators.
 - > The site should be level, readily connected to utility infrastructure and should front onto a distributor road.
 - > The site should preferably be located within walking distance of shops and open spaces.
 - > For feasibility purposes, the site should be valued as a super lot at around 30% below residential value.
- » High amenity mainstream housing associated with the golf course is likely to be particularly attractive to seniors. To the greatest extent possible, such products should be designed to allow older people to age in place, including incorporating a proportion of adaptable/universal design homes.
- » As seniors' housing requires access to public transport and local facilities, staging plans should assume that its development will not occur until these are in place.
- » It will be necessary to identify interested potential partners for any substantial seniors-specific projects, as most established players do not have a presence in the area. This would apply particularly if an integrated aged care precinct is considered, requiring health, academic and development partners.
- » Locally based aged care and seniors' housing developers should be given the opportunity to participate in development where appropriate.

2 Introduction

Elton Consulting was commissioned to investigate potential demand for accommodation and facilities that meet the needs of older people in North Tuncurry. Our study is one of several undertaken as part of the proposed rezoning and development of 615 hectares of land to the north of the existing Tuncurry urban area. The rezoning proposes a mix of urban and conservation uses.

The North Tuncurry Urban Renewal Area (NTURA), is sponsored by Landcom under a Project Delivery Agreement (PDA) with the NSW Department of Industry – Crown Lands and Water which controls the land. The traditional owners of the land, the Worimi and Birpai people, have acknowledged that the NTURA can proceed subject to certain conditions.

This study is intended to help inform planning for the allocation of land uses, and about the development partners that might subsequently be involved in developing these facilities. It therefore concentrates on the need to deliver appropriate built facilities rather than on detailed assessment of the adequacy of services in the area.

We have undertaken extensive research and consultation with stakeholders, including those working at a policy and program delivery level and those working in the industry, in completing this study. It is a revised version of an earlier report completed in 2014. The revision process included updating information on existing and proposed retirement village and aged care facilities within the study area as well as additional consultation with stakeholders. Further consultation will occur as progress with the NTURA advances.

The industry sectors reviewed in this study are:

- » Retirement village developers and operators
- » Housing developers specialising in mainstream housing for independent seniors
- » Residential Aged Care developers and operators
- » Health and support service providers.

This report

Our study is in five main parts:

- » Chapter 3 examines the current and projected population of older residents in the Forster Tuncurry area and its salient characteristics.
- » Chapter 4 presents an overview of the relevant industry sectors, including the products they offer, the types of developers and operators that work in these sectors, and the issues and changes they are dealing with in the market for these products.
- » Chapter 5 examines the local situation in the region and in Forster Tuncurry itself, and projected needs into the future.
- » Chapter 6 focuses the operators in the aged housing and care sectors, describing their roles and priorities. It then looks at how they select locations and sites for development.
- » Based on this analysis, Chapter 7 presents several recommendations to Landcom.

3 Older people in the area

The proportion of older people in the Forster Tuncurry population (46% are aged 60 or over) is double the average for NSW. It is projected to continue to grow, in both absolute numbers and as a proportion of all residents.

Population growth is reliant on inbound migration, without which the local population would decline. A large proportion of existing residents migrated into the area typically after the age of 50. Future population size will therefore be determined by the level of migration.

The income profile of older people in the area shows that most residents are in the low to middle income bands. The proportion of residents with incomes above \$1,500 a week is only a third of the NSW average.

Most older residents are home owners (70%). However, the proportion is falling over time.

3.1 Older people's housing options

Many older people prefer to stay in the home they have occupied for many years, perhaps having raised a family there, and surrounded by established social networks and services. Others, by choice or by necessity, move to housing which is more suitable or which offers better lifestyle options.

Four broad categories of housing are especially suited to older people.

- » Mainstream, open-market homes – people moving into an area like Forster Tuncurry for a sea-change tend to favour houses with easy ground floor access or, increasingly, good quality well-located apartments. To permit ageing in place, Universal Design permits modifications (for instance to accommodate a mobility walker or a wheelchair) but this is in limited supply.
- » Age-restricted¹ independent housing in the community – this is a niche market offering purpose-built seniors' housing within the open market. Supply is extremely limited.
- » Retirement villages – these offer accessible housing, onsite facilities and a sense of community. In a few villages, limited in-house care services are also offered. Villages are open to anyone aged 55 or over, but on average entrants are aged around 74².
- » Residential Aged Care (RAC) facilities – this refers to nursing facilities tailored to people with significant care needs that cannot be met in the older person's home. The average age of residents is 83 years³.

3.2 The size of the older population

Forster Tuncurry lies within the MidCoast Council Local Government Area (LGA) and accommodates over a quarter of its residents. The proportion of residents aged 60 or more in the LGA is one of the highest in Australia, and the median age of residents is 52, compared to 43 across Regional NSW.

Forster Tuncurry has a higher proportion of seniors in its resident population than the wider LGA. At the time of the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) Census 2016, 46% of residents were aged 60 years or more (just under

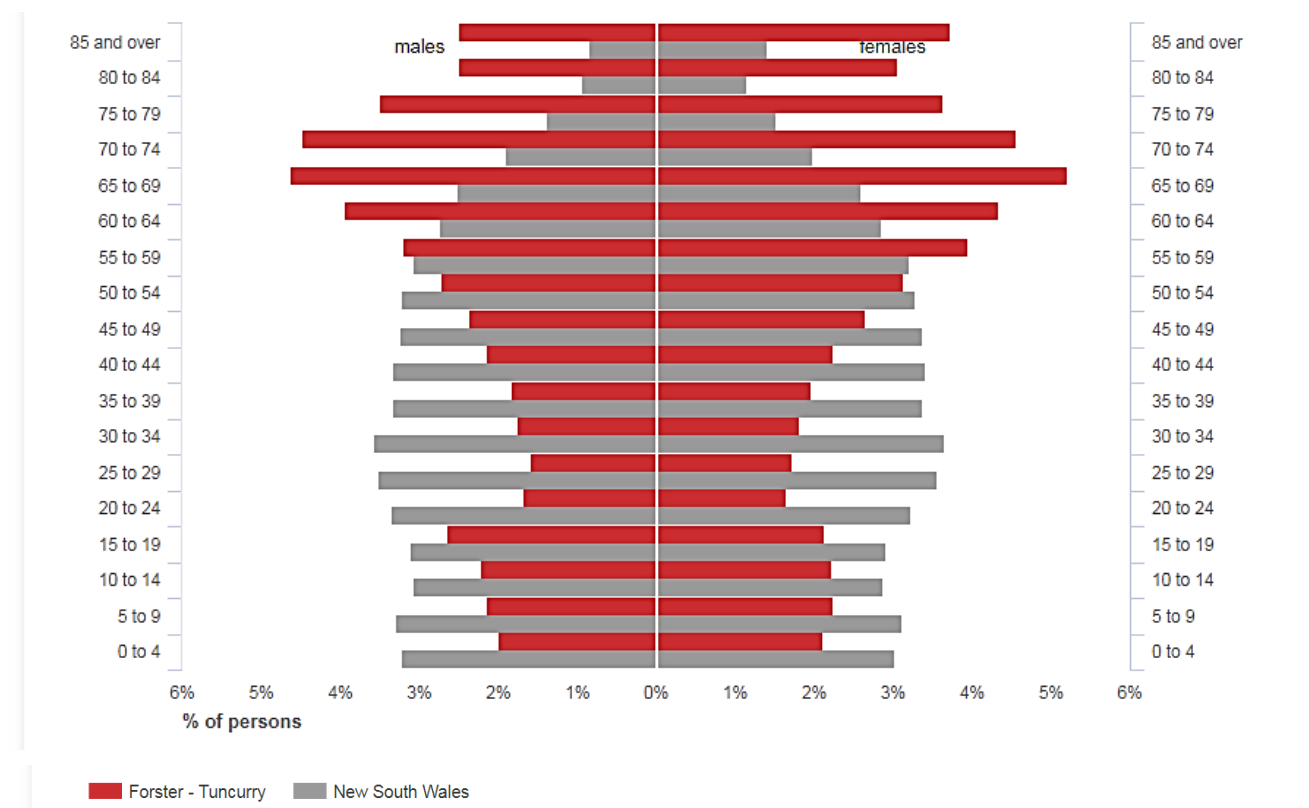
¹ Developments for seniors approved under *Seniors Housing SEPP*, must be occupied by people aged 55 or more, their dependents, or people with a disability.

² PWC/Property Council (2019), 2019 PWC/Property Council Retirement Census, <https://retirement.propertycouncil.com.au/retirement-census>

³ Department of Health (2018), 2017–18 Report on the Operation of the Aged Care Act 1997, <https://www.health.gov.au/resources/publications/2017-18-report-on-the-operation-of-the-aged-care-act-1997-roaca>

9,400 people out of a total population of 20,500), more than twice the NSW average (22%). This is illustrated in **Figure 1**, which clearly shows that the age structure of local population is very different to the State average.

Figure 1 Age pyramid Forster Tuncurry, 2016



Source: ID consultants based on ABS Census 2016

Over the coming decades, the population of older people in the MidCoast LGA is projected to continue to increase (**Table 1**). Population projections prepared for Council⁴ suggest there will be modest growth in most age groups, but that the seniors cohorts will increase substantially mostly due to migration rather than population ageing.

Table 1 Projected older population, MidCoast LGA

Age group	2016	2026	2036	Change (2016-2036)
60-64 years	7,510	7,968	8,378	868
65-69 years	8,257	8,567	9,001	744
70-74 years	6,846	8,046	8,968	2,122
75-79 years	4,888	7,322	8,135	3,247
80-84 years	3,313	5,150	6,341	3,028
85 years and over	3,379	4,058	5,528	2,148
Subtotal (60-85+)	34,193	41,111	46,351	12,157
All ages (0-85+)	91,958	100,323	113,147	21,189

Source: ID for MidCoast Council

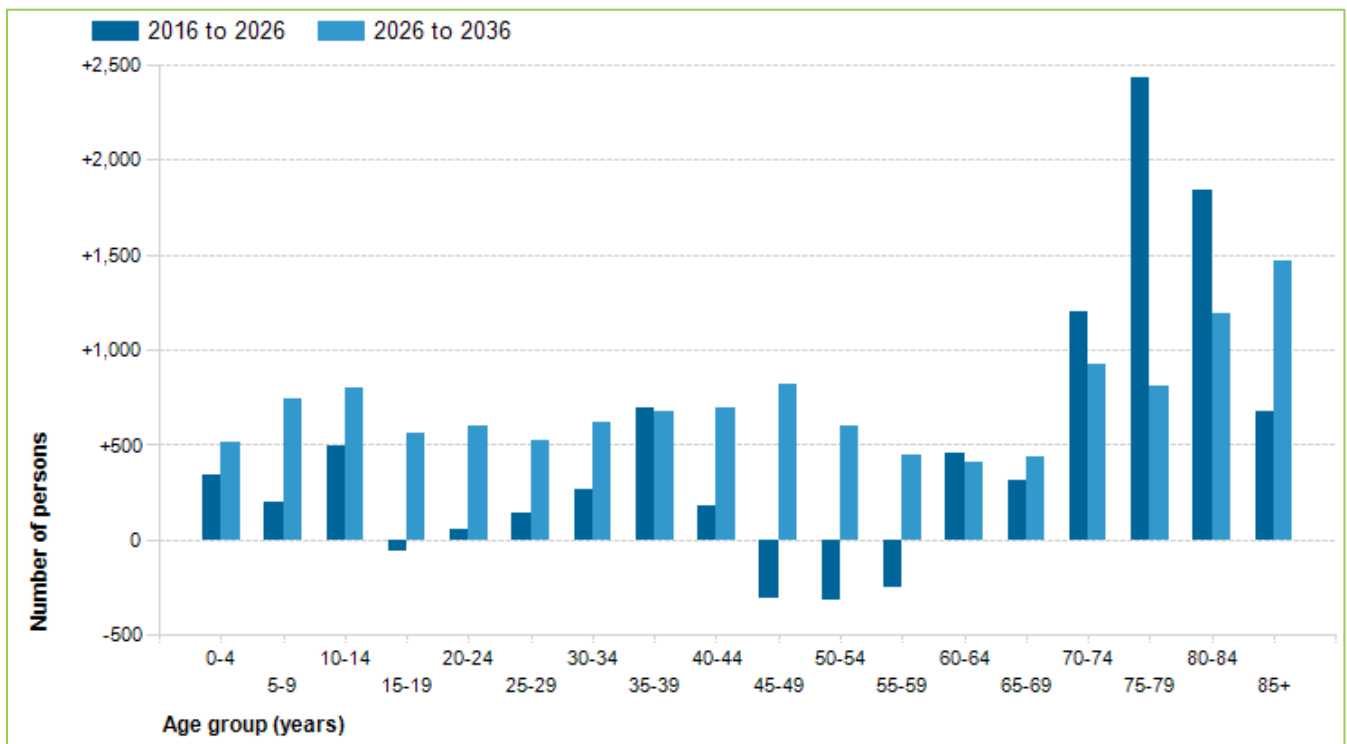
⁴ <https://forecast.id.com.au/midcoast?WebID=280> Accessed 14 December 2018

In the period to 2036, the population of the MidCoast LGA is projected to rise by 23% to approximately 113,000. Projections for Forster Tuncurry suggest slower growth with an increase of 14% to 23,900.

Over this period, seniors are projected to account for almost all the population growth in Forster Tuncurry (2,960 of 3,030), while several younger adult cohorts are predicted to experience a decline in numbers. However, these projections need to be treated with caution, in particular in the case of Tuncurry, where a small increase in the projected population does not appear to have taken account of the possible contribution from the NTURA.

In Forster Tuncurry, by far the biggest increases in resident numbers are expected to be in age groups between 70 and 84 years (**Figure 2**). The number of very old people (85+) is projected to increase by a smaller absolute number but will be large in percentage terms, with a rise of 34% up to the year 2036.

Figure 2 Projected change in age structure to 2036, MidCoast LGA



Source: ID for MidCoast Council

In interpreting population projections, it is important to recognise that they are based on a range of assumptions, some of which may or may not eventuate. For instance, the growth of the oldest age cohorts can be assumed to be mainly a result of the ageing of existing residents and is therefore very likely to eventuate, while increases in the age groups between 50 and 75 years will depend significantly on the level of inward migration, which will only occur if appropriate additional housing is available – and the development and construction of this housing will in turn depend on market factors including the state of the wider economy.

Nevertheless, it can be concluded from the data that:

- » Over the next 20 years there will continue to be increases in the number of people in the core sea-change retiree age group (60-75 years old), seeking independent housing (i.e. appropriate open market housing);
- » The number of people in the core market for retirement village accommodation (age 75-85) will increase significantly; and
- » The number of people in the age cohort most likely to need residential aged care (people aged 85 or more) will also increase quite strongly.

3.3 Indigenous and overseas-born seniors

The 2016 Census reported that there were 1,080 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander residents in Forster Tuncurry. Unlike the wider population, they were predominantly relatively young, with a median age of 22. However, approximately 250 residents were aged 50 years or over.

The overseas-born population in Forster Tuncurry is modest. The 2016 Census found that 10% of residents were born overseas, in most cases born in the United Kingdom or other English-speaking countries. The main non-English speaking birthplaces were Germany and the Netherlands, each accounting for well under 100 residents. Less than 3% of residents said they spoke a language other than English at home and only 0.2% of residents said that they were not proficient in English.

3.4 Migration

Across the MidCoast LGA, persons aged 65 or more accounted for 3,000 of the 13,400 inward migrants in the five years to 2016. Population growth in Forster Tuncurry itself is and is likely to continue to be driven almost entirely by incoming migration. Given its age profile, the local population would decrease without a steady flow of newcomers. Across all age groups, over 40% of residents living in Forster Tuncurry in 2016 had moved to their current home within the last 5 years. Many had moved locally but a large proportion (64%) had moved in from elsewhere, a total of just over 5,000 people. Most (4,425 people) had moved from elsewhere in NSW.

Detailed data on the source of migrants into Forster Tuncurry is unavailable, but data for the wider LGA has been analysed to identify the LGA of origin of seniors moving into the MidCoast LGA during the period 2011-2016. This indicates that a large proportion came from adjacent LGAs, followed by several LGAs in Sydney.

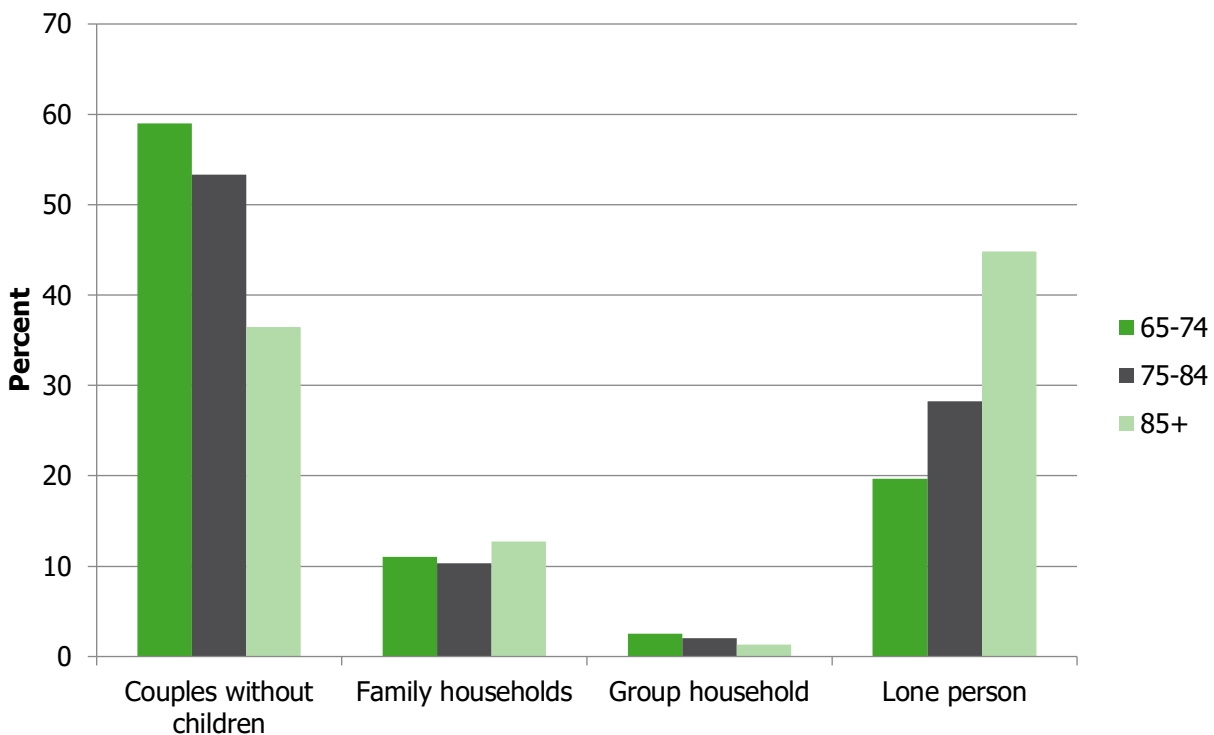
It is notable, however, that inward migration from other parts of the Mid North Coast region and from adjacent regions was largely counter-balanced by outward migration to these areas (for instance, while 126 seniors moved into the area from Port Macquarie Hastings, 134 moved in the other direction). However, there was very limited movement back to Sydney. The LGAs providing the highest net migration into the area between 2011 and 2016 were Blacktown (131), Central Coast (103 people), The Hills Shire (86), Northern Beaches (78), Penrith (75), Parramatta (71), Canterbury-Bankstown (58), Sutherland Shire (51), Ryde (49) and Campbelltown (48).

The most common age of relocation among those coming from outside the region was 60-69 years and the majority were aged less than 70. Given the high average entry age for purpose-built retirement housing, this indicates that most moved into mainstream open-market homes.

3.5 Household types

Analysis of the type of private households in which older people live (**Figure 3**) shows that, up to the age of approximately 80, the majority live in couple households. However, the proportion of lone person households increases with age, rising from 20% at age 60 to 45% in the 85+ age group. In all age groups, approximately one in ten seniors lives in a wider family household.

Figure 3 Household type for older age cohorts in MidCoast LGA (2016)

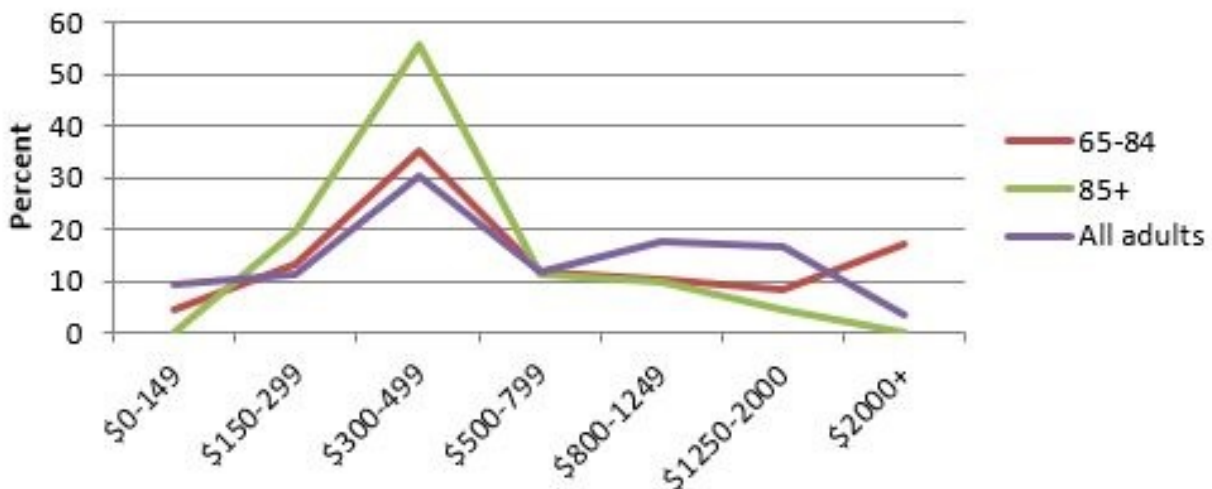


Source: ABS Census 2016

3.6 Income and tenure

Older households generally have lower incomes than younger households (**Figure 4**). This is often partly offset by lower housing costs. Significantly, however, only a minority of households can afford to move to a more expensive home when they retire, and many cannot afford residential situations that involve significant fees and levies (e.g. strata levies or user-pays service fees). This explains why the established tenure model for retirement villages is to defer management fees and then deduct them when the resident departs.

Figure 4 Weekly individual income, Foster Tuncurry (2016)

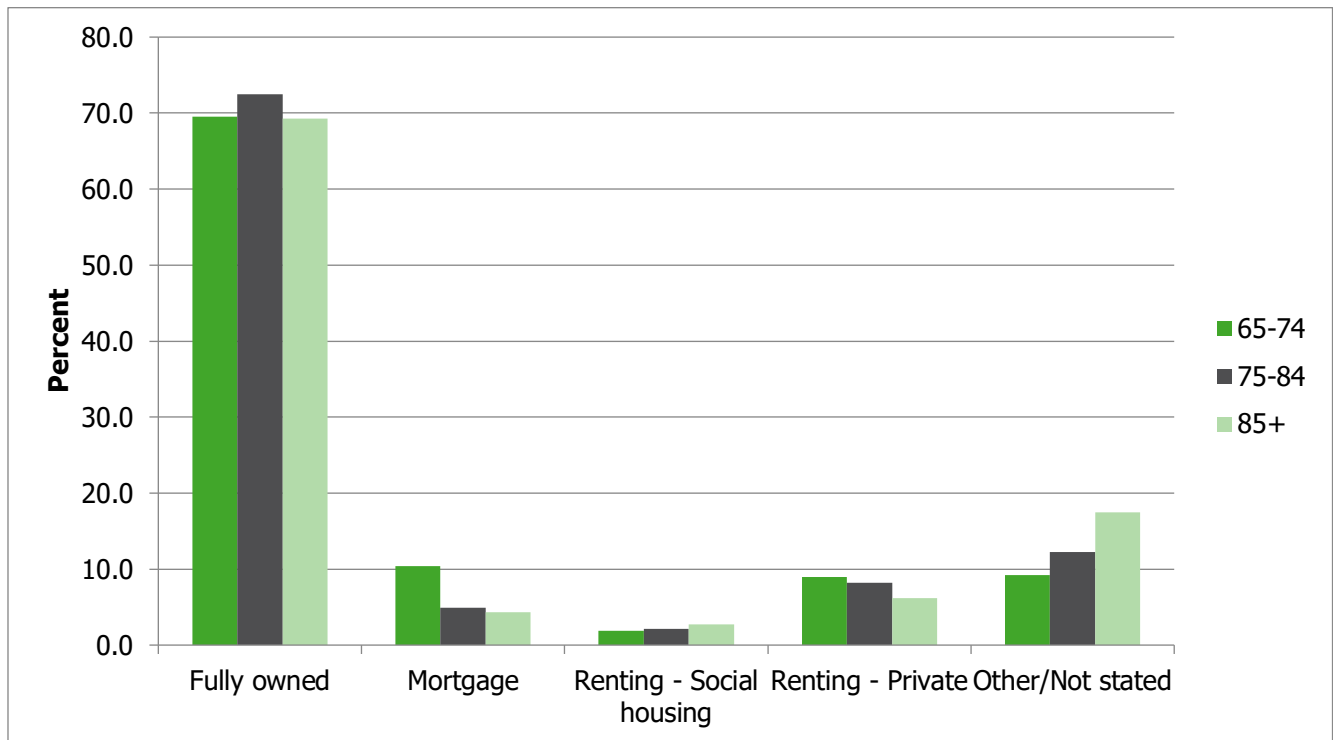


Source: ABS Census 2016

Incomes in Forster Tuncurry are typically low, and at the time of the 2016 Census only 6.4% of residents had a weekly income of \$1500 or more, compared to the NSW average of 17%. By comparison, well over half the seniors in the area had a weekly income under \$500.

The tenure of retired people is predominantly owner occupation (**Figure 5**), and while 70% of seniors were outright owners in 2016, a significant minority reported that they still had a mortgage, even among people aged 85 or more (4.3%).

Figure 5 Tenure by age group for people 65 years and older, MidCoast LGA (2016)



Source: ABS Census 2016

Available data at the LGA level shows that in 2016, 9% of seniors aged 65-74 were private renters, falling to 6% by age 85, while around 3% were social housing tenants (across all the senior age cohorts).

Seniors’ housing options in the future will be affected by two current trends:

- » Home buyers are paying off their mortgage at a later age, and in future an increasing number of older people will have an outstanding mortgage debt
- » The proportion of middle-aged owner-occupiers and home buyers is falling at the rate of around 1% per year, predominantly due to lifestyle changes and unaffordability. As a result, it is predicted that there will be a sharp rise in the number of private tenants aged 65 and over in coming decades.

4 Overview of the seniors housing and care sector

There is ongoing demand for additional housing and care for seniors driven by the expansion of the older population, increased longevity, and expectations of choice which are underpinned by increased affluence (for many but not all older people).

Most seniors live in mainstream housing in the community. Unfortunately, this does not always meet their needs as they age, particularly if mobility declines.

Retirement villages meet the needs of a section of the older population, offering security, a sense of community, and access to facilities. New villages are attempting to attract younger and more active seniors by incorporating more recreational facilities. Increasingly they tend to be higher density, co-located with aged care facilities and relatively large with around 100 units.

Residential aged care (previously known as nursing homes and hostels) are used only by a small minority of seniors. Most residents are very elderly, many have complex high level needs, and over half have dementia. New facilities are being developed to address these factors.

Key future trends include demand for greater choice of housing products (particularly in mainstream market housing), expansion of services providing support and care at home, and a greater emphasis on healthy ageing services.

4.1 Context

Drivers of demand

There are three main drivers that underpin the seniors' housing and aged care sectors:

- » The ageing population – the number of older people in the population is rising rapidly and people are living longer. As a result, there are needs for expanded and new services and facilities including housing, support services, and health and aged care services.
- » Lifestyle and choice – the current generation of retirees are accustomed to having choices, and many (but by no means all) older people have the economic resources to continue to exercise choice as they age. More and better housing options are being sought, and spare living space, manageable accommodation and access to facilities (including recreation) are priorities for many seniors. At the same time, markets are becoming differentiated by income, with different products, prices and tenures meeting different needs, tastes and budgets.
- » Care needs – increased longevity and the demand for “ageing in place” are changing the face of aged care. People in their 60s and 70s are healthier than in the past, and most do not require care services, but at the same time the number of very old people is increasing, bringing rapid increases in demand resulting from dementia and other complex health issues. “Ageing in place” is a policy response to the desire of older people to remain at home for as long as possible and avoid moving into care. It is leading to rapid increases in demand for care and support services delivered into seniors' own homes, while residential care services become increasingly focussed on very old people needing high levels of care.

Government policy

At a government policy level, these factors have resulted in extensive review of existing policy settings over the last two decades. Two key policies are relevant to our study – the federal Living Longer Living Better policy announced in 2013, and the state policy the Seniors Housing State Environmental Planning Policy (SEPP) introduced in 2004.

We also note the recent Royal Commission into Aged Care is likely to lead to further reform in the sector. The Royal Commission has provided a scathing assessment of the current aged care system calling it a “cruel and harmful system ... a system that needs fundamental reform and redesign”⁵. Partly in response to the Royal Commission, the Federal Government has recently announced additional funding for residential aged care and thousands of new Home Care Packages⁶. Despite recent federal government policy announcements, the fundamental structure of the aged care system was established in Living Longer Living Better.

Living Longer Living Better

Comprehensive changes to overhaul the aged care policy framework have been phased in by the Federal Government, based on directions set out in the 2013 Living Longer Living Better policy, and subsequent legislation. Reforms are based around the twin aims of supporting ageing in place and improving the efficiency and viability of aged care. Reforms have progressed but are ongoing, and include:

- » Integration of existing community care (“in-home” care) programs, and an increased emphasis on community care
- » Revised financial arrangements for residential aged care, including new formulae for ongoing subsidies and new provisions for charging accommodation bonds to incoming residents who have sufficient assets to pay them.

RAC developers say that, in principle, the new system improves the viability of the sector, despite ongoing concerns about the adequacy of subsidies to meet the high level of needs among clients. These concerns have resulted in periodic adjustment to financial arrangements. Changes in the nature of demand and in the calculation of subsidies have led to the closure of older and smaller aged care facilities.

Seniors Housing SEPP

The Seniors Housing SEPP facilitates development of housing and care facilities for seniors in NSW. It covers independent housing designed for older people, retirement villages and RACs. It provides a consistent state-wide planning approach to permit development of such facilities so long as they meet certain standards of design (e.g. accessibility) and location.

Other policy trends

On a more general level, wider policy trends that will affect the development of health and aged care facilities in the future include:

- » Improved integration of services, often through co-location and shared use of facilities
- » Wider use of communications and information technology, e.g. telehealth and electronic health records
- » Increased focus on wellbeing and prevention of ill-health, including the establishment of “healthy ageing” programs and facilities.

4.2 The retirement village sector

Retirement villages should be differentiated from age-restricted housing in the community and from residential aged care. They provide self-contained housing for older people who can live independently, and residents are contractually linked to an organisation that is responsible for managing the village, including maintenance of open spaces and village facilities and, in some cases, providing services. Retirement villages are not aged care providers but some offer a limited menu of fee-for-service care and support options, and some villages adjoin a residential aged care facility.

⁵ Royal Commission into Aged Care Quality and Safety (2019), Interim Report: Neglect (Volume 1), <https://agedcare.royalcommission.gov.au/sites/default/files/2020-02/interim-report-volume-1.pdf>

⁶ Australian Government Department of Health (2019), More Choices for a Longer Life – overview, https://www.health.gov.au/sites/default/files/more-choices-for-a-longer-life-overview_0.pdf

Characteristics

Retirement villages have several defining characteristics⁷:

- » Residents must be aged 55 or over. In practice, the average age of entry is 74 years old with the average age of residents around 81 years old
- » Villages normally provide facilities for residents. A community room is the usual minimum, but many modern villages also provide extensive facilities including a community centre, wellness centre, gym, pool and café or restaurant
- » Tenure is in most cases through a “Loan Lease” or “Loan License” model, under which the resident makes an entry payment (to most intents and purposes a purchase price) in return for a right to occupy a property and receives a refund on departure, at which point Deferred Management Fees are deducted.

Research shows that the most common reasons for moving into a retirement village are concerns about security and health. Priority issues include a desire for the company of other seniors, and access to care⁸. From a development viewpoint, retirement villages are not subdivided and are therefore built on substantial super-lots. The housing they provide is designed to meet the needs of residents with poor mobility, but private gardens, if provided, are modest with landscaped communal areas taking their place. Most retirement villages are low rise (77%), although this is changing with much new development (48%) comprising vertical or combination villages⁹.

Types

The industry is relatively fragmented with some operators owning just one village. In the past, most villages were operated by charitable organisations, notably church-based agencies. However, during the 1990s private sector developers entered the sector on a large scale. Now around two thirds of all operators are for profit organisations with the largest players being Aveo Group, LendLease and Stockland¹⁰. The industry is consolidating as the larger operators seek greater efficiency through economies of scale¹¹.

There are now, broadly, four main types of retirement village:

- » “Traditional” retirement villages – older style, small villages (up to 40 units) providing modest one bedroom or bedsit accommodation. Many were built in the 1970s by not-for-profit organisations. They are often seen as unsuitable for modern needs and some are being redeveloped
- » Care-oriented villages – some larger villages adjoin a residential aged care facility, and they may also provide in-home care options to self-care residents. Again, these are mostly provided through not-for-profit organisations
- » Recreation-oriented villages – pioneered by the private sector, most new villages provide mainly 2 or 3 bedroom homes and include extensive recreation options including club houses and swimming pools. Buyers are primarily middle income, although some private sector villages are targeted at the upper end of the market
- » Rental villages – villages offering rental tenure. Doubts over viability mean that this sector has not expanded in recent years.

The market

The retirement village market has experienced significant growth over the past ten years. The number of independent living units delivered within retirement villages, for example, increased by 27% across Australia

⁷ PWC/Property Council (2019), 2019 PWC/Property Council Retirement Census, <https://retirement.propertycouncil.com.au/retirement-census>

⁸ Retirement Living Council (2018), The Book of Wise Moves, <https://www.awisemove.com.au/>

⁹ PWC/Property Council (2019), 2019 PWC/Property Council Retirement Census, <https://retirement.propertycouncil.com.au/retirement-census>

¹⁰ Ibis Group (2020), Retirement Villages in Australia– Market Research Report, <https://www.ibisworld.com/au/industry/retirement-villages>

¹¹ Knight Frank (2017), Seniors Living Insight September 2017, <https://content.knightfrank.com/research/1336/documents/en/seniors-living-insight-september-2017-4951.pdf>

between 2011 and 2016 to 170,700 units¹². Much of this growth was outside the major cities, particularly in NSW where 63% of growth was in regional and coastal locations.

The projected supply pipeline for the next five years (2020/21 to 2024/25) is more moderate with around 11,000 new units projected across Australia with a focus on the metropolitan areas of Sydney, Melbourne and Brisbane¹³. Key challenges include:

- » General economic conditions – the sector is sensitive to the performance of the wider economy, and particularly to open market house prices. When house prices are steady or falling, operators often find that demand slumps due to a fall in consumer confidence. The massive economic impact of the COVID 19 pandemic is already having consequences for retirement village operators, such as Lendlease Retirement which has recently had its village portfolio marked down by 6%¹⁴. This is also affecting the market in Forster Tuncurry with local retirement village operators reporting higher vacancies than usual
- » Public concern about financial exploitation – media reports of poor service and financial exploitation have affected the retirement village sector. Recent media interest has particularly highlighted problems arising from the financial and legal complexity of village contracts¹⁵
- » Rising age of entry to villages – many operators are seeking to address the fact that the average age of entry to villages has been rising and is now around 74 years. New villages therefore seek to attract a somewhat younger clientele by offering extensive facilities for a more active lifestyle (bowling, swimming pools, bar, restaurant etc.).

In summary, current activity in the industry is focussed on:

- » Redeveloping older style villages that now offer limited appeal to buyers
- » Constructing new villages in areas of rapid population growth (particularly the fringes of capital cities). In general, developers tend to prioritise areas where they already “know the market” and most are very tentative about projects in regions where they do not currently have a presence.

Additionally, new developments within the retirement village sector tend to be higher density (48% are either vertical villages or a mix of apartments and villas), co-located with residential aged care facilities, and offering a range of different services and facilities¹⁶. To fund and support facilities, new developments tend to be more than 100 dwellings.

4.3 Mainstream housing options

Most older people live independently in “mainstream” housing. The majority prefer to remain in the home in which they have lived for many years, although a minority prefer to move to a new location (like Forster) for lifestyle reasons. Unfortunately, mainstream homes are often unsuitable in the longer term, for instance if house and garden maintenance requirements become a burden, if the health of residents deteriorates and their mobility declines, or they need support services.

Some developers offer “mainstream” housing products that, while available to any buyer, are particularly targeted to seniors. There are two categories:

¹² Knight Frank (2017), Seniors Living Insight September 2017, <https://content.knightfrank.com/research/1336/documents/en/seniors-living-insight-september-2017-4951.pdf>

¹³ PWC/Property Council (2019), 2019 PWC/Property Council Retirement Census, <https://retirement.propertycouncil.com.au/retirement-census>

¹⁴ The Weekly Source (2020), Lendlease Retirement reflects village owner challenges pre- and post- COVID, <https://www.theweeklysource.com.au/lendlease-retirement-reflects-village-owner-challenges-pre-and-post-covid-village-valuations-hit-development-delayed-stock-building-up/>

¹⁵ See for example: Ferguson, A., Toft, K. & Danckert, S. (2017), Aveo: Exploitation of the elderly rife in retirement villages, Four Corners 24 June 2017, <https://www.abc.net.au/news/2017-06-24/elderly-exploited-in-aveo-retirement-villages/8645876>; Hobday, Liz. (2019), Retirement village residents unhappy about complex contracts and fees, ABC News, 20 June 2019, <https://www.abc.net.au/news/2019-06-20/retirement-village-residents-unhappy-about-complex-contracts-fee/11224072>

¹⁶ PWC/Property Council (2019), 2019 PWC/Property Council Retirement Census, <https://retirement.propertycouncil.com.au/retirement-census>

- » Adaptable, universal or Livable housing, that is designed to be wheelchair accessible and is located on a level site. Villa-style developments in areas with level topography may also appeal, even if they do not offer these design features
- » Resort-style developments and more recently, apartment buildings in prime locations that are popular with retirees.

In addition, some housing is specifically designed and built for seniors. It is sometimes described as age-restricted housing, because it is developed under the rules of the Seniors Housing SEPP which provides for the construction of accommodation for independent seniors, to adaptable housing standards. It differs from retirement village accommodation in that it is not managed or serviced.

Despite the SEPP, the availability of such housing in regional areas is limited, probably because its main appeal to developers is in high cost areas where the SEPP offers scope to increase density.

4.4 Residential aged care

Residential aged care facilities provide over 240,000 permanent places in Australia, and respite care for a further 60,000 people¹⁷. They were traditionally known as hostels (providing low care) and nursing homes (providing high care). Today, the average age of residents is 83 years, and most require high levels of care. A large and increasing proportion have dementia. Most older people never need to enter aged care.

Residential aged care places are provided by private and by not-for-profit specialist organisations and are subsidised by the Federal Government which manages supply by allocating a restricted number of places (once known as bed licenses) to each region on a competitive project-by-project basis. Subsidy levels are calculated based on several variables including the level of need of the resident. Access to a residential aged care place is only possible through an assessment process carried out by an Aged Care Assessment Team (ACAT).

Current government policy is to support consumer preferences by expanding community-based care services that can help seniors to avoid the need to go into residential care. However, the growth in the older population and the complex health issues faced by some very old people mean that the number of residential aged care places required will continue to grow in future.¹⁸

Most residential aged care providers are small with over half operating a single facility¹⁹. Not for profit organisations provide 56% of services in the sector, but the for-profit sector accounts for much of the recent growth in aged care supply²⁰. There is evidence the sector is consolidating largely due to cost pressures with operators "increasingly needing in the order of 1,000+ beds across their portfolio to achieve optimal efficiencies"²¹. Some of the largest players in the sector include DAC Finance, Regis Healthcare, BUPA, Aveo, Blue Care, Estia Health, LendLease and Stockland²².

Some aged care facilities are in or adjacent to retirement villages. However, they are operated as separate entities and it is currently not permitted to offer village residents the automatic right to a place in an on-site facility, although if a place is available and the resident has been assessed as eligible by the ACAT, entry is often possible. Subsidy rules also make it difficult to use residential aged care facilities as a base to offer services to self-care residents.

¹⁷ Department of Health (2018), 2017–18 Report on the Operation of the Aged Care Act 1997, <https://www.health.gov.au/resources/publications/2017-18-report-on-the-operation-of-the-aged-care-act-1997-roaca>

¹⁸ Royal Commission into Aged Care Quality and Safety (2019), Interim Report: Neglect (Volume 1), <https://agedcare.royalcommission.gov.au/sites/default/files/2020-02/interim-report-volume-1.pdf>

¹⁹ Knight Frank (2017), Seniors Living Insight September 2017, <https://content.knightfrank.com/research/1336/documents/en/seniors-living-insight-september-2017-4951.pdf>

²⁰ Aged Care Financing Authority (2018), Sixth report on the Funding and Financing of the Aged Care Sector, <https://www.health.gov.au/resources/publications/sixth-report-on-the-funding-and-financing-of-the-aged-care-sector-july-2018>

²¹ Knight Frank (2017), Seniors Living Insight September 2017, <https://content.knightfrank.com/research/1336/documents/en/seniors-living-insight-september-2017-4951.pdf>, p.7

²² Ibis Group (2020), Aged Care Residential Services in Australia– Market Research Report, <https://www.ibisworld.com/au/industry/aged-care-residential-services/5531/>

4.5 Health and support services

Integration between accommodation services, care/support services and health services is currently poor, even though many older people have interconnected needs. Integration has been hampered by the involvement of different specialist agencies and in many cases by fragmented government funding arrangements. Improved integration (or at least co-location) of services is however being promoted by policy reforms at government level.

A key step was taken by the Federal Government in bringing together all forms of community-based support and care under one funding umbrella. Indeed, this is the segment of the aged care system in greatest demand with nearly 850,000 people receiving services through the Commonwealth Home Support Programme and over 115,000 people receiving support through Home Care Packages in 2017-18²³. However, high demand means that many eligible older people cannot access these services with the “average length of time waiting for a Package is just over one year for half of the people on a Level 4 Package”²⁴.

More generally, “ageing in place” is supported by all levels of government – its core objective is to allow people to age in their own home rather than having to enter a care facility, and this entails greater demand on community services and facilities that may be needed for by older people living independently. As well as care and support, this includes wellness programs, day therapy centres and seniors’ activity centres. Additional built facilities will be needed to accommodate these.

Trends in provision

In addition to medical advances, several trends in health care provision can be noted:

- » Seniors with complex needs – as the number of people aged 85 and over increases, so does the prevalence of health issues that include dementia and multiple co-morbidities. This affects residential aged care facilities, which must deal with these complex issues, and community care services, which offer care support and nursing services that are delivered into private dwellings
- » Wellness and preventative care – healthy ageing is a key policy priority and is resulting in an increase in wellness programs targeted to seniors, ranging from hydrotherapy pools and seniors’ gyms to falls prevention programs. Walkable and senior-friendly neighbourhoods also have an important role in promoting healthy lifestyles for older people
- » Clustering of facilities – the benefits of co-location are becoming better understood. Co-location facilitates communication between practitioners, more efficient use of space, and easier access for patients. It is also more cost effective than dispersed provision
- » Increased use of technology – recent innovations include telehealth and personalised electronic health records. In addition, the ability of doctors to assist patients remotely, over the internet or by video call, is rapidly increasing. Fast internet connectivity is essential for such services
- » User pays services – demand for subsidised health and care services among seniors is continuing to expand faster than supply, and for those who can afford it, private services are increasingly utilised. At the same time, many community-based services are moving to a user pays model, usually on a means tested model.

²³ Aged Care Financing Authority (2019), Seventh report on the Funding and Financing of the Aged Care Industry, <https://www.health.gov.au/resources/publications/seventh-report-on-the-funding-and-financing-of-the-aged-care-industry-july-2019>

²⁴ Royal Commission into Aged Care Quality and Safety (2019), Interim Report: Neglect (Volume 1), <https://agedcare.royalcommission.gov.au/sites/default/files/2020-02/interim-report-volume-1.pdf>, p.53

5 Seniors housing and care in the local area

There is a limited but increasing supply of retirement village housing in the Forster Tuncurry area. Most is traditional in style offering villa housing in a landscaped setting, with limited on-site facilities. Recent developments are higher density with apartments and a broader range of services. There is a lack of contemporary lifestyle-oriented retirement village options, although there is a new development underway which may address this need.

The range of housing choices suitable for seniors in the area is currently relatively limited. Consultations suggest that there is unmet demand for housing in the community that is designed to meet the needs of independent seniors who wish to age in place. The North Tuncurry site could help meet this demand.

The availability and capacity of health and support services is patchy, particularly given the lack of accident and emergency services in Forster Tuncurry and difficulties attracting and retaining key staff.

The projected growth in the local population of seniors will support some additional purpose-built housing, but there is already some capacity within the system and existing demand is inadequate to justify planning large scale retirement village or residential aged care projects at this stage.

5.1 Retirement villages

Existing provision in Forster Tuncurry

There are nine existing retirement villages in the Forster Tuncurry area (**Table 2** and **Figure 6**). All are modern or relatively modern. A categorisation of retirement villages in NSW is presented in chapter 6 and local villages are discussed in this wider context. However, key factors to note are:

- » Golden Ponds is the largest retirement village, and the only one in Forster Tuncurry owned by a major national operator. It is traditional in style, offering villa accommodation
- » Evermore was completed in 2017 and is the first large-scale vertical retirement village developed in the area. Evermore is also working with MidCoast Council to develop 139 seniors living apartments in the Civic Precinct
- » Crystal Waters has sometimes described itself as a retirement village but is a manufactured home estate with limited aged care facilities
- » Palm Lake Resort Forster is still under construction. It is seeking to attract affluent, younger seniors with marketing positioning it as “an over 50s resort” offering “five-star leisure”. The masterplan includes a gym, tennis courts, a bar, cinema, pool and marina
- » Sunrise is a fairly recent market entrant, targeting people who want to live in self-care housing but who require support and assistance services.

Vacancies and price points

There is only limited information available about retirement village vacancies, but most have regular vacancies due to turnover of residents. There seems to be some capacity in the market potentially due to the economic impact of COVID-19 with the following villages listing vacancies – Crystal Waters Estate (10), Evermore Retirement Living (7), and Sunrise Supported Living Forster/Tuncurry (20).

Local villages offer products at a range of price points aimed at lower to middle income seniors, including:

- » Crystal Waters Estate – manufactured homes from \$160,000 (2 bed, 1 bath) to \$365,000 (2 bed, 2 bath)

- » Evermore Retirement Living – apartments from \$389,000 (2 bed, 1 bath) to \$575,000 (2 bed, 2 bath, study)
- » Golden Ponds Retirement Resort – villas from \$205,000 (1 bed, 1 bath) to \$410,000 (2 bed, 2 bath)
- » Sunrise Supported Living Forster/Tuncurry – villas from \$229,000 (1 bed, 1 bath) to \$445,000 (2 bed, 2 bath).

Table 2 Retirement villages in Forster Tuncurry

Village	Dwellings	Location	Operator
Crystal Waters Estate	185 one, two and three bedroom manufactured homes	133 South Street, Tuncurry	Hampshire Villages
Evermore Retirement Living	148 one and two bedroom apartments	18-30 Bruce Street, Forster	Evermore Supported Living
GLAICA Gardens	14 two bedroom villas	Cassandra Crescent, Tuncurry	GLAICA
GLAICA Lions Village	25 one bedroom villas	47 Lake Street, Forster	GLAICA
Golden Ponds Retirement Resort	158 one, two and three bedroom villas	1 Cape Hawke Drive, Forster	Stockland
Pacific Cape	25 two and three bedroom villas, and 20 one, two and three bedroom apartments (future stages may incorporate additional apartments)	140 Kularoo Drive, Forster	GLAICA
Palm Lake Resort Forster	Being developed, up to 285 homes (44 in stage one)	223 The Lakes Way, Forster	Palm Lake Group
Secura Lifestyle Lakeside Forster	39 manufactured homes	13 Tea Tree Road, Forster	Secura Lifestyle
Sunrise Supported Living Forster/Tuncurry	106 one and two bedroom villas	11A Chapmans Road, Tuncurry	Sunrise Supported Living

Source: villages.com.au; agedcareguide.com.au

Figure 6 Retirement villages and residential aged care facilities in Forster Tuncurry



Legend

- Site Boundary
- Proposed employment
- Proposed residential
- Proposed open space
- Proposed B2 Local Centre

Retirement village

- 1 Golden Ponds Resort Retirement Village
- 2 Pacific Cape
- 3 Crystal Waters Estate
- 4 Sunrise Supported Living
- 5 Glaica Gardens
- 6 Glaica Lions Village
- 7 Evermore Retirement Living
- 8 Palm Lakes Resort Forster
- 9 Secura Lifestyle Lakeside Forster

Residential aged care

- 1 BCS Kularoo Centre
- 2 Glaica House
- 3 Estia Health Forster (Barclay Gdns)
- 4 Estia Health Tuncurry

Provision around Forster Tuncurry

There are also several villages in the wider region (**Table 3**). Of these, by far the largest and most luxurious is The Palm Lake Resort in Tea Gardens.

Table 3 Retirement villages in the wider region

Village	Dwellings	Location	Operator
Banyula Village	50 modern villas, 8 studios	Medowie Rd, Old Bar	Bushland Health Group
Beachfront – Hallidays Point	Two and three bedroom manufactured homes	21 Redhead Road. Hallidays Point	Hometown Australia
Bishop Tyrrell Place	19 self care villas	Princes St, Cundletown	Anglican Care (North Coast Diocese)
Bushland Place	54 one and two bedroom villas	Cnr Bushland Drive and Gipps Street, Taree NSW	Bushland Health Group
CC Drury Villa Precinct	30 one and two bedroom villas	24-30 Jacaranda Avenue Taree	Bushland Health Group
Clifton Old Bar	131 one, two and three bedroom dwellings	119 Forest Lane, Old Bar	Clifton Lifestyle
Halliday Shores	181 two and three bedroom villas	90 High St, Hallidays Point	Gateway Lifestyle
Ingenia Gardens Taree, Taree	50 dwellings	60 Edinburgh Drive, Taree	Ingenia Gardens
Palm Lake Resort Tea Gardens	275 two and three bedroom dwellings	50 Spinifex Avenue, Tea Gardens	Palm Lake Resort
Secura Lifestyle Hallidays Point	Three bedroom manufactured homes	517 Blackhead Road Hallidays Point	Secure Lifestyle
Storm Retirement Village	18 one and two bedroom villas	109 Cowper St, Taree	Anglican Care (North Coast Diocese)
Taree Gardens	Rental Village	Edinburgh Dr, Taree	Garden Villages
Tea Gardens Grange	206 two and three bedroom dwellings	33-39 Spinafex Avenue, Tea Gardens	RSL Lifecare
Warrana Place Retirement Village	94 two and three bedroom villas (including 13 under construction)	Cnr Wingham Road & Marie Avenue, Taree	Bushland Health Group
Wingham Retirement Village	12 rented apartments	12 Primrose Street, Wingham	The Whiddon Group

Source: villages.com.au; agedcareguide.com.au

Benchmarking needs

According to industry estimates, retirement village market penetration is about 5.4% of over 65s in NSW²⁵. In Forster Tuncurry, market penetration is currently only around half of this (excluding Crystal Waters, which is not

²⁵ Knight Frank (2017), Seniors Living Insight September 2017, <https://content.knightfrank.com/research/1336/documents/en/seniors-living-insight-september-2017-4951.pdf>

strictly speaking a retirement village). So, given the size of the resident population of seniors in the area, the provision of retirement village homes appears relatively modest.

It is likely further villages could be successfully developed in the area, especially by large regional and state-wide operators which have a limited foothold there at present. Such operators advertise widely and seek to attract buyers from outside the locality, whereas the existing villages are mainly targeted to the local market.

The main obstacle to the establishment of new retirement villages, in Forster Tuncurry as elsewhere, is finding suitable sites – that is, sites that are large enough to accommodate a substantial number of homes alongside the necessary associated infrastructure, and that are affordable to acquire.

Future needs

Looking to the future, the growth in the 70-85 age groups within the local population will result in an increase in the benchmarked demand for retirement village dwellings. This estimate is highly tentative both because current penetration rates in Forster Tuncurry are significantly lower than the state average, and many retirement villages target markets well beyond the local area. However, if we assume a range based on the current retirement village penetration rate in Forster Tuncurry and the average for NSW, this growth could result in demand for 300-600 additional retirement village dwellings by 2036.

New local demand currently appears to be met largely by long-established local provider GLAICA (The Great Lakes Aged and Invalid Care Association) with its recent Pacific Cape project and Evermore Supported Living at Forster, which delivered 148 new retirement living apartments in 2017 and plans to deliver 139 additional apartments as part of the Civic Precinct development in Forster.

In summary, local consultations and benchmarking for this study suggest that there are potentially two long term market opportunities in the Forster Tuncurry area:

- » There is a modest but ongoing level of locally-generated demand, including demand from residents of the rural hinterland
- » There is scope for a “destination village” which will attract residents from outside the area. This is likely to be lifestyle oriented with extensive recreation facilities or linked to the golf course – Palm Lakes Resort in Tea Gardens is the best comparison in the region. The new Palm Lake Resort in Forster is likely to fulfil this opportunity.

The NTURA could in principle offer a location for one of these opportunities depending on how the market develops in coming years. However, the cost of land would be a critical issue in the feasibility of establishing a retirement village on the site.

Finally, although affordability has been identified as an important issue for seniors in the area, it should not be assumed that the retirement village sector will be able to respond adequately to those who cannot afford full entry prices. In policy terms, the most significant unmet needs are found among seniors trapped in the private rental market, and it has proved almost impossible to address their needs through open market mechanisms. Entrepreneurs who attempted to build and run affordable rental retirement villages have gone out of business in recent years, including Village Life in Forster. Not-for-profit village operators have attempted to assist in such cases, and Government programs (e.g. the National Rental Affordability Scheme) have been utilised in a few cases.

5.2 Independent housing options

The great majority of seniors do not want or need housing that is purpose-built for older people, and this is particularly so in areas like Forster Tuncurry where a large proportion of residents have moved to the area to retire, buying a home where they intend to remain. In some cases, however, this house can eventually prove unsuitable, particularly if the resident’s health or mobility declines. In this situation, level access, a low-maintenance garden, ease of movement around a single storey dwelling and proximity to services become priorities. If they must move, most people would prefer to move to a more suitable home and have care services delivered to it, rather than move to a retirement village or go into residential care.

In this area, as elsewhere, most mainstream homes do not facilitate easy internal circulation for people with poor mobility or who use a wheelchair, and many homes are not easily adapted. Policy makers recognise the need for more of the mainstream housing stock to be built to “universal”, “adaptable” or “Livable” designs, as recognised in Landcom’s Universal Design Guidelines. However, to date there has been limited response from the development and construction industries. Housing specifically designed for seniors can be built under the state-wide provisions of the Seniors Housing SEPP which facilitates approval of such dwellings even if they would not be acceptable under local planning codes, so long as they meet a range of standards including accessibility. It appears that limited use has been made of the policy in Forster Tuncurry, although data is not available.

Mainstream housing suited to the needs of seniors in Forster Tuncurry (e.g. villa homes) is reported by stakeholders in the aged care sector to be in short supply, although developers do not necessarily believe that this represents the most profitable market sector. Additional mainstream housing for seniors can be expected to represent a significant ongoing need in the area. Importantly, it can readily be integrated into new residential development.

A key challenge in the region, however, is affordability. Housing prices have risen by almost 50% for units in the area since early 2014 with median unit prices at March 2020 around \$385,000, and nearly 30% for houses with median house prices at March 2020 around \$450,000²⁶.

5.3 Residential aged care

Existing local provision

Only a small proportion of seniors ever need residential aged care, and most of them are aged 85 or over. There are four existing residential aged care facilities in Forster Tuncurry, providing 535 places (**Table 4** and **Figure 6**).

Table 4 Residential aged care in Forster Tuncurry

Name	Accommodation	Location	Operator
BaptistCare Kularoo Centre	160 beds	Cnr Kularoo Drive and Boundary Street, Forster	BaptistCare
Estia Health Forster	100 beds	150 The Southern Parkway, Forster	Estia Health
Estia Health Tuncurry	129 beds	4 Bonventi Close, Tuncurry	Estia Health
GLAICA House	146 beds	22 Flora Parade, Tuncurry	GLAICA

Source: villages.com.au; agedcareguide.com.au

In addition to the established facilities, an 88 bed RAC is proposed as part of the Pacific Cape development at Forster, which has just received development approval, sponsored by local aged care and seniors’ housing provider GLAICA. This site also has the capacity for additional RAC accommodation as part of future stages.

Other RAC facilities surrounding Forster Tuncurry are in Old Bar, Taree, Hawkes Nest and Tea Gardens (**Table 5**).

²⁶ Department of Family and Community Services (2014), Rent and Sales Report No.108, <https://www.facs.nsw.gov.au/download?file=324976>; and Department of Family and Community Services (2020), Rent and Sales Report – interactive dashboard, <https://www.facs.nsw.gov.au/resources/statistics/rent-and-sales/dashboard>

Table 5 Aged care facilities in the wider region

Name	Accommodation	Location	Operator
Alkira Lodge	89 beds	Cnr Bushland Drive and Gipps Street, Taree NSW	Bushland Health Group
Banyula Lodge	80 beds	39-59 Medowie Road, Old Bar	Bushland Health Group
Bishop Tyrrell Place	75 beds	60 Princes Street, Cundletown	Anglican Care
Estia Health Tea Gardens	106 beds	42 Spinifex Avenue, Tea Gardens	Estia Health
Karingal Gardens	100 beds	9 Bligh Street, Taree	Bushland Health Group
Peter Sinclair Gardens	75 beds	2 Mirreen Street, Hawkes Nest	RSL LifeCare
St Paul's Retirement Community	40 beds	54 River Street, Cundletown	Calvary Retirement Communities
Storm Village	117 beds	109 Cowper Street, Taree	Anglican Care
Whiddon Wingham	82 beds	12 Primrose Street, Wingham	The Whiddon Group

Benchmarking needs

Funding for aged care places in residential facilities is provided by the Federal Government. There are 535 residential aged care places in Forster Tuncurry with a further 160 in the pipeline. According to the Federal Department of Health, the wider Great Lakes sub-region (which is essentially the same as the former Great Lakes Council area) currently has 767 approved residential aged care places, of which 615 are operational.

On this basis, the area is close to meeting the benchmark of demand which has in recent years been used to inform planning for aged care funding, which is 88 residential care places per 1,000 population aged 70 or over. (Note that this benchmark was developed for the purposes of regional planning and is not intended to be applied at the local level, however its use can still provide a useful insight into the adequacy of local supply).

Consultation with local stakeholders, including the ACAT, indicates that local facilities are of good quality, and that the shortfall of places compared to demand which existed some years ago has abated significantly. The level of unmet need in the area is therefore currently fairly low.

Information provided by the Federal Department of Health for the purposes of the 2018-19 Aged Care Approvals Round²⁷ shows that the Great Lakes sub-region is classed as Priority 3 for new places (on a scale of 1-6) and that the current outstanding needs are for Dementia places and Respite places.

If the projected population to 2036 eventuates, there will be a need for further residential aged care places in the future. The facility proposed at Pacific Cape, the new GLAICA development, is likely to meet this need for several years. It has approval for a new 88-bed RAC and this is likely to be operating within two to three years.

It is not currently possible to quantify the level of long term need for residential aged care places, other than to say that additional places will certainly be required to meet increasing demand from around 2025 onwards.

²⁷ https://www.health.gov.au/sites/default/files/documents/2020/01/2018-19-aged-care-approvals-round-acar-targeting-of-residential-aged-care-places_2.pdf

5.4 Health and support services

Current provision

Health services

Gaps and staff shortages in health services have been a significant concern for many years in the Forster Tuncurry area, although more recently the situation has improved to some degree.

Forster Tuncurry has no public hospital, although some public beds are provided in Forster Private Hospital. There is also no Accident and Emergency Department in the area with the nearest services at Taree and Gloucester. This is a leading concern for local seniors. The NSW Ministry of Health is currently investigating the need for additional public health services hospital in the area.

The Hunter New England Local Health District provides a range of services in the area mainly through the Forster Community Health Centre. Services include Aboriginal health, early childhood, child and family nursing, drug and alcohol, and mental health services. Allied health services such as dentistry, physiotherapy and podiatry, are also available in the area with the number of practitioners having increased in recent years.

The other key issues for Foster Tuncurry related to health services are:

- » Challenges in attracting and retaining medical staff – Council reports that the longstanding shortage of medical practitioners, which has existed for some time, has improved over recent years. However, it is still difficult to attract general practitioners to the area and the Local Health District notes that retaining staff, particularly nurses, is a challenge
- » Availability of community transport – the Local Health District notes that the community transport services have reduced in recent times partly due to insurance issues. This impacts the ability of some older people, particularly those who are isolated or on lower incomes, to access health services in population centres.

Aged care and support services

As noted above, home based aged care services are provided through the:

- » Commonwealth Home Support Programme, which provides entry level support services including help with housework and personal care
- » Home Care Packages Program which helps older people with complex needs to stay at home through coordinated care and services. There are four levels of home care packages from basic care to high-level care needs.

Access to these services (and to residential aged care facilities) is determined by the local ACAT, which is in Taree. A geriatrician and gerontic nurses are based on the same site.

As a 31 December 2019, 4,224 people in the Mid North Coast of NSW had access to a home care package with 49 organisations providing services at each of the four package levels. Most people eligible for home care are also approved for support under the Commonwealth Home Support Programme.

At the same time, there were also 1,421 people who had been approved for a package but were waiting to receive services. Recently, the Commonwealth Government has announced new funding for home care packages. This has seen an additional 1,407 packages released in the Mid North Coast²⁸.

Other services in the area include:

- » MidCoast Assist which operates its Active and Older program at the Forster Centre including group activities, outings, art and movement based activities

²⁸ Australian Government Department of Health (2020), Home Care Packages Program – Data Report 2nd Quarter 2019-20, https://gen-agedcaredata.gov.au/www_aihngen/media/Home_care_report/HCP-Data-Report-2019%e2%80%9320-2nd-Qtr.pdf

- » Seniors' Day Care services are also operated by Wallis Lakes RSL and the Community of Christ. They provide activities for the frail aged and respite for their carers
- » A hydrotherapy pool at Foster Private Hospital which is available for use by community groups.

Current and future needs

Health services in the area have improved over recent years, but the lack of accident and emergency services and the difficulty in attracting and retaining medical staff are concerns for some older people and those who work with them or care for them. Consultations also suggest that there are continuing shortages of some allied health professionals, including physiotherapists, speech pathologists and occupational therapists. In addition, it is difficult to recruit and retain aged care staff. These issues are particularly relevant in the holiday season when the population of the area more than triples.

One existing service provider in the area also expressed interest in developing an integrated aged care and health facility on the North Tuncurry site²⁹. Partners would be required if this proposal were to be progressed, certainly including Council and the Local Health District and probably a major aged care and retirement housing provider, as well as a university or health research institution. If feasible, this would help integrate aged care accommodation and services with health care in this area.

²⁹ The Hunter Valley Research Foundation also proposed this in its 2011 Market Sounding Study for the North Tuncurry Development. It suggested "Retirement villages, residential aged care facilities and out-placement care services (along with associated health services) ... represent the most evident opportunity founded upon rapid increases in anticipated demand. There appears to be an opportunity to create a category-killing location (a cluster) for these services, including independent living units (RVs), residential aged care facilities, care services for those ageing-in-place".

6 Operator profiles and priorities

The retirement village and aged care sectors were until quite recently the domain of not-for-profit organisations, but the private sector has become increasingly involved over the last 20 years.

Many existing villages and residential aged care facilities are held by small local organisations, but these sectors are consolidating. The Forster Tuncurry area is generally serviced by smaller operators in the retirement village sector with only one major operator (Stockland). However, residential aged care facilities in the area tend to be operated by larger private (e.g. Estia Health) and not for profit organisations (e.g. Anglican Care and BaptistCare).

The key priority for developers in these sectors is a clear market for their product, which strongly favours areas with a rapidly growing population, such as the fringes of capital cities. An existing presence in the area also supports investment confidence.

New residential aged care facilities and retirement villages must be quite large to be viable. They require level sites with easy road access, and with a land price below the prevailing level for residential land.

6.1 Classification of operators

Until recently, many of the same organisations have been involved in both the retirement village and residential aged care sectors, and they are described in this section. Generally this is still the case, although private sector operators in particular are increasingly likely to specialise in either residential aged care or villages.

Not for profit operators

Aged care and retirement housing was once the preserve of the not-for-profit sector, particularly faith-based groups.

Large not-for-profit providers include Uniting, Anglican Care and BaptistCare. These organisations increasingly resemble the “for profit” sector in that they are developing large villages with high-specification homes, a wide range of village facilities, and prices similar to those in the private sector. A large proportion of villages include residential aged care facilities.

There are also many small, usually locally-based, not-for profit operators. They provide self-care housing and/or residential aged care, typically in small facilities. Many are facing viability problems due to their small scale. This, combined with the demand for more modern villages, is forcing some to expand using borrowed funds and accumulated assets, or to sell out to larger operators.

For profit operators

The for-profit sector is increasingly diverse and includes a significant number of specialists.

Several corporate village operators provide modern villages around Australia. The villages generally offer well-appointed two and three bedroom homes, landscaped grounds, a residents’ community centre or club, leisure facilities and on-site services (meals, hairdresser, etc.). These providers are typically financed by a specialist real estate trust and have links to large development companies. Australia’s largest village operators include Aveo Group (90 villages and over 13,000 residents), LendLease Group (with 72 villages and around 17,000 residents) and Stockland (63 villages and over 11,000 residents). Although some of these villages include residential aged care facilities, there has been a trend to divest either the ownership or management of these to other operators.

As in the not-for profit sector, there are also significant numbers of private, locally based village operators and residential aged care operators. Some smaller operators have had to sell up due to their lack of scale and

decreasing appeal of older facilities, but others are developing large projects, including some “high end” recreation-oriented villages. There are also several successful private residential aged care operators that are building new facilities.

A small number of mainstream developers now specialise in open market housing products that are primarily targeted to seniors. These include luxury apartment developments and resort style estates.

6.2 Local operators

The local aged accommodation and care sector is changing with new investment in retirement villages in the area, including luxury resorts, and consolidation in the residential aged care sector. Services and facilities are quite fragmented, with limited built infrastructure in Forster Tuncurry to support the increasingly large section of the population that is ageing “at home” and that seeks services and facilities in the community.

Not for profit

Large charitable providers do not have a significant presence in Forster Tuncurry with BaptistCare being the only large charitable provider in that area, operating a residential aged care facility in Forster. However, Anglican Care and RSL Lifecare do own and operate retirement villages and aged care facilities in the MidCoast LGA. They are particularly prominent in the residential aged care sector, but RSL Lifecare also owns a large “upmarket” retirement village in Tea Gardens.

Locally based not for profit providers have a strong footprint with Bushland Health Group in Taree and GLAICA in Forster Tuncurry owning and operating retirement villages and residential aged care facilities. GLAICA is a long established local not-for-profit provider, which has taken significant steps to increase the scale of its operations and modernise its facilities. It has a major new development under construction providing a self-care retirement village and a large modern aged care facility.

For profit

Private operators are particularly prominent in the retirement village sector in Forster Tuncurry where GLAICA is the only not for profit provider.

New investment in retirement villages has come from Evermore Supported Living which developed 148 apartments in Forster in 2017 and is currently building a further 139 as part of the Civic Precinct development. Additionally, Palm Lakes is developing a luxury resort for seniors in Forster. Other significant operators include:

- » Stockland’s Golden Ponds is the only local example of a large village owned by a large corporate investor. The village is described as a retirement resort and has a swimming pool and café. It is pitched towards the middle sector of the retiree market.
- » Crystal Waters and Secura Lifestyle are manufactured home estates that target a proportion of sales for retirement living. Despite being relatively affordable, it appears that there is weak demand for established homes for sale on the estate.
- » Sunrise Supported Living took over some of the assets of a failed rental retirement village. It operates under an emerging model (supported living) specialising in residents who need and can pay for private support and services in their home.

The only for profit provider in the residential aged care sector is Estia Health, one of the largest players in the sector.

Future operators

Many sector players are currently focussing on their internal organisation and internal delivery models rather than on specific developments given the findings of the Aged Care Royal Commission as well as the health and economic impacts of COVID-19. The Federal Government has recently announced additional funding for aged care and it is likely further reform will follow consideration of findings from the Royal Commission. It is therefore

possible that there will be further changes in the makeup of the industry, although the current business model, including the focus on lifestyle facilities, is likely to endure for some time.

6.3 Operator priorities

Retirement village developers

Specific priorities will vary between developers but market factors, financial viability and local knowledge are all important in making investment decisions.

Market factors

Developers seek localities that are popular with older buyers where there are appropriate services and facilities nearby. They strongly prefer areas of rapid population growth and focus on a style of accommodation where there is evident demand.

Forster Tuncurry is certainly popular with older home buyers. However, most large developers want to build large villages, to support extensive onsite facilities, and the area may not be seen as a priority location because of the likelihood of modest population growth and (in the short term) the relative lack of evidence of unmet demand for retirement village accommodation. Certainly, forecasts by the Property Council of Australia suggest new investment is likely to be most over the next five years with a focus on development in metropolitan areas.

Evidence from the local operators (e.g. GLAICA) and the review of existing and proposed facilities suggests there is capacity within the market to meet local demand for several years. This includes expansion of GLAICA's Pacific Cape project, Evermore Supported Living's new retirement units in the Civic Precinct and at the high end of the market, Palm Lake's Forster Resort.

Financial viability

Developers require confidence about a range of financial factors, including access to large suitable sites at affordable prices, access to development finance, the ability to sell at a profitable price and the potential for quick sales. The main barrier in a fairly resilient housing market, despite the impacts of COVID-19, is the difficulty in locating suitable, affordable sites for development.

Knowledge of area

Most investment in new retirement villages in Forster Tuncurry over the past few years has been by organisations with an existing presence in the area. This provides essential information about local market conditions and supports confidence in investment decisions.

Smaller not-for-profits particularly tend to favour expanding their activities in areas they already service and to which they have a commitment. This is true in Forster Tuncurry and its surrounds where GLAICA and Bushland Health Group have a strong presence.

While local knowledge is important, developers may target an area simply because they believe it has potential, whether or not they are established in that area. For example, Palm Lake expanded its portfolio in 2014 with the purchase of a retirement resort in Tea Gardens despite not having a presence in the area previously.

Mainstream housing targeted to seniors

Since the turn of the century, seniors have become identified as a target market for certain types of housing product in locations that are attractive to older buyers. Some forecasters believe that this sector will overtake the retirement village sector in the next decade. To date, the following models have been successfully developed:

- » Golf course estates
- » Resort-style projects, particularly in coastal locations
- » Villas and low rise cluster housing in areas accommodating a large population of seniors

- » Quality apartment buildings, particularly when they are in town centre locations that are popular with older people.

In general, there is an existing need for homes that are designed and located to suit seniors, particularly homes built to adaptable standards.

Despite a lack of high profile projects, much of the recent development in Forster Tuncurry is clearly intended to appeal to older buyers.

In the case of the NTURA, it is likely that a substantial proportion of buyers will be seniors, particularly given the site's location (adjoining beaches and golf course). Consequently, it will be important to ensure that both housing products and urban design take account of the needs of older people.

Aged care facilities

Many residential aged care developers are focussing on replacing ageing facilities, but this is not an issue in the Forster Tuncurry area. New aged care facilities, within retirement village developments or as stand-alone facilities, require:

- » Evidence of local need, including waiting lists for existing facilities
- » A residential aged care place allocation from the Federal Government
- » In most cases, an established presence in the area, to provide knowledge of local need and access to an appropriate workforce
- » A suitable site.

In the Forster Tuncurry area, significant needs are not expected to emerge for several years because of the adequacy of current facilities and the likelihood that the planned new GLAICA facility will address new demand for some years into the future.

Health and support services

Integration of health and support services is an increasingly important issue for retirement village and aged care operators in the light of research that shows a large proportion of seniors consider the availability of care and support is a key reason to move to a retirement village³⁰. This is particularly relevant in Forster Tuncurry where the lack of accident and emergency services, difficulties in attracting and retaining staff, and reduced availability of community transport can make it difficult for older people to access services.

There are several health and allied services that are particularly well used by older people, and which can offer benefits if they are located close to concentrations of older residents. These include:

- » Community facilities for social, leisure and learning activities and programs
- » Recreational facilities, possibly including gyms and pools
- » Day therapy centres and day activity centres
- » Easy access to key practitioners including hairdressers and podiatrists
- » Access to a general practitioner surgery
- » Services provided by physiotherapists, speech therapists and occupational therapists
- » Local administrative and delivery centres for community care services, e.g. meals on wheels or community transport vehicle storage.

Given the trend towards greater integration of services, several large not-for-profit aged care and retirement housing operators are looking to develop new facilities that incorporate housing, aged care, facilities for health

³⁰ Retirement Living Council (2018), The Book of Wise Moves, <https://www.awisemove.com.au/>

professionals, communal facilities for older people that are open to the wider community, and broader community services such as childcare.

Previous local research has suggested that there may be an opportunity for a new aged care service precinct on the North Tuncurry site³¹. Local retirement village and residential aged care operator GLAICA has expressed interest in developing such a facility in Forster Tuncurry.

An example of how the precinct might look is provided at Carlton in Melbourne, where Australian Unity in partnership with the State Government, has built a large retirement village, an aged care facility and a "Wellbeing Precinct" for older people, including a recreational centre with swimming and hydrotherapy pools, a seniors-friendly gymnasium, library, cafe, beauty salon and activity rooms.

6.4 Local priorities

As most older people do not access housing in retirement villages or residential aged care facilities, the most significant unmet local need identified in this report is for certain types of mainstream housing, specifically:

- » Villa style homes with level access and no steps or stairs
- » Adaptable homes into which residents with declining mobility can relocate
- » Dwellings that are affordable (rental or purchase) for households on low to moderate incomes.

To date, Forster Tuncurry has attracted mostly lower to middle income retirees seeking traditional styled homes. In future, higher priced and more luxurious homes may appeal mainly to people from outside the area, notably from Sydney, where housing prices are such that relatively luxurious homes are often affordable to those relocating to the Mid North Coast. Similarly, a market may develop for good quality coastal apartments for seniors who are downsizing.

In the retirement village and aged care sectors, most of the locally generated need at least for the next few years will be met by recent development and existing capacity within the market. Beyond this, there will be ongoing demand for all types of housing and care suited to older people.

6.5 Site requirements

Scale and characteristics of sites

Retirement villages

If a locality offers strong market potential, operators seek sites that have the following characteristics:

- » Accessibility – easy access to local shopping facilities, health services, major transport links (especially highways), public transport, and external recreation opportunities are all strongly preferred for retirement villages. If the Seniors Housing SEPP is relied upon for development approval, these features are essential.
- » Site size – large for-profit and not-for-profit retirement village operators seek large sites that can accommodate upwards of 100 dwellings plus facilities. Such developments are likely to need a site of at least 5 hectares for the purposes of modest low-rise developments, or more for luxurious projects. There is a strong preference for sites that provide surplus land for possible later development. Smaller local providers may, however, consider smaller sites.
- » Topography – sites should be flat or relatively flat. Developable areas should not be broken up by deep creeks or steep slopes.

³¹ Hunter Valley Research Foundation (2011), Market Sounding Study for the proposed North Tuncurry Development

- » Surroundings – sites adjacent to industrial or high intensity commercial use are not acceptable. Sites adjacent to bushfire prone areas are not acceptable. Proximity to open water sources (e.g. ocean beaches) is a major advantage for villages that seek to attract residents from outside the area.
- » Zoning – residential zoned land is easier to develop but may not be affordable, and operators will often consider sites that can be approved under the SEPP, that is, urban land or land adjacent to urban zoned land.
- » Servicing – services to the site boundary will normally be accepted.

Housing in the community

Purpose-designed housing for seniors must meet the requirements of the relevant SEPP, and must therefore offer the following:

- » Flat or gently sloping sites and flat or gently sloping surrounding streets
- » Proximity to local facilities and services and public transport links.

Residential aged care

New residential aged care facilities must be large enough to support the specialist staffing and equipment that are needed to address complex health issues and in particular, dementia. Key requirements include:

- » Accessibility – transport links and proximity to major urban areas are priorities for aged care facilities.
- » Site size – residential aged care developers will generally require a site of at least 10,000 square metres or more, in a square or oblong shape. For instance, the proposed GLAICA facility in Forster will accommodate 88 beds in stage 1 with up to 200 bed spaces on a site of approximately 1 hectare.
- » Topography – Sites should be flat or relatively flat.
- » Surroundings – residential aged care proposals often generate intense local opposition if they are immediately adjacent to residential areas, as they are often associated with traffic generation issues. Whether or not this is justified, sites within retirement villages or away from adjoining homes are preferred because they are seen as more likely to be approved.

Co-location requirements

Some developers, especially large not-for-profits, may seek to provide for a range of uses on the site, including self-care housing, recreational facilities for residents, residential aged care, and possibly facilities for shared community use (e.g. community centre, wellness centre, café, shops, health practitioner space, child care centre). Others, however, prefer to specialise, and may wish to develop only a village or an aged care facility. In these cases, however, the developer may seek to partner with other companies to provide such facilities. Lend Lease, for instance, no longer wishes to own residential aged care facilities in its villages, but has partnered with another company to operate them where they are seen to be desirable.

Cost of land and construction

It is not possible to provide definitive advice on costs for development of retirement villages and aged care facilities because these vary enormously depending on a wide range of factors, in particular the target market. If the target market is an affluent one (especially if it mainly comprises owners of high value capital city homes) extremely high costs may be sustainable.

However, some general observations may be made:

- » In a retirement village or aged care facility, “pre-sales” are not a feasible option, and a range of costly facilities must be provided up-front. Additionally, the cost of these facilities cannot be recouped because they will never be sold.

- » Retirement village dwellings are generally sold at a lower price than the equivalent housing in the local market. Typically, in coastal and regional NSW they are around 25% lower than median house prices³².
- » The feasibility of an aged care facility depends on its long term cash-flow which in turn depends heavily on the level of affluence of the average resident. The only funds available to recoup capital outlays and provide an appropriate return come from recurrent government subsidies, user pays charges and income from accommodation bonds paid by incoming residents.

The cost of land is central to any decision to develop, and developers can rarely afford to pay full open market price for residential zoned land. At its simplest, this is because sales prices are lower than for similar size open market housing, and construction costs (which must include recreational and communal facilities) are high.

Construction costs depend on the scale, location and quality of the building and fittings – where the target market is an affluent one, the construction cost of a luxury development be very high indeed.

There is very little published data on project costs for retirement housing and residential aged care facilities, probably because these vary so much. One consulting firm specialising in cost estimating for aged care facilities notes that costs per square metre can vary from \$2,420 to \$3,730 depending on the level of finishes in a facility and that building costs in rural areas can be up to 15% higher than metropolitan areas³³. It includes an illustrative cost plan for a midrange aged care facility which indicated a project cost for construction and fitout of around \$214,000 per bedspace in 2019, excluding land.

³² PWC/Property Council (2019), 2019 PWC/Property Council Retirement Census, <https://retirement.propertycouncil.com.au/retirement-census>

³³ Caulfield Krivanek Architecture (2019), Building Cost Indicator Aged Care, <https://caulfieldkrivanek.com/wp-content/uploads/2019/09/Aged-Care-Cost-Guide-Spring-2019.pdf>

7 Conclusion

The Foster Tuncurry area, and by implication the North Tuncurry site, is attractive to seniors especially those migrating for a sea-change in retirement. Seniors will be attracted by mainstream housing options at the NTURA and these, along with the overall urban design, should therefore seek to facilitate health, wellbeing and ageing in place.

MidCoast Council has indicated there is insufficient information to demonstrate a need or demand for aged care and retirement housing within the NTURA. This report demonstrates there is sufficient supply within the market currently to address demand and that there is additional capacity to respond to increases in demand in the medium term. While aged care or retirement village development is not required within the NTURA to meet demand, there are opportunities to provide this accommodation. However, the greatest need in the NTURA is for diverse and affordable housing that caters to all household types, including older people. This can be provided using the recommended zoning provisions detailed in the Planning Study prepared by Ethos Urban.

7.1 Key risks and opportunities

The North Tuncurry site is well located, and has generally good topography for seniors' accommodation. Several possible opportunities have been identified in this study:

- » Incorporation of housing suitable for independent seniors, such as villas or apartments, into the whole development. This is a priority
- » An integrated aged care, health, and housing precinct
- » Luxury resort-style seniors' housing, either in a retirement village or as a mainstream development.

The main risks identified in this study are:

- » Probable further increases in the proportion of residents aged 65 and over, putting further pressure on local services
- » The area's perception of being more affordable than metropolitan areas, which may deter some specialist developers
- » The retirement housing market's dependence on wider economic trends. A prolonged downturn in housing prices, in particular, could be expected to dampen demand for retirement village accommodation and reduce inbound migration to the area.

7.2 Recommendations

Seniors are likely to comprise a significant proportion of the market for mainstream housing at North Tuncurry. Consequently, planning for the whole site should seek to maximise its utility and attractiveness to older people, with a view to delivering a seniors-friendly development. This includes providing a safe and attractive public domain, easy walkability, access to good recreation facilities, and "mainstream" housing options that suit older people (preferably including some homes that offer adaptable/ universal design standards).

High amenity housing associated with the golf course is likely to be particularly attractive to retirees. To the greatest extent possible, such products should be required to be designed to allow older people to age in place, including a proportion of homes to adaptable/universal design standards.

Master Planning and zoning should be sufficiently flexible to allow purpose-built retirement housing, and/or a residential aged care facility, and/or a seniors' health precinct to be provided at some future date, if the need and demand is found to be strong enough. There does not appear to be a need to allocate specific sites at this stage of planning.

Site issues

Should a location within the North Tuncurry site be sought for purpose-built facilities (retirement village and/or residential aged care facility), an appropriate site would have the following features:

- » The site should be large enough to include at least 1 hectare for an aged care facility, a further 1-2 hectares for other facilities in the seniors' precinct, and at least 8 hectares (preferably up to 15 hectares) for a retirement village. (This suggests a minimum of 10 hectares and preferably 15-18 hectares of developable land in one piece)
- » The site should be level, not dissected by undevelopable land, readily connected to utility infrastructure and should front onto a distributor road
- » The site should preferably be located within walking distance of shops and open spaces
- » For feasibility purposes, the site should be indicatively valued as a super lot at around 30% below residential value.

Timing and staging issues

It would probably be premature to proceed with detailed planning at the current Master Planning stage beyond ensuring that zoning and other conditions will permit the achievement of potential development outcomes in future.

As seniors' housing requires access to public transport and local facilities, staging plans should assume that its development will not occur until these are in place.

The potential to make specific provision for seniors' housing and facilities should be maintained until more detailed overall planning is underway.

Identifying appropriate developers

Locally based aged care and seniors' housing developers should be given the opportunity to participate in development where appropriate.

It will be necessary to identify interested potential partners for any substantial seniors-specific projects, as most established players do not have a presence in the area. This would apply particularly if an integrated aged care precinct is considered, requiring health, academic and development partners.

Appendices

A Appendix A – principal sources

A Appendix A – principal sources

A-1 Data

- » ABS (2017), Census 2016
- » Australian Government Department of Health (2020), Home Care Packages Program Data
- » Caulfield Krivanek Architecture (2019), Building Cost Indicator Aged Care
- » ID consultants for MidCoast Council (2018), Population Forecasts
- » NSW Department of Family and Community Services (2014, 2020), Rent and Sales Report data

A-2 Publications and web resources

- » Aged Care Financing Authority (2018, 2019), Reports on the Funding and Financing of the Aged Care Industry
- » Deborah Kuhn (2005), Future of Ageing: Coffs Coast for Great Lakes Council and Aged Care Industry in the Great Lakes: A Review of Challenges and Opportunities
- » Grant Thornton (2015), National overview of the retirement living sector
- » Hunter Valley Research Foundation (2011), Market Sounding Study for the proposed North Tuncurry Development
- » Ibis Group (2020), Aged Care Residential Services in Australia– Market Research Report
- » Ibis Group (2020), Retirement Villages in Australia– Market Research Report
- » Knight Frank (2017), Seniors Living Insight September 2017
- » McCrindleBaynes (2015), Villages Census Report
- » Productivity Commission (2011), Inquiry report: Caring for Older Australians
- » PWC/Property Council (2019), 2019 PWC/Property Council Retirement Census
- » Royal Commission into Aged Care Quality and Safety (2019), Interim Report: Neglect (Volume 1)
- » Seniors' Living Web Directories, listings of retirement villages in the area.
- » Websites of local operators and developers.

Note: several other minor sources are identified in the body of the report.

A-3 Consultations (by telephone)

- » Aged Care Assessment Team, Manning Hospital
- » Anglican Care, Hunter and Manning
- » Forster Tuncurry Senior Citizen's Association
- » GLAICA, Forster
- » Great Lakes Council
- » Hunter New England Local Health District

- » Lend Lease Retirement Living*
- » MidCoast Council
- » Property Council of Australia (incorporating Retirement Villages Association) *
- » Stockland *
- » Uniting
- » Urban Development Institute of Australia

Note 1: At the time of writing, all the agencies marked * had been contacted on several occasions but had either not responded or had indicated that they were not in a position to comment.

Note 2: The main consultations for this report were carried out during the preparation of the original version of this report. Additional interviews were undertaken in 2020 as part of the report update.

